

Titus 3:3-7
This is Us

Titus is a disciple of Paul. He is a man that Paul has entrusted and trained for ministry, and now Paul is writing back to him, while Titus is pastoring churches. We know that Paul sent him to Crete to organize the church. We also know that he went to Corinth to help reorganize that church while they were in turmoil. Some scholars say that he was the one who delivered the letter we now know as 2 Corinthians, and then stayed there to help them work through the issues they had.

In the book Titus, Paul is writing to him as a friend, but also as a pastor. Giving direction of the overall leadership of how the church should operate, but also the reminding of the focus of the church. It is in this book that Paul is encouraging Titus to be focused on teaching the church to be ready for God to call them to action, but for them to be ready to listen, they had to know who they were. So Paul in Titus 3:3-7 gives marching orders for who the people of Jesus should be.

To this morning we are going to look at who we are.

Who You Were (3)

Before we have a relationship with Jesus, Sometimes we like to think of ourselves in a way that makes us seem and feel morally right. We like to picture ourselves as “good” people. Paul is telling Titus to remind the people that their view of themselves is inaccurate. That they, and Paul includes himself in Titus in this, are the opposite of good. Paul gives this list, not as an all inclusive list, but just to hit some of the ways that people are not right with God.

The heart behind this entire list is to show us that we are, at a heart level, in need of a greater morality than what we have. That we can put on this mask and make us look good enough for everyone around us so they think we are good enough. And we may even be able to convince ourselves by looking at other people and judging our best features against their worst features, and deciding that we are good enough. And that is not new, but Paul was addressing the very same thing with Titus. He is telling him to remind people that on the inside they are in need of help. They are in need of being rescued.

Have you ever taken a test, and at the end though you nailed it. You felt good about it, everything seems to be on the right track, until a couple of days later when you get the test back from the teacher and you did not do nearly as good as you thought you had done. In fact, you bombed the test. Upon further examination your understanding of the subject was inaccurate to what we expected?

That is similar to what is going on with us when we judge our moral ability by our own thoughts and understanding. We are unable to determine what is good because we will always think that we are good enough, but it is not by our standard that we are being judged.

In fact, we need to make sure and examine our heart, and our relationship with Jesus to see if this is who we were or who we are. That without a personal relationship with Jesus. Without Jesus having saved you, your hope is that you have done enough good works or deeds that you can appease God, and surely that is enough correct? That is what religion teaches. That you do enough to earn your way to god. That is the reason that if you would survey people all across

the United States if they were going to heaven, their answer would be based primarily on what they have done or accomplished.

Paul is telling us, and if we search deep down in our heart enough, even our own hearts are telling us that we are not good enough. If that is your story. If you think that you get to heaven or get to Jesus based on what you have done, then your hope is not based in the sacrifice of Jesus, and it will not get to you to heaven. If that is you, then you are still in this first part of this passage. You have yet to experience the true hope of Jesus Christ.

Today is the day of salvation!(2 Corinthians 6:2)
Anyone who calls upon the name of Jesus shall be saved. (Romans 10:13)

Who You Are (4-6)

You've heard the saying that big things come in small packages. Often times in the Bible, BIG truths come from small words. Vs. 4 starts with the word but. It is a transition word that the entire gospel hinges on. This word is the representation of the transformation that happens upon us entering into salvation. Then he gives us the explanation of what salvation is and does for us.

Salvation:

Is ONLY because of Jesus (5) (Not because of works done by us in righteousness)

Paul is not focusing on the bad parts of our life in this. It is not a list of what we have done wrong. He has already addressed that, but now he is focusing on what we qualify as good. All of the works that are done in righteousness are the focus of all the things that we have gotten right in our mind. This is the epitome of the best that we have to offer.

