

Three verses three through seven. Well, if you are saved here this morning, why are you saved? You are saved by God's grace alone. And you do not want to miss this word alone. Jesus Christ came to save his people from their sins. Jesus did not come to make salvation a possibility. Jesus Christ came to make salvation a reality for his people. Those for whom Jesus shed his blood will not possibly be saved. They will certainly be saved.

Jesus did not come to save those who save themselves. Jesus did not come to help those who help themselves. If Jesus came to save those who save themselves, hell would be full and heaven would be empty. If Jesus came to help those who help themselves, hell would be full and heaven would be empty. And that is because no one can save himself and no one can help himself. No one can even put himself in a state where he is deserving of receiving salvation. According to our text this morning, God saves you by His grace alone. But why does the Spirit bring up this fact of God saving you by His grace alone in this context?

It might appear to kind of come out of nowhere, this grand and glorious doctrine, but it doesn't. You see, because in verses one and two of chapter three, Paul has been writing by divine inspiration about how the Christian is supposed to treat unbelievers, how the Christian is supposed to live towards unbelieving civil authorities and unbelieving people of various kinds. And then he starts to bring up this grand and glorious doctrine of salvation by grace alone. And the reason is simply this.

If I remember who I was outside of Christ, and if I remember the fact that the only reason I'm any different now than these unbelievers is because of God's grace alone, I will want to treat these unbelievers with graciousness, with kindness, and with pity, not disdain, not arrogance, because apart from the grace of God, so was I. is the argument. Therefore, shouldn't we treat the unbeliever in a kind manner, no matter what?

Otitis chapter 3, I want to read verses 1 through 7, although the sermon itself will be on verses 3 through 7. Let us pray before reading. Almighty God, this is your word. I plead with thee, O God, that there would be no reliance upon the speaker on eloquence or passion or power, but upon the spirit of God, who alone can raise the dead, who alone can sanctify the saved person. And I pray, O Lord, for all who are present, that we would hear the very word of God this morning and listen, for it is not man's words, but God's. We pray this in Jesus's name, amen.

This is the word of God, Titus chapter three, beginning in verse one. Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people. 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. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 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, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Thus ends the reading of God's holy word. May he bless the proclamation of it to our lives. Well, in our text today, we see that God saves us by his grace alone. We see this under two headings. First, who we were in our sin, and second, who we are by his grace. So first, who we were in our sin.

This is verse three. And as you come to verse three, this verse describes every single person outside of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every single unbeliever is being described in verse three. Now someone will object. Someone might say, well, I don't think that's who I am outside of Christ. Or someone might say, I know I was bad before I was a Christian, but I wasn't that bad. What does verse three say? 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.

This describes every single unsaved human being, past, present, and future. This is a description of the sweet grandmother outside of Christ and the rebellious teenager. This is every single human being. Paul even includes himself and Titus as being this way before they knew the Lord Jesus Christ savingly. Look what he says, for we ourselves were. This is every single person right now who is a Christian. This is who you were. This is God's word describing who you were.

This is what we call total depravity. Now this doctrine of total depravity does not teach that every human being is as bad as they could be. But what it does teach is that every single faculty of the human being outside of Christ is tainted with sin. The will is tainted with sin. The mind is tainted with sin. The affections are tainted with sin. The entirety of the human being outside of Christ is tainted with sin in every part. As a drop of food coloring takes a cup of water and changes the color of the entire cup of water, so sin has tainted the entirety of every human being outside of Christ.

Now, someone objects and they say, well, I don't agree with this assessment of humanity outside of Christ. Well, I answer you, God knows humanity better than humanity knows humanity. If this is what God says you were like outside of Christ, then this is who you were outside of Christ. This is humanity outside of Christ, for God has spoken in his word.

And additionally, One of the reasons humanity is prone to deny the doctrine of total depravity is because it is true. Because he's so depraved that rather than believe that which is true about himself and declared in God's word, he chooses to suppress the truth in unrighteousness. In other words, it's very truth is why people don't want to believe that it is true. It isn't for a lack of evidence that people deny the doctrine of total depravity. It is because they don't like the evidence. And so they hate it and they suppress it.

And if I could just say anecdotally, This is true of countless people in Yazoo City. And I can say that based on real interactions that I have with people in our hospitals. People believe man is basically good. That's not words I'm putting in the mouths of people in our community. That's the words of people in our community to my ears. And so this is a real thing that people don't want to believe what the Bible declares to be who we are outside of Christ. And so what does our text say?

