

# Living Redemptively in a Pagan Culture (Part 3)

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[ 0 : 00 ] Amen. We've been looking at Titus chapter 3 verses 1 through 8 and under this title or subject, living in a very logical manner throughout these passages and now tonight we're going to really get into the redemption part, that is the real message of Christianity.

But we started with our Christian manner and Paul took us through that, verses 1 and 2, to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all people.

So this talks about, though it's certainly not an exhaustive list of the things that ought to be true and ought to be lived out, not an exhaustive list, but it's some pretty important categories, how we relate to our rulers, our government, our authorities in that sense, and really, they're in a very broad way, how we relate to all people.

So this is our Christian manner. And then, second, our Christian motive, and we looked at, finished that up last week. What we're talking about, of course, there is our motive for living in this manner in which, that Paul describes for us.

So our Christian manner, our Christian motive, verse 3, is all about our motive, and not the only motive we have, again, but a supreme motive, and that is, for we ourselves were also once, just like the lost in this world.

[ 2 : 06 ] We were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. All right? That, too, is not an exhaustive list in that passage, of course, but it hits some pretty major categories that, on the one hand, describes lostness, you know, the life, the heart and life of an unsaved person.

But it's meant to describe here for us who we once were, and that we should never forget that, and we sometimes do become kind of disgusted with the way unsaved people live in our world and some of the things that they do.

So disgusted with that that we sometimes forget, in fact, almost always forget, that we could be just like them. We really could be, and most likely would be, were it not for the saving grace of God.

And so then Paul reminds us all, for we ourselves were also once foolish. And so that leads us to the third and final thing here in this letter, this section of the letter.

And Paul then now delves into our Christian message, our Christian message. And so Paul gives us the reason, really what this is all about, he gives us the reason why what we once were is not what we are now.

[ 3 : 35 ] All right. So we're to be reminded of what we once were as a motive to live in a Christian manner. And so now he's telling us, reminding us of what we once were, that what we once were, we are not now.

And he gives us the reason why, because of the grace of God, because we're saved. And so this is what we have in verses four through eight. And I want to go ahead and read the entire passage, and then we'll reread portions of it as we go along.

All right. So verses four through eight. But when the kindness and the love of God, our Savior, toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness, which we've done, but according to his mercy, he saved us.

Through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Savior, that having been justified by his grace, we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works.

[ 4 : 50 ] These things are good and profitable to men, really to all men. Let me just point out a few things, really kind of by way of introduction, before we delve into these verses, into the passage itself, point out a few things to you.

First of all, these five verses consist of only three sentences. And one of those sentences is quite long.

It's the key part of the passage. All right. So just three sentences in these four verses. So you have a couple of short sentences in verse eight to close it off, but what precedes that is a very long sentence.

I say that because then I want you to note that, you know, the key verb here in the passage is the word in the English.

It is the words, he saved us. And that's one word in the Greek language, Greek text. It's sozo. But in English, it's three words.

[ 6 : 00 ] He saved us. That's the key verb in this entire passage. And particularly in that long sentence that really runs starting at verse four all the way through to the end of verse seven, four verses.

So he saved us. That's the subject here. Our salvation. He saved us. Which means then that if that's the key verb, the main verb, then that means that this is one of the really the fullest statements.

I mean, it's a long sentence. But it is one of the fullest statements on salvation that you would find almost anywhere in the New Testament. And even after I read it and as I was reading it, you probably had a sense of that.

This is this this weighty stuff. This this is this is Paul really giving us quite an expanded kind of description of of our salvation that we have in Christ.

So it's tremendous statement here in those four verses. And then one other thing I would say about the passage. This passage not only explains why we are who we are, that is believers, Christians, but it also identifies the substance of our message to this world.

[ 7 : 27 ] So we really ought to take this passage in two ways. First of all, this this is salvation. He's describing the salvation that we have experienced. I hope everyone here has and is experiencing that.

It also describes for us very clearly the kind of message that we are to proclaim to this world. Not only is it a message that we profess to have believed in ourselves, but it is the substance of the message that needs to be proclaimed to the world.

So what Paul gives us in these few verses really constitutes the good news, the good news to this lost world. And so we should face the reality that the manner in which we live in this world.

