

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 9TH-10TH, 2024 // BAPTISM

HE SAVED US (TITUS 3:1-5)

"REMINDE THEM TO..."

In the epistle of Titus, the apostle Paul instructs Titus, his protégé, on how to lead the churches in Crete.

- Cretan culture was known for being deceitful, greedy, and violent. Titus's calling was to instruct Believers living in a godless society how to live like Christians (vs. 1-2).
- Our spiritual identity determines our behavior.

"FOOLISH, DISOBEDIENT, DECEIVED..."

The Scriptures don't deal in the world of fantasy and hopeful idealism when it comes to the human condition apart from God.

- The reality is our natural self is bent towards foolishness—doing what feels good without considering the consequences.
- We are bent towards disobeying God's laws and commands, and we're easily deceived.

"ENSLAVED BY VARIOUS PASSIONS AND PLEASURES..."

Because we have a sin problem, our natural condition without God leads to slavery to the passions and pleasures of the flesh.

"LIVING IN MALICE AND ENVY, HATEFUL, DETESTING ONE ANOTHER..."

We are bent toward selfishness, self-preservation, violence, and hatred.

SALVATION IS THE RESCUE OF GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST TO UNDESERVING PEOPLE FROM THIS STATE OF SLAVERY TO SIN AND REBELLION AGAINST GOD.

Vs. 4-5 make it clear this salvation is entirely an act of God's kindness and mercy, not something we earn through our good deeds or religious performance.

- We were saved because God is good, not because we were good!

Every religion in the world teaches that to get to God, we must "DO" works.

- But it's IMPOSSIBLE for us to do enough to make ourselves right before God!
- The gospel teaches that the work is DONE—we must simply place our faith in the Lord Jesus.
- This means we "repent" of our sins, we stop trusting in our own works, and we trust in Jesus to make us right before God.

1. Mercy and Kindness: we deserve judgment for our sins, but God out of love and compassion, offers us salvation and forgiveness instead.

- We are all sinners who deserve nothing from God except for the just penalty of our sins—death.
- The second death (hell) (Rev. 2:11; 20:6; 20:14; 21:8) is a place of eternal separation from God.
- Jesus took the penalty of our sin upon Himself and stood in our place so we could be saved.

2. Justification: V. 7 tells us we are "justified by his grace." This means God declares us righteous because of what Jesus did for us on the cross.

- When we place our faith in Christ, God's grace is shown—He declares us righteous and we're freed from the guilt and penalty of sin.
- God treats you as righteous because on the cross He treated Christ as unrighteous—for your sake (2 Cor. 5:21).

3. Regeneration and Renewal: God doesn't just forgive us; He renews and regenerates us by the Holy Spirit, giving us new life.

- God doesn't just save us—He changes us!
- Regeneration and renewal are acts of God through the Holy Spirit by which we're brought to new life from a previous state of separation from God.

REGENERATION AND RENEWAL (TITUS 3:5-7)

"THE WASHING OF REGENERATION AND RENEWAL BY THE HOLY SPIRIT..." (V. 5)

The work of the Holy Spirit in regenerating and renewing us involves a cleansing of our sin that makes us spiritually new.

- The Holy Spirit performs this inner work. It doesn't mean we're perfect. It means we have a new nature with a desire and ability to obey God that we didn't have before.

WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH BAPTISM?

Baptism is the outward act that represents this inner work ("washing") of the Holy Spirit to save, renew, and regenerate us.

- Baptism is something we do physically that symbolizes what God has done in us spiritually.
- Baptism is how we, as followers of Jesus, profess an active faith in Jesus Christ.

1. Baptism is a Sign of Spiritual Cleansing.

- Sin has a defiling effect on the human soul.
- Morality, religion, and self-hatred can't cleanse the stains on our soul created by sin.
- Baptism symbolizes the washing and cleansing of sin we experience in salvation (v. 5; Acts 22:16) and shows that we've been forgiven and cleansed!

2. Baptism is a Sign of New Life.

- One definition of "regeneration" is to be "reborn." When we place our faith in Christ, that's exactly what happens! (John 3:3).
- In baptism, we identify with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.
- Just as Christ rose from the grave, we rise from the waters of baptism as new creations in Christ.
- We are not the same person anymore!

3. Baptism is a Sign of the Spirit's Work.

- V. 6 says God, "poured out His Spirit on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior."
- God doesn't just want to give us a little bit of Himself. When we're baptized, the water covers us abundantly—symbolizing that the Spirit has been poured out on us, marking us as God's own and empowering us supernaturally to live for Him.

WHY DO I NEED THIS?

WHY BE SAVED AND BORN AGAIN?