It says that they're foolish in verse three, lacking spiritual understanding. This person is called foolish, not because they're intellectually incapable, but because they deny the one living and true God as God. And as such, they are foolish. Psalm chapter 14, verse one says, the fool says in his heart, there is no God. They are corrupt. They do abominable deeds. There is none who does good.

Psalms 14, one and Titus three, three. show you that when you deny the one living and true God as God, abominable deeds will always follow. But it always begins with rejecting the one living and true God as God. And then from that rejection of God comes a rejection of our fellow man. Foolish denial of God leads to foolish behavior among humanity.

So for example, you look at our country today and you ask, well, how did we get here? And of course, more than one answer could be given. But the reason we treat our fellow man so poorly in this country is because we rejected our God many years ago. And when you cast out the first four commandments about who is God, how he is to be worshiped, and when he is to be worshiped, it might take a minute. It might take on a societal level, a few decades.

But we didn't get where we are because we just started to live heinously towards one another. We got where we are because we hated God and we rejected him for decades. And we've cast out the first four commandments. And as a result, we've cast out the latter six commandments about how to deal with our fellow man as well.

You see, the principle at play here, beginning with foolishness and then leading to all sorts of external immorality in verse 3, the principle at play here is just this. Your vertical relationship with God, your up and down relationship with God, always impacts your horizontal relationship with one another. Your vertical relationship with God always impacts your horizontal relationship with one another. I've been asked before, told before, in essence, this.

My relationship with God is fine. It's just my relationship with God is terrible. Or no, my relationship with God is fine, but my relationship with my wife is terrible. And what I've told this individual is, well, how is your relationship with God? And they say, well, I just told you my relationship with God is fine. It's just my relationship with my wife is terrible.

But the reality is, oftentimes, a relationship with your wife, a relationship with your fellow man, is an indicator of how your relationship with God really is. Your relationship with God is impacting, in other words, all of your other relationships. It will show itself in the way you treat one another, but the root issue is my relationship with God.

And out of that is flowing all of these other things listed in the text, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others, and hating one another. So this, Wickedness described in verse three is going to look different in different people. For some unbelievers, it is going to look like rampant, outright immorality. For other unbelievers, verse three might manifest itself in what we might call more respectable sins, in air quotes, or what we might call self-righteousness, cloaking itself in morality, but in reality, the heart is, as Jesus would say, dead man's bones. But it might look, it will look different in different people.

But at the end of the day, every human being is ascribed in verse three. So why then do you perhaps not immediately recognize yourself in verse three? Why might it be the case that even the Christian here this morning doesn't immediately recognize himself in verse three? Listen to what one pastor said. People of God, it is because we are fallen, sinful, and depraved in our natural hearts that we can read verse three and not recognize ourselves in it.

But when regenerating grace changes our hearts, we more and more realize that this verse is just what I was when I was outside of Christ. I accept the testimony of scripture about total depravity and fallen nature of my own fallen heart. This is who I was outside of Christ. Do you know that this is who you were outside of Christ? You were, verse three. Adolf Eichmann was a Nazi during the concentration camp and he murdered many Jews. In 1961, Adolf Eichmann was brought up on trial for his crimes.

It was a survivor of his crimes named Yigal Deneur, and he stood up to testify against Mr. Eichmann. And when Mr. Deneur stood up to testify against Mr. Eichmann, he famously fainted. And you might ask the question, why did Mr. Deneur faint that day on the witness stand? You might suppose it was because He was afraid to be in the presence of Mr. Eichmann again, who had formerly murdered many people just like Mr. Deneur. You might suppose that to be in the presence of this monster so disturbed him that he fainted. But here is what Mr. Deneur said years later about why he fainted.

He said this, Eichmann was just an ordinary man. I was afraid about myself. I saw that I am capable to do this. I am exactly like he." So as he stood on this witness stand and saw Mr. Eichmann in his suit looking well put together, he realized, I'm terrified because I'm no different than Mr. Eichmann. And can you say that about yourself? I am exactly like he. I am exactly like the man of verse three.

But why does the Spirit bring up this whole idea of total depravity here? Because the Spirit is wanting each person in those churches and each of us today who know Christ to remember who we really were so that we might deal kindly with those who are still right where we used to be. You see, you realize this is me, that unkind, wicked woman, that unkind, wicked man outside of Christ with whom you might deal. That's who you were apart from Christ.