And we've already covered that that base that that in the passage. But the manner in which we live in this world will either make it possible or I don't know if I'd say impossible, but nearly impossible to share the message of the saving name of Jesus Christ.

See, how we live will determine whether or not we're successful in proclaiming the truth of the gospel. Really, and I mentioned this last time, it will determine whether the people, the unsaved of the world, will even give us a hearing.

[ 8 : 50 ] I mean, why should they listen to us if we're living in a way that's contrary to the message? If we're living in a way that seems to the world that we don't even believe what it is we profess to have believed.

And so this is very important. And this is, I think, Paul's primary purpose in the passage. All right, so what is the message? Well, there are several movements, kind of parts to the message.

And so here's the first one. Why salvation is necessary. Why salvation is necessary. And actually, to understand this portion of it, you really have to go all the way back to verse 3.

Not all the way back, it's just one verse back. Go back to verse 3, which, again, provides for us a pretty devilish list of sinful behaviors.

I know they're broad categories, but we don't have to use too much of our minds to kind of flesh that out, understand what he's talking about here.

[ 9 : 54 ] So verse 3 kind of lists all that, and it describes for us the condition of lostness, right?

That's what verse 3 is all about. But I would say to you that Paul is not just describing the activity of lostness.

The activity of lostness. He's not just describing that. Now, he is describing that. Like foolishness, disobedience, lustfulness, maliciousness, envy.

He mentions hatefulness, you know, all these things. Those are pretty, maybe not specific items or sins.

I mean, you know, you have to get specific under those categories. But he is identifying for us, describing for us the activity of lostness. But that is not just what he's doing.

And so Paul's describing more than just the activity of lostness. Paul is identifying the condition of lostness. And this, it's important to know the difference. The activity, yes, but he's really describing the condition of it.

[11:04] So what does he say? He says, we, for we ourselves were. That's an important word. Not we ourselves did.

That would then focus primarily on activity. The activity of sin or sinfulness or activity of lostness. But he said, we ourselves were. So the things listed in this verse are not just what lost people do. And what we did before we were saved. These things identify what lost people are. And it's very important to know the difference there.

Because, I've heard it put this way. We lie because we are liars. Okay. A person lies because he is a liar. It's a heart issue.

People steal because there are thieves. It's a moral issue. A moral condition of the heart. And so, you can look at lostness from those two kind of aspects or perspectives.

[12:08] There is the activity of lostness. Sinful activity. Specific sins that we may commit. But the more important issue is much deeper than what you do on the outside.

It's what's true on the inside. It's true of the condition of the heart. And this is what Paul is talking about. So it's not just what lost people do. It's what lost people are.

And more importantly, of course, more important to the point, what we were. What we once were and still would be, were it not for the grace of God. And so, this is what Paul says to us in verses 4 and 5.

Just kind of pick out a couple of phrases, words and phrases out of those two verses. But, God our Savior saved us. See, this is what we once were.

And don't ever forget that. And what we would be today were it not for the grace of God. Don't ever forget that. That's our motive for proclaiming the truth of the gospel and living according to it.

[13:18] So don't ever forget that. This is what we once were. But, Paul says in verse 4, and, you know, usually that conjunction is followed by something really great in the Bible.

But, but what? But, God our Savior saved us. He saved us. All right? So our sinful condition was hopeless. And that is why salvation was necessary.

All right? It's just as simple as that. Why salvation is necessary. Next, where salvation originates.

And right off, some of you are very astute. You've been listening to my preaching for a long time. We'll note that there's no alliteration here. And apologize for that. Where salvation originates.

Where does it originate? And there are three statements about that. Verse 4, but when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared.

[14:21] God our Savior. Verse 5, according to his mercy, he saved us. Verse 7, justified by his grace, we should become heirs.

That's pretty clear, isn't it? And you didn't even need to read those verses to know the answer to the question, where does our salvation originate? But contrary to what some people, and really even some so-called Christian preachers are saying, salvation does not come from within.

I mean, you can go back to Norman Vincent Peale, Robert Shuler. You can take in a whole swath of contemporary preachers today, prosperity preachers, and some of these.

And many of them teach and preach this idea that salvation comes from within. You know, you just have to, you know, think right on the inside.

You just have to come to grips with who you really are. And stop beating up on yourself, you know. And put the guilt out of your life.

