

Titus 3
Good News In The Heart, Good Works In The Life
The Well
July 24th, 2022I

Intro: Relational Care Pastor. What is it? Soul Care: learning to connect the work of Christ with the heart of Christ to the needs of sin and suffering. Learning how to care for one another. All of us-members. Care from intentional soul care: 1:1, small groups, all the way to intensive soul care when others are brought in. Our elders desire for there to be a culture of care here at The Well.

Read Titus 3:1-15

Purpose of Chapter 3 Think of a Gospel Sandwich- Opens and closes with a call to good works with the meat of the gospel of grace in the middle.

How? Remind them 2 important things: Gospel Calls and Gospel Comforts In this chapter we see both gospel comforts and gospel calls for the Christian.

“Remind them”: Because of what we believe, as God’s called out people we should glorify Him to the outside world: Distinctive living- Gospel Calls. Jesus: **Matthew 5:16:** *In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

This is also a reminder of what Paul just told them at the end of **Ch 2:14** *who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.* Then 3:1-2, Paul: here’s what I mean...

Titus 3:1-2 *Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people.*

So, the FIRST reminder- this is under **“REMINDE THEM”**- first: The gospel we believe is to affect our behavior so that...we glorify God in our lives as the distinct people of God.

Question: When you read that list of works listed, where does your heart go? Encouraged? Discouraged? Overwhelmed? We ARE called to a life that looks different. We see this over and over again. BUT...WHY? But...How? Those are the TWO questions Paul answers for us here.

Why? We are different. We should live in a way that shows God's beauty to the world. But...HOW? That's a very important question we should all consider. Because remember- Paul is countering TWO threats against the church- one was the pressure from the world-rampant immorality and laziness see Ch1.

But also a threat from within the church: Legalism. So under the heading of REMIND them- he's addressed reason 1: we are different. Our lives should show God's beauty to the outside world. But number 2 threat is also addressed here.

It could be VERY easy to read this list of works and their hearts default to a false gospel=Works based righteousness. **Martin Luther:** default of human heart: religion. That's what the false teachers were dispensing.

So HOW we carry out these works is also VERY important or else, they are NOT good works because they aren't for GOD's glory but ours! Doing good works for selfish reasons. Good works that aren't good.

So now we get into Gospel comforts The second part of his reminder: How we do this: what keeps these good works from being legalistic? **Good news in the heart**, is what motivates us towards our good works.. **The gospel has 2 parts to it. Very important.** Another way of saying; The gospel of grace has two parts to it. Have to believe BOTH to believe the TRUE gospel.

Part 1: BAD news. Gospel- good news. Has to remedy the bad news.

We see part 1 **in verse 3***For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.*

This verse sounds a whole lot like **Ephesians 2:1-3**

*And you were dead in the trespasses and sins **2** in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— **3** among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body[a] and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind*

These were not just things we did- it was a nature we had. Who we were.

The standard Is God's perfect holiness. And we have to know this and see this. When we at the heart level are helped by the Holy Spirit to see this immediately we see He is holy and we are not -see **Isaiah 6**. But too often we have LOW love of God and low love of neighbor because either we don't go here OR we use the wrong standard -comparison to others.

We HAVE to let ourselves go there and feel that. It is part of the truth.

Charles H. Spurgeon: *"Do not let me talk about these things this morning while you listen to me without feeling. I want you to be turning over the pages of your old life and joining with Paul and the rest of us in our sad confession of former pleasure in evil"*

His mercy is more: *"welcomes the weakest, the vile, the poor."* We sometimes think that's talking about someone else- the really bad off sinners. No, all of us.

If we don't go there at the heart level we are forced into two options-both of which are devastating spiritually: We will become **PRETENDERS and PERFORMERS**. . We pretend we're not THAT bad (at least compared to others- wrong comparison) or we become performers as though we could somehow meet God's perfect holiness on our own. Anyone tried this? Suffocating. Exhausting and impossible. That's legalism. But legalists usually lower the bar to something they think they can achieve. **But legalism and the gospel are VERY different in the approach to good works.**

It goes like this:

Legalism/Moralism: I do good works so God will accept me.

Gospel: I am accepted by God, therefore I do good works.

Which brings us to Part 2 of the gospel. Here's the deal: when we allow ourselves to be honest about this (our heart condition), and we can be because of the work of Christ, it allows us to be honest about sin. Our identity is secure. But when we are honest and feel it...then what is ABOUT To COME in part 2 will jump off the page with an explosion of DIVINE love and grace to us sinners!

Part 1-TRUE. Then Immediately we go to part 2: **verses 4-7:** *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.*

This is ALREADY ours before we do any good works as a Christian!