No-one builds a resume and fills it full of all the times they have failed and messed up. Instead they put all of their accomplishments and accolades that they could bring to the table. It is the idea of here is the best part of me, which is us acting in our own righteousness. But the Bible says that our best days. The best thing that we can bring to the table is like filthy rags. Disgusting rags that would never be presented to anyone, but especially not God.

So how does salvation happen? Because of Jesus. Because it is his plan and because He is GOD. That is the only way that we can ever experience salvation!
And Salvation is shown through his mercy!

Demonstrates God's Mercy

Mercy is the compassion that is shown when the person giving the compassion could rightfully punish. Because of who we were before Christ there is but one thing that we deserve, and that is punishment from a holy, perfect, and just God. However he is also merciful where He has allowed us to experience the compassion of Christ. That He would take the wrath and punishment of our sin on himself.

God is the judge who has every right and obligation to bring judgement. He is the one who knows our guilt completely, and yet chooses to show compassion. While at the same time choosing to take the punishment that we deserve upon himself.

The basic truth of the Gospel is one that we must make sure we do not get past. He who knew no sin became sin for us. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

If we have been given this great mercy, we have the opportunity to show it. People are not always going to treat you like they should, and I am in no way saying let people walk all over you, but if you have the opportunity to show mercy then show it.

Mercy has the opportunity to be one of the strongest things that someone has ever experienced.

Not only is salvation because of Jesus and it shows his mercy, but it also brings about something new. (regeneration)

Brings about something new (Regeneration)

This idea of something new is both who you are and who you are meant to be!

Because we have been saved we go through this process of being made more like Jesus (sanctification). However that process must have a starting point. There must be a time when you call upon the name of the Lord for salvation.

This is the discussion that Jesus has in John 3. When Nicodemus comes to him seeing that he was from God, and Jesus tells him that he has to be born again to inherit the kingdom of God. And that re-birth (born again) is the start of the regeneration process.

This is also the Holy Spirit (God Himself) dwelling with us. And this passage shows us that part of what the Holy Spirit does within us is that he makes us more like Jesus, and renews (convicts) us to let us know when we are not being like that.

That is part of the great beauty of salvation is that God walk with us to guide us.

Have you ever been going to a specific place, and someone gives you directions, and maybe they sound something like this...go north at the 4 way stop and travel for about 4 minutes. Then you will turn left at the barn with Joe's truck sitting out in front of it. After that find the 4th gravel road heading south just pass where the Smith's house used to be. Then it will be the 3 to fifth house on the right.

Sometimes it feels like life gives us directions like that, but how much easier is it for the same person to simply say...Follow me and I will take you.

The process of being regenerated and renewed is the Holy Spirit is God saying, I will walk with you. Just follow me.

And then who you are naturally becomes who you are meant to be.

Who You Are Meant To Be (7)

New Purpose(Made new by the Holy Spirit)

This is where this idea of being regenerated and renewed plays into both who we are and who we are meant to be.

The Bible tells us that when we are saved, we become a new creature. The old has passed away and we get a new life. Obviously that is not a physical body at the immediate time of salvation (that comes later) but now the purpose and focus of our life has changed. We are no longer living a life for this current world, but instead we now have a new purpose. That is a Heavenly kingdom focus.

Let's say you got a new job. If you show up on the first day, and your purpose in your mind is the same as the old job with the other company, then there will be immediate conflict. That old job is no longer your purpose. You have a new one.

When we are saved, we have a new purpose. And God has given us new purpose and prepared us for it, but

New Promotion (heirs with eternal life)

This is a spiritual raise of Biblical proportions. Because of the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ, we go from alienated enemies of God, to being part of the family that means we get all the eternal benefits of Jesus.

It does not make us Jesus. We do not become deity, but we become part of the ultimate royal family.

This is you! If you are a child of God. If you have given him your life, then there has to be a transformation where you are being more like Jesus. That the Holy Spirit is working on you to show you more and more of Jesus. And that your focus and purpose have changed. You now have an eternal citizenship in heaven, and that becomes your hope, not things that will fade away.