And so you can kindly interact with them, patiently deal with them, and even love them. And all of this in verse three certainly also must highlight how salvation is by grace alone, doesn't it? Can you suppose that this person in verse three was a person who could save themselves? Absolutely not. This is clearly not somebody who could save themselves. And yet they are saved. They are saved by God's grace alone. Our second point, who we are by his grace. Who we are by his grace.

Verses four through seven. As we begin to unpack verses four through seven and see who we are by his grace, we must remember that if you saved yourself, even in the most minute way, even in the smallest manner, you could legitimately look down on unbelievers with contempt. Self-salvation would produce pride, not humility, because even if it were the smallest amount, you were saved because you did something that this unbeliever is not willing to do. You could pridefully look down on them.

But what does our text say, beginning in verse four, but when? And these two words, but when, contrast the former, hopeless, dead state of the individual with the now living and hopeful state of the individual. These words, but when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, are amazing. But how you finish the start of this sentence is very important. How would you finish the words, but when? Would you say something like, but when I worked harder for God, he saved me. But when I sincerely believed hard enough, he saved me. But when I sincerely repented thoroughly enough, he saved me. If this is how you finish that sentence, then you've missed the

entire point of the text. Because the entire point of the text is that you have absolutely done nothing that contributes to your salvation. What does the text say? Who saved you?

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 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. It was he who did the saving, not we ourselves.

And so you see contrasted in verse three and verse four how wicked and awful mankind was in verse three. And then how loving and good and kind is God in verse four. Verse three, we were these hateful people, these evil people. And then in verse four, you see God is a loving and kind and merciful God. Now this word loving kindness here is the word philanthropia. It's where we get our word philanthropy. And it literally means love toward man.

Who is the greatest philanthropist of all time? God. God has shown the greatest love toward man of anyone of all time. All of man's philanthropic efforts, all the wells he's built, all the money he's given, all the food he's distributed are complete and utter rubbishness. compared to the philanthropy of God.

Because God has shown love towards man in a way that outstrips anything man has done or will ever do. For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whosoever believes in him may not perish but have everlasting life. God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. And one thing that makes this love of God toward man so amazing is how utterly undeserving man is.

Man, in verse three, was clearly not deserving of any love from God. And he doubles down on this point in verse five when he says, he saved us not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy. In other words, we are completely undeserving. We have done absolutely nothing to earn his saving grace. As Romans chapter nine says, I will have mercy on whom I have mercy. I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. So then it does not depend on human will or exertion, but on God who has mercy. And notice, God accomplished salvation for us. He saved us. He did it all. And when did God accomplish this saving work? He accomplished it through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is a once for all, unrepeatable act in history, the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

He lived a life of righteousness, so that you can be declared righteous in the sight of God. He was crucified on the cross so that the penalty your sins deserve could be dealt with on that day on the cross. And he rose from the dead so that on the last day you might rise and be openly acquitted and acknowledged as righteous because of Christ's resurrection for you in your place. Jesus saved you by his death, by his life, and by his resurrection.

But how does this glorious salvation actually become yours in time? Look what verse five says. He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit. In other words, the Holy Spirit, beloved, takes the work of Christ and he applies it to you personally in time and space. He takes Christ's work and he applies it to you, such that you are regenerated, you are born again, as John chapter three says. Jesus says there that you must be born again.

And the language that is being used here is really pulling from Ezekiel 36 which says, I will sprinkle clean water on you and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart and a new spirit. I will put within you and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

What God is saying in verse five is that we are regenerated and we are cleansed in our very hearts, in our very inner man. And why do we need cleansing? Because we're dirty, verse three. And why do we need regeneration? Because our entire natures were rotten, verse three. The very heart of man is dirty and needs cleaning. The very nature of man is depraved, so we need regeneration.

But who, I ask, can cleanse your heart? Who, I ask, can make you born again? Only the Spirit of God can do the cleansing of the heart. Only the Spirit of God can make someone born again. This is why it's explicitly called regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit. And what do those who have been regenerated do? You place your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. But you see, your faith does not cause you to be regenerated. You are regenerated, therefore you have faith. You believe because you are regenerated, not so that you might be regenerated.

And how does God the Father do all this? He pours the Spirit out on us, verse six, richly through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Not sparingly, but richly. Not minimally, but abundantly. He lavishes the Holy Spirit upon us. And this whole text is Trinitarian, isn't it?

In verse four, you see that God is the Savior. In verse six, Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, is called the Savior. But in Isaiah 43, we learn that only Yahweh saves. So how can God the Father be called your Savior, in verse four, and God the Son be called your Savior, in verse six, if only Yahweh saves, Isaiah 43? because God the Father is Yahweh and God the Son is Yahweh because he is God.

