

The Goodness of God in the Gospel

Titus 3:4-7 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

❖ Introduction

➤ Goal of Sermon:

- 1) Let the Text speak for itself
- 2) Equip Believers by helping them understand the gospel so they can share the gospel
- 3) Proclaim the good news of Christ so unrepentant sinners may be saved

➤ Background to the text:

- Writing to a young pastor named Titus... instructing Him in the faith...
- Each point I have could be broken into a full sermon

➤ Outline:

- 1) God is Good and Man is Not
- 2) God has Come
- 3) God's Spirit Regenerates and Dwells
- 4) God's Mercy Saves
- 5) God Justifies
- 6) We Gain Eternal Life

❖ 1) God is Good and Man is Not

- ⁴But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared,

➤ We Start the Gospel with God

- Before we are able to understand the whole of the gospel...
- We must understand the God of the gospel...
- **Here in this text it starts with describing God's character...**
 - And there is much more to Him... But first we see...

➤ God is Good and He is Loving

- **Goodness refers here to God's acting kindly for man...**
 - This word is the quality of God that considerate toward us
- **Loving Kindness come from the same word we use for philanthropy**
 - We say a person is philanthropic when he gives to others...
 - When a person serves the world around him and donates possessions..
 - That person is philanthropic... This is not the usual way God's love is described...

- **But here the sense is that God loves us in a way where He wants to**

- ◆ Alleviate our suffering...

- ◆ He sees our suffering and He wants to heal it

- **So, Paul is using these two words to describe God...**

- And they are very fitting words, especially when you consider the context of the verses
- Paul is reminding them of what God has done for them...
- But... God is more than Good and Loving

➤ God is a Holy and Just God...

- **This is maybe the most important part of understanding the gospel...**
 - The gospel makes little sense without a Holy, Just and Mighty God
 - There is no need for the gospel if God is not Holy...

- ◆ There is much to say here... I will keep it brief to one example
 - **Isaiah the Prophet... He was a pretty good guy it seems..**
 - But when he sees God, he curses himself and his sin...
 - ◆ **Isaiah 6:3 And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”**
 - Isaiah’s response is beautiful and an example to us... this is the response of
 - What we would call a good person...
 - ◆ **Isaiah 6:5 And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!”**
 - His integrity was destroyed standing before God...
 - He recognized the depth of His sinful nature...
 - **Habakkuk sums up God’s nature of Purity**
 - **Habakkuk 1:13 You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong,**
 - The holiness of God dictates His response toward sin... Not allowed
 - **God’s Holy Nature Poses a Problem for Man**
 - Before Paul says verses 4-7... he reminds his readers of their state before meeting God...
 - **Titus 3:3 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.**
 - Moral Bankruptcy was the state of man before God...
 - Notice Paul says... we were morally not good...
 - ◆ Foolish, disobedient, slaves to various passions and pleasures
 - ◆ Lived our days in malice or... meanness... just mean.. Lived in envy, Hatred toward others...
 - *This is the default state of men...*
 - **Paul describes us elsewhere as “dead in our trespasses and sins”**
 - **Jesus reminds us... there is none good but God...**
 - We as men like to consider ourselves good...
 - We are not like the terrorists, so we are pretty good...
 - **But... when you put me up against a bunch of older white guys on a basketball court**
 - ◆ I might can be like Micheal Jordan...
 - ◆ You get me out there with some decent competition
 - ◆ And I am average at best...
 - *Our goodness is evil compared to the Holy nature of God...*
 - **But: Remember... God’s goodness and loving kindness has appeared...**
 - God is not content to leave us in this state...
 - He sees sinful mankind and has compassionate mercy and love toward men
- ❖ **2) God has Come**
 - **⁴But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared,**
 - **Paul explains how God has acted kindly to alleviate our suffering...**
 - Or... how his goodness and lovingkindness has appeared...
 - **He says our Savior Appeared...**
 - So, it is most obvious that he is referring to Jesus Christ...
 - **There are a couple of Bible verses that come to my mind here...**
 - One is in Philippians and the other in Colossians...
 - **Philippians 2:6-8 Though he was in the form of God, [Jesus] did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.**

