

Growing in Your Love For Non-Christians

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Titus 3:1-2
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Hi, I'm Jon, one of the pastors of Redeemer Bible Church. Thank you for joining me for Redeemer Live. With Easter just a week away, our church building might be empty, but the grave isn't. Hey, maybe this will work over technology. He has risen. He has risen indeed. Yes, He is.

Hey, kiddos. Yeah, I know you're watching right now. I'm talking to you. Hey, I want you to do something, if you're a little kiddo, I want you to draw a picture of something that I say in this message, okay? Or draw a picture of me preaching this message, whatever. Then when it's over, ask your mom or your dad to post it on social media with the hashtag #RedeemerAZLive, 'kay? Redeemer AZ Live. Speaking of kiddos, happy birthday, Amy Sue. You're two years old today. Dada loves you. Now, everyone else, can you take a picture of yourself watching this broadcast, only if you're presentable, and post it to social media with the same hashtag, #RedeemerAZLive? I just think it'll be a fun way to see that even though there's this separation because of technology and because of this crisis, we really are connected all across the valley and maybe even all across our country and the world.

Finally, I want to speak to you if you've lost your job or you've been put on furlough, let us know how we can help you. Email us info@redeemeraz.org. If you're struggling or you look out at the future and you think you're going to start struggling, please do not give, take care of your family, and let us help you do that, inforedeemeraz.org. If you're still giving regularly, thank you. You make it so that we're able to help because of your generosity, we can care for those in need, so thank you.

If you give sporadically, or if you don't give it all, now's the time to do it. You can help your brothers and sisters go give on our website, redeemeraz.org. We'd recommend you sign up for recurring giving, that way when you forget, your bank account does it, and the people who need help can get the help they need. Listen, we are all in this together, and we're going to get through this together. That's what being the church is all about, okay?

Preaching God's word is also what the church is all about, so grab your Bibles and open to Titus 3. Titus 3. If you use one of the Bibles that we give away on Sunday mornings, that is page 1100 in those Bibles, Titus chapter three. I've decided to stay in Titus to keep a sense of normalcy for all of us. However, I know that there is specific help in God's word for this crisis, so we started Redeemer Live on Wednesday nights at 7:00 to give you truth that will be helpful. During these troubled times. Also, we give our daily word videos coming out each day, our Redeeming Truth podcast coming out each week. We're just doing our best to not only feed you God's word, but to

care for you and stay connected to you during this crisis, so join us Wednesday at 7:00, join us Tuesday at 4:00 for the live prayer time with your pastors.

Now, speaking of prayer, join me in prayer that God would work through His word with us today. Father, there is no separation between me right now and the people who are watching this video because we are connected because the same Spirit in me is in them, so I pray that You would work powerfully through this message. I pray that You would use your word powerfully in our lives. I ask that the truth that we hear would not just rattle our eardrums, but that these truths would completely transform our lives. I pray we would not be hearers of the word, but that we would be doers of Your word, and especially a passage like this. Help us, please, I pray. Bless this time in Jesus' name. Amen.

One day in seminary, we got word from our president, John MacArthur, that he was going to be on Larry King live. Do you remember that show? At one time, Larry King had the most watched news talk show on cable. He would get the highest ratings for CNN. We heard that Pastor MacArthur was going to be on Larry King live. He was going to get a whole hour, but it was going to be him and an actor who was a homosexual activist and it was going to be the two of them for the whole hour. To say there was buzz on campus was an understatement. Everyone had their opinion about what they would do if they were on this show with a guy like that. I wonder, what would you do? How would you respond? What kind of God? What kind of Jesus would you portray to the hosts, to the guests, and to the world?

This is Paul's concern in Titus, that Christians live lives that make their God and the truth that they believe about that God that they would make those things look great to everybody, including non-Christians. "They were to," chapter two, verse 10, "adorn. They were to make our God and the truth about Him attractive." The lives of Christians either give the truth, credibility or the lives of Christians cut the throat of our message when our lives leave a favorable impression on the non-Christians we interact with. We will pull them closer to Jesus, which should be our goal that they see how wonderful, how powerful, how loving, how transformative it is to actually follow Jesus.

