

## Transformed in Christ

Titus 3: 1-7

Although Paul's letter to Titus was brief in comparison to some of the other letters he had written, the Apostle shared much with the young pastor. He had provided sound wisdom in regard to settling the church on a firm foundation, implementing a plan that would ensure discipleship of new believers, and dealing with the challenges of false doctrine and attacks from the enemy.

As Paul began to bring his letter to a close, he again offered insight regarding the life believers were expected to live before others. By reminding Titus of what the believer had received in Christ, and being aware of what the Lord had delivered them from, Paul knew such an awareness should serve to guide them in living upright lives that would bear an influential witness to others who had yet to come to faith in Christ.

These are simple verses, and yet they reveal profound truth. Like Titus and the believers in Crete, we too have been delivered from the bondage of sin, being transformed in Christ. Such a transformation should impact every aspect of our lives. We are no longer the same, and bear an obligation to live in such a way that others can see Christ through our lives. Those who are born again, saved by grace and placed within the body of Christ, should live in such a way that others immediately recognize the difference a relationship with Christ has on an individual's life. As we examine the [reminders](#) Paul offered Titus, I want to consider: [Transformed in Christ](#).

**I. The Expectation for the Believer** (1-2) – Paul began these thoughts by reminding Titus of what is expected of believers, those who have been transformed in Christ. He mentioned:

**A. Our Cooperation** (1) – [Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work.](#) We must remember that Crete, along with much of the world at that time, was under Roman authority. The Romans were not especially sympathetic to Christians and their faith. In fact, believers were often persecuted by the Romans. Regardless of their treatment by the Romans, Paul urged the church to submit to the authority above them. They were expected to abide by the laws of Rome, being obedient to those in positions of power, revealing their submission and obedience through the lives they lived. That is not to say they were to embrace theology or principles contrary to the faith or the Word of God, but they were to be good citizens, striving to obey the laws of the land, rather than participating in insurgencies and acts of public disobedience. [Rom.13:1 – Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.](#) [1 Peter 2:13-14 – Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; <sup>\[14\]</sup> Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.](#)

**B. Our Conduct** (2) – *To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.* Not only did Paul expect the believers to live in accordance to the law, he also expected them to behave in such a way that would reflect their faith in Christ. They were not to speak evil of others. They were to refrain from slander, verbal abuse, gossip, or any attempt to tear down the reputation and character of another. (My how this is needed in our day!)

➤ They were not be brawlers, “*not a contentious person, always seeking a fight or argument; they were not to have a chip on their shoulder, seeking controversy; not being critical and seeking to stir up trouble with others.*”

➤ They were expected to be gentle. This has the idea of “*gentleness, forbearance, reasonableness, consideration, agreeableness, courtesy, patience, and softness.*” It means that there is *something better than mere justice*—a gracious gentleness. Christian citizens are to be gentle and forbearing in dealing with other citizens. <sup>i</sup>

➤ They were also expected to show meekness to all men. This means to “*to be gentle, tender, humble, mild, considerate, but strongly so.*” Meekness has the strength to control and discipline, and it does so at the right time. <sup>ii</sup> Meekness is not weakness, but strong gentleness.

**II. The Transformation of the Believer** (3-7) – After challenging Titus and others to live upright before others, he reminded them of the transformation they had received in Christ. He mentioned:

**A. Our Rebellion** (3) – *For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.* Paul was gracious and yet firm. He did not accuse Titus or any other believer of anything he had not been guilty of in the past, but he did remind them of the rebellion of all men prior to a relationship with Christ. All men behave foolishly, in disobedience and deception, seeking to serve the lusts and pleasures of the flesh, while living in malice and envy toward others, having a tendency to be hateful and even hating others. Paul emphasized the fact that every believer is nothing more than a depraved sinner who has experienced the transforming grace of God. We all walked in rebellion, sin, and disobedience prior to salvation. We have no reason to develop a self-righteous, condescending attitude of condemnation toward another. Unbelievers behave the way they do because they remain in sin, not yet being set free as we have been in Christ.