- Here the coming of Jesus is described clearly for us...
- He emptied Himself to become one of us
- Also in Colossians
 - ◆ Colossians 1:19-20 In [Jesus] all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.
 - God dwelled fully in the person of Jesus Christ... God has come to us in Jesus Christ...
 - Emmanuel means... God with Us... and this what God has done in Jesus...
- **And His appearing can be summed up so succinctly by Paul in 1 Corinthians**
 - 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 ³For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures
 - Jesus came and lived a perfect life that led him to the cross
 - He died... he was buried... But He arose on the third day
 - ◆ In accordance with the Scriptures...
- **In accordance with the scriptures...**
 - The coming of Jesus was not out of no where... it was not a complete surprise...
 - This is something that is not only historically accurate for us looking back...
 - It was all written about before it ever even happened...
 - We have never been asked to have a blind faith... in fact... we have a very proven faith
- **Did you know there are maybe 456 prophecies concerning the coming of Jesus...**
 - Some say 350 or 365...
 - These are written at least 400 years before he appeared...
 - Some over a thousand years...
- **Illustration:**
 - What if I were to tell you that in 550 years from now... there would be a young man born
 - And he would be born in the town of liberty MS
 - What if I told you this guys would be born as a descendant of a certain family of today
 - And then he would move to las vegas
 - Only to return a few years later
 - What if I said this guys would be a religious leader for the world
 - What if I said He would be killed by torture... and I told you the form of torture
 - ◆ But we don't have that form of torture yet
 - What if I told you his friend would betray Him
 - What if I told you he would be killed with 2 other people
 - What if I told you what his name would mean...
 - What if I told you what others would do to him and say about him
 - What if I told you the kind of things he would teach
 - And how he would teach people...
 - What if I told you he would not remain dead but in fact rise from the dead
 - **What are the chances that I am going to be right in 550 years?**
 - Our country is not even 250 years old... We only had 13 states 250 years ago
 - **Well... all of the things plus more were written about Jesus long before He ever came**
 - The probability of only 8 being true is 1 in 10 to the 17th power
 - ◆ Blindfold a man and have him find a marked silver dollar in silver dollars four feet deep covering the state of texas
 - The probability of only 48 of the hundreds occurring in one person in history

◆ Is 1 in 10 to the 157th power

➤ If you could count to 250 every minute it would take you 19 million years

➤ **Jesus appeared and died and rose in accordance with the scriptures...**

- Now... that is part of the equation... God is Holy and Good... God sent His Son...
 - Now... how does the coming of the Son save us?

❖ **3) God's Spirit Regenerates and Dwells**

- ^{5b} **by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit ⁶ whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,**

➤ **We see 4 things here:**

- The Holy Spirit is the Actor; we are washed; are washing is one of regeneration and one of renewal

➤ **1) The Holy Spirit is at Work...**

- Let me press this point upon you... unless the Spirit is moving on you...
- Nothing happens... There is no change.
- The Holy Spirit of God is the initiator of Salvation...
- **Remember what Jesus said?**
 - John 3... Nicodemus the Pharisee comes to Jesus... He is asking Jesus about the kingdom of God
 - **Jesus tells him that no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again...**
 - ◆ **Born Again...**
 - **Born Again gets a bad rap... I do not know why...**
 - ◆ It is so biblical... I had two young ladies laugh at me when they asked me if I was a born again Christian... I said of course I am born again... is there any other way to be a Christian?
 - **Jesus says you must be born again....**
 - ◆ Nicodemus is confused at this concept so He essentially asks how is this?
 - **John 3:5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.**
 - ◆ **Then**
 - **John 3:8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."**

➤ **The Holy Spirit is the Agent of Change...**

- This is illustrated perfectly in Lydia
 - **Acts 16:14 ⁴ One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.**
 - The Lord opened her heart... as she heard the gospel from Paul
 - The Holy Spirit opened her heart...
 - He washed her with regeneration and renewal...

➤ **There is a Washing of Regeneration and renewal**

- There is a need of washing because we are filthy spiritually...
 - We are morally dirty and evil... our hearts need to be cleansed
- **Regeneration** and renewal is the work the Holy Spirit does in us
 - Regeneration means a rebirth... a new creation... the phoenix that rises from the ashes
 - Renewal means making something like new...
- **These things must take place in the person... or they can not see God**

➤ **This is described in great detail by the Prophet Ezekiel**

- Notice His description of what occurs with the new birth
- **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

➤ **This is also why Paul describes the Christian as:**

- A new creation, a new creature...
- This is exactly what has occurred.

➤ **God Dwells in the Believer by His Spirit...**

- **whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,**
 - Paul confirms this in Romans
 - **Romans 8:9 ⁹You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him**

➤ **Application:**

- Here is the question... Has this happened to you? This can not be faked...
- This is not being baptized as a baby, or teenager or adult
- This is not signing a card or going through a new membership class
- This is not a person that goes to church...
- This is a person that God has changed from within... By His Spirit
 - You can not fake this... and the Spirit confirms within you if this is true

➤ **Next... lets look at the basis by which God saves...**

❖ **4) God's Mercy Saves**

- ^{5a} **he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy**

➤ **God is making it clear to us how we are saved...**

- What is the substance of our being saved by God?

➤ **There is so a huge population of the earth that believes our works save us...**

- **This comes in many forms...**
 - Some say it is our good deeds that will be measured in the last day to see if we get in
 - Some say it is our hearts intentions... you just need a good heart
 - Some say it is rituals performed... some would say it is acts of grace we perform
 - Still others may think it is our sufferings that earn us favor with God...
- **None of these are based in the scriptures...**
 - Many of these are things that come as a result of a person being born of the spirit
 - But do not get your cart before the horse... the cart cant pull the horse...