Well, I want you to notice how Paul encourages Titus to do this. How does he motivate Christians, the ones that he pastored, how did he motivate them to live lives that make the truth beautiful for the eternal everlasting good of their non-Christian friends and family. Look at Titus 3:1. We said last week that we beautify God that we beautify the truth, we beautify Jesus when we obey the government and love our neighbors. Look at 3:1. "'Remind them,' Paul says to Titus, 'Remind your churches 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 towards all people.'"

Now, in verse three, he tells us why we should obey the government and why we should love our neighbors. We should do all of that 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. To put it all together, Christians should be model citizens because they

and all non-Christians were once identical. If He can save us, He can save them, and He does it through our good and godly, loving lives. However, if God's going to do that with us, we must start here. We must start with growing in our love for non-Christians.

You will win no one to Christ by being arrogant, looking down your nose, interacting with non-Christians you know and love with an air of superiority or angst. Too many Christians interact with non-Christians like those Christians achieved their salvation, like they're making themselves more like Jesus, even though being like Jesus would mean interacting with the worst of sinners, just like He did, even though He wasn't influenced by them. If anyone even smells arrogant, that turns off non-Christians, right, especially when it's coming from Christians who follow Jesus, who was so humble, and so meek. We need a heavy dose of grace, which trains us to be the kinds of people. God uses.

Listen, when a non-Christian sees humility coming from Christians, they see Jesus. Philippians 2: "Jesus didn't regard equality with God, a thing to be gripped, and held onto, but He emptied himself of all the honors of being worshiped as God in heaven." He empties himself of that. He comes here. He becomes a servant, becoming obedient to the point of death, all because He thought of what was best for sinners rather than what was best for Him. God used the humility of Jesus to pay for sin on the cross and He uses the humility of Jesus' followers to win people to Jesus who will pay for their sins on the cross. This passage will help us grow in humility and grow in love towards non-Christian so that maybe just they'll see Jesus in our lives and they'll give their lives to Him as a result.

Growing in love for non-Christians begins, when point #1) ***you attack your pride with your past attack, your pride with your past.*** What was your life like before you were saved? I can tell you what it was like. It was a lot like verse three. This is a description of every non-Christian to a greater or lesser degree. This is a diagnosis of the human condition. This is all of humanity through God's eyes. Notice Paul says "we," so he combines Titus and the Christians on Crete, he combines us by implication and we combines all of those people with who? It combines all of us with him.

As an aside, beware of pastors who don't say "we" because they're too busy pointing their finger at you like the little peon Christians need what I'm going to say, but I don't need it. No, all people everywhere have the same sin nature. All people, pastors, Christians, non-Christian, we all have the same disposition towards disobedience. Every one of us is a chip off the same rebellious block. This is humanity without God. This is humanity left to itself. They are hostile towards God starting off. That's the first three words in the list. They were foolish. That's the unbelieving world. They're foolish. They're understanding of God, the things of God. It is darkened. They're completely wrong about spiritual things. Their knowledge of God is inaccurate. No matter how sharp their intellect, no matter how advanced their education, their minds cannot grasp the most basic of spiritual truths from the Bible.

Second, they're disobedient. They hear God's standard for their lives and they think it's stupid. It's beneath them, so they rebel. They're not compliant with him. They don't tend to be compliant

to any human standards that he's put in their lives like parents or government. They do things their way and they glory in that. Obedience is distasteful to them. They are their authority, which means that third, they are led astray. They're deceived, diluted. They're following lies, they're following liars, especially when it comes to happiness, and especially when it comes to the things of God. They're trapped in their own foolish disobedience. There's a right path to Christ and they're not on it. They couldn't even see it. They're blind the whole time, believing that they have the truth. As a result of being hostile to God, they are verse three, "slaves to various passions and pleasures."