[15:37] You've got to look inside. And this is what a lot, quite a few preachers are preaching today. But that's not true, isn't it? Salvation comes from without. Not from within.

It comes from without. Actually, from above, I guess we could say, in reality. That is, someone had to come to rescue us. He had to come to our rescue.

Because we could not save ourselves. And we all know that someone was Jesus. And so he, Jesus, is the manifestation of the kindness and the love of God toward man. Jesus is. He is the one who appeared. As the verse describes. And by the way, the term, that term, appeared, really encompasses the birth of Jesus.

But not just the birth, his life, his death, his resurrection. It includes everything that he did when he came the first time. All the way to when he ascended back to the Father.

[16:42] So he appeared. It's talking about his first coming. And so he's the one who appeared. He's the one who came to our rescue. Because we could not save ourselves.

Romans 5.8. God demonstrates his own love toward us. And that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. So here's how we need to understand the origination of our salvation. He intervened on our behalf. God did. Jesus did. He took the initiative. He rescued us from our hopeless condition.

Condition of lostness. He came after us. We did not come after him. He came after us. In fact, when he came the first time, no one wanted him.

And today, most do not want him. And no one would want him. Apart from his intervention into our hearts, we would not have wanted him.

[17:47] So he took all the initiative. So he took all the initiative. All right. So why salvation is necessary? Where salvation originates? And then next, what salvation rests on?

Or rests upon, if you'd like to use that word. And again, those same verses. Verse four, the kindness and the love of God.

And perhaps the clear statement on this, verse five, not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us.

And verse seven, justified by his grace. All right. So there are four tremendous words. First word, the kindness of God.

Verse four, the kindness of God. Jesus said this of God in Luke chapter six, verse 35. He is kind to the unthankful and evil. So, so the kindness of God was directed toward us.

[18:52] Even though we were unthankful and ungrateful. So, see, he take, he took the initiative. Again, as Jesus said, he is kind to the unthankful and evil.

And that was all of us. Certainly all of us at the time when God in Christ extended his kindness toward us. Number two, the love of God.

The second word is love. The love of God. Again, verse four. And you might, and sometimes we automatically think that every time in the New Testament the word love appears, it's agape love. But this time it's not. It is philanthropia, is how you would pronounce it. We get our word philanthropy or philanthropic, you know, those kind of words.

And we understand kind of the meaning of those terms. But it's a compound word. Phileo is a word for love. It's talking about affection. Now, oftentimes in the Bible it's combined with delphia, philadelphia, which is love or affection for a brother.

[20:04] Here it is connected with anthropos, which is the word for man. So this is love of man or mankind. And so this love of God in verse four speaks of God's love for mankind.

That love meant that he would send a savior into the world. Third word is the word mercy. Mercy, the mercy of God, verse five, comes out of verse five.

And the mercy of God is something that comes out of his affection. His affection for the sinner. His affection for us.

So mercy is, we put it this way, mercy is God's pity. His pity toward those who are afflicted. He looks upon us and we're afflicted. In this case, in this context, afflicted by sin. And God has mercy on us as sinners.

[21:05] The affliction of sin. He extends his mercy toward the helpless. This is the idea behind the mercy of God. He extends his mercy toward the helpless. Helpless who cannot save themselves.

And then grace. The fourth word is grace. The grace of God, verse seven. Now, mercy and grace, very similar. In fact, sometimes it seems the Bible uses them interchangeably. Sometimes mercy, sometimes grace. And it's very difficult to make a distinction between the two quite often. But there is a marked difference.

And mercy is directed toward our affliction. I've already mentioned mercy. So it is God's response to our affliction. God has mercy.

He has compassion on us. But it's not just feeling sorry for us. God, in that mercy, provides a way for our affliction to be removed.

[ 22 : 07 ] So that's why it's very similar to grace. Sometimes the two are confused. So that's what mercy is. Grace, on the other hand, is directed toward our sin guiltiness.

Our guiltiness. And God has acts to remove it. To remove our guiltiness. So there's a nuance of a difference between those two things.

Let me put it in other terms. Mercy, as I've already said, is the compassion of God for helpless sinners. Whereby he helps us to recover.

Grace is a judicial act of God. It's a judicial act of God. Whereby he forgives us. And he gives us a new standing before him.

