

Set in Order – Sermon 15 – An Accurate Assessment – Titus 3:3-7

Intro:

1) For Sale Advertisement

- a. Premium Pre-owned Vintage Driving Experience
- b. Are you looking for a vehicle with history, character, and personality?
 - i. Look no further!
- c. This rare, well-experienced 1998 sedan is loaded with unique features you won't find in modern cars
 - i. Highlights include:
 1. **Naturally ventilated floorboards** – no need for expensive air conditioning
 2. **Adaptive exterior styling** – rust accents that change with the weather
 3. **Interactive steering system** – slight drift to the right that keeps the driver alert
 4. **Weight-reduction hood design** – hood secured by convenient bungee cord technology
 5. **Surprise audio system** – radio works occasionally to keep driving exciting
 6. **Custom exhaust soundtrack** – announces your arrival from three blocks away
 7. **Complimentary smoke feature** – engine occasionally releases dramatic visual effects
 - ii. Bonus Feature – slight engine knocking ensures you'll never fall asleep while driving
 - iii. Asking price - \$12,000 – firm, no low offers, I know what I've got
- d. Now – if you actually went to see that car, what would you find?
 - i. Rust everywhere
 - ii. Holes in the floor
 - iii. Busted engine
 - iv. Damaged hood
 - v. Barely running
- e. Why? – Because the Ad wasn't an accurate assessment
 - i. The creative advertising covered some serious issues

2) Reality – that's exactly how the human heart often seeks to view ourselves

- a. We describe ourselves in the spirit of that ad
 - i. I'm a pretty good person
 - ii. I'm not that bad
 - iii. I'm basically moral
 - iv. I try my best
 - v. At least I'm not like that guy
- b. But – when God gives us an honest assessment in Titus 3, the description sounds very different

- 3) Truth – The Gospel doesn't begin with better advertising – The Gospel begins with an accurate assessment**
 - a. That's exactly what we see in Titus 3
 - b. Paul knows that it is vital that we have an accurate assessment of our self, God, the Gospel, and Biblical hope

- 4) What we see in Titus 3:3-7 is the explanation for why we are to live out the Godly goodness that preceded this passage**
 - a. How it is possible for one to live chapter 2
 - b. Why is it important to live obediently 3:1,2

- 5) This morning we are going to lay aside the false advertisement and get an accurate assessment of Gospel truth**
 - a. Sermon: An Accurate Assessment
 - b. Text – Titus 3:3-7

The Condition of Man

1) In V3 Paul reminds the Cretan believers of their condition before salvation

- a. This is a common Pauline practice when addressing the great need for Godly living
 - i. 1 Cor. 6:9-11 - Gal. 5:19-21 - Eph. 4:17-22 - Col. 3:5-7
- b. Paul is giving an accurate assessment of the condition of man before salvation
 - i. Sometimes – pote – once, at some time
 - 1. Imperfect tense – a continual action in the past
 - a. IOW – You WERE continually this way
 - b. This is what characterized your life before

2) A Darkened Mind

- a. Paul gives 3 words here that accurately summarize the lostness of man and his thinking
 - i. Foolish, disobedient, deceived
 - ii. This is what those words communicate – before Jesus you possessed no wisdom, you resisted God’s wisdom, and you followed other’s lies
- b. Textual insight
 - i. Foolish – anotoes – “no + perceive”, not having an understanding
 - 1. This word does not simply refer to someone who lacks intellect, it is a reference to moral and spiritual blindness
 - 2. “[Foolish] denotes a complete lack of knowledge. Paul’s point here is that, no matter how advanced a person’s education and intellectual accomplishments may be, if he does not recognize God and trust Him for deliverance from sin, he is foolish...” – J Mac
 - 3. In Scripture – a fool is someone who lives life without recognition of God
 - a. Ps. 10:4, 14:1
 - b. The very definition of biblical foolishness is one who ignores God
 - ii. Disobedient – a stubborn rebellion, denotes a willingness to be persuaded
 - 1. At it’s core – “Unpersuadable”
 - 2. Lit. no + trust
 - 3. It describes a person who hears the truth but refuses to submit to it
 - 4. “Being disobedient involves choice” – Knute Larson
 - a. It refers to a decision to reject God’s will and ways
 - 5. In Greco-Roman world this word was used to describe:
 - a. A rebellious citizen
 - b. An insubordinate soldier
 - c. A child who rejected authority
 - 6. Denotes a resistance even when one is exposed to God’s truth
 - a. Example – Acts 7:51
 - 7. The problem with mankind is not simply a lack of knowledge, its resistance to God’s authority