➤ **In accord to his own mercy...**

- God had to be merciful toward us for us to be saved...
- He says it is not even righteous works done by us that save...
- They can not save the soul...
- It is only by the **mercy** of God...

➤ **Job Encountered the Mercy of God...**

- The book of Job is assumed to be a book that teaches us perserverance in suffering...
- Rather... it is a book of repentance... a book that takes the best man on earth
- And places him against the backdrop of God's Holy Nature

- **Job is found to be wanting**

- ♦ **Job 9:20 Though I am in the right, my own mouth would condemn me; though I am blameless, he would prove me perverse.**

- ♦ **Job 9:2 "Truly I know that it is so: But how can a man be in the right before God? ³ If one wished to contend with him, one could not answer him once in a thousand times.**

- God brought Job to repentance and was merciful toward Him...

- **Our mercy is found in Jesus Christ**
 - 1 Peter 1:3 According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead
- **Therefore we must agree with Paul...**
 - It is God's mercy that saves us... and not our good deeds...
 - God has done even more... He is good, He appeared, His Spirit Regenerates us, His mercy saves us...

❖ 5) God Justifies

- ⁷ so that being justified by his grace
- **What are we talking about here?**
 - Illustration: Remember our example of that great court room?
 - We stand before God... Here stands all the books of all the days of all our sins...
 - **Justification is a legal declaration by God, that you are right with Him**
 - There is no sin on your books... You are actually given Christ's Righteousness
 - David says it... and Paul then quotes him in Romans...
 - ◆ Psalm 32:1-2 Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
² Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.
 - This is what it means to be justified by God...
 - Obviously the person is a sinner... he is not perfect...
 - But... He is a justified sinner... one who is right before God...
 - **Now... You may say... well that sounds all great and wonderful... but Why? How?**
 - God can't just overlook sin can he? He doesn't do that willy nilly
 - Well He did not... This is where the cross of Christ comes into things...
 - ◆ The death of Jesus took your sins...
 - Look back at the text...
 - **Justified by His grace...**
 - God's grace is the foundation... the source of God's goodness toward us...
 - God's grace precedes every move He makes or we receive...
 - Grace is God's unmerited or unearned favor on man...
- **Then there is one more question? How do we get that?**
 - How can all this be true for me?
 - Because... I know not everyone is right with God
 - I know the Bible says many will perish
 - That the road is wide that leads to destruction...
- **What is the Key... How do I access this grace**
 - So we have talked about How good God is
 - And how we were sinful people in His eyes, And He sent His Son
 - And the Holy Spirit regenerates man
 - And how God justifies sinners by His grace...
 - But How can this happen to me? Or my loved one...
- **Faith is the Key...**
 - Romans 4:16 That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed
 - There you have it... Faith that all this stuff is true... is the key...
 - John 1:12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.
 - Now... this belief goes beyond a head knowledge into the heart...

- ◆ And remember... it is a work of the Spirit...

- ◆ Faith produces repentance in the person...

- **So... A person is brought out of darkness and into light... into the kingdom of God...**
 - When the turn from their sins and trust in Christ for removal of sins and eternal life...
 - That is where the rubber meets the road...
- **And finally... Paul reminds us of where this is all going...**
 - We see what all God has done for us and how we should respond...
 - Here is the reward...

❖ 6) We Gain Eternal Life

- **we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life**
- Heirs of Eternal Life... We could say a lot here... but just a few things...
- **2 Great set of verses come to my mind**
 - **Revelation 21:3-4** “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”
 - **1 Corinthians 2:9** “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”
- **The Greatest thing about Heaven... will be being able to experience God fully...**
 - That sounds foreign to some of you...
 - It sound foreign because you do not know God...
 - If you knew Him... You would desire Him...
 - You would be like Moses who longed to have a glimpse of God...
 - **Psalm 16:11** **You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.**
- **Eternal Life will be much more than just living forever and not dying...**
 - Eternal Life will be filled with God...

❖ Gospel Recap

- God is good and Holy and Just
- Men have sinned and rebelled against God
- God sent His Son to live a perfect life, to die on a cross to pay for sins, to rise from the dead
 - Because death can not hold the sinless Son of God
 - It has not power over Him
- **This “Gospel” is preached or read**
 - And the Spirit of God regenerates the dead person
 - So that they may hear and believe...
- The person then turns from sin and puts faith in Jesus Christ
- God justifies them in His eyes because of Faith... He declares them righteous
- This is all brought about by Faith... And the end result is eternal life
 - Sounds like a pretty good deal

❖ Invitation

- Have you ever Followed Jesus Christ?
 - He is real, He isn't fake... The Spirit of Almighty God is real...
- It is clear we have sinned and done wrong... are you willing to repent?