

Titus 3:1-3:8 | Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, ² to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people. ³ For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. ⁴ But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. ⁸ The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people.

Titus 3:1-8 | He Saved Us

We've learned from Paul how the church is to be structured. We've learned how the interworking of the church in all her parts involving all levels of society in her from older men to younger women to bond servants might by the light of the gospel become resilient to the false teaching and encroachments of the Cretan culture. But how is it that the Christian is supposed to act in a culture like Crete? Remember outside the church they are liars, evil beasts and lazy gluttons. And inside the church many are oppressing entire families for their own greed. So how does a Christian stand up to what must have felt like incessant provocation?

Paul calls the Church in Crete to submission, obedience, gentleness and perfect courtesy to all people. Why would I do that? Aren't you setting me up to be taken advantage of? You might be able to act like that in a Christian culture, but not in Crete. Well that just means you forgot you were saved. Paul calls the church to remember that we were saved.

1. How to Act

Titus 3:1 | Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work,

Paul begins with this reminder, meaning it was something he likely taught them while he was present with Titus in Crete. It is a reminder to be submissive to the rulers and authorities, a call to obedience, and eagerness for good works. I know this feels naive, but it isn't. It feels naive because we understand the disproportionate amount of harm that can be caused by wicked leadership. But in seeing the establishment of wicked authority we don't seek to eliminate the authority itself. Instead we honor the authority that God has placed in the world because our hope is not the elimination of authority but the establishment of good authority.

I think one of the most extreme pictures of this in scripture is David and Saul. David is promised that the true authority of the kingdom will one day be his, but the current authority over Israel is Saul. Saul is a wicked king who has denied God and is trying to murder David. And on multiple occasions when given the opportunity David doesn't kill Saul. We don't kill our father's to get the throne. If we do, we'll find we must kill our children to keep it. All authority is from God. Therefore we seek to honor God in his authority As he has placed it in the world. This is the 5th commandment, to honor your mother and father.

Titus 3:2 | to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people.

Paul continues as he calls the Church in Crete to a posture of gentleness and all courtesy to all people. In the church reputations are protected, foolish quarrels are not sought out but quelled, we don't resort to crushing one another but engage gently trusting God to work, and all people receive our courtesy. You can't think that Paul doesn't understand what its like in Crete he's the one who told us they're evil beasts. So remember Paul is saying, treat the evil beasts with all courtesy. And your response might be, they don't deserve it and you're right, but that just means you forgot, neither did you.

2. Remember

Titus 3:3 | For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.

Who were we without Christ? Here is another list of seven attributes. We were just like everyone else. We were foolish couldn't comprehend what a good life might be. We were disobedient to parents and all authorities. We lived lives of constant subversion. Led astray and desiring to be led astray. We became slaves to passions and pleasures such that we identified with them as core of our very selves. Our days were full of malice and envy, tearing down one another and despising the success of anyone else. We were hated and we hated one another.

Don't you realize you didn't stand a chance. Of course your life was absurd and your family was disordered and you aged and gained no wisdom and your life was just a movement from one petty selfish quarrel to the next. Outside of Christ you couldn't even tell what was good or up from down. The tiniest glimmer or hope of relief you'd chase and pursue and no matter how many times it let you down you kept serving it, gaslighting yourself about what a good life might be. Don't you realize all the wickedness of the world that you now find absurd and foolish, you once were foolish. Then what happened?

Here is the wonder of the gospel. You didn't wise up, you didn't get to the bottom of it and solve the riddle of your soul. You didn't make your bed and get your life together and

finally make something of yourself. You are not what pulled you out. Christian, don't you remember?

3. He Saved Us

Titus 3:4-5 | But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,

What happened to us while we were in that miserable state. The goodness and loving kindness of God our savior appeared and He saved us. But we're the ones who were saved, he saved us because we proved ourselves worthy of being saved. Wrong again, he didn't save us because of works done by us in righteousness. There was nothing in us that drew the love of God towards ourselves. He saved us because of his own mercy. You cannot, you must not forget this.

While You were dead in your trespasses and sins he saved you. While you were in open rebellion against him he sought you. While you were yet sinners Christ died for you. Before you repented he forgave you.

How can you show perfect courtesy to those who show you malice. You have been shown perfect courtesy by the one you showed malice. How can you show gentleness to those who are only harsh with you? You have been treated so gently by your Lord. Have you started to think that what you freely received you actually earned? No you did not earn it, you received it because God is gracious and merciful and slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Have you forgotten the parable of the unforgiving servant? The man who owed an impossible debt to his king, but the king showed mercy on him forgiving the debt. That same man having been forgiven such a great debt refused to forgive his fellow servant who owed him such a small debt. Do you remember how it ends?

Matthew 18:32-33 | Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?'

To live the Christian life in a world which stands against it is to understand how we have been rescued from the Kingdom of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of his beloved son not because of our works which we have done in righteousness but only because of his great mercy.

This happened to us by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit. It is literally washing of new birth, and the Holy Spirit's continual work of renewing us after the image of Christ which allows us to see the goodness of God and causes us to seek him.

Titus 3:6-7 | whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Paul's wonder at this reality cannot be held back and he moves into a description for the fullness of this news. Explaining that through Christ Jesus our savior the Holy Spirit has been richly poured out on us. This means you have the power to live a life that is pleasing to the Lord. You are equipped to understand the truths of God. For who knows the mind of a man but the spirit of a man but we have the spirit of God! You know that that means, we can know the mind of God, such is the richness of what Christ has freely poured out upon us.

Let us move through verse 7. So that being justified. This is a tense which shows us something that has happened in the past which effects the way we are in the present. Having inherited millions of dollars you are a millionaire. You have been justified by God. That means in his sight you are perfectly forgiven and perfectly righteous because not because of anything you did but because of what Christ did on your behalf.

In light of our justification the spirit works in us so that we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. We are ones who live in an unshakeable hope of eternal life who are more and more sanctified into the image of Christ. This means we can be courteous and rejected and lose no hope of being courteous because a loss in this life is no loss. We have eternal life!

Titus 3:8 | The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people.

Paul wants you to understand, that this reality that Christ saved us is trustworthy and true. So I join him in insisting upon this. Do you see how the freedom of the gospel towards you allows you to offer to others even your enemies the very patience and kindness that God has offered towards you?

Believe in God and be careful to devote yourself to good works. These things are excellent they are profitable. He saved us. You the people who were saved. Glorify God and honor what he has done for you by acting like it.