

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

These notes are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye, mistakes can possibly be found. Therefore, he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabible.org.

Date: August 5, 2018

Sermon Title: God, the First Philanthropist

Sermon Series: Titus

Text: Titus 3:4-8

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Text: Titus 3:4-8
Theme: God loves us, so He saved us, so that we would become heirs of heaven's hope and careful to engage in good deeds.

Introduction:

Our preceding paragraph shows how the JESUS SEED bears the fruit of respect and civility toward those who govern above us. Verse three shows the radical nature of the gospel. It takes us from what we were in Adam and completely and thoroughly changes us to what we are in Christ.

There is a gap between the two that no flesh can traverse. Our present paragraph shows the power behind this deep-seated transformation.

"The Chronicle of Philanthropy – a news and information source for all things charitable – tracks the amount of money that's given by donors, and the organization releases data on the largest donations made public each year. In 2016, the ten biggest charitable gifts totaled \$4.3 billion. This past year the total came to a whopping \$10.2 billion. The largest donation was given by Microsoft founder Bill Gates and wife Melinda, totaling \$4.6 billion in Microsoft stock. The recipient was the foundation the couple began in 2000, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which focuses its philanthropic efforts on health, development and education the world over. The value of the foundation stands at around \$40 billion, while Gate's own wealth has reached \$92 billion, according to FORBES."¹

When we go about describing God, we will often refer to His divine attributes or characteristics. We attempt to reduce God to single qualities such as love or holiness. Yet, God is always more than the sum total of His attributes. We speak of God saving humanity for His glory. Which is true. But it wasn't His holiness that drove Him to do what He did. It was His love for that which He created.

If we were to ratchet this entire *Story* back to the beginning, we would read of a God who created this entire world so that He might meet with His people, so that they might know and experience the joy He has within Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

This text tells us what drove Him to save us. It was His love for us. This love is so powerful as to save us from our past sin and for good works. He moves us from the disobedient to the obedient, from existing as orphans to actual heirs. From those who deny Him by their works, to those who confess Him through their works.

This is how powerful God's love is. His love secures His end. Neither you nor I can stop the hand of God from acting. I know we will differ on this matter, but your will is not that powerful as to stop God's intent. He did not make your will His equal or superior. Nothing stands above God and all bow before Him.

This passage graphically and powerfully explains this idea. As we already noted, there is a progression of revelation as we move from 1:1-4 through 2:11-14 and conclude in 3:4-8. Notice the larger structure of our text inside the larger context.

Verse 3 shows the innate estate of humanity. Our condition required, yea demanded, intercession apart from which no one would or could be saved. What follows is God's Mission.

God alone moves us from chaos to cosmos, from disorder to order. This is what the Gospel intrinsically does. Neither you nor I can stop this. God takes us from where we are as sinners and through His redemptive activity turns us into heirs. He is the one who makes all things new. We often ask ourselves as to God's motive. **Why did God do this?** Our text tells us. He loves us. In our horizontal existence, we speak of loving people or being loved. Sin taints every human expression of love. Yet, in the shadow, we can see reflections of the divine.

But it is still impossible for us to fully understand the depth of God's love when the text tells us that God loves us to the degree that His Son would take on human flesh and become for us what we could never become for ourselves, the sin-bearer. Through the New Testament and this Letter we read of Jesus being the voluntary and vicarious sacrifice for sinners. It is only in Him that the wrath of God against us and the sentence of God could be satisfied. Romans 5 gives us a straightforward word concerning this love.

- ⁶“For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Rom. 5:6-10).

This is the magnitude of God's love for His people. He loves us even when we were weak, at war, and wicked sinners. It is His love that changes us from those who were hated by others and hating one another to those who are lovers of God and as a consequence lovers of one another. Friends, only the JESUS SEED can so powerful change us into this.

“The crux of the matter is a fundamental change or transition that has occurred. To emphasize this change Paul uses a device that he has put to good use elsewhere; verse 3's *at one time* is to be taken with verse 4's *but when* (compare 1:2-3; 2 Tim 1:9-10). The force of this formula is to focus attention on this change, for with it (and only with it) does human life enter into a new age of rescue.”²

Let us now consider this entire idea, as we are the recipients of God's philanthropic activities.

