

Titus 3:1-8

1 Remind them (church) to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, 2 to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men. 3 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.

4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.

The first couple of verses of chapter 3

- speak about our present obligation
- as people living in this society.

Our present obligation is based upon two things,

- previous condition
- past salvation.

We have a present obligation based upon our previous condition

- and our past salvation.

Titus 3:1

1 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work,

Caesar Nero was ruling and he hated Christians,

- he hated what they stood for
- which resulted in having many of them killed.

Yet, Paul says to be subject to rulers and authorities.

When others tell us to do something that contradicts or controverts what God says, then we are to listen to God rather than man.

In verse 2 Paul says to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.

Matthew recorded the words of Jesus, “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned?”

Looking at verses 1 & 2, that’s what our present obligation is.

Our previous condition is spelled out for us in verse 3.

Titus 3:3

3 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.

Have you ever wondered what God really thinks of you?

Paul said:

Rom 7:15

15 I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate.

We hate to sin and the enemy constantly reminds us of our sin.

But then, Paul mentions God’s kindness and love in verse 4.

God loves us in a way that no one can really comprehend.

John 3:16 tells us that God loved the world so much that He gave,

- He gave His Son as a ransom for our sins.

A ransom is typically a sum of money that is paid for the release of prisoners.

God gave His Son as payment for us that were held captive to sin.

God sent His Son to die in our place so that God would see you and me as redeemed.

Ps 139:1-6

1 O Lord, You have searched me and known me.

2 You know my sitting down and my rising up;
You understand my thought afar off.

3 You comprehend my path and my lying down,
And are acquainted with all my ways.

4 For there is not a word on my tongue,
But behold, O Lord, You know it altogether.

5 You have hedged me behind and before,
And laid Your hand upon me.

6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
It is high, I cannot attain it.

God knows everything about you.

- He knows when you sit and when you get up,
- He knows every thought you have.

Ps 139:17-18

17 How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God!

How great is the sum of them!

18 If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand;
When I awake, I am still with You.

God's thoughts toward us are innumerable is what David was saying.

Jer 29:11

11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

People have become accustomed to seeing Jn 3:16

- posted at major sporting events
- to the point that they don't
- even think of the meaning of the verse.

There is nothing greater for us than to have salvation in Christ.

When the seventy were sent out in the book of Luke,

- they were told that whatever city they entered
- and were received, they were to heal the sick in that city.

After returning with joy, they said to Jesus

- that even the demons
- were subject to them in Christ's name.

Luke 10:19-20

19 Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. **20** Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

The greatest victory we have is victory over death thru Christ.

Paul speaks often in this letter to Titus of how we are to live our life.

In chapter 1 verse 1 Paul identifies himself as a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness,

In verse 8, speaking of qualified elders, Paul says they are to be hospitable and lovers of what is good.

Titus 2:3

3 the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things -

In verse 7 Paul tells Titus to exhort the young men to be sober-minded, and to show yourself to be a pattern of good works,

Verse 9 says to exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own master, well pleasing and not answering back,

Then in verse 11 Paul says to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.

Finally in chapter 3 Paul says to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable and gentle.

And in verses 8 & 9 he says to be careful to maintain good works and to avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law and to maintain good works.

As Christians we should desire good works.

But we are not saved by our good works.

It's God's kindness that leads us to repentance.

Rom 2:4

4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

In the next section we're covering this morning

- we'll take a look at the kindness of God revealed
- and then we'll look at our response.

Titus 3:4-7

4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

God continually pours His kindness out on us.

The very fact that we are here today,

- the very fact that we are alive today
- shows God's kindness.

Thank God that He is forbearing and longsuffering.

Then Paul speaks of the means by which God's kindness and love came to us.

It came according to His mercy.

Mercy means to take pity on someone who is helpless.

- To show kindness or concern for someone.

The word "mercy" assumes two things, need and resources.

He granted mercy on us because we were helpless.

It's the feeling Jesus had when He saw the multitudes having no hope,

- He was moved with compassion (with suffering).

