

Sermon Discussion

24 October 2021

Read Titus 3:1-8

Dig Deeper

So far in this letter, Paul has been concerned with the internal arrangements of the Cretan churches and the duties of their members to one another. Now, he comments briefly on their relationship to the civil power and their pagan environment generally. The point he makes is that they should be models of good citizenship precisely because the new, supernatural life of the Spirit finds expression in such an attitude.

The list (v. 1-2) closes with a call to take the initiative to show all manner of good to all sorts of people. **Perfect courtesy** (*prautēta*) is a good translation of an often misunderstood word literally meaning “meekness/gentleness.”

The transformation described in v. 3-7 is not based on human effort. “*We ourselves were once...slaves*” (v. 3) but He saved us. God must act before salvation occurs. Salvation comes not because of works but by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.

Some have understood this as saying that baptism (“**the washing**”) causes salvation. However, in this context human deeds are clearly downplayed (“**not because of works**”) and the emphasis is on divine action and initiative (“he saved us”). The “washing” described here is the spiritual cleansing, which is outwardly symbolized in baptism.

1. What is the evidence of a life changed by the power of the gospel?
2. Who are the rulers and authorities Paul is referring to? What other passages of Scripture clarify how we relate to governing authorities?
3. What is the connection between a submissive attitude and serving others?
4. What was our former way of life before Christ? What does it mean to be a slave to sin (2 Corinthians 4:4; John 8:34; Ephesians 2:8-10)?
5. How is a rebellious sinner made right with God? Are you trusting in your own moral achievements for salvation or happiness?
6. What attributes of God moved Him to save you? What virtue in you moved God to save you?

7. How does the gospel motivate us for good works/missional living? How is it different than religious motivation?

Application & Prayer

- Pray that we will remember, and then live in light of, who God is and what He has done for us.
- As Christians, we must speak evil of no one, avoid quarrelling, be gentle, and show perfect courtesy. Which of these is the biggest struggle for you right now? What do you think is at the heart of that struggle for you?
- Reflect on the implications of Titus 3:1-8 for your own life today. Consider what you have learned that might lead you to praise God, repent of sin, and trust in His gracious promises.