Now the Text.

- ⁴“But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. ⁸ The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people” (Titus 3:4-8).

“Verses 4-7 are set as poetry in NA²⁶/NA²⁷. These verses probably constitute the referent of the expression “this saying” in v. 8.”³

“And so the rescue came. **Verses 4-7 consist of a single, densely packed sentence of theology, originally probably part of a liturgical creed.** Paul modifies and inserts the material at this point to describe the experience of becoming a Christian.”⁴

I would like us to consider this paragraph with three ideas.

Outline:

I. The incarnation reveals the glory of God – the person of God (v. 4)

- ⁴ But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared,

“God the Savior flows from God the Philanthropist. Where love is it will be active, and will show itself. So the philanthropy of God appeared, it shone out, in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, and in his giving his life for the life of the world.”⁵

God’s kindness and love are in parallel. His kindness and love moved Him to act merciful to undeserving sinners.

“We of ourselves should never have become changed [people], had not the kindness of God and His divine love for [humanity] shown itself. We, indeed, have no ground for self-exaltation, no excuse for haughty treatment of others, either in thought or action; for if we now live other and purer lives than they live, our change to better and higher things was owing to no desert or merit of ours, but solely to the mercy and the love of God. The changed life is here solely attributed to the manifestation to man of the kindness and love of God our Savior.”⁶

“Stunning is the characterization of the primary attributes of God revealed in Christ -- “goodness” (*chrestotes*; “kindness” in NIV and NET), “loving kindness” (*philanthropia*; lit. “love of humanity”), and “mercy” (*eleos*). **In short, God -- in God’s innermost heart -- is a God of tenderhearted mercy who deeply loves and cares about humanity. This is not a platonic love, but one that has been enfleshed, manifested in Jesus.**”⁷

“The contrast is striking; God hated the sinners’ sins, and the sinners hated one another, but God loved all the sinners through it all, and at the right time let His ‘loving kindness’ ‘appear.’”⁸

Notice our text. It identifies God’s person at a very distinct moment in time. There is a point in time when God’s kindness, love for His people, and mercy manifested itself. When did this happen?

Epiphaino

- “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men” (Titus 2:11).
- But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared” (Titus 3:4).

Epiphaneia

- “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and **shall destroy with the brightness of his coming**” (2 Thess. 2:8).
- “That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, **until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ**” (1 Tim. 6:14).
- “**But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ**, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim. 1:10).
- “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, **who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom**” (2 Tim. 4:1).
- “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, **but unto all them also that love his appearing**” (2 Tim. 4:8).
- “Looking for that **blessed hope, and the glorious appearing** of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

“These “manifestations” or “appearances” of Christ -- one hidden in the flesh in the **Incarnation** (i.e., discerned only by faith); one promised in glory (to be experienced by all creation) -- reveal the transforming, saving power and scope of God’s *grace* (2:11; 3:7). It is God’s grace/favor that underlies *both* manifestations and provides the continuity between the celebration of the birth of Jesus and the *parousia* of the glorified Christ.”⁹

I believe the primary idea behind this appearance is His incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and enthronement. God in manifesting Himself saves His people from sin and death and for joy and glory.

The appearance of our Lord is two-fold. First, there is the appearance tied to His incarnation (Titus 2:11; 3:4). Second, there is the appearance tied to His Second Coming (2 Thess. 2:8; 1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 1:10; 4:1, 8; Titus 2:13). The first coming is gracious and the second is glorious. In the first coming, He judges sin. In the second coming, He judges sinners. The first one is tied to salvation and the second is tied to sentencing.

Verse 4 speaks to His first coming, thus walking us into verse 5.

II. The incarnation reveals the provision of God – the provision of God (vv. 5, 6)

The provision of God is stated in two ways.