This is one God in three persons. And how does the great redeeming work of God get to you? By the cleansing work of the Holy Spirit. Verse five, so the whole triune God is involved in your salvation. There is no salvation apart from the triune God. No one has ever been saved apart from the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. I'm not suggesting to you that every person who's ever been saved has had in-depth knowledge of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, but what I am saying is regardless of the depth of their knowledge, only God, the triune God, saves. Think, Christian here this morning, the triune God took counsel from before the foundation of the world to redeem you from your sins.

And then verse seven, continues to elaborate on this grace, so that being justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. What is justification? Verse seven, justification is to be declared righteous in God's sight. Declared righteous in God's sight. And how is a person declared righteous in God's sight? He tells you, by his grace.

Verse seven. What this means is your sins are imputed to the Lord Jesus Christ and his righteousness is imputed to you. This is what is called double imputation or the great exchange. The great exchange when your sins were placed

upon him and his righteousness is placed upon you. That is justification. He who knew no sin became sin so that we in him might become the righteousness of God. That's justification.

And this is important. It's important because God's wrath is coming on all unrighteousness. Therefore, the only person who can stand in God's sight must be righteous. The wrath is coming. Only the righteous will be surviving. And only the righteous are those who are in Christ, who are clothed in his righteousness.

Beloved, if you are in Christ, your sins have already been punished in Jesus. Right now, this very day, you are righteous in the sight of God. As it has been said, you are no more secure today than the glorified saints in heaven. That is the security that you have because of the righteousness of Christ imputed to you.

If I could put it this way, the final judgment that is to come has already broken into time and history and been placed on Christ in your place, such that on the last day, there is no judgment to be placed on you because it's been placed on Christ in your place.

And so there is no double jeopardy in God's court of law. It's not only that you will not be damned. It's that because of justifying righteousness, you cannot be damned. God is a just God. Jesus was damned for his people in their place. God can no longer damn you because Christ was damned in your place.

So you're already declared righteous, and as a result of this saving grace, because of nothing in yourself, you are now, verse seven, heirs according to the hope of eternal life. You have this certainty, this security of eternal life because of what Christ has done for you, this hope, this sure knowledge of the future. And it's only sure, it's only certain because of what Jesus has done, not because of anything in us. There is no hope in us for the future in ourselves. All of our hope is in Christ.

What makes the thought of eternal life here mentioned so wonderful is not that one day you're going to live forever. Those who go to hell will live forever in torment. What makes the thought of eternal life so wonderful is that you will live forever declared righteous in the sight of God and worship Him for eternity. That is what makes it so wonderful, this eternal life.

And again, why does the Spirit bring all of this up? Because He wants us to know how to live before an unbelieving world. And when seriously the Christian takes his former depravity, verse three, and his current declaration of righteousness by grace alone. He must logically, by the power of the Holy Spirit, it takes the spirit, but logically he must be patient towards the unbeliever. He must have pity on him. He must want to be kind to him. Why? Because he knows that he is literally just like that man, that woman.

And so your heart should overflow with kindness towards that annoying person that bothers you, who you know is an unbeliever. Because, you know, I am that annoying person apart from Christ. And I am only different because of the unbelievable, completely undeserved mercy of God in Christ Jesus my Lord.

Someone might say to Paul, if they could speak to him today, Paul, I know you're writing by divine inspiration, but why do you write about doctrine when you're trying to be practical? Paul might respond, that's exactly why I wrote about doctrine. The doctrine of the depravity of man and salvation by grace alone is not theoretical. It is life changing.

Let us pray. Almighty God, we do acknowledge that we need to understand just who we were and we need to marvel more fully in who we are because of your sovereign grace alone. Oh God, I pray that we would not want to accredit to ourselves any sense of righteousness in our hearts, but that we would want to give all the glory to you who alone have saved us. You weren't waiting for us to do something to earn your favor. You sent your son. He came and lived the life. He came and died the death. He came and rose again. so that all in him might. receive complete and full salvation by grace alone. And so, O God, we praise you that we are here this morning and know him.

But, O God, there be any who don't. We pray that you would open up their eyes. And we pray, O God, for the world around us, as many do not know him. We ask, O Lord God, that we would not look down upon them in disdain as if we have any reason to boast, but we would look upon them in pity and in prayer. asking for you to do for them what you in your mercy have sovereignly done for us. We pray this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.