

## Daily Bible Study

### *“Why Christians Should & Must Be Gracious”*

*Titus 3:3-7*

*January 20 – January 25, 2014*

**MONDAY** – As we continue on in our study of **Titus**, we now take for our text, **Titus 3:3-7** as we look at what we are calling *“Why Christians Should & Must Be Gracious”*. This passage is full of wonderful and practical truths which can be illustrated by going over some of the titles that we could have given to this lesson; things like; *“A Celebration of God’s Salvation”*, *“How & Why God Saves His People”* and *“The Double Dynamic of The Christian Life”* among others. This passage so clearly points out all the great blessings God has given to His people in Salvation but it also as our lesson title suggests tells us as God’s people “why” we ought to be gracious to others as we have just seen from **verses 1-2**. The Apostle Paul will also go on in **verse 8** (which we are putting with the following lesson) to explain there is a lifestyle that he wants believers to embrace; namely one that is not only gracious and kind but one that is characterized by all types of good works. He uses this wonderful passage and specifically mentions in **verse 8** what he calls a ‘trustworthy’ or ‘faithful’ saying in order to both remind us of our responsibility and to motivate us to do those good works. As usual the Apostle Paul as all of the other Apostles are desirous for us to be people marked out by godly living. Read our text: **Titus 3:3-7**: *“For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. <sup>4</sup> But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, <sup>5</sup> 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, <sup>6</sup> whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup> that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”*

*Suggestion for Prayer: God, teach me this week from Sacred Scripture both “how” I am to live and act as a Christian in this world as well as “why” I should.*

**TUESDAY** – **Titus 3:3**: *“For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.”* As mentioned yesterday concerning our changed behavior we now in this “beautiful yet ugly” (in its description of our lives without God) passage see there *must* be a change done in our attitudes and actions. And take heart beloved, a change can be done with the “worst” of sinners like you and I. The bottom line is that a reflection upon our own former condition makes it easier for us to be mild and kind toward others. *We* means: Paul, Titus, all

believers in Crete, and in fact, all believers everywhere including you and I. Paul the Apostle had also been a slave of sin “zealous” but for the wrong things and person (**1 Timothy 1:13, Galatians 1:11–17**). The sharp contrast between what men *were* in their state of sin and what they have become since entering a place of saving grace encourages and promotes a gratitude to God and a desire to do good to our neighbors made in God’s image. Remember we spoke of Paul’s writing style to list negative and positive and put them against one another in illustration? The virtues mentioned in **verses 1-2**, showing what believers should be, are placed now alongside a number of vices showing believers what we once were. *Foolish*; meaning not only ignorant, but by nature actually *unable* to discern the things of the Spirit (**1 Corinthians 2:14, Romans 1:21, Ephesians 4:18**). *Disobedient* to both divine and human authority such as civil rulers and parents (**2 Timothy 3:2**). *Deceived* by being made to wander from the truth, living in a world of unreality, imagining that license to sin is liberty and actually when the sinner thinks he is free he is truly become a slave as he is controlled, *serving various lusts and pleasures* which dominate life and conduct. The Bible speaks of these evil desires as passions and pleasures (**2 Timothy 2:22, 3:6, Luke 8:14, James 4:1, 3, 2 Peter 2:13**.) If that were not already enough he continues saying we were *living in malice and envy*. According to the Greek words used we are talking about a wickedness, a hostility and a severe jealousy much going on in the mind. Envy was the fuel for the murder of Abel, Joseph being sold by his brothers, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram’s rebellion against Moses and Aaron, Saul’s chasing David, and finally in the NT we see it in the older brother in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Interesting Scripture tells us that *love* never envies (**1 Corinthians 13:4**). Lastly we were *hateful and hating one another* people who loathed people, detested them, thinking them despicable and disgusting. Remember Christian, *For we ourselves were* like this and many people still are and we should strive by godly conduct to exemplify Jesus to them and bring them to Christ.

*Suggestion for Prayer: God, help me remember what I was without You and strive to fight and kill the sin that still remains in me as I follow Jesus and reflect His glory to others.*

**WEDNESDAY** – **Titus 3:4-6**: *“<sup>4</sup> But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, <sup>5</sup> 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, <sup>6</sup> whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,”* People like “fresh starts” whether it be a New Year with its resolutions and hopes or any occasion for that matter. In all areas of life this true and spiritually is no different. Many people are not happy with the way their lives have gone, and with the things they have experienced and done. How often we hear, “If I could begin again” or “do that over differently”. In a very real way when God *saves* us he gives us that very thing; a NEW start. The language used here in these verses is language that reflects a new start, a new beginning, a new birth and *renewing*. From the point of salvation, being washed and regenerated (brought to spiritual

life) by God's grace a whole new life begins; a life of faith in Jesus, love for God and others, and true obedience. This is no exaggeration as this change brought by The Holy Spirit is anything but superficial and surface deep. God, in His *kindness and love* apart from any *works of righteousness which we have done* but by His *mercy* has changed us and in the language of Scripture has given us a "new heart" (**Ezekiel 36:26**). God gives His children new hearts with new desires and new power to taste and see that HE is good. We are radically *changed* when the Spirit renews us. The whole of our nature is truly and lastingly affected for good and this change inevitably shows itself in the way that we live. Take heart beloved, this is not saying that we become perfect. We still carry around with us a heart that is sinful, and, because of that fact we as the Apostle says will have a life of fighting for faith, killing sin and one that is sometime a very difficult struggle to do what is good and pleasing to God. This is why we receive such commands and truth spoke to us from God in Sacred Scripture. We also must be reminded we have the power of Jesus resurrection through The Holy Spirit living in us (**Romans 8:11**). This all is a good and gracious gift from God.