A. The Negative / dismissal

⁵ “**He saved us**, [by what means] not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness,”

“The best of which were so defective and polluted by sin while we were in our unregenerate state, that, instead of meriting acceptance, they needed forgiveness.”¹⁰

“This text also represents one of the clearest articulations in the New Testament of the early church’s understanding that one’s justification/salvation is wholly dependent upon God’s mercy and grace. The notion that “works of righteousness” (*ergon, ton en dikaiosune ha epoiēsamen hemeis*) might somehow “save” one is dismissed out of hand. Note that the phrase in this text is “works of righteousness” not the more common Pauline “works of the law” (cf. Romans 3:20; Galatians 2:16).

B. The Positive

^{5b} “but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,”

“As there was nothing in us which called for such a salvation, as there were no acts of ours which deserved reward, His gift of salvation, which includes (Titus 3:7) eternal life, was owing entirely to His divine love which saw and pitied our misery, our endless suffering.”¹¹

The means of appropriating God’s kindness and love is not by works but by believing.

“The palingenesia which Scripture proclaims begins with the microcosmos of single souls; but it does not end there; it does not cease its effectual working till it has embraced the whole macrocosmos of the universe.”¹²

“The one made new by the ‘bath’ in Christ is, then, also pulled into the ongoing work of Christ in the Kingdom of God. The two cannot be separated.”¹³

“This seems to move the ‘justification/righteousness’ language out of its particularly Jewish context to make a larger soteriological statement. In the matter of the salvation of all (2:11), the initiative always lies with God. As creation is totally dependent upon the creative activity of the creator, so too is ‘re-creation’ (*palingenesia*). Given the *need* of creation for salvation (note again v. 3), its manifestation in Christ can only be an expression of God’s mercy (verse 5) experienced as grace (verse 7).”¹⁴

When God acts, the entire created order will be recreated.

Notice the contrast between the descriptive in verse 3 and deeds of righteousness in verse 5. Those in verse 3 are incapable of righteous deeds, thus if they are to be saved it must be because of mercy.

There is an intentional contrast (**alla**) between our works and God’s works.

Titus calls us to good works. The word for “good” stands in contrast to “righteousness.”

Kalos in Titus

- “In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity” (Titus 2:7).
- “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14).
- “This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men” (Titus 3:8).
- “And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful” (Titus 3:14).

Agathos in Titus

- “They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Titus 1:16). {reprobate: or, void of judgment}
- “To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed” (Titus 2:5).
- “Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things” (Titus 2:10).
- “Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work” (Titus 3:1).

Kalos and **agathos** are used as synonyms in Titus. The word “righteousness” occurs once in Titus (3:5). A sister word occurs in Titus 1:8 (just).

There is nothing we can do to affect our justification before God. **Our justification never works up in the vertical, it only works out on the horizontal. The horizontal display of God’s righteous work is through our good works.**

Listen to the following statement by one of the church’s older commentators:

“If men could have been saved by their own good works, there would have been no need of salvation by the Redeemer; if our own deeds were now the basis of our title to eternal life, the work of Christ would be equally unnecessary. It is a great and fundamental principle of the gospel that the good works of men come in for no share in the justification of the soul. They are in no sense a consideration on account of which God pardons a man, and receives him to favour. The only basis of justification is the merit of the Lord Jesus Christ; and in the matter of justification before God, all the race is on a level.”¹⁵

When I read and hear this, my heart sings. I am bowed before God in humility and gratitude. I cannot read this without my heart weeping. If the redeeming of my eternal soul was by any other means than by His kindness, love, and mercy, I would be lost forever in a lake of fire. But God who is rich in mercy saved me. Why? Because He loves me. What moved Him to act in this manner? His love for me!

According to His mercy: "Whatever we have done or can do, when we come to receive salvation from the hand of God, there is no other element which enters into it but mercy. It is not because our deeds deserve it; it is not because we have by repentance and faith wrought ourselves into such a state of mind that we can claim it; but, after all our tears, and sighs, and prayers, and good deeds, it is a mere favour. Even then God might justly withhold it if he chose, and no blame would be attached to him if he should suffer us to sink down to ruin."¹⁶

The washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit are parallel statements. They could be progressive parallelism where the one explains and expands on the other. Thus, the washing can be water baptism [i.e. shadow] and the renewing could be Spirit baptism [i.e. the substance].