**B. The Intervention** (4-5a) – *But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,* <sup>[5]</sup> *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.* Paul reminds all who read these words that we were disobedient and sinful until the Lord, through

His kindness, love, and grace intervened on our behalf. Our transformation is not the result of our works or righteousness – it is according to the mercy and grace of God being bestowed on those who were undeserving and incapable of saving themselves. Had the Lord not intervened in our lives, we too would yet be bound in sin, living a life of disobedience and rebellion, separated from God and destined for eternal judgment!

**C. Our Salvation (5-6)** – *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; <sup>[6]</sup> Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.* Paul reminded Titus and others of the great transformation that takes place in an individual's life after the Lord intervenes in their situation through His great love, mercy, and grace – He provides our salvation. One who was once alienated and condemned, spiritually dead in their sin, is transformed through the power of God, resurrected from the deadness of sin and made alive in Christ. The sin of our past is forgiven, pardoned through the shed blood of Christ on the cross, and we are born again in righteousness, placed within the body of Christ.

- Those saved by grace experience regeneration in Christ. This speaks of being “*given new life; to be given a new birth; to be renewed or revived; to be spiritually reborn or converted.*” Salvation is a spiritual rebirth; it is a person being *born again* by the Spirit of God. We are washed in regeneration. This speaks of “*a bath, a complete immersion.*” Salvation is so dramatic it is just like the washing away of the old life and the receiving of a new life. All that concerns a person's old life is washed away. <sup>iii</sup> The old man of sin is resurrected in newness of life in Christ. The sin, guilt, and condemnation of our past is washed away in Christ. Our sin is removed as far as the east is from the west, and God chooses to forget that sin forever!
- We are then renewed through the Holy Spirit. This means “*to make new again; to renew again; to revive again; to make new spiritually; to begin all over again; to adjust again.*” Salvation is the Holy Spirit adjusting a person and renewing him all over again. It is the Spirit of God taking a person, readjusting his life and reviving him spiritually. <sup>iv</sup>

**D. Our Justification (7a)** – *That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.* Paul declared those who have been transformed by the redeeming power of grace are now justified. This is a term and doctrine that ought to be dear to the heart of every believer. Those who once were guilty, condemned and separated from God in sin, are now accepted of Him, being declared righteous because of the atoning sacrifice of Christ the Son. The saved by grace have the righteousness of Christ imputed to their account; the sin of our past is removed and forgotten; those once considered unworthy and condemned are now declared righteous in the eyes of the Father. We are accepted of God through Christ.

**E. Our Preservation (7b)** – [That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.](#) Although they lived in a difficult environment, being expected to maintain a positive witness in an ungodly society, Paul reminded Titus of the eternal hope of the believer. Those saved by grace are made heirs of the inheritance in heaven, promised eternal life in Christ. They would most certainly face difficulty and adversity in life, but the Lord had prepared an eternal inheritance for them in heaven.

- Such awareness should have a profound impact on every believer. I know we all face struggles in life, but we must remember that this world is not our home. The saved by grace are now citizens of that heavenly country. We will endure hardships and pain while in this life, but we have eternal life in Christ. When this brief life is finished, we will enter the glorious presence of our Lord, never to depart. The glory and splendor of heaven will be ours to enjoy for eternity!

**Conclusion:** The believers in Crete dealt with circumstances that you and I have never faced, and yet we all deal with difficulty in life. As our world changes, even in America, we are now dealing with much that is contrary to our faith. Legislation is being passed that diminishes our religious freedom. Many in our day are opposed to the Gospel and Christian faith. Although we are now in an increasing minority, we have been transformed in Christ. With that transformation comes expectations and responsibilities. When faced with hardship in life, we must maintain a proper perspective. We are called to be salt and light among the world. In this life we will suffer for our faith, but one day our faith will end in sight. As believers, I pray we will commit to living our lives in a way that honors the Lord and positively impacts others. If there are burdens, bring those to the Lord for the provision you need.

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<sup>i</sup> Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible - Commentary - The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon.

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid

<sup>iii</sup> Ibid

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid