

It's All God (Part 2) – Titus 3:1-7

Titus 3:1-7; Thankful for our Fellowship; Thankful for your kindness

We're in the middle of a series called Blessed Assurance; For the purpose of understanding all that God has to say about salvation, and solidify our convictions
B/c more often than not, when our *experience* of salvation exceeds our knowledge of it, doubt begins to creep in

And last week, I shared the story about Baby Jessica – an 18 month old little girl, who fell into an abandon well, and became stuck 22 feet down
And after 2 days, rescuers were finally able to get her out – not b/c *she* did something, but b/c *they* did
Which is exactly the situation *we're* in when it comes to our *salvation* – we're utterly *powerless* to save ourselves, and completely *dependent* on God; IOW it's all God

And we found in Part 1, that the *means* of his rescue, the *means* of his salvation, is grace
We're saved by God's grace (4-5, 7)
His unmerited favor; His acts of kindness toward us that we didn't deserve; His love and compassion that we *didn't* earn, and couldn't earn
And his goodness to impress it on us
That's God's grace – unmerited favor, that's embodied by Jesus, and timely

But it's *not* automatic; The application of God's saving grace to your life, requires faith
By grace you have been saved through faith the Bible says (Eph 2:8)
Faith is the switch, that releases the grace, to save your soul
Faith is the gate, that releases the flood, to make you whole
It's all God, and it's all grace

• **Not our works**

We don't save ourselves, any more than Baby Jessica saved *herself*
Works don't *earn* our salvation, and works don't *keep* our salvation
Works only *show* our salvation, and glorify the One who did it
You're a child of God by *grace*, just like you're a son or daughter through *birth*; Your behavior, good *or* bad, has nothing to do with it

We also found that we're saved . . .

Because of God's mercy (5)

His disposition to withhold the *punishment* we deserve
Grace is God's disposition to grant us *favor* we *don't* deserve, and mercy is his disposition to withhold the *punishment* we *do* deserve
And we need it – desperately; We *need* mercy
And we need to show it to others; Drawing on God's inexhaustible supply, that covers a world of sin – in them *and* us

It's all God, and it's all mercy

• **Not our merit**

It doesn't matter where you were stuck in the well of sin – 22 feet down with Baby Jessica, or 222 feet down with the worst of the worst . . .
There was nothing about you to merit your rescue; You were worthless the Bible says

Which makes mercy one of the most beautiful and amazing blessings you could ever hope for – b/c God saves us in *spite* of ourselves

That was Part 1 (**Summary**); We're saved by God's grace, not our works; B/c of God's mercy, not our merit

➤ But that's not it by a long shot; So follow along w/ me as I read y1-7 (**Part 2**), and glean the remaining truths from this passage

The Apostle Paul is writing to Titus about what he should tell his church, and says in v1 . . .
[1] Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, [2] to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people. [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. [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.

We're saved by God's grace; Because of God's mercy . . .

Through God's Spirit (5-6)

That's the next truth we see here regarding our salvation

5b – God *saved* us . . . *by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit*
IOW by the Holy Spirit's cleansing action on our souls, to make us new
His act to purify our hearts, and make us whole
His work to awaken us unto faith, and give us new *life*
That's *the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit* (5b)
It's his work to cleanse our hearts, awaken our souls, and give us life

And it's a spiritual thing; It doesn't refer to baptism or some *physical* washing, it's *the washing of regeneration* – a soul thing; The washing of *renewal* – a heart thing
And the agent or *means* of the washing isn't water, but the Holy Spirit

You might think of it this way – water is to a bath, like the Holy Spirit is to salvation
The former, cleansing and refreshing you *outwardly* . . .
And the latter, the Spirit, cleansing and renewing you inwardly

➤ And not just barely; In v6, after saying that we're saved *by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit* . . .
It says that he was *poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior*
Through Christ's work on the cross, and our faith in him; IOW Jesus is the conduit, through which the Holy Spirit, is given to us

And not just barely or partially, but abundantly; When you were saved, God gave you his Spirit, and all the blessings that accompany him, *richly*; In abundance
Which means you weren't *barely* saved, or *partially* washed – but fully, and completely
It's a spiritual thing, and a complete thing, and a permanent thing

➤ If you're saved, God has so lavished himself on you, and invested himself *in* you, through his Spirit – that he'll never leave you or forsake you
He'll never divest himself of you

Like General Motors will never divest themselves of the car business; Or Apple, the computer business; Or Walmart, the retail business
Or Facebook the social media business; They're too invested; *Richly* so

And so too is God, in us; Not only sacrificing his *Son* on our behalf, but pouring out his *Spirit* as well
Which is one more reason for blessed assurance, when it comes to our salvation
God is so thoroughly invested in us, that it's a permanent thing

➤ And you know you're a recipient of his rich investment, if you manifest the *fruit* of the Spirit; If love, and joy, and peace, and kindness, and goodness mark your life (Gal 5)
And you're increasing in virtue, knowledge, self-control, and godliness (2 Pet 1)

If those things are true of you, if that's your desire – rest in your assurance; Rest in it;
You're safe – safe and secure from all alarm
God saved you completely and permanently

But if those things aren't true of you, if they don't represent the desire of your heart – accept God's call on your life and receive his Spirit, right now
To quicken you, cleanse you, indwell you, and change you; You can't do it yourself, but God can; And he will . . .
If you open your heart to receive his grace, and mercy, and Spirit; It's all God

• **Not our power**

That's the flipside of this; We're saved by *God's* power, not ours
My little investigation last week into Baby Jessica and the well she fell into, piqued my interest in other underground accidents recently . . .
Like the miners in Chile a few years back; Remember them?