"Baptism is only a sign, and therefore should never be separated from the thing signified; but it is a rite commanded by God himself, and therefore the thing signified should never be expected without it. Baptism changes nothing; the grace signified by it cleanses and purifies. They who think baptism to be regeneration, neither know the Scriptures nor the power of God; therefore they do greatly err."¹⁷

Renewing of the Holy Spirit: "It is a word which is found only in the writings of Paul and in ecclesiastical Greek writers."¹⁸

Regeneration / Paliggenesia

This word occurs twice in the New Testament, here and in Matthew 19:28 when Jesus thoroughly straightens all that is crooked at His appearance in glory. It is a compound word meaning, "once more beginning."

Renewing / Anakainosis

This word occurs twice in the New Testament, here and Romans 12:2, "renewing of the mind."

This text tells us why the JESUS SEED always produces GOSPEL FRUIT. When God saves us, He makes us new. What we once were (v. 3), we no longer are, but still have. The gospel changes us into something entirely different. What Christ secures for us in His person and work, the Holy Spirit powerful and effectually to us. It is an inside out working.

- ⁶"whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,"

Jesus spoke of this in John 17. He notes how He must go in order that the Holy Spirit might come. His statement is theological, not spatial. The Holy Spirit was already there doing His work, but a next or new thing would be added.

When Jesus became for us the sin-bearer, He would take upon Himself our sin. When we by grace through faith believe who He is and what He did, the Father takes this work and imputes it to us. This “work” is embodied in the Holy Spirit. It is His, this righteousness that is now ours. And the Holy Spirit who has been given to us, works in us and through us this very righteousness so that we become righteous and thus live righteous lives.

This work is copious. There is more there than you need.

“The meaning is, that the Holy Spirit had been imparted in copious measure in order to convert them from their former wickedness.”¹⁹

However deep the sin and dark the stain, God wins. Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. Look at your life and what is it that brings you shame? What sin have you committed or took pleasure in that haunts you even after you have been saved? Well, I am here to tell you that God’s work is copious. There is an excessive and lavish expression of God’s working because of who He is as an infinite and immeasurable God that swallows up all of your past deeds and renders them powerless.

Perhaps today as an heir of God you are committing acts of debauchery. I tell you in the name of God and in the power of the Holy Spirit and the provision of Jesus – Stop! You are no longer a child of sin and enslaved to your appetites. I also tell you in your fight against sin that it has no authority over you. Regardless of the assault, you can never be anything other than what you are, a child of God. Take heart and keep fighting against sin by bathing yourself in the gospel each and every day.

The next verse gives us the result of God’ powerful workings.

III. The incarnation reveals the vision of God – the promise of God (vv. 7, 8)

God’s design in saving sinners is to restore them as heirs and to have them live out His design for them through good works.

The result – twofold

“This is the conclusion of a single, skillfully composed sentence in Greek encompassing Titus 3:4-7. Showing the goal of God’s merciful salvation, v. 7 begins literally, “in order that, being justified...we might become heirs...”²⁰

- A. ⁷ **so that** being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.
- B. ⁸ This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, **so that** those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds.

“When 67-year-old carpenter Russell Herman died in 1994, his will included a staggering set of bequests. Included in his plan for distribution was more than two billion dollars for the City of East St. Louis, another billion and a half for the State of Illinois, two and a half billion for the national forest system, and to top off the list, Herman left six trillion dollars to the government to help pay off the national debt. That sounds amazingly generous, but there was a small problem—Herman’s only asset when he died was a 1983 Oldsmobile. He made grand pronouncements, but there was no real generosity involved. His promises were meaningless because there was nothing to back them up.”²¹

Thankfully, God has the resources to back up His promises. God is always first and foremost the great philanthropist.

The fact that we are saved is a testament to God’s mercy and grace. God has withheld from us what we deserve and has given what we could not earn.

