

He saved us.

A Five-Day Devotional from Titus 3:3–8

Day 1: We Ourselves Also

Read: Titus 3:1–3

Paul has just told the church to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show courtesy toward all people. Then he tells us why: “For we ourselves were once.”

That sentence removes every ground for contempt. Paul does not say, “They are foolish, disobedient, deceived, and enslaved.” He says, “We were.” He includes himself, Titus, the believers in Crete, and every Christian who reads this letter.

Verse 3 tells the truth about what we were. We were responsible for our sin, and we were enslaved by it. “Foolish” and “disobedient” will not let us present ourselves merely as victims. “Led astray” and “slaves” will not let us reduce sin to a few bad choices. We were culpable and captive.

Remembering this changes the way we look at people who do not yet know Christ. We do not have to soften what God says about sin. Paul certainly does not. But we can tell the truth without despising the sinner, because our goodness does not explain why we are no longer where they are. Grace does.

Who are you tempted to look at and think, “How can they live like that?” Titus 3 invites you to remember before you judge. Their sin may be real and destructive. Your former condition was real too. The difference is not that you were a better kind of person. The difference is that God was merciful to you.

“We ourselves also” does not create shame for the Christian. It creates humility, patience, and hope. The God who rescued us can rescue others. No one is beyond the reach of the mercy that found us. Remembering what we were helps us show the gentleness and courtesy Paul commands.

Reflection

1. Who are you most tempted to treat with contempt?
2. How does “we ourselves also” change the way you see that person?
3. What would truthful, gentle courtesy look like in your next interaction?

Today’s Practice: Pray for one person you are tempted to judge. Ask God to help you speak and act with the humility of someone who remembers grace.

Prayer

Father, I confess that I am quick to notice the sin of others and slow to remember what I was apart from Your grace. Keep me from contempt. Help me tell the truth about sin while treating people with gentleness, patience, and hope. Thank You for being merciful to me. Make that mercy visible in the way I treat others today. In Jesus' name, Amen

Day 2: But God

Read: Titus 3:3–5; Ephesians 2:1–5

Verse 3 leaves us with a question it cannot answer. Foolishness did not produce wisdom. Deception did not free itself. Slavery did not break its own chains. Nothing in us explains the difference between what we were and what we are.

Then Paul writes, “But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us.” The turn is as plain as it is glorious: But God. He saved us.

Paul tells us why God acted, and the reason is found entirely in God. He saved us “not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy.” Salvation did not begin with something God saw in us that made us savable. His goodness, kindness, love, and mercy appeared toward people described by verse 3.

That truth humbles our pride, but it also comforts a fearful heart. If your salvation rested on your ability to give God a sufficient reason to love you, you would always wonder whether you had done enough. Paul removes that burden. You did not supply the reason God saved you, and you do not have to keep supplying the reason God saved you.

When you tell your story, it may be true that you finally listened, turned away from a sinful pattern, or made a decision you had resisted. Those things describe your response. They do not explain the saving change. The deepest explanation is not something you did. It is something God did.

His mercy is not a reluctant response to our improvement. It is the reason any saving change began at all. Mercy came first. What explains the difference between who you were and who you are? Nothing in us explains the difference. He saved us.

Reflection

1. When you explain your salvation, where does your explanation finally land?
2. What fear grows when you believe you must keep giving God a reason to save you?
3. Which word in this passage most comforts you: goodness, kindness, love, or mercy? Why?

Today's Practice: Write a one-sentence testimony that begins with God rather than you. Keep it where you will see it this week.

Prayer

Father, nothing in me explains why I belong to You. You saved me according to Your mercy. Forgive me for taking credit when I feel strong and giving way to fear when I feel weak. Teach me to rest in Your goodness, kindness, love, and mercy. Let my testimony point clearly to what You have done. In Jesus' name, Amen

Day 3: Made New by the Spirit

Read: Titus 3:5–6; Ezekiel 36:25–27; Acts 2:32–33

God did not improve the people described in Titus 3:3. He made them new. Paul says that God saved us “by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior.”

We did not need better habits laid over an unchanged heart. We needed cleansing and new life. Ezekiel had promised that God would sprinkle His people clean, give them a new heart, and put His Spirit within them. Titus tells us that this saving work has come through Jesus Christ.

Paul’s emphasis is not on our ability to remake ourselves. The Holy Spirit regenerates and renews. From beginning to end, salvation is God’s work.

Notice the abundance in Paul’s language. God poured out the Spirit “richly.” He did not give believers a thin or reluctant measure of Himself. John Calvin pictured even the smallest drop of the Spirit as an ever-flowing fountain that never dries up. You did not receive a starter kit with the real gift still waiting somewhere in the future. God gave you His Spirit richly.