They think they're free and Christians are the slaves, but they're sinful desires, and the indulgence of those desires control them at their core. Those desires reign over them like tyrants, all while those desires promise them freedom and happiness, money doesn't give it. Attention doesn't give what they want. Power doesn't give it, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, that doesn't give it either, but that won't stop them. They think if they could just get more of the thing that they desire that that will satisfy them.

These desires, though, are insatiable. They cannot be satisfied, but they keep obeying those desires. Every good thing, even things like charity, doing good for others is done with selfish motive, to make themselves feel good, to make themselves look good to be noticed for doing good, to other people, to get promoted. No matter how much they indulge, how much they experience, how much fun they have, there's always the need for more. They'll trade one desire, one passion for another, but each time they are slaves to those passions and desires. As a result of their hostility to God and their slavery to sin, verse three, they're "passing their days in malice and envy, hated by others, and hating one another."

Sin infects their understanding of God, their understanding of themselves, and their understanding of other people. This is how they live. They are number one in their own hearts, and if they aren't treated as such, rage, unforgiveness, even evil could ensue, or if have you have what they don't have, if you had success and they think they should have it because, after all, they are number one, if they think they deserve it more, whatever it is, again, evil, envy, jealousy comes out. Dissatisfaction breeds comparison and that leads inevitably to hatred, hatred towards those who have what they want hatred towards those who didn't treat them like they should have, hatred towards those who had the audacity to do something wrong towards them, even though they do the same thing to others, and as a result of the hatred that they have for others, the people that they hate hate them back.

Now, you say, "That might be other people, but that's never been me. I'm a good person." I don't doubt that you're a good person, but this list is what you know you are, too. All have sinned. No one is born right with God. All fall short, every single one of us. You might not be all this stuff on that list in Titus 3:3 to the max, but if you're honest with your biography, you will find every single word in verse three in your life. You might be a good person, but you are not good enough to be accepted by God. You must own that list and own the fact that you have no hope at all of

making yourself acceptable to God because your life is marked by that list. This list is not pretty at all.

But the point of verse three is not to paint the ugliest picture possible of non-Christians. The point of verse three was to remind Christians of what they were. The goal was to attack their pride by reminding them of their past. We grow in love towards non-Christians as we remember our own past as non-Christians, that old person we were, that old life that we lived before we were Christians, and we grow in love towards non-Christians. The ones that we know and love, we grow in love for them as we are humbled by our present, so point #2) ***be humbled by your present.*** Look again at verse three, this is a list of Christians BC days. This is what we notice, were." Look at the transformation, verse three, "For we ourselves were once we ourselves as emphatic." He's thinking about the non-Christian world, but he's saying, "Hey, that's us, too, not just those bad people over there, not just the non-Christians, we just like them." But not anymore. We were once this list. Let that sink in for a second.

If it was painful to go through that list because that's your present life, then listen, if verse three marks who you are now, I love you when I say this to you, you are not a Christian. Look at verse three. If that diagnoses your life, if that's not what you were, but that's what you are, then you are not saved. If you have an open Bible, notice verse three, "This is what Christians," fourth word in, "were. They were foolish. Now, they're soft to the truth and are saved. They were disobedient. Now, they seek to obey. They were let astray. Now, they know the truth and stay on the path. Now, whether they were slaves to sin, now they're set free to love God instead of loving pleasure. Now, instead of their desire being for sin, now they make it their passion to please Him. They lived in malice, envy, hating, and being hated. Now, they love people. Now, they seek what's best for them. Now, they're unselfish."

Verse three should never mark any church or any Christian, because that's not what any Christian is anymore. Our present reality is in verse four, "This is what we were, but when the goodness in love and kindness of God, our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of work done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy. Look at the first word in verse four, "but." I heard a preacher this week say, "Praise God for the buts in the Bible."

Listen to another one, Ephesians 2:1, "You were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked. Following the course of this world, you took your pattern for life from the world, following the prince of the power of the air," that's Satan, "The Spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived and the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, He made us alive together with Christ." By grace, you have been saved. You were dead in sin. That was your past. Your present, you are alive in Christ, permanently forever.

