

Titus 3:1–15

Saved by Mercy, Transformed for Good Works

Introduction: The Gospel Lived Out in the Real World

Gospel faith is never meant to be confined to a church service or a set of beliefs we affirm. The gospel changes how we live in the real world—how we relate to government, how we speak to others, how we remember our past, and how we treat one another in the body of Christ.

In Titus chapter 3, Paul brings his letter to a close by reminding believers where they came from, how they were saved, and why they now live differently. Grace does not lead to passivity; it produces transformation.

Submitting to Authority and Living with Gentleness

Paul begins by instructing Titus to remind believers to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, and to be ready for every good work. This submission is not conditional upon liking those in authority or agreeing with every decision they make. Scripture consistently teaches that governing authority exists by God’s allowance, and believers are called to live as respectful, law-abiding citizens.

Alongside this, Paul urges believers to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarrels, to be gentle, and to show humility toward all people. The tone of our lives matters. Christ-followers are not called to be combative, harsh, or arrogant. Our conduct should reflect the grace we have received.

Remembering Who We Used to Be

Paul then calls believers to remember their past honestly:

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

This is not meant to shame us, but to humble us. Before Christ, we were not simply misguided—we were enslaved. Sin deceives, dominates, and destroys. Disobedience to God is always foolish, no matter how reasonable it may seem at the time.

Remembering who we were keeps us from pride. It reminds us that we did not save ourselves and that we are no better than those who are still lost.

The Great Turning Point: “But When...”

Paul then introduces one of the most beautiful transitions in Scripture:

“But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared...”

Everything changes here. Humanity was hopeless, but God intervened. Salvation did not begin with our repentance—it began with God’s kindness. The love of God appeared in the person of Jesus Christ.

Paul makes this unmistakably clear:

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.”

We are not saved by religious effort, moral improvement, or good intentions. Jesus saved us when He shed His blood on the cross. His resurrection declares that He is God, Savior, and Lord. Salvation is entirely God's work, received by faith.

Regeneration and Renewal by the Holy Spirit

Paul explains that salvation involves “the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.” This is the new birth. God does not merely clean up our old life—He gives us a new one.

The Holy Spirit washes away our past, renews our hearts, and continues His transforming work day by day. No sin is too deep, no past too dark. Through Christ, forgiveness is complete. Scripture tells us that God has separated our sins from us as far as the east is from the west.

This work of grace is poured out abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior. Everything God gives—life, peace, forgiveness, hope—is found in Him.

Justified and Made Heirs

Paul declares that having been justified by God's grace, we are made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. To be justified means to be declared righteous—fully forgiven, fully accepted, with no charges remaining.

Because Jesus bore our guilt, God now declares us innocent. We are no longer enemies, but children—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. Salvation is not only rescue from judgment; it is entrance into God's family and future glory.

Saved by Grace, Called to Good Works

Paul then makes an essential clarification. Though we are not saved by works, those who believe in God are to be careful to maintain good works. Good works do not produce salvation, but they prove faith is real.

True belief changes behavior. Faith that never affects conduct is empty. The Christian life is not about perfect performance, but about genuine transformation. Grace saves us, and grace trains us to live differently.

Guarding the Church from Division

Paul warns Titus to avoid foolish disputes, arguments about the law, and divisive controversies. These things do not build people up; they tear them down. Leaders are to correct divisive individuals patiently, but if a person refuses correction and persists in spreading error, they are to be rejected for the sake of the church's health.

Truth matters. Unity matters. Love matters. But unity at the expense of truth ultimately harms everyone.

Faithfulness in Relationships and Service

Paul closes with personal instructions and greetings, reminding us that ministry is always relational. God's work is carried forward by faithful people supporting one another, serving together, and meeting practical needs.

He ends as he began—with grace.

Practical Application

Ask yourself:

- Does my life reflect humility and gentleness?
- Do I remember where God brought me from?
- Are my works consistent with my profession of faith?

Grace saves us, but grace also changes us.

A Challenge for Believers

Do not forget the mercy that saved you. Let it shape how you treat others, how you speak, and how you live. Maintain good works—not to earn God's favor, but because you already have it. Live as someone who has been washed, renewed, and given eternal hope.

An Invitation to Non-Believers

If you are still living under the weight of sin, guilt, or emptiness, hear this clearly: you cannot save yourself—but Jesus can save you.

He shed His blood on the cross for your sins. He rose from the dead, declaring that He is God, Savior, and Lord. Salvation is not by works, but by mercy.

Today, you can turn to Jesus Christ, trust in Him, and receive forgiveness, new life, and the hope of eternal life.

Closing Thought:

We were once lost—but God showed kindness.
We were once enslaved—but Christ set us free.
Saved by mercy, we now live for His glory.