

Titus chapter 3. Our sermon this morning will focus on verses 8 through 15. Titus chapter 3, verses 8 through 15. Well, in the section immediately preceding our verses this morning, God made it abundantly clear that salvation is by His grace alone. God our Savior saved us, not according to works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us, in Jesus Christ our Savior, in whom we are justified by grace alone. so that we have eternal life. That is a summation of what we've just seen. Salvation is by God's grace alone. But how should this reality that salvation is by God's grace alone impact you in your daily life?

Well, it's to this that we turn ourselves this morning in verses 8 through 15. Before reading, let us pray and ask God to help. Heavenly Father, we come to the voice of the God who once dwelt in your triunity without any other being or thing existing, and then you spoke, and the worlds came into being. everything from the angels to the material world around us. And you speak today as we come to the voice of the Almighty in the words of the Bible. God, we praise you that we're about to hear from your voice, and we ask that you would give us the grace to listen.

In Jesus's name, amen. Titus chapter 3, Having just heard about salvation being by grace alone, we pick up in verse 8 and it says this, 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. But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him. Knowing that such a person is warped and sinful, he is self-condemned. When I send Artemus or Tichyus to you, Do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. Do your best to speed Zenos the lawyer and Apollos on their way.

See that they lack nothing. And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need and not be unfruitful. All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen and amen. May God add his richest blessings to the reading and now the preaching of his holy word. Well, how should salvation by grace alone impact your life? As we come to this text, we see three major ways in which salvation by grace alone should impact your life.

First, trust and obey. Second, avoid and warn. Third, unity and service. So first, trust and obey. You see this in verse eight. We read here, the saying is trustworthy. And I want you to insist on these things. Well, why should you believe here this morning what was said in verses four through seven?

Why should you believe that salvation is really by grace alone? Why should you believe that it is entirely the work of God. Why should you believe that it's not you do, God does 99.9% and you do the other tiny, tiny remaining amount? Why should you believe that in his loving kindness, God, our Savior appeared and he saved us? Not according to works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, so that in him you might be justified and have eternal life." Why should you believe that? Because God tells you right here it's a trustworthy saying. And God doesn't lie. Back in chapter 1, verse 2, God told you he never lies.

And right here he tells you what I just said is trustworthy. You can bank eternity on what has just been written. When it says the saying is trustworthy, it's referring to the saying that he has just proclaimed in the previous few verses. The saying that salvation by grace alone is the way God saves sinners. That is a trustworthy saying. God is giving his extra stamp, if you will, of approval, his amen to it, when he says this is a trustworthy saying. And so every other saying for salvation is untrustworthy, isn't it? It's a lie, isn't it? That's implied. If this is the trustworthy saying of the way of salvation, then every other way is untrustworthy.

Dear ones, don't put your trust in princes, in men, in your works, in your religiosity. Christ and Christ alone is the savior of sinners. And to some people, That brings a sense of terror, a fear. I must do something. But it should bring a sense of gratitude and thanksgiving because what's the something that you could possibly bring to the table that would bring you any assurance of salvation? What is it that you could muster up and produce that would make your way of salvation more reliable than God's saving way through grace alone?

This is the way he says he speaks. And when you come to him, you come to truth. Jesus Christ said, I am the way and the truth and the life. When you come to Christ, you come to the truth himself. And the importance of truth is stressed throughout this book. And you know how important truth is. We live in a world that is filled with confusion. What is truth? How do you know if something is reliable? When you read an article, when you see something on the news, there's this sense in which you just don't know if it's true or not. How can you know what is true? Well, this book has been stressing the importance of truth.

In chapter 1, verse 1, it talked about the knowledge of the truth. In chapter 1, verse 2, it talked about how God never lies in contrast to the Cretans who are called, in chapter 1, verse 9, no, 1, verse 12, always liars. In chapter 1, verse 9, the elders are to hold to the trustworthy saying, the trustworthy word. In chapter two, verse one, verse two, and in verse eight, it refers to sound things, things that are sound in doctrine, sound in faith, sound in speech.

That is true. This book is telling us, God is telling us that truth is very important. He's concerned with truth. It's riddled throughout the whole book. And so he comes here and he says, I'm going to tell you something that is trustworthy, something that's true.

And it's this reality that salvation is by grace alone. So do you trust this doctrine? Not the doctrine itself, but the one in whom this doctrine manifests itself. Christ, who has appeared to save us from our sins. Do you understand this to be true? And if you do, you're not being silly. You're not being dumb. You're being reasonable, you're accepting God's testimony of the way he saves sinners, and you're taking them at his word. God spoke these words. And it's important. How important is it? Hard to exaggerate, if it is possible, the importance of this.