Listen to past versus present, Ephesians 2:11. He says, "Remember as a command, remember that at one time you Gentiles that's us. Remember that you were at that time, separated from

Christ. You were alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." That was your past, verse 13, "But now, in Christ Jesus who you were once far off have now been brought near by the blood of Christ." You had no hope, you were separated from Christ, that was your past. Your present, you've been brought near forever.

Listen to one more past versus present, 1 Corinthians 6:9. "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?" Do not be deceived. There's a lot of deception out there about how to go to heaven and there are many out there that are going to say you can live however you want and go to heaven. That is called deception. Do not be deceived. "Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God," verse 11, "And such were some of you."

That was your past. That's not who you are anymore because you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ. You lived how you wanted. You were deceived into thinking. No matter how you lived, you'd go to heaven. That was your past. Here's your present, washed from all of your sin, separated as God's special possession and declared accepted by Him forever. Translation, Titus 3:3 is not what you are now. A hundred percent of the time becoming a Christian radically, decisively, and permanently changes a person's identity and changes a person's life. That's why becoming a Christian is described with phrases like "born again," "made alive," "new creation," "regeneration," "renewal," "conversion." All of that speaks of drastic life-defining, core-transforming eternity, long change, where your view of everything changes, your desires change, your speech changes, your actions change, your pleasures change, your relationships change. Everything changes. Every single solitary thing changes when you're saved.

Notice the contrast in Titus 3:3 versus Titi 3:5, "Between what we did and what God did," verse three, "We did the sinning," verse five, "God did the saving." Look at verse five: "He saved us." Remembering our past attacks our pride. Contrasting our past with our present should humble us deeply. Look at that list again in verse three. There's nothing attractive about that list to God. That entire list is repulsive to Him. That is why verse four says when the goodness and loving kindness of God, our Savior, appeared, He saved us, not because of work's done by us in righteous, because we don't have any of those. He saved us according to His own mercy. We cannot take credit for our salvation. We cannot take credit for our transformation. There is no room in the Christian for pride, especially the kind of pride that looks out at non-Christians and goes, "What's up with them? How come they don't understand it? How come they don't get it? God, just zap them."

Aren't you glad God didn't just zap you? I know I am. I was saved in August of 1995 and I am so grateful that God didn't start wrapping everything up in July of 1995 'cause I wouldn't be in heaven if that were the case. Christians, we should be the most humble people ever. We have the greatest gift in the history of humanity, salvation, and yet we did nothing to earn it. He saved us

in spite of everything we were and everything we did. Let that sink in. Let that humble you. All praise, all glory goes to Him. It should never come to us. We don't even want any of it to come to us for anything that we do because we do nothing without Him.

Now, what's Paul's point again? Why did he remind Christians of our pasts and why does he humble us with our present? He did this so that we would never stop seeing all non-Christians as us without grace, so point #3) *see all non-Christians as you without grace*. We were no different than the non-Christians we interact with all the time, and the more that sinks in, the more you will genuinely love them and care about them. In context, we're to live verse two, we're to love our neighbors because we're not verse three. We live good lives to show people our good Savior. We live good lives to show people our good Savior, and by doing so, we are loving them. We're loving them with our lives and we're loving them by showing them Jesus through our lives. Listen, Paul never got over God's grace towards him. Have you ever gotten over God's grace towards you? When you sing Amazing Grace, does it just wash through your head, or is grace still amazing?

We see in Paul in 1 Timothy 1 a man who never got over God's grace to him. When Paul writes 1 Timothy, he's been a Christian for somewhere around 30 years, and listen to what he says 1 Timothy 1:15, "The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the foremost," I'm the chief, I'm number one. But I received mercy for this reason, the chief of sinners received mercy for this reason, that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display His perfect patience, and he's going to show his patience as an example to those who would believe in him for eternal life. Translation, Paul is saying, "If God can save me, He can save anybody."