*Suggestion for Prayer: Our Father, who art heaven, hallowed by Your name. Lead me not into temptation but deliver me from evil...for Yours is the kingdom, power, and glory forever.*

**THURSDAY – Titus 3:4-6:** <sup>4</sup> *But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,* <sup>5</sup> *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,* <sup>6</sup> *whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,"* Today we continue to look at this work which we see in **verses 4-6**. This work of God being so loving and merciful toward us that he saves us from the penalty of our sin (eternal death) and changes us to be people who can "glorify and enjoy Him forever". Notice again that it is through *the washing*... The washing referred to is wholly spiritual. It is that of *regeneration and renewing*. We speak about being regenerate and the term *regeneration* as applied to individuals occurs only in this one New Testament passage. It does appear in Scripture in a more general context in **Matthew 19:28** where Jesus refers to the cosmic *regeneration*. Literally the word *palingenesia* means *new birth*, the being born again (*palin* = again, plus *genesia* = birth). Although the word occurs only this once, the idea is found in many other passages including (**John 1:13, 3:3, 5-8, 1 Peter 1:23, 1 John 2:29, 3:9, 4:7, 5:1, 4, 18**) Louis Berkhof sums up this wonderful reality with this definition; "Regeneration is that act of God by which the principle of the new life is implanted in man, the governing disposition of the soul is made holy, and the first holy exercise of this new disposition is secured." This work is of *the Holy Spirit* who as the third person of the Trinity is in Scripture represented as the giver of life. The *Holy Spirit* is also in the work of making men *holy*. This saving work which is an instantaneous change precedes and then gives rise to the process of *renewing* which is a life-long activity. The word *renewing* is also found in **Romans 12:2** that indicates this work is done by the Holy Spirit, nevertheless, the *renewing* or *sanctification* is also

an activity in which man takes part. *Regeneration* is a work of God never directly perceived by man but it becomes known to him because of its effects but *renewal* requires the conscious and continued surrender of man's whole personality to the will of God. Finally, notice how in this passage God the Father, God the Spirit, and God the Son are beautifully combined; ...*renewing of the Holy Spirit,* <sup>6</sup> *whom He* (God the Father) *poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior*. At Pentecost (**Acts 2:17, 18, 33**) we see the Spirit was poured out and he has established a residence and will never leave. So, God the Father not only gives his Son but also pours out his Spirit. The adverb *abundantly* indicates a rich supply of spiritual gifts which results from this outpouring of the Holy Spirit. No Christian has a legitimate excuse for not working in the Kingdom, for God has given through Jesus Christ our Savior the gift of the Holy Spirit (**John 14:16, 16:7**).

*Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me meditate on & know the depth of this wonderful reality of Your salvation done in me through the work of Jesus on my behalf. Thank You also for giving me The Holy Spirit. Help me yield myself to Him and His leading (Romans 6:16).*

**FRIDAY – Titus 3:7:** <sup>7</sup> *that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life".* Our former condition described in **verse 3** has ended, the blessings described in **verses 4-6** have and are being received, and now we hear the purpose for these things in **verse 7**. Paul, in other Scriptures also gives this progression. IE: We were by nature children of wrath but we have been made alive and we look forward by (**Ephesians 2:1-10**). We were idol-worshippers but now we serve the true and living God as we wait for the coming of Jesus (**1 Thessalonians 1:9, 10**), and we then have everlasting fellowship with him (**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**). We were ungodly and ruled by worldly passions but we have renounced all this and are now living lives of self-control and devotion as we wait for the realization of the blessed hope (**Titus 2:11-13**). What wonderful things we receive because of the change God has brought to us. We are *heirs* who even now have the right as children (**John 1:12**) to look forward to the full possession of that which we possess by faith. We have a hope that will *certainly* be realized (**Romans 5:5**). We have become *heirs* because we *have been justified*. The passive voice here means the subject "we" has been acted upon. God acted upon us in grace *having declared us righteous*. Justification is that act of the Father where He counts our sins to be Jesus' and His righteousness to be ours (**2 Corinthians 5:21**). It's opposite of *condemnation* (**Romans 8:33, 34**). We're delivered from the curse of God because that curse was placed on Christ (**Galatians 3:11-13**). We receive forgiveness (**Romans 4:6-8**). It is God's free gift, the fruit of *sovereign grace*, and not in any way the result of our "goodness" or accomplishments (**Romans 3:24, 5:5, 8-9**). We have peace with God (**Romans 5:1**), a peace that passes all understanding. Our hearts should be filled with such thanksgiving that a harvest of good works is produced. Justification and sanctification, though distinct, are never separated (**Romans 6:2, 8:1-2**).

*Suggestion for Prayer: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, I thank, praise and worship You.*