That's why Paul, writing by divine inspiration, says in verse 8, I want you to insist on these things. He says to Pastor Titus, I want you to be emphatic that you preach this. I want you to always preach Christ. I want you to always preach salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, and Christ alone. I want you to always proclaim the triune God who saves, as we've just seen in verses four through seven. And so I, as an ambassador of God, following this example, want to insist on these things this morning.

You only have hope in the God of verses four through seven. You can only have salvation in the God of the verses four through seven. And nothing that we do, nothing that we bring, it's all in the God of verses four through seven, the triune God who redeems us from our sins in his own loving mercy, in his own bountiful kindness, in his own unending grace. There's no language that we could pull together to capture the wonder of the triune redeeming God in verses four through seven and so I insist that you delight in this, that you know this, that this be your joy, that this God be everything to you. But somebody might object and say, doesn't salvation by grace alone promote a life of sinful living?

Well, the answer is nothing could be further from the truth. The truth is actually this, only salvation by grace alone can produce truly selfless works. You see, because if it's all by God's grace alone, you can pour your life out in works for no other reason than that you love God.

You're not doing it to earn something from him. You're not doing it so that you can hopefully get him on your good side or get him to like you get on his good side. It's only a salvation is by grace alone that you can actually do things out of selflessness, not trying to earn something from him, but simply because you love him. But if your salvation is tied up in your works. There's always gonna be that voice, that sense that you're doing it because you're trying to earn his favor. You're trying to get something from him, not because you really just love God. And so that's what he goes on to say. You think perhaps it's going to promote sinful living.

What does Paul, writing by divine inspiration, say in verse eight? So that those who have believed in God, now it's not just any God, it's the God of verses four through seven, that glorious God of redeeming love we've just seen. So that those who have believed in God may be careful.

Look at this. It's all grace. And then he says, what are you going to do? Be careful to devote themselves to good works. When you have believed in this great God of redeeming grace in verses four through seven, you want to be careful in your life to obey him. You want to please him because he's done everything for you and so you know, to all to him I owe and yet all I give is nothing.

I can give all and yet I can say with Luke 17 in the parable, I am but an unprofitable servant. Remember that in Luke 17, after the man, the servant does everything? He's not done, he's just done his duty. He hasn't done anything worthy of the honor of his master. And so we do everything we can because of the grace we received and yet we know I'm not giving him something that is earned. I'm simply doing my best to say I love you to him who loved me from before the foundation of the world.

You see the secret to good works is not focusing on good works. What is God teaching us here? When you take Chapter 3, verse 4, and you read straight through verse 8, and you meditate on it. What is God teaching you? He's teaching you that the secret to good works is basking in the grace of God in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's being not works-centered, but Christ-centered. And what will flow from that is real good works. real selfless love for other people, desire to be a good husband, desire to be faithful children, a desire to honor mom and dad, all those things, because you think, I love Jesus.

He did everything for me, and I had absolutely nothing to contribute. I wanna pour my life out in honor and service to him, but that will manifest itself in loving and serving other people. But what happens so often is that even us who know Jesus will say we become works-centered rather than Christ-centered. And we end up, even if we do a duty, we can honestly say if people could read our hearts, our hearts weren't in it.

We did the duty perhaps at best, But we did the duty that the good work from a posture of bitterness or self-righteousness and both of those God knows and sees. But when you are truly taken by the God of verses four through seven you start doing good works and you're hardly even thinking about the good works and sort of a let me go do something. it just begins to more and more flow out of who you really are in Christ.

So we need to know the love of God more. The more you know the love of God, the more you will want to love him. The more you know who God is and what he has done for you, the more you will want to love him and do things in return to him because you love him.

So salvation by grace alone really is the only way you can begin to trust and obey in a truly selfish way. And this is going to be profitable for other people. He says at the very end of verse eight, these things are excellent and profitable for people. You want to help people?

Know the God of verses four through seven. The more he is your God, the more I know that he's by God's grace. If there's anyone who doesn't know him, repent and believe in him. But he's your God here this morning. He is your God, verses four through seven.

And you want to be a better service to other people, more profitable, end of verse eight. The more you know him, the more you're going to be all those things that are profitable. You're going to serve better, you're going to love better, you're going to care better. But it's not because you're focused on yourself or men or even good works. You're focused on Christ and the redeeming God of verses 4 through 7. Secondly, how should salvation by grace alone impact your life? Avoid and warn verses 9 and 10. A great shift in verses 9 and 10.