J.I. Packer: *“There is tremendous relief in knowing that his love to me is based at every point on prior knowledge of the worst about me.”*

This is part 2 of the gospel of grace: Even though side 1 IS true that in my heart I am worse than I think I am SIMULTANEOUSLY it's true that because of Christ's work for me I am more forgiven, accepted, approved, loved and secure than I could ever imagine.

And when BOTH of those are working in your heart in the MOMENT...we see good works TOTALLY different. The gospel of grace REFUTES legalism in our approach to works..

It frees us from self absorption in our approach to works. No longer FOR something but because OF something- Christ's love and grace.

NO one else in this world can love you like that! Know you completely? Love you perfectly? Not even MOM!

It's also important to break down the work of God for sinners in verse 4-7. Eph 2-We were dead. Children of wrath side 1- then, BUT (beautiful Gospel transition word) *when the goodness and lovingkindness of God our Savior appeared* (who was that? Jesus. God incarnate)...

How God did all the work in our salvation. NOTHING we did; A pastor: all we contributed to our salvation was the sin that made it necessary! The Holy Spirit REGENERATES us spiritually. This is a miracle!

Verse 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,*

Regenerates; re genesis. New birth. You know what this means? What God says we needed: was NOT an IMPROVED you...but a WHOLE NEW you. Spiritually. And only He can do that.

Ezekiel 36:25-27

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. 26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules

The Holy Spirit EMPOWERS us now to love others the way Christ loves us- We have grace to **enable us** and the Spirit to **empower us** to live out these good works in love of God and love of others because we are IN CHRIST.

Then it says **Titus 3 verse 6** *whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior.*

In these verses it's telling us, In our NEW BIRTH, The Holy Spirit APPLIES IN us what Christ ACCOMPLISHED FOR US.

It goes on in **verse 7:** *so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

Justified by grace means: to be declared RIGHTEOUS by God through the work of Christ as our substitute.

Jesus met God's standard of perfect righteousness for us as our substitute and it is IMPUTED to us in faith. In exchange our sin is imputed to Christ as our substitute and HE...absorbs in His body at the cross the full judgment and wrath of God for us.

Church, when we are reflecting on, believing both sides of the gospel IN THE MOMENT...we will see our MOTIVATION for GOOD works VERY DIFFERENTLY in a good way. Because we love this God of grace, we want to show HIS beauty and for the good of others!

That's why **verse 8 is next**- the last piece of bread in this gospel sandwich: It COMES RIGHT AFTER THESE GOSPEL COMFORTS- *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*

Gospel comforts give us the heart perspective to carry out good works. Love and glory for God and good of others. Love God. Love Neighbor.

This section of scripture gives us a beautiful picture of how gospel comforts lead to gospel calls. And WHY...we have to be REMINDED SO OFTEN. How did Paul start the ch "Remind them". Why do we so often miss it? We forget. We get GOSPEL AMNESIA: forgetting both sides of the gospel IN THE MOMENT.

Christians need to be reminded often of the gospel of grace.

Even in this short letter... Paul has reminded Titus TWICE of this truth, (which btw good picture of healthy church leadership- for leaders to remind others of this means they have to be reminding themselves of it often!) Summarize- **Ch 2:11-13 To me the centerpiece of the whole letter.**

*For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, **12** training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,*

Saving grace is also...training grace. The grace that saved us is kind to TRAIN us and TEACH us how to live it out in godly lives. Praise God for His grace to us in Jesus!

The gospel of grace COMFORTS us that it's all JESUS' work that keeps us from first to last, beginning to end, A-Z. The work of Jesus saves us and the work of Jesus keeps us. Listen, Jesus and His gospel are an INEXHAUSTIBLE WELL OF GRACE for you. He doesn't tire of you coming to Him in your need. In fact, it gives Him joy for you to do so. Jesus is grace and He will never run out of who is for you. *"Whoever comes to me...I will NEVER cast out."*

Think: we love him BECAUSE He FIRST loved us. SO...the more deeply we believe His love for us.....The more we will love Him and want to live for His glory in our actions.

V 14: *"learn to do good works and help cases of urgent need"* **"learn to "** We can actually learn how to do this. This can also be a tie to relational care- carrying out the one another's of scripture. The more we are saturated and gripped by His grace the more we will move into these spaces for others.

Application: being "Reminded". How might we put ourselves in a consistent rhythm of being reminded of this amazingly deep grace and love? The means of grace: Sunday's- the word preached. Being in gospel community. Regular Bible intake. Lord's Supper. Baptism are all reminders.

Application Questions:

- 1. Where does your heart go when you read some of the gospel calls in verse one?**
- 2. Why do we need to be reminded so often of the truth of the work of Christ as our substitute?**
- 3. How does remembering and believing both sides of the gospel of grace encourage your heart in love of God and desire for good works?**
- 4. What are some specific ways you can live out your love for God and others this week?**
- 5. How might we have a rhythm of gospel reminders in our life?**