Do we have that same hope? That hope will grow as we remember and as we never forget what we were before God came to us personally and saved us by His grace and rather than look down on and rail against and hate the non-Christian world, rather than returning slander against the slander that's against Christians, rather than returning that as slander towards our culture, we should never forget that we were once no different than the ones we are now tempted to revile, look down on, slander, and even hate. We were once no different than they are. We should never hate our mission field. We should see them as us without grace. We should still listen. "We would still be them were it not for," verse four, "the goodness and loving kindness of God appearing to our lives personally.

When we understand the magnitude, when we really grasp the massive amount of mercy and grace that God's shown us, we will demonstrate that same kind of mercy, that same kind of grace and forgiveness and kindness and love towards everybody, including non-Christians. Our good works tell them, think about this, our good works to them come from grateful hearts to Jesus for saving our souls. The gratitude that we have for Christ saving us, yes, it goes back to Jesus in worship, but it goes out to people in love. Let's not be so against non-Christians. Let's win them to Christ. Yes, with our lips, of course, of course, but let's win them to Christ with our lives, too.

Let's believe with all our hearts the words of John Bradford. He was a pastor in England. He was martyred under the Catholic Bloody Mary. My wife and I have actually stood in the spot where he was burned at the stake in London. One day he saw criminal being led to his death for his crimes and he was with some friends and he said to those friends, as they were looking at the criminal, "There before the grace of God goes John Bradford." That anti-Christian activist on television, "There but for the grace of God goes Jon Benzinger," that Bible-hating scientist, "There but for the grace of God goes Jon Benzinger," that terrorist in Iran, "There but for the grace of God goes me, there but for the grace of God goes you."

As we see all non-Christians as us, just without God saving grace, we will grow in our love for them. We will grow in our compassion towards them. We will grow in brokenhearted desires to see them saved. At that point, God will use our lives of love to show them who he is and to show them what he can do if he were to appear to them in his goodness and grace just like he's appeared to us. This really hit home to me. The night John MacArthur was on Larry King Live with Chad Allen. You can watch it on YouTube. It was masterful. It's a genius example of telling the truth, being bold and clear, but doing it with a kind, respectful, gracious demeanor that frankly ticked off a lot of my fellow classmates. When I got to school the next day, the buzz on campus was how soft MacArthur was, how he didn't let him have it, how he wasn't valiant enough for the truth, how he let off on the gas, and let Chad Allen off easily.

I think Dr. MacArthur got wind of that because in chapel that morning, he talked about his time on Larry King Live, and then he chastised the student body. I remember sitting there stunned because he basically said this, "How can I be mad at Chad Allen for being a sinner? He's doing what sinners do, they sin, and they defend their sin." Then he said, "If it wasn't for grace, he could be me." Brothers and sisters, every non-Christian we know, even the most wicked of them could be us.

Let me put it this way, all of them should have little to no evidence to blaspheme God because of our lives. Instead, they should have mountains and mountains of evidence that we love them, that we care about them, that we want what's best for them, which is their salvation. They should see our God and see His son, Jesus Christ, as the beautiful, gracious, wonderful life-transforming Savior He is because they see all of that coming out of our lives. Now, as I close, please remember three things. Please remember to pray for us, please remember to give, and please remember to join us this Tuesday at 2:00, please join us this Wednesday at 7:00, and please join us this Good Friday at 6:00 PM for another broadcast of Redeemer Live. Let's pray.

Father, passages like this are challenging. They're challenging because we want justice. They're challenging because we see what's happening in our culture, the more and more it's becoming anti-Christian, and the tendency in is to fight. Father, I pray that You would use passages like this to soften our hearts towards the lost, that we would grow in our love for non-Christians as we remember that we were all once non-Christians. Nobody is born a Christian. We were all non-Christians, we were all rebellious against You, and yet You showed us mercy and grace and you probably did that through somebody who showed us mercy and grace, and so I pray that You

would use each of us to be kind and gracious and loving to the non-Christians that we know, so that we will be used by You to see them enjoy the same grace that we enjoy. Father, that's not going to come to us naturally. We need you to do that. We need you to do that in us, so please do it. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.