It says, but avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law for they are unprofitable. and worthless. As for a person who stirs up division after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him knowing that such a person is warped and sinful and self-condemned." There's a call here to avoid and warn. There are ideas, okay, this is not popular but it's true. There are ideas you just need to avoid. That's what verse 9 says, they're a waste of your time and they're evil. There are certain ideas that are just unprofitable and you don't need to waste your time with them. Someone will say, well, that's very closed-minded, quite narrow of you.

Well, let me put it to you like this. Imagine you're sitting there and you see somebody put poison in a drink. And then they offer you that drink. I have this drink. I'd love for you to have a sip. And you say, no, thank you. And then the person says to you, well, you're being rather closed-minded, aren't you? Shouldn't you just, you know, take a sip? No, I'm not being closed-minded. I'm being wise. I know that that isn't going to be healthy for me. And I don't need to take a sip of your poisonous drink to find out that it's not going to be good for my body. I know that it's poisonous. I watched you put the poison in there. Beloved, we're fooling ourselves if you think there aren't ideas

that are poisonous to the mind, to the soul. And I think, well, I'll go sip on that deadly ideology, that deadly thinking, and I'll be just fine.

No, you're not being closed-minded when you say, I don't want to waste my time with that. I don't want to spend my time sipping back on that philosophy that's anti-God, anti-Christian. That's despicable. You don't need to waste your time on it. And part of the reason is this. Why don't you need to waste your time on it?

Because don't you already have the best way of thinking in the world presented to you in verses four through seven? Contemplate verses four through seven. Put that up against any other idea in the world. And you'll say, all these other ideas are unprofitable. They're just not worth my attention. It's just not good for my soul.

I've got the best meal in the world. The way I had thought about this this week when preparing was imagine, on the one hand, it's like verses four through eight are essentially this. Metaphorically, they're an incredible steak dinner. And then over here, verse 9, all these other ideologies and ways of thinking, they're roadkill.

Now, if you desire to go eat the roadkill, you can do that. But who in their right mind would want to do that? It's going to be terrible. It's not going to taste good. You've got all this incredible truth right here. And God is telling you this is his way. And it's an incredible way. You want to eat the roadkill? So be on guard, beloved, about what you listen to and what you read.

There are a lot of charismatic, winsome personalities. But do they preach the Bible? Do they speak the actual word of God? We have to be aware that many of the ways false teaching can arise is not by so much what is said, but what is left out. Do they mention sin? Do they mention hell? Do they mention death? Do they mention eternity?

These are not going to be the doctrines that have popularity, but they arise in scripture and so they must be preached. be on guard, avoid these ideas, but also warn certain people. It's not just an avoidance of ideas. It's actually a stern warning of certain people. It says there are those who you need to be warned and you warn them once and you warn them twice, but they remain and persist in their sin. Well, they need to be disciplined. Church discipline is biblical. Matthew chapter 18 is so helpful here. When Jesus Christ gives us this incredible insight into church discipline, Jesus says this, if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.

If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen to the church, let him be to you a Gentile and a tax collector.

If you've been around church discipline very much, you know that sometimes it's not exercised perfectly. But it better be exercised. Jamie can tell you, one of the questions I asked him the first time we spoke on the phone, wasn't the first question I asked him, he probably would have run away, I probably wouldn't be here today if it was. But I did ask him, I said, do y'all exercise church discipline? I will not serve in a church where elders are unwilling to

exercise church discipline. Not because I think it should be the thing we're longing to do, we're going to look around and see where we, that's not the attitude at all of scripture. But in our day and age, churches don't very, often, almost ever, practice it, even when it is appropriate, because it's hard, and it is hard.

And I have seen it exercised, and I have been among those who have exercised it. And it's not done glibly or happily, or you're looking for a fun time, but you do it because God in his word has told you to do it. And it's clearly to be exercised. We see it right here.

He says, yes, warn them once, and then you give them a second try. You give them some opportunities, but their day comes where you must lay down the law because God has told you. And you do it ultimately for a couple of reasons, God's glory, the purity of God's church, and to reclaim the sinner. You do want to see them repent. You do want to see them come to Christ.

Just read a few verses on this call to avoid and to warn certain people, to warn certain people. 2 Corinthians chapter four, verse 14 through 18. 2 Corinthians chapter four verses, or sorry, 2 Corinthians chapter six, verses 14 through 18. This call to warn certain people, to avoid certain ideas, Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? For what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols?

