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Titus 3: Works Produced by Grace

Titus 3:1-15

ANNOUNCE

40 days life second Sunday - 5-7

father daughter date night for all ages

BIBLE PASSAGE

Titus 3:1-15 (NKJV - New King James Version)

¹ Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work,

² to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.

³ For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.

⁴ But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,

⁵ not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,

⁶ whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,

⁷ that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

⁸ 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. These things are good and profitable to men.

⁹ But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless.

¹⁰ Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition,

¹¹ knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.

¹² When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there.

¹³ Send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey with haste, that they may lack nothing.

¹⁴ And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.

¹⁵ All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.

INTRO

As we come to Paul's final words to Titus, the book begins the letter by emphasizing God's Grace. Remember, Titus' life was a walking illustration of the Grace of God that saves us from our works and from our moral or religious status. Paul weaves the Grace of God into the entire letter:

- By God's grace, salvation appeared to mankind in the person of Jesus.
- God's grace opens our eyes to God through the preaching of the gospel.
- God's grace teaches us what it means to live soberly and righteously in this present age.

Paul wraps up his final thoughts by continuing the theme of grace and how grace works in us, through us, and around us.

1 The Grace of God Through Us

BIBLE PASSAGE

Titus 3:1-2 (NKJV - New King James Version)

¹ Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work,

² to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.

APPLICATION

When the grace of God transforms our hearts, it also transforms the way we interact with those around us and the authorities above us.

A. HOW WE LIVE WITHIN OUR SOCIETY

Remind them - yes, we have a tendency to forget the things that we can practically do to affect our witness for Christ.

- It could be rightly said that chapter 3 is a chapter of reminders, and this is the first of several reminders.
- Reminders are given for things that are challenging and difficult for us to do.

Be subject to authorities, ready to obey - just what you want to hear leading up to this election cycle, right!?

- This is frequently one of the most misunderstood principles as it related to western Christianity. Paul and Peter are very clear, citizens of heaven must strive to be good citizens on earth. This means not bucking God-given authority, be it at home, in the church, at work, or in government. Paul speaks of this in Romans 13 and Peter in 1 Peter 2.
- Some Christians, who have become incredibly woke and have swallowed cultural, worldly philosophies as truth, look at this and say, "**See, the Bible says to do whatever the government tells you.**"
- Others, who have swung hard the other direction, seem to praise rebellion to any law in the name of individual liberty... the Bible calls that lawlessness.
- So where is the biblical line drawn?

Where righteous laws and leaders exist, the Christian should be the model of obedience to those laws and leaders. Where unrighteous laws and leaders exist, the Christian should be the model of obedience to God first.

DEFINITIONS

Be subject - hupotasso - to order oneself under.

- Law and ORDER are good things. People thrive when they are subject and are ordered under righteous laws that protect the innocent, punish evil, and praise good.
- Rebellion against good is rooted in pride and is the very thing that got Lucifer kicked out of his glorious position in heaven. There is time and place for rightful rebellion against evil, but that's not what Paul is talking about.
- The Christian should be the last person on earth robbing a store, breaking into someone's house, committing fraud, taking a life, or cheating a neighbor.
- Be someone who models that you believe, as a follower of Christ, that submission to good and righteous laws and those committed to uphold them is a way to honor Christ and for the good of our neighbors.

Obey - pi-tharkh-eh'-o - To conform to another's advise.

- Contrary to what you might believe about yourself, you don't always know best. God has placed societal authority over nations for a reason, to give standards by which we conduct ourselves.

- This is a strong Greek word. It's the same word used in the NT speaking of our obedience to God. Paul isn't suggesting that we obey laws and lawgivers when we feel like it. If you get pulled over today and you're asked for your license and registration, just hand it over, don't pull some **[image] Dukes of Hazard** move.

We are a nation of the rule of law. In America, the highest authority in the land is not a human, it's a set of legally binding parameters. We call it the constitution. It's designed to limit human government form operating beyond a set of appropriate boundaries.

- As a people, we are to honor the authority of the land, as well as the people put in place to implement and enforce that authority.
- But only to the level of what is righteous, good, and appropriate.

QUOTE

“Where righteous laws and leaders exist, the Christian should be the model of obedience to those laws and leaders. Where unrighteous laws and leaders exist, the Christian should be the model of obedience to God first.”