V. 3 describes the human condition apart from Christ: we are totally lost in sin and completely unable to save ourselves apart from Christ.

- We're spiritually dead, enslaved to sin and Satan, and our hearts are hardened by evil (Eph. 4:18).
- We are under God's wrath, at odds with God (Rom. 8:7-8), and in danger of eternal hell.
- Getting right with God, becoming a Christian, and receiving the assurance of heaven is not a matter of attending church or trying to modify your behavior.
- Some of us trust in religion, morality, and a magic prayer we once prayed or magic water we once got dunked in. But it's only complete faith in Christ that saves us!

WHY GET BAPTIZED?

Jesus commanded it (Matt. 28:19-20), Jesus modeled it (Matt. 3:16-17), and the early church baptized in obedience to Christ's commands (Acts. 2:38-41).

- Baptism is a public proclamation of the inner transformation that has already occurred in our lives through faith in Christ. By being baptized, we declare our allegiance to Jesus!
- Baptism identifies us with Christ and shows the union we share with Him upon salvation (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12).
- Baptism shows that our old self and old way of life have been crucified & buried with Christ.
- Baptism shows that, just as Jesus was resurrected, we've been raised to a new kind of spiritual life by the power of the Holy Spirit.

"BUT...DO I HAVE TO GET BAPTIZED?"

When we ask that question, it already proves that our hearts are in the wrong place.

- Every person on planet Earth needs to be saved because only through Jesus can we have eternal life, and every Believer should be baptized as an act of obedience and a public sign of the new life we have in Him.

LIVING IT OUT (TITUS 3:8-11)

GOD SAVES US WHEN WE PUT OUR FAITH IN JESUS. OUR WORKS DON'T SAVE US.

However, salvation by grace through faith can never be used as an excuse for a fruitless, barren, and compromised Christian life.

- V. 8 tells us that a trustworthy, central tenet of our Christian faith is that those who have believed must be careful to devote themselves to good works.

GOOD WORKS ARE WHAT WE'VE BEEN SAVED FOR (EPH. 2:10)!

It is biblically inconsistent and spiritually impossible to say that someone has been saved but not changed (2 Cor. 5:17).

- Just as a baby will grow after they're born, so a true Believer will grow after the new birth.
- Good works are the natural outcome of a genuine faith in Christ.

WHAT ARE "GOOD WORKS"?

Good works are practical acts of Christ-like love that help meet people's needs, things that are "good and profitable for everyone" (v. 8).

- Selflessly caring for our children and spouses with Christ-like love and patience is a good work.
- Being a kind, hard-working, and compassionate co-worker or employer is a good work.
- Sharing the gospel is a good work.
- Staying sober-minded and not mastered by alcohol, drugs, or intoxicants is pleasing to God, helpful to people, and is a good work.
- Not sexualizing other humans made in the image of God and staying morally pure by not watching pornography is a good work.
- Not living in a constant state of hatred, rage, irritation, and anger is a good work.

UNPROFITABLE AND WORTHLESS RELIGION (VS. 9-11).

If our expression of Christianity is characterized by foolish debates, quarrels, and disputes where we're more concerned about being right than surrendering to and being like Christ, we've gone astray and are sinning.

- People like this are divisive and shown to be self-condemned. They have failed to be who they know they should be.

We're to avoid (v. 9) and reject (v. 10) unprofitable and worthless expressions of dead religion as we live to devote ourselves to good works that are profitable for others.

- To live a life of good works that looks like Jesus is why we've been saved!
- When we're baptized, this is the kind of life we are committing to live: a life of holiness, goodness, and obedience to Christ.

HAVE I RECEIVED THE SALVATION THAT GOD OFFERS THROUGH CHRIST?

- Does v. 3 describe your spiritual life right now? What does that mean for your relationship with God? For your eternity?
- If you haven't, today is the day to receive God's mercy and grace.
- God offers this salvation freely to all who believe and call upon the name of Jesus.

HAVE I PUBLICLY PROFESSED MY FAITH IN CHRIST THROUGH BAPTISM?

- If you've been born again, but you've never been baptized, right NOW is the time to take that step of obedience and publicly declare your faith.
- If you've been washed, regenerated, and renewed by the Holy Spirit, He's given you a new desire to obey God—so obey God and be baptized.

AM I LIVING OUT THE NEW LIFE BAPTISM REPRESENTS?

- If you have been born again and baptized, are you walking by the Spirit and devoting yourself to good works that reflect your transformation?
- Slander no one, avoid fighting, be kind, and show gentleness to all people (v. 2).
- What kind of good and profitable works is God calling you to devote yourself to (v. 8)?