- iii. Deceived – Planao – to cause to wonder, to lead astray
 1. Ancient astronomers used this term to describe a wandering star not fixed in a constellation
 2. Rabbis would use this term to describe a sinner – they acted like a sheep who wandered from the flock
 3. Denotes a person who is easily misled by others
 4. Ket tactic of Satan – Rev. 12:9
 5. Character trait of false teachers – 2 Tim. 3:13

3) Dominated by Desires

- a. The result of our darkened mind was that we end up dominated by our sinful desires
- b. Textual insight
 - i. Serving – Lit. to serve as a slave, to be in bondage
 1. Sin promises you a life of freedom, but really it's a life of bondage
 2. Rom. 6:16,19
 3. "Apart from saving trust in Jesus, a person has no alternative to sin." – J Mac
 - ii. Divers – various, diverse, Many-colored
 1. Root of this term "pik" – English picture
 - iii. Lust – desire (good/bad) in tis context bad
 - iv. Pleasures – hedone – self-centered enjoyment, sensual self-indulgence
 1. Insatiable pursuit of self-satisfaction
 2. English – Hedonism
 3. Lust = sinful desire – pleasures = sinful satisfaction of those desires

4) Damaged Relationships

- a. Notice how Paul explains how we related to God AND relate to others
- b. Textual insight
 - i. Living in malice and envy
 1. Malice – badness in quality, ill will – wish bad on someone
 2. Envy – the feeling of displeasure produced when you see or hear good happen another
 3. IOW – Malice is wishing bad on others, Envy is wishing good doesn't happen to them
 - ii. Hateful – abhorred, detestable, to hate intensely
 - iii. Hating one another – an unjustified malicious feeling towards others, an animosity to others, an active hatred

5) There are many other words used in Scripture to describe our condition before salvation

- a. Here we read 3 categories of sinfulness which we all dwelt in before Jesus
- b. You need to know what you are being saved from – (Paul L)

The Compassion of God

1) Q – What would you do if you held the authority to deal with the person described in V3?

- a. Harsh judgment, condemnation, no second chance
- b. Yet – V4a “But after that”
 - i. We see God meet man in compassion

2) The Contrast of grace

- a. V3 prepares us to feel the weight of one of the most beautiful Gospel statements in Scripture
 - i. Immediately after addressing human depravity, Paul outlines God’s desired deliverance
- b. There is an intentional contrast made here
 - i. Notice the contrast being made
 - ii. Foolish – kindness
 - iii. Enslaved – delivered/set free
 - iv. Hateful – love
- c. Truth – Grace interrupts human depravity
 - i. Rom. 5:20
 - ii. Eph. 2:4,5

3) The Care of God

- a. Textual insight
 - i. Kindness – chrestotes – goodness of heart
 1. Expresses a moral goodness through gracious, benevolent action
 2. Goodness in action – gracious helpfulness
 3. Greco-Roman world this word referred to a ruler who:
 - a. Treated people with dignity
 - b. Did not abuse their power
 - c. Showed benevolence
 - d. A king who was known to show mercy to his citizens
 4. Leads to repentance – Rom. 2:4
 5. Fruit of the Spirit – Gal. 5:22
 6. Salvation is not merely God tolerating sinners, it is od actively showing kindness to them
 - ii. Love...toward man – Philanthropia – love + man, Lit. love for humanity
 1. Root word for English – Philanthropy
 2. A phrase that simply expresses the kind, loving affection God has toward mankind
 3. IOW – when humanity was at it’s worse, God showed love
 - a. Rom. 5:8

4) Christ-Centeredness of the Gospel

- a. Q – Who is it that showed this kindness and love?
 - i. God our Savior
- b. Q – When do we see this love?
 - i. Appeared – epiphany – upon + light, to make visible, to shine forth
 - ii. A reference to the incarnation
- c. Truth – God not only commands love, He showed it in Jesus
- d. IOW – Grace appeared in person – Jesus Christ
- e. Q – What does God’s love look like
 - i. And – Jesus

5) This statement reveals to us that God’s offer of salvation does not come from our merit, it comes from His character

The Cleansing of Jesus

1) Paul goes on to explain in V5,6 what that kind salvation in Jesus does

2) We see the Origin of salvation

- a. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us
- b. Sentence – The work of salvation comes solely from God’s mercy, not our merit
 - i. Truth – the best works we can offer are at best rejected – Isa. 64:6, Rom. 3:23
- c. Let me be clear – we contribute nothing to our salvation
 - i. Paul emphasizes the Divine origin of salvation by the use of pronouns here
 1. Notice – His mercy, He saved
 - ii. “He saved us” is the main verb of the sentence” – Tim Chester
- d. God did not look at us and think:
 - i. There is some goodness there
 - ii. They aren’t too bad
 - iii. There’s some merit to their actions
 - iv. If you were to make a pros and cons list for the reasons we give God for our salvation
 1. Cons – V3
 2. Pros – Nothing
- e. Scripturally accurate statement regarding salvation
 - i. We are saved: By grace, Through faith, According to mercy
 - ii. Salvation is God’s action, not man’s achievement