For we are the temple of the living God. As God said, I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them. And I will be their God and they will be my people. Therefore, go out from their midst and be separated from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing. Then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty."

There's a call to separation from certain peoples, certain ideas, and you must see the call to this sort of, this call in the church to discipline. It's biblical. Well, thirdly, Salvation by grace alone should impact your life in promoting unity and service. Unity and service, verses 12 through 14. Well, you see unity in service here in several ways. Let's look at each verse.

When I send Artemis or Tychius to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. You see this unity in service because in verse 12, Paul is saying, I want to meet up with you, Titus, at a place called Nicopolis, but don't leave Crete to meet with me at Nicopolis until either Artemis or Tychicus show up.

In other words, he's saying don't leave until when they come, then you have the liberty to leave. And why is he saying this? Because he's caring for that flock or those flocks on Crete. He doesn't want them to be left without a shepherd. He doesn't want Titus to leave his post without somebody to replace him while he is gone.

You see this all the time in Presbyterianism. For five plus years, Guy Waters served here as a stated supply because God doesn't want his church to be left without somebody to serve in that capacity. And so for that season, Guy was

here so that there was somebody to keep and care for those who are among us. But then you also see this unity in service in verse 13.

It says, do your best to speed Zenos, the lawyer, and Apollos on their way. See that they lack nothing. And so the pretty much agreed upon interpretation of this is that these two individuals, Zenos and Apollos, had likely been the carriers of this letter that Paul wrote by divine inspiration. So Paul gives the letter to these guys, Zenos and Apollos. They go to Titus. They give him the letter.

And then Paul says, make sure that whenever you send them to their next work, you don't leave them empty handed. You care for one another. There's this unity and this service in the body of Christ. And then in verse 14, he says, and let our people learn. So it's this present tense, it's keep on learning. They're gonna see this, this example about the way you cared for Zenos and Apollos, and they're gonna learn from that example. Let them learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need and not be unfruitful.

In other words, when things come up in the church of urgent need, the body should be there to serve and help one another. We've had a great example of this yesterday. In the last few days is preparing for Miss Patsy's funeral as a body. Everybody's chipping in and trying to serve where they can to help issues of urgent need. That's what Paul is talking about here.

So you see this theme of unity and service woven throughout verses 12 through 14. And the concept is this. that as Christians, and particularly as those who are part of the body of Second Presbyterian Church, this should be our response, unity in service, to the reality of having been saved by God's grace alone. One of the ways it impacts us is that we want to be serving one another in unity. And by God's grace, that is evident among us, but it's always the call of us to be growing in every area of our lives. But this selfless service and unity flows out of the grace we've received in Christ. Thus he ends this way in verse 15. All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. I did a little study this week.

How many of Paul's last verses in his 13 letters ends with the word grace. How many of those last verses of his 13 letters have the word grace in it? And it's 11. 11 of his 13 letters have that word grace in the very last verse. And it's obvious as to why that is the case. Because you're saved by grace, but you also grow in grace.

Paul has given all sorts of commands throughout this letter, and they are good commands, and they're commands that they needed to hear. He told them in verse one, or chapter one, establish elders. He commanded very firmly in chapter two that they need to establish godly homes. He commanded very clearly in the start of chapter three that they needed to have a good reputation among outsiders. So he commands establish good elders, have godly homes, good reputations among outsiders.

These are all commands. But Paul is resolute. He is unwavering in his commitment to ground all of these commands in the grace of God that you have received in Jesus Christ. It's always grounded in grace. Beloved, every religion has commands. Islam has commands. Religious Jews have commands. Even atheists have some sort of moral code by which they live. What is it that separates that reality then from Christianity? We have commands too.

What makes this religion different? Because this is the only religion in the world that grounds obedience and the grace of God alone for salvation. It's not different because we have different commands necessarily, it's different because it flows from a heart of the redeeming work of Jesus Christ alone for salvation. And so that is why Paul concludes in this way.

Well today we have seen that salvation by grace alone should impact our lives by promoting in us trust and obedience, avoiding and warning, and unity and service. In the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, let us pray. Almighty God, we do thank you and praise you for salvation by grace alone. The wonder of verses four through seven, may that seep out into our lives because this is the God who has done it all for us.

And so would we respond in heartfelt service, not even caring if anyone sees us, not even looking for a pat on the back, but doing things because we have been bought with the blood of Jesus. How in the world could we want to live differently than dwelling upon him and worshiping him and living for him? And yet we do fall short. And so we pray for you to remember your son and his blood and his righteousness all the days of our lives. Help us to grow in grace in Jesus's name. Amen.