

He Saved Us

Titus 3.1-8

Main Idea

God saved us, not because of any work done by us in righteousness. This goodness, loving kindness, mercy and grace fuels our obedience to a watching world.

Overview

Live Carefully and Kindly before a Watching World (Vs. 1-2)

- Remind them to:
 - Be Submissive to rulers and authorities
 - Be Obedient
 - Be Ready for every good work
 - Speak evil of no one
 - Avoid quarreling
 - To be Gentle
 - Show perfect Courtesy toward All people
- Given Paul's propensity to organize these believers under authority we can be sure that Crete was likely full of people that wanted to live exactly as they pleased instead of under God ordained authority structures that serve our joy

Remember who you used to be (Vs. 3)

- The "we ourselves" references those in Christ: Before we were Justified we were:
 - Foolish
 - Disobedient
 - Led Astray
 - Slaves to various passions and pleasures
 - Passing our days in malice and envy
 - Hated by others
 - Hating one another
- Paul motivates the prior behavior by reminding them of who they used to be so that they might recall both how they changed, but why its important to persevere and be patient in 'adorning the Doctrine of God'

Remember how you came to be (Vs. 4-8)

- God's Goodness and Loving Kindness appeared:
 - The appearance of Christ was the appearing of God the Father's goodness and loving kindness – he is the image of the invisible God (cf. Col. 1:29)
- God saved us (entirely!)
 - NOT because of ANYTHING we had done
 - Salvation wasn't/isn't conditional in that God needs us to do something in order to save us
- Salvation was according to His Mercy (ability to do for us what we could not do for ourselves)
 - This came by regenerating and renewal of the Holy Spirit:
 - The Spirit worked internally to re-generate and renew our broken hearts of stone into hearts of 'flesh' or hearts that were alive again (cf. Ezekiel 36:26)
 - God poured this Spirit on us richly
 - The Holy Spirit is only able to come THROUGH Jesus Christ our Savior
- Justification (Declaration of Christ's Innocence upon us) comes by Grace:
 - Where Mercy is undeserved ability, Grace is undeserved Decree (God declares us innocent)

- Those in Christ are declared to have been 'imputed' (robed) with Christ's Righteousness, therefore we are deemed innocent...all by Grace
- This process makes it possible for sinners to become heirs to the hope of eternal life
- This is a trustworthy saying and we should insist on these things
- SO that, we who believe might devote ourselves to good works (note 2.14, 3.1, 3.14 as well)
 - This adorns God (2.10)

Questions

Discussion Starter: *In what ways are the major world religions similar? Use the following discussion to not only worship the Lord and build one another up, but also to highlight the distinctive beauty of the Gospel in comparison to other world religions.*

1. Read 3.1-8. What stands to be gained by the Cretan churches obeying these passages?
2. Regarding the exhortations in 3:1-2, which of these do you find most difficult to do? Easy? Why?
3. Verse 3 reminds us to remember who we were apart from Christ. How does this help our obedience to Christ? How does this help us disciple and evangelize others?
4. Notice the "But when..." that starts verse 4. In what ways does the depth of one's understanding of sin increase the wonder of God's goodness, loving kindness, mercy, and grace?
5. How does verse 5 display the unique beauty of the Christian message from the rest of the world?
6. What is the role of obedience, even in religious things (Church, evangelism, Scripture memory, Baptism, Lords Supper, etc.) if God saves us not by our own works of righteousness?
7. In what way does God save us according to His own mercy? What is the role of The Father in the plan of Redemption? Spirit? Son?
8. What is Regeneration? Justification? What is the result of these things for the believer?
9. How would you use this passage to:
 - a. Minister to a brother or sister weary in the Christian faith?
 - b. Minister to a brother or sister overcome by guilt due to a sin they have committed?
 - c. Minister to a brother or sister struggling with shame/uncleanliness of a sin committed against them?
 - d. Share the gospel with the lost
10. In what ways might we 'insist on these things' as a church?
11. Where are you 'devoting yourselves to good works'?

Accountability Question: (Remember accountability is not just about sin, but also about God's abundant grace. Focus on that this week!) *Share with one another about how this passage has encouraged you and pray and give thanks to God. Pray for our church that we would wonder at this Gospel and be careful to devote ourselves to good works.*