3) The Outcome of salvation

- a. By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost
- b. Textual insight
 - i. Washing – loutron – bath, cleansing
 1. “Washing here means “bathed all over”. When a sinner trusts Christ, he his cleansed from all his sin and he is made a new person by the indwelling Holy Spirit.” – WWW
 2. This is not a word used to teach baptismal regeneration, this is talking about the inward cleansing accomplished by God Himself
 3. A word that points to the fulfillment of New Covenant prophecy
 - a. Ez. 36:25
 - ii. Regeneration – Lit. birth + again, palin – again + genesis – beginning
 1. Word which refers to a new birth
 2. In the Greek world, this word was used to refer to:
 - a. The renewal of nature after winter
 - b. A restoration after a catastrophe
 3. Regeneration is what Jesus was talking about in John 3:3
 4. “The washing of regeneration refers to the cleansing from sin which results from trust in Jesus Christ.” – Knute Larson

- iii. Renewing – renovation, transformation – again + renew
 - 1. Rom. 12:2 – renewal of the mind
 - 2. Word expresses the transforming effect new birth has on a believer's mind
 - a. Contrast with V3
 - 3. In Greco-Roman world they used this term to refer to renovating an old, worn out building
 - a. Paul says here – the Spirit of God renovates the soul
 - 4. We could say:
 - a. Regeneration = new life begins
 - b. Renewal = new life grows

4) Outpouring of the Spirit

- a. Shed – pour + out, lavishly given, abundantly supplied
- b. This text settles the question – when and how does a person receive the Holy Spirit today?
 - i. At salvation
 - ii. Through Jesus
- c. This is a statement of fulfillment – Ez. 36:26 - John 14:24-27
- d. Abundantly – richly, generously
 - i. God does not give a believer the Holy Spirit sparingly, but abundantly through Jesus
- e. The Holy Spirit brings us spiritual life, He sustains our spiritual life, He empowers our spiritual life, He seals our spiritual life

5) In this passage we are given a clear picture of Trinitarian Theology

- a. Mercy from the Father
- b. Redemption through the Son
- c. Renewal through the Spirit

The Change in Estate

1) V7 is the conclusion of Paul's gospel explanation in the passage

- a. Progression of the passage
 - i. V3 – Human condition
 - ii. V4 – God's compassion
 - iii. V5-6 – Jesus' cleansing
 - iv. V7 – A changed estate
- b. Here Paul explains what salvation accomplishes for the believer

2) The Statement of Grace

- a. Notice what God's saving grace accomplishes – justification
- b. Textual insight
 - i. Justification – declaration of righteousness, acquittal
 1. Word comes from the Greek legal system
 - a. Only 2 verdicts were given
 - i. Katakrino – condemned
 - ii. Dikaioo – Justified
 2. Carries the idea of legally being proclaimed not guilty
 3. It's a reminder that justice wasn't evaded, a believer stands on legal ground
 4. God the Judge calls us justified
 5. Tense – aorist passive
 - a. Aorist – completed action
 - b. Passive – God performed it
 - c. Justification is not a process, it is a completed act

3) The Security of Hope

- a. Having received pardon and been given His righteousness, we share in His glory
- b. Those who trust Jesus are adopted into God's family
 - i. John 1:12
 - ii. IOW – God extends His inheritance to YOU
- c. Paul says it this way – Rom. 8:16,17
- d. Peter expresses it like this – 1 Pet. 1:3,4
- e. Sentence – salvation does not just pertain to my past, and apply to my present, it dictates my future
 - i. According to hope – in expectation of hope

4) Note the radical change in estate

- a. V3 to V7
- b. Enemy to heir through Jesus
- c. Dead to eternal life in Jesus

Closing**1) The dirty child and parent**

- a. Boy was playing outside in the mud
- b. Came in covered in mud
 - i. Clothes filthy, hands dirty, muddy face
- c. This child was helpless
 - i. Rather than yell, clean yourself off before you come in, the mother came over, carried him off to the shower, and washed him herself
- d. The child didn't clean himself, the parent did
- e. That's the picture we have before us today
 - i. Titus 3:5
 - ii. God didn't save you because you cleaned yourself off
 - iii. He saves you, cleans you, and renews you Himself
- f. Christianity is not self-cleaning sinners – it is God washing sinners who cannot clean themselves