The day was August 5, 2010; Just like any other day for a group of 33 Chilean miners . . .
Until they became trapped in a massive collapse near the bottom of a copper mine – 2300 feet down (**Photo 1**)
And despite the hopelessness of the situation, rescuers began a frantic effort to locate and rescue them (**Photo 2**); Even though they didn't know if they were alive

But 17 days later, just after the miners had run out of food and water, the rescuers punched through into a cavity with their drill . . .
And when they raised it back up, they found a **note** taped to the end of the drill bit, that said – “We are well in the shelter, the 33”

And so began an effort to reach them that lasted 69 days; Culminating in a hole or tunnel, 22 inches in diameter, within which a capsule was lowered and raised . . .
To bring each miner to the surface; Here's a quick **video** to give you a mental picture (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6Vha1tFJ6Q>)

➤ They didn't come out on their own power, and they didn't devise a way for the bottom up
The rescuers dug the tunnel down to *them*, and the capsule carried them through it
Enabling them to live a life as they pleased, instead of wasting away in the depths of a mine

Which is a lot like our salvation; Jesus made a way to rescue *us*, a tunnel if you will, and the Holy Spirit carries us through; Just like the capsule in the mine
Enabling us to live a life pleasing to God, instead of wasting away in the depths of our soul

➤ And don't miss the fact that the *Spirit* carries us; It's *his* power that raises us, not ours
We're *powerless*; So powerless, the Bible calls us dead (**Eph 2:1**)
You were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked
Dead, as in you couldn't do *anything* of any spiritual value
You couldn't live for the Lord; You couldn't please him; You couldn't worship him;
You couldn't glorify him . . .
And you couldn't get yourself out of the mine of your sin if you *wanted* to*****
It's only through the power of God's *Spirit* that we're saved

A power you receive only when you call on the name of the Lord; Only when you trust in Jesus; Only when you rest in his grace
Do that, and the Spirit indwells you, seals you, and keeps you for all eternity
That's blessed assurance; Based on *his* power; Not ours

And when you get right down to it, that's a gift; We're saved by God's grace . . .

To receive God's gift (7)

Just like the Chilean miners; They were rescued and saved that they might receive a gift
A second chance; A new lease on life; A life that seemed like a long-shot down there

And so too with us – *God saved us* [v7] . . . *so that being justified by his grace* (declared and considered righteous by virtue of his favor toward us) . . .
We might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life
We might receive all that he promises as members of his family; Everything that goes hand in hand with life to the full and life forever; That's a gift

The same thing we find in **Rom 8:16-17** – *The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit* [i.e. he testifies to God with us] *that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ*
IOW having been saved by God's grace, we are God's children; And as such, we are heirs in line to receive his inheritance
His gift of life to the full, life forever, and all the blessings that go along with it

Blessings like purpose, and fellowship, and contentment
Not to mention the gift of seeing him face to face some day; And living with him on a new earth; And worshipping him w/ all the saints; And getting a glorified body*****
We're saved by God's grace, to receive God's gift – a gift he *promised*

➤ Which is where the analogy with the miners breaks down
They weren't promised a rescue; They weren't promised a new life; They weren't promised anything; The risks were too high and the uncertainties too great

But not for God – we’re promised; We *have* this blessed assurance – this great salvation
so rich and free

Why? Why can we be so sure? B/c he knows the end from the beginning
And guarantees it with the blood of his Son, and the presence of his Spirit
We’re saved by God’s grace, to receive God’s gift – guaranteed

- The question is, do you have it? Have you *received* God’s gift of salvation?
Have you *embraced* Jesus as your Lord and Savior?
If so, the gift of salvation is yours – rest assured; If not, open up your heart and let the
Son shine in; We’re saved by God’s grace, to receive God’s gift

But that doesn’t mean we get whatever we want; We’re saved to receive God’s *gift* . . .

- **Not our demands**

And oh how easily we get this messed up; Sometimes b/c we want more, and sometimes
less; Sometimes we approach salvation with thoughts like . . .

“I’ll accept your gift of salvation God, but only if you make my life better; Or get me
out of debt; Or bless my business; Or fix my marriage”; Only if you give me *more*
Is that you? Are you an ungrateful believer? Always demanding more?

Or do you want *less*? Do you treat the gift God offers in salvation like a smorgasbord?

Choosing only the parts you like?

“I accept, unless I have to stop living with my girlfriend; Or lording it over my wife; Or
cheating on my taxes”

“I really want life to the full, but I don’t want to live it for you”

“I’ll take the eternal part, but not the obedience part”

Do want *more* than what God offers, or *less*?

- Either way, that’s not how it works
God is not a divine gift-horse that you can look in the mouth and make demands of

If the miners were able to communicate in the first few days of their ordeal . . .

They wouldn’t have *dared* to make demands regarding the quality of their life upon
extraction; They wouldn’t have *dared* express their expectations for a new job

They wouldn’t have *dared* talk about the conditions under which they would receive
help

They wouldn’t have *dared* refuse the 15 minute claustrophobic ride to the surface – no
matter *how* uncomfortable it was

They received the gift of rescue no matter *how* it was given; Void of *any* demands
B/c life *itself* was waiting at the surface; And so should we (**Summary**)

- We’re saved by God’s grace; Because of God’s mercy
Through God’s Spirit; To receive God’s gift – no more, and no less

Pray – It’s all you God; All you; And we’re so thankful; B/c if it were up to us, we’d still
be in the mine of our sin; So use these truths to solidify our assurance, and multiply our
passion

And receive our tithes and offerings now, blessing both the gift and the giver

Close – Baptism Packets; Visitor Bags