APPLICATION

Verse 2 taps on some strong advice that is typically connected to a heated political season!

A. Speak evil of no one - Christians are not to be gossips, those who bear false witness about others, or distort facts to make others look worse and ourselves look better. And no one means just that. Not your best friend, and not your greatest enemy.

- But herein lies a very important truth. We need to know what this is commanding and also what it's not:

QUOTE

“The Bible's call is to cease from speaking evil, not to cease from speaking against evil.

Pastor Josh

APPLICATION

There is a difference between speaking evil of someone and speaking against the evil that someone is doing. There are some, who in the name of, "speak evil of no one," will no longer say that something or someone is evil. And this is a good reminder entering into an election season.

- You may sincerely despise one or all of the many candidates running for office. The human temptation is to misalign facts, spit off talking points, and skirt around the truth in order to promote our candidate of choice. This can often involve carnal anger, vitriol, half-truths, lack of kindness, gentleness and self-control. Don't be deceived that this kind of behavior from a follower of Christ is acceptable or Christ like.
- BUT, God forbid that we stop demonizing things that are actually sourced in demons! God forbid that we stop courageously speaking out against evil in every form and we speak the truth in love.
- When John the Baptist told Herod that he was unlawfully sleeping with his brother's wife, he wasn't "speaking evil" about Herod, he was speaking against the evil that Herod was doing and the evil that Herod had become.
- When someone says, "By allowing an abortion truck outside their national convention, the Democrat party is participating in and propagating demonic wickedness," that is not "speaking evil" of the Democrats, it's speaking against the evil they are endorsing.

WE CAN SPEAK AGAINST EVIL BY BEING PEACEABLE, GENTLE, AND HUMBLE IN OUR APPROACH.

Again, if you think that peaceable, gentle and humble = compromising truth or being vague and pragmatic about issues of righteousness and unrighteousness, that is not within the

biblical paradigm.

But Paul is clear, those who intentionally provoke, are harsh, and haughty in their approach are misrepresenting the Grace of God.

QUOTE

“ If people hate you because of the truth you stand for, praise God. If they hate you because you're a jerk about the truth, repent.

Pastor Josh

APPLICATION

Now, let's just read those instructions again, and let's apply them to social media conduct. What would it look like for people to engage social media with the following principles?

[Tit 3:2 NKJV] 2 to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.

WHY

Next Paul outlines why we should interact with those around us with humility and grace. ***Because you were once there and God approached you in Christ with humility and grace! It's hard to get a big head when you are reminded of the rap sheet of charges that Christ expunged through His own atoning sacrifice.***

2 The Grace of God Toward Us

BIBLE PASSAGE

Titus 3:3-7 (NKJV - New King James Version)

³ For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.

⁴ But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,

⁵ not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,

⁶ whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,

⁷ that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

APPLICATION

What a passage of scripture. It's the second time in the letter that Paul references the saving and redeeming Grace that God had toward us in Christ!

A. THE NEED FOR SALVATION (3)

[Tit 3:3 NKJV] 3 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.

Verse 3, is the only time that our part in salvation is mentioned. Verses 4-7 are all about God:

- The love and kindness of God appeared
- By His mercy
- He saved us
- The Washing and renewing of the Holy Spirit
- Poured out through Jesus Christ
- Justified by His grace

But when it comes to you, you were:

- foolish
- disobedient
- deceived
- serving various lusts and pleasures
- living in malice and envy
- hateful and hating each other

Even if you grew up in a Christian home in a moral upbringing (which is something to be grateful for), by nature of your flesh, you and I were all subject to these things at one level or another. Here's the point of Grace:

- If you've watched God take you from where you were and accept you, receive you, cleanse you, and change you, it ought to humble you to the point of seeing those around you differently who haven't yet experienced that grace.

B. THE DIRECTION OF SALVATION

Here we find the same word for "appeared" that was used in chapter 2 of the grace of God in Christ and the future return of Christ for His church.

- Kindness and love - Make no mistake about it. The bible is clear that one day God's wrath and vengeance toward sin and sinners will also appear, but the first time Christ came was to reveal the love and kindness of God toward us. Sometimes it's a hard love that tells us the truth about our failures and flaws, but not to leave us in a broken state, but to offer us hope that we can be forgiven and repaired by the kindness of God.

[Rom 2:4-5 NIV] 4 Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? 5 But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.

Friend, if you have not received Christ as you God, King, and Savior, you can either be angry that God would declare you guilty (even though you know you are), or you can rejoice that instead of judging you on the spot, in his kindness and patience he offers you grace, complete unmerited forgiveness of your sin.

And don't miss the direction salvation flows. Like a waterfall salvation, flows from the rivers of God's mercy downward toward underserving human beings. ***The love of God appeared "Toward man."***

- There are many attempts of mankind to reach God through religious observation and jumping through moral hoops, but God can't be reached by man any more than an ant could comprehend the joys of watching the Chiefs play football or the Royals play baseball.

[Col 1:19-22 NKJV] 19 For it pleased [the Father that] in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. 21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled 22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight--

2000 years ago, in a humble town, in a stone feeding trough, God came our way. God came our way so that those who had no way might come to know the Way the Truth and the Life and be forever changed.

C. THE MEANS OF SALVATION

Unlike PBS, eternal salvation was not made possible by viewers like you!

Paul tells us what our salvation didn't come from and what it did come from.

Not by works of righteousness which we have done - Now to be clear, as Paul was earlier in the letter, Paul isn't devaluing works of righteousness, but rather putting them in their proper place. Works of righteousness are a crucial fruit of the person who has been

transformed by Grace. I would argue that works of righteousness can even be temporally beneficial for unbelievers. But if anyone knew that human works, as good as they might be, are not good enough for God, it was Paul. There was never a moment when God looked from heaven and said, "They're finally good enough, get down there Jesus!"

If not your works of righteousness, then what possessed God to reveal a way of salvation to us? His mercy!

EXAMPLE: When I was younger, my brother and I played a game. [image of boys playing mercy] We would grasp each other's hands begin to push. AS one person's strength weakened, and their hands would go back, the other person wouldn't relent until the loser cried, "MERCY!"

In God's justice, he could have rightfully let humanity fold right into his righteous judgment for their sin and rebellion. Instead, he lifted the crushing blow and instead took it upon himself. Many things happened at the cross of Jesus, but one of the most profound is that God, in his desire to show us mercy, took the standards of his own justice and absorbed in within himself.

After all that Christ endured and suffered to humbly take our place and victoriously defeat death forever, we would be wise to remind ourselves that we are nothing more than recipients of unfathomable divine grace and mercy.

[Gal 2:16 NKJV] 16 "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

Washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit: How is salvation applied once faith is engaged? The Holy Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead, goes to work doing the humanly impossible by washing and renewing our hearts:

- It's a twofold process: First he washes our hearts by regenerating them.
 - **Regeneration: from two Greek words which mean "to make anew one's nature."**
 - **[2Co 5:17 NKJV] 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**
- Secondly, the Spirit renews our hearts. It's an ongoing process. It's the same word Paul uses in Romans 12
 - **[Rom 12:2 NKJV] 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what [is] that**

good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

- **EXAMPLE:** When my girls were young, they had no probably going outside and getting in the mud [image of the girls]. They rather enjoyed it. We would hose them off and shower them up, but that didn't get rid of the desire to go back outside and get dirty again!
 - Religious rituals and codes might have an appearance of cleaning someone up, but until the Holy Spirit cleanses and renews their hearts, nothing truly changes.

QUOTE

“ Regarding your salvation, God doesn't just want to paint the barn, he wants to clean house!

Pastor Josh

D. THE RESULTS OF SALVATION

[Tit 3:6-7 NKJV] 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Receiving the Holy Spirit now and the promise of eternal life later.

I love the word abundantly. God has no short supply of spiritual life and power for the believer.

[Rom 14:17 NKJV] 17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

3 The Grace of God Around Us

BIBLE PASSAGE

Titus 3:8 (NKJV - New King James Version)

⁸ 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. These things are good and profitable to men.

APPLICATION

Faithful saying: The early church had statements that they would spread and repeat; perhaps in the form of songs, hymns, or recited prayers. Here we find one of them. And apparently this one never goes out of style because Paul wanted it to be "affirmed constantly." -There are some things we just need to be always reminded of, aren't there?

If you believed in God, you maintain (keep up, stay active in) good works.

- This is a reiteration of the rest of this book: The Christian is not saved BY good works, but he is saved FOR good works. And apparently, they are not self-sustaining or things that always come naturally. They must be maintained. There needs to be an intentionality associated with staying active.
- Paul affirms a very important principle: A church needs to do more than simply believe the right things. They need to do the right things as evidence of what they believe.
 - ***Announce here the Hands of Grace Sunday on October 27.***

Paul's reasoning:

- It's not so you can virtue signal about how good you are.
- It's not to fill your ego.
- It's not to make you feel as though you did something for others.

- It's actually not about you at all.
- ***It's profitable to ALL men (people).***

QUOTE

“God wants His church to be a conduit of grace and goodness that benefits everyone around them.

Pastor Josh

POLITICS

Good works can be so widely defined, as they should be. This doesn't put us into a corner, but gives us a broad brush to paint the goodness of God. I think this is also a good reminder for election season. Do you know that political engagement can be a good work?

- For the Christian, political engagement should never be seen as a way to power grab, a means to protect our own interests, or some demented way of forcing Christianity on others.
- For the Christian political involvement is a way that you can have voice and a part to play in policies and standards that may be to the good or the detriment of all men.
- Satan has worked overtime to gain a monopoly on politics and separate faith and politics in the mind of the Christian. "Oh, I'm not political, I preach the gospel. I'm not concerned with what politicians do, I'm part of the heavenly kingdom."
 - Ironically, this doesn't translate into other areas of people's life.
 - Are you going to preach to the poor or feed them? YES.
 - Are you going to disciple your kids in the ways of Christ or teach them how to be a good steward of their money? YES.
 - Are you going to get political or preach the gospel? YES.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Titus 3:9-11 (NKJV - New King James Version)

⁹ But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless.

¹⁰ Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition,

¹¹ knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.

APPLICATION

Paul is more than likely addressing the Jewish false teachers who were distracting people away from the grace of God and the gospel through fighting about Jewish myths, genealogical claims, and useless opinions about the law of Moses that never benefited anyone or led them closer to Jesus.

- But this is a good litmus test for the things we choose to dwell on with each other. Is it profitable and useful for godliness? Or is it wasted time, getting bogged down in fanciful theories that can never be answered and cause people to fight with each other more than they are fighting against the enemy?
- **[Eph 4:29 NKJV] 29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.**

This is how you identify and deal with divisive people.

- And yes, there are people who, out of self-preservation or selfish ambition, will seek to plant seeds of division among the body of Christ.
 - Notice first, that the heart with anyone who is in error is to see them restored. It may seem easy to cut someone off immediately upon hearing or seeing something, but Paul says to admonish them (exhort through rebuke) one or two times, probably depending on the attitude and receptiveness of the person being rebuked.
 - But there are times when a line has to be drawn. A cancer that keeps spreading after a couple treatments needs to be removed.
 - The reason is because they are internally broken and their brokenness will start to infect the church with bitterness and confusion.
 - If someone is warped and sinning, they are self-deceived. They can't see how their own sin is causing the problems. They are self-condemned because they are self-deceived.

- **[1Ti 4:2 NKJV] 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,**

Divisive people don't love the truth. They love to use the truth stir the pot, win a self-centered fight, or become the center of attention.

4 The Grace of God in Others

BIBLE PASSAGE

Titus 3:12-15 (NKJV - New King James Version)

¹² When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there.

¹³ Send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey with haste, that they may lack nothing.

¹⁴ And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.

¹⁵ All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.

APPLICATION

AS is customary with Paul, he ends the letter with several greetings for others involved in the ministry. This is something that strikes me: while Paul was certainly a trailblazer, he was not a lone ranger.

- When you count all the names of people that Paul mentions in 13 letters, you find 83 names!
- Paul recognized something very important about the work of God: **Ministry takes a team of servant hearted, likeminded people.**

Artemas - most likely a potential replacement for Titus.

Tychicus - someone mentioned in other places. Most likely a companion of Paul who was entrusted to carry and read his letters to various churches.

Apollos - An eloquent teacher and skilled apologist mighty in the word of God who was disciplined by Priscilla and Aquilla in Acts 18 to more accurately handle the word of God.

Zenas - a lawyer. Thank God for Christian lawyers! I've discovered that you really need them!

But this is God's grace. When it comes to fulfilling the mission, God uses an entire crew of people.

Paul closes with a reminder that he has been laying out in the entire book: **maintain good work, meet urgent needs, do not be unfruitful.**

And finally, GRACE be with you all. Amen