That probably helps us see the difference even more. And just to make sure we get it. And this I think I put in your notes. This is a good way to make the distinction.

[ 23 : 06 ] Mercy delivers us from what we deserve. Guilt, condemnation, affliction, and judgment. It delivers it.

God has compassion on us and seeks to deliver us from these things. From what we deserve.

Because we're the sinners, right? So mercy delivers us from what we deserve.

Whereas grace delivers us to what we could never deserve. And that's a good way to make a distinction between the two. And what is it that we can never deserve?

His forgiveness. We'll never deserve that. His forgiveness. His forgiveness. Justification. Salvation itself.

In its broadest sense. We could never deserve that. So mercy then delivers us from what we deserve. Grace delivers us to what we could never deserve.

[ 24 : 06 ] And that is our salvation. So. Why salvation is necessary. Where salvation originates. What salvation rests on. And then next.

How salvation comes to us. How salvation comes to us. Verses 5 and 6. He saved us. He saved us. He saved us.

He saved us. Through the washing of regeneration. And renewing of the Holy Spirit. Whom he poured out on us abundantly. Through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Alright. Now. Let me clarify something here. The washing of regeneration. Caused a lot of confusion. In some people's minds. In fact. It is.

One of those passages. That has become the basis. For a certain. Theology. That is. Incorrect. The washing of regeneration. Is not referring to water baptism.

[ 25 : 04 ] Very important that we. We know that. And there really. I put two reasons. There are really more reasons. Why that's not what this passage is talking about. But these are the two. I think. Most important.

First of all. Baptismal regeneration. And that's. That's the belief. That some have. And they base it upon this passage. Baptismal regeneration. That is. You're saved.

Through the baptism. The physical. Water baptism. Our Church of Christ. People believe that.

There are other denominations as well. But baptismal regeneration. Doesn't line up with scripture.

Anywhere else. So you can't just take. This. Kind of ambiguous phrase. Washing of regeneration.

And build an entire theology on that. To say that. Baptism is what saves us.

That we're actually. Regenerated in the baptismal waters. It's not taught anywhere in scripture. Not in any clear way. And it's not taught here. Even in an obscure way.

[ 26 : 00 ] But there's another reason. That is. The preposition. Through. And this is. This is a grammatical. Reason. Why this cannot be. Water baptism.

Through. Through. Through. In the Greek text. And. Now. It might be the right way. To. I mean. To. Write it in English. But. In Greek. If. If. We were talking about. Two different things. Here. Two separate. Well. Two separate events.

Then. The preposition. Through. Would appear twice. So. But it's not. It is. Through. The washing. Of regeneration. And renewing. Of the Holy Spirit. Rather than.

Through. The washing. Of regeneration. And. Through. The renewing. Of the Holy Spirit. See. The. What difference. That makes. In the meaning. That.

[ 26 : 57 ] That second. Way. That I. Listed it. Would denote. Two separate events. Done. By. Two. Two. Different agencies. The way.

That it appears. In the passage. Is. Talking about. One single event. One single event. That is. Performed. By a single agency. In this case. It is the Holy Spirit.

So. Salvation. Comes. About. Through. The twofold. Working. Of God. The Holy Spirit. And we can name them. This way. Regeneration. Which is.

In the sense. In which. Paul uses it. Here. Internal. It's a. Spiritual cleansing. From all sin. And guiltiness. Regeneration.

And then the other. Is. The renewal. Regeneration. And renewal. Renewal. Is the new life. Really. Both. These come together. Usually. And describe. For us. This whole process.

[ 27 : 53 ] Of regeneration. This new birth. If. Baptism. Has anything. To do. With the washing. Of regeneration. In his. Spiritual baptism. Holy Spirit.

Baptism. Being immersed. In Christ. And. But it's not. Water baptism. At all. The ordinance. Of water baptism. It's a.

A work. You know. So salvation. Comes to us. Through the working. Of the Holy Spirit. All right. Next. What salvation. Leads to. Or what.

We might. Might call. The goal. Of our salvation. And verse 7. Speaks to that. That. Or so that. Having been justified. By his grace. We should become heirs. According to the hope. Of eternal life. That's. This talking about purpose. What it leads to. What.

