

Titus 3:3-7

Why we are to display good works in a godless, decaying culture

Introduction:

1) Why are Christians supposed to live this way (3:1-2) in a godless, decaying culture?—3:3

- a) ³ *because* [ga,r] **we** (emphatic) *also were* [impf. act. ind.] *once* ... (7-fold description, using 3 adjectives and 4 participles)
- i) Lacked wisdom—*foolish* [avno,htoj] *ourselves*,
(1) Unable to comprehend and disinterested in doing so
 - ii) Lacked persuadability, were resistant—*disobedient* [avpeiqh,j],
(1) This is not inability but unwillingness.
 - iii) Lacked discernment—*deceived* [pres. pass. ptc. plana,w],
(1) Following false guides
 - iv) Lacked freedom—*enslaved* [pres. act. ptc. douleu,w] (but actually thinking and claiming to be free)
(1) *to variegated* [poiki,loj] *desires* [evpiqumi,a]
(2) *and* (to variegated) *pleasures* [h`donh,],
 - v) Lacked love (described in 3 ways)
(1) *spending our lives* [pres. act. ptc. dia,gw]
 - (a) *in malice* [kaki,a]
 - (i) The desire to cause pain or distress in others
 - (b) *and* (in) *envy* [fqo,noj],
 - (2) *hated/detested* [stugnhto,j],—detestable to others, but especially to God
 - (3) *hating* [pres. act. ptc. mise,w] *one another*.
 - (a) This is the natural result when detestable people in all their gruesomeness are nevertheless forced somehow to live with each other and to meet each other in a hundred different ways.” (Hendriksen)
 - (b) While a veneer of civilization often obscures the bleak truth, the slightest crack in the surface of society reveals the reality behind the façade. The painful truth is that apart from God people degenerate into little more than animals wrangling over bones. (Litfin)
- b) Greek philosophers recognized the slavery to sin but taught that reason alone could deliver people from such enslavement. How sad!
- c) We are no longer what we once were; we are not enslaved to our past. The chains are broken—we are freed by Christ.

2) What did God the Father do when we were in such a desperate situation?—3:4-7

- a) What the Father did—3:5a ⁵ **He** (God the Father) *saved/rescued* [aor. act. ind. sw,zw] **us** (emphatic),

- i) While accomplished historically at the time of Jesus's first coming, the saving benefits of his work are applied to believers at the point of conversion. (Kostenberger)
- b) When the Father did this—3:4 ⁴ *But when the kindness [crhsto,thj] of God our Savior and His love for mankind [filanqrwpi,a] appeared [aor. pass. ind. evpifai,nw], (cf. 2:11)*
 - i) In the person of His Son.
 - ii) Out of His tender love God dramatically changes people by releasing them from the grip of the past to enter into newness of life. It is the ministry of the Word, in the power of the Spirit, by which this takes place. (Adams)
- c) How the Father did this—3:5-6
 - i) Negatively—*not on the basis of [evk] works **we** (emphatic) did in righteousness,*
 - (1) Manmade religion says, “Do!” God says, “Done!”
 - ii) Positively—*but [avlla,] according [kata,] to His mercy [e;leoj], (our misery)*
 - (1) Instantaneous spiritual cleansing—*through [dia,] the washing [loutro,n] of rebirth [paliggenesi,a]*
 - (a) cf. Ezek. 36:25-27
 - (2) Ongoing spiritual transformation—*and (through) the (personal) renewing/new in kind [avnakai,nwsij] of the Holy Spirit,*
 - (a) ⁶ *Whom He (the Father) poured out [aor. act. ind. evkce,w] upon us abundantly through [dia,] Jesus Christ our Savior,*
 - (i) So, don't listen to those who say you need more of the Holy Spirit. They are wrong.
 - (b) Referring to the renewing to a new life proceeding from the Holy Spirit. (Magill)
 - iii) Rebirth leads to renewal. Remember this truth.
 - iv) NB the work of all 3 persons of the Tri-Unity of God.
 - d) What is the goal of the Father's merciful rescue?—3:7 ⁷ *so that [i;na],*
 - i) When? *having been justified [aor. pass. ptc. dikaio,w] by His (the Father's) grace,*
 - ii) What? *we may become [aor. dep. subj.] heirs [klhrono,moj] according [kata,] to the hope of eternal life.*
 - iii) The path to hope goes through the door of justification.

3) Things we need to remember:

- a) Let us be careful not to look down on our unsaved friends, neighbors, co-workers. They are enslaved to their sin, just like we were. Remember when you were without hope and without God in this world. (Eph. 2:12) The only thing separating believers from unbelievers is the saving grace of God.
- b) “Your worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the **reach** of God's grace. And your best days are never so good that you are beyond the **need** of God's grace.” (Bridges)