The eternal life referenced does not exist in the abstract. We are heirs of God’s intent, His design. That for which we have been created will be fulfilled. We will walk in good works (Eph. 2:10).

- ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Paul wants the people of God to be overwhelmed by His language. There is a shock and awe in all of this. This is why he ends in the following verse (v. 8).

- ⁸ The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people.

Here Paul summarizes his primary point; JESUS WORKS. The JESUS SEED always produces GOSPEL FRUIT. “This shows that Paul supposed that the doctrines of the gospel were fitted to lead men to holy living.”²²

The stunning aspect to all of this is that God is the first philanthropist, but what He does in regenerating and renewing us is turn us into philanthropists! God the first giver makes us givers to one another. We become what He is! Christians are not stingy and selfish people. We are generous and giving people. This is what the Jesus Seed does in the people of God.

“The things to which the apostle refers are those of which he had just been writing, and may be thus summed up:

1. The ruined state of man, both in soul and body.
2. The infinite goodness of God which devised his salvation.
3. The manifestation of this goodness, by the incarnation of Jesus Christ.
4. The justification which they who believed received through his blood.
5. The mission of the Holy Spirit, and the purification of the heart by his influence.
6. The hope of the resurrection of the body, and the final glorification of both it and the soul through all eternity.
7. The necessity of obedience to the will of God, and of walking worthy of the vocation wherewith they had been called.
8. And all these points he wills him to press

continually on the attention of believers; and to keep constantly in view, that all good comes from God's infinite kindness, by and through Christ Jesus."²³

"These doctrines which he had stated were not mere matters of speculation, but they were fitted to promote human happiness, and they should be constantly taught."²⁴

What is this happiness spoken of? The obedient Christian life is one lived resting on the finished work of Jesus. The obedient Christian life is one where you recognize your own innate selfishness and irresponsibility and begin to realize that the Christian life is one that lives with others in mind. That might be other family members, it might be other employees, it might be other neighbors, it might be other citizens of this nation, it might be other fellow congregants, but the focus is no longer just on you and your immediate gratification. That is the happiness spoken of. The JESUS SEED always drives us to love God and to love one another in that order and with that outcome.

Our very existence stands in stark and dramatic contrast to the unbelieving world around us. We are in this world, but not of this world. I am, we are, the embodiment of this text. If you believe yourself to be failing, put it off and press forward. How often must this cycle repeat itself? Every moment of every day. That is life on the horizontal.

This text and the message of Titus assures us that God has secured for Himself His victory both in us and through us to those around us. Let us always live in light of the gospel.

In Jesus name, Amen.

¹ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/karstenstrauss/2018/01/09/the-10-largest-charitable-donations-of-2017/#7dd2a6122d92>

² <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/IVP-NT/Titus/Basis-Christian-Living-World>

³ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/Titus+3>

⁴ <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/IVP-NT/Titus/Basis-Christian-Living-World>

⁵ *Adam Clarke's Commentary* on Titus 3:4.

⁶ *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers* on Titus 3:4.

⁷ https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1867

⁸ *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* on Titus 3:4.

⁹ https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1867

¹⁰ *Benson Commentary* on Titus 3:4-7.

¹¹ *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers* on Titus 3:5.

¹² *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* on Titus 3:5.

¹³ https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1867

¹⁴ https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1867

¹⁵ *Albert Barnes' NT Commentary* on Titus 3:5.

¹⁶ *Albert Barnes' NT Commentary* on Titus 3:5.

¹⁷ *Adam Clarke's Commentary* on Titus 3:5.

¹⁸ *Albert Barnes' NT Commentary* on Titus 3:5.

¹⁹ *Albert Barnes' NT Commentary* on Titus 3:6.

²⁰ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/Titus+3>

²¹ <http://ministry127.com/resources/illustration/giving-away-what-wasn-t-his>

²² *Albert Barnes' NT Commentary* on Titus 3:8.

²³ *Adam Clarke's Commentary* on Titus 3:8.

²⁴ *Albert Barnes' NT Commentary* on Titus 3:8.