Jesus felt what the multitudes felt, and He had compassion upon them. Not only that He was merciful to them.

A judge once said to a harsh prosecuting attorney, "Did you ever hear of the mother who visited Napoleon on behalf of her condemned son? The emperor told her the young man had committed the same offense twice, and justice demanded the death penalty. 'But Sire,' she pleaded, 'I don't ask for justice—only for mercy.' 'He doesn't deserve it,' said Napoleon. 'No, he doesn't,' she admitted, 'but it would not be MERCY if he deserved it.' I'm not asking you to give him what he deserves. 'You're right!' said the ruler quickly, 'I'll grant your request and show him mercy!' "¹

We sometimes desire mercy from others, yet we fail to extend that same mercy.

I like how Jonah put it in chapter 4 (Jonah 4:2),

Jonah 4:2

2 So he (Jonah) prayed to the Lord, and said, "Ah, Lord, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm.

Not everyone recognizes their need for mercy.

Then Paul says it's through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.

¹ "Mercy" (2000) in *6,000 Plus Illustrations for Communicating Biblical Truths*. Christianity Today.

It's a new birth we receive when we come to Christ,

Regeneration means "to be regenerated or given new life;

The Holy Spirit does a complete makeover in the life of a believer.

- The things we used to do,
- the things we wanted to do,
- suddenly becomes the things we now **GET TO DO**.

Titus 3:6-7

6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

The word grace is derived from the Greek work "Charis."

In the classical Greek it's the kindness of a master

- or a superior to someone that is inferior.

For example, if you're a business owner

- or you're overseeing people in another capacity,
- and you go out of your way to bless those
- whom you're overseeing.

Paul says we've been justified by His grace, by God's grace.

- That's to declare a person righteous.

When you're feeling guilty God justifies you thru His grace.

- He declares you righteous, in right standing.

It doesn't make you righteous, but positionally in Christ you are made righteous.

In the book of Job, we see Satan accuse Job before God

- claiming that Job is only faithful
- because God has blessed him abundantly.

The book of revelation tells us a bit more about Satan's role.

Rev 12:10

10 Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.

Rom 8:33

33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

Satan may be the father of lies

- but we're told in Heb 12:2 that
- Jesus is the founder and perfecter of our faith.

The ESV says that the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable Rom 11:29.

Hence, Paul says in verse 7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Steve Lawson said in his commentary of Job

- that it's been said that a person can live three minutes without air,
- three days without water and three weeks without food,
- but not one second without hope.

Paul said to the Corinthians:

1 Cor 15:19

19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

The NLT says, "And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world."

I can't imagine going thru this life with no hope of a future.

So how do we respond to God's kindness?

Titus 3:8

8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.

We've all heard the term "You can take that to the bank." Implying this is as sure as it gets.

Paul says, "This is a faithful saying,"

This is a constant theme in the NT, we are to do good works. We can't be a believer and not do good works.

Matt 5:16

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Jesus told Peter, if you love me feed my sheep.

James 2:17-18

17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

The small deeds we do are better than the great deeds we plan to do.

God doesn't call us into vineyards to eat grapes,

- but to be busy using the tools He's given us.

Jesus often spoke about bearing fruit, and when He did, He was referring to us getting out and working, not sitting around stagnant.

Luke 6:46-49

46 "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say? 47 Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: 48 He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. 49 But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great."

Jesus says, "why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,'"

Are you placing one foot in front of the other and pressing on with the Lord! Are you putting your hands and your feet to work for God's kingdom?

Paul has been speaking of things which are profitable to the church, now he closes the letter with those which are not profitable.

Titus 3:9-10

9 But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law (law of Moses); for they are unprofitable and useless. 10 Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, 11 knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.

If you'll recall from the opening chapter Paul told Titus that he left him in Crete to set in order the things that were lacking.

Titus 1:10-11

10 For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, 11 whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.

Final Messages

12 When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. 13 Send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey with haste, that they may lack nothing. 14 And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.

Farewell

15 All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith.

Grace be with you all. Amen.