[ 28 : 47 ] What ultimate. What's the ultimate goal. Here. And that is. That we would become heirs. According to the hope. Of eternal life. Praise the Lord. For that. And.

Something that we have. Right now. But we won't realize it. It is full of sins. Until we get to heaven. Paul. Expanded. Upon that. In Romans chapter 8. Verses 16 and 17.

Which I gave you. I think. In your notes. The spirit himself. Bears witness. With our spirit. That we are children. Of God. And if children. Heirs also.

And that's what children are. They're heirs. Heirs of whom though. Heirs of God. God. Fellow heirs. With Christ. If indeed. We suffer with him. In order that we may also.

Be glorified with him. Peter also writes about it. First Peter chapter 1. Verses 3 and 4. Blessed be the God and Father. Of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who according to his great mercy.

[ 29 : 44 ] Has caused us to be born again. To a living hope. Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. From the dead. To obtain. This is what it leads to.

To obtain an inheritance. Which is imperishable. And undefiled. And will not fade away. Reserved in heaven. Reserved there for us.

So. This is what salvation leads to. So. This is our Christian message. This is the basis. Upon our confidence. As believers.

Confidence in our salvation. Why salvation is necessary. Where salvation originates. What salvation rests on. How salvation comes to us.

And what salvation leads to. And then one more. How salvation proves itself. How salvation proves itself.

[ 30 : 40 ] Verse 8. This is a faithful saying. All of this is. It's all true. These things I want you to affirm constantly. All these things we've just.

Been talking about. And reading about. And. And I've been. Explaining about. These are things that we need to. Constantly affirm. That.

And here's. Here's a purpose. That. Those who have believed in God. Should be careful. To maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men. If there's anything that proves. The reality of our salvation. Is. How. That reality is. Worked out in our lives. What people observe about us. See about us.

Hear from us. And so forth. So. Paul is talking. I think. He's talking about good works. But he's talking primarily about. Believers doing good works. To unbelievers.

[ 31 : 40 ] To the unsaved. In this world. We don't just confine our. Confine our good works. To. You know. Inside these walls. Or.

Simply. Reserve them only for. Those who are of like faith and mind. And. Believers. Those who are part of the family of God. But we do works. To those outside.

Of the confines of the church. And. Outside the context. Of our Christian family. And. And it stands as a proof. A proof.

Of our salvation. A proof of genuine salvation. And. It then adds credence. I think. To the message that we proclaim to the world. I mean.

Why should they believe what we. Proclaim. If they don't see. Any goodness in us. If we. Act like. We hate them. Or. Repel by them.

[ 32 : 36 ] Or disgusted by unsaved people. Why should they believe. What we proclaim. And. And. Profess to believe. And there are a couple of passages.

I think that. Reinforce this. Jesus said in Matthew 5 16. Let your light shine. Before others. So that they may see your good works. And give glory to your father.

Who is in heaven. Others. Is not. A reference to other believers. Others. Other people. Who believe the same way. Way you do. But others.

In a general sense. To the world. So let your light shine. And. Let them see your good works. Not so that you can.

Be puffed up with pride. Obviously. But let them see your good works. So that. God. We get all the glory. God. They will glorify.

[ 33 : 33 ] Our father. Your father. Who is in heaven. Apostle Peter. Of course. Heard those words. That Jesus spoke. In Matthew 5 16. And he believed them. And. Echoed them.

In 1 Peter 2 12. Keep your conduct. Among the Gentiles. Honorable. And when he says Gentiles. He's primarily talking about. A category of lost people. Unsaved people. Let.

Let your conduct. Among the Gentiles. Unbelievers. Be honorable. So that. When they speak against you. As evil doers. They may see your good deeds.

And glorify God. On the day of visitation. So all of these. All. All of what Paul's talking about. Here in Titus. At the close. This last verse. Verse 8. Is how our salvation.

Proves itself. Proves itself. To be real. And that doesn't mean. That everybody's going to. Naturally believe it. Just because. You every day. And in a flawless way.

[ 34 : 28 ] Prove. The reality of your salvation. Some are going to. Despise you. And hate you still. But. You know. Many will.

Say at least. What they preach. Is how they live. And. God. I think. Quite often. We'll use that. To touch the heart. Of an unbeliever.

Thank you.