That does not mean Christians never feel weak or spiritually dry. Scripture still calls us to walk by the Spirit, be filled with the Spirit, and depend on the Spirit. The question is not whether God withheld part of His gift. The question is whether we are living in dependence on the Spirit He has already given.

Christianity is not self-improvement. God cleanses sinners, gives new life, and pours out His Spirit through Jesus Christ our Savior. The change is real because the saving action belongs to God. We can face our weakness honestly because His transforming work does not begin with our strength.

Reflection

1. Where are you most tempted to treat Christianity as self-improvement?
2. What does “poured out on us richly” teach you about God’s generosity?
3. In what situation do you need to depend on the Spirit today?

Today’s Practice: Before one demanding task or conversation, pause and ask the Holy Spirit to help you act in dependence rather than self-reliance.

Prayer

Father, thank You for doing what I could never do for myself. You cleansed me, gave me new life, and poured out Your Spirit richly through Jesus Christ my Savior. Keep me from living as though everything depends on my own strength. Help me walk by Your Spirit and trust Your generous work in me today. In Jesus' name, Amen

Day 4: From Slave to Heir

Read: Titus 3:3, 7; Titus 1:1–2; Romans 8:14–17

Titus 3 begins with slaves and ends with heirs. Verse 3 says we were enslaved to various passions and pleasures. Verse 7 says that, having been justified by God’s grace, we have become “heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

Grace has not only changed what is happening in us. It has changed where we stand before God. Regeneration changes us. Justification changes our standing before God. Justification is not God gradually making us good enough to accept. It is His gracious verdict over the sinner: righteous before Me.

The verdict is not earned. It is given by grace.

Paul then moves from the courtroom to the family. God did not merely break our chains and send us away. He brought us into His family and gave us an inheritance. We are heirs, and our inheritance is the hope of eternal life.

Biblical hope is not wishful thinking. Paul began this letter by speaking of “the hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began.” Our future rests on the promise of the God who cannot lie.

Some of us constantly take our spiritual temperature: Have I changed enough? Am I growing enough? Do I feel close enough to God? Those questions may help us examine our lives, and verse 8 assures us that grace produces fruit. But our hope is not built on our ability to measure our progress accurately.

You are justified by His grace. You are an heir. Fruit is evidence, but it is not the foundation of assurance. Nothing that produced your justification came from you, so nothing in you can overturn the verdict God has given. His promise is steadier than your best day or your worst day.

Reflection

1. Do you tend to think of yourself as an heir or as someone still waiting outside?
2. Where are you building assurance on your recent performance?
3. How does God’s promise steady you when your feelings change?

Today’s Practice: When failure unsettles you today, answer it with Titus 3:7: “I am justified by His grace and made an heir.”

Prayer

Father, thank You that my standing with You rests on Your grace and not my performance. You have brought me from slavery into Your family and made me an heir. When my feelings change and my progress seems small, anchor my hope in Your promise. Help me live with the confidence and humility of someone who belongs to You. In Jesus' name, Amen

Day 5: The Fruit of Grace

Read: Titus 3:1–8; Ephesians 2:8–10

Paul places good works in exactly the right order. Verse 5 says that God saved us “not because of works done by us in righteousness.” Verse 8 says that those who have believed in God should “be careful to devote themselves to good works.” Paul has not changed his mind. He has shown us where works belong.

Good works cannot produce salvation. God’s salvation produces good works.

Paul wants Titus to insist on the gospel so that believers will devote themselves to what is good. He does not treat the gospel as something to mention once before moving on to practical instruction. He expects the truth of what God has done to produce a certain kind of life.

What does that life look like? The beginning of Titus 3 gives us a picture. Grace makes us ready for every good work. It changes the way we speak about people. It moves us away from quarreling and toward gentleness. It teaches us to show courtesy toward all people, including those who still look like what we once were.

These works do not earn God’s favor. They grow from the favor He has already given in Christ. We do not obey to become heirs; we obey because grace has made us heirs. We do not serve to prove that we saved ourselves; we serve because He saved us.

Grace does not merely forgive us and leave us where it found us. It produces something. If you see good works appearing in your life, even slowly and imperfectly, that is not you proving anything to God. That is grace doing what Paul says it does. Our obedience becomes grateful worship made visible together in the ordinary places of daily life.

Reflection

1. Where have good works begun to feel like a way to earn God’s approval?
2. Which command in Titus 3:1–2 needs to become more visible in your life?
3. How does remembering “He saved us” change the way you obey?

Today’s Practice: Choose one concrete act of good for someone this week. Do it quietly as the fruit of grace, not as a performance.

Prayer

Father, thank You that my works did not cause my salvation and cannot add to the work of Christ. Produce the fruit of grace in me. Make me ready to do good, gentle in my words, and courteous toward all people. Let my obedience grow from gratitude for Your mercy. He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy. In Jesus' name, Amen