Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

He Saved Us
Scripture: Titus 3:4-7
Code: 56-25

Open your Bible to Titus chapter 3. We are in the midst of studying in chapter 3 of Titus verses 1 through 8. And though we have already covered them once, I want to draw your attention to that same text again for the message this morning, particularly I would like to read to you verses 4 through 7, Titus chapter 3 verses 4 through 7. "But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness but according to His mercy by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

That statement is so loaded with theological truth that a man could preach a life time on it. There are so many words there that could be studied exhaustively for months and months. There is truth there sweeps from eternity past to eternity future, concepts in and around the great truth of salvation that demand our attention in great depth and with profound meditation. But all of the truths that are there are dealt with in many other places in the New Testament and so rather than exhaust all that could be exhausted in this text, I want us to take a look at it as to its message regarding salvation in a general sense and leave the greater depth for your own study and for those related Scriptures to it.

There's one phrase that is the heart of this passage that I've read, it's found at the beginning of verse 5. Three words in English, "He saved us." In those simple words you have the core of the Christian faith, it's all about salvation, it's all about God saving sinners. The word "saved" has become a distinctively Christian term, though in the Greek language the original verb sozowhich is translated "saved" could mean temporal deliverance. It was a word used to describe rescuing someone from danger, preserving someone safe from harm, delivering someone out of potential ruin and disaster, salvaging someone in the midst of death. In fact, in Matthew's gospel a number of times there are such usages of the word in temporal ways. One comes to mind particularly in Matthew 8:25 where the disciples who were in a storm on the sea of Galilee said, "Save us, Lord, we're perishing." And they weren't talking about spiritual salvation, they were talking about physical deliverance from a storm that was about to take their lives. So the verb speaks of rescuing someone in imminent grave serious and even permanent danger or disaster.

In the spiritual sense, however, which is its main usage in the New Testament it has the idea from being saved from sin, being rescued from sin, from sin's power, from sin's penalty, being preserved therefore safe and unharmed from divine wrath, from judgment, from hell, from eternal punishment.

We know and love the word. We understand what it means. We talk about being saved. We talk about salvation. We remember the words of the Apostle Paul who said in writing to Timothy, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, to rescue otherwise doomed and damned sinners."

But the word in its spiritual sense does not only carry a negative connotation, that is of rescuing us from imminent disaster and deadly danger, it also has a positive connotation as well in that it carries the essence of not only lifting us out of danger but putting us into blessing, not only delivering us from punishment but bringing us to glory, not only taking us out of the threat of hell but giving to us the hope of heaven, not only dismissing us from divine wrath but bringing us under divine benediction, divine blessing. The word then carries the idea of being delivered, as Paul said, out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. It is used in such a way, for example, in Acts 2:47 where it says that the Lord was adding to the church daily such as should be saved. They were being rescued out of sin and placed into the body of Christ, the church, the very place of blessing. And so it is that we have come to know and love the word "saved."

I remember as a young man I was preaching one time in a Youth For Christ rally here in the San Fernando Valley, very soon after I had come to Grace Community Church and I was asked to preach an evangelistic sermon and it was held over at the former First Baptist Church of Van Nuys in their auditorium and there was about 1200 young people there and it was a great opportunity for me to preach the gospel. And I preached on what it means to be saved. And afterwards some folks came up to me and said, "Well, while we appreciate your effort, we think you ought to stop using the word `saved' since it's become an irrelevant word in the English vocabulary. You ought to find a better term." I have a difficult time, to be honest with you, improving on the Word of God. And I have...I listened and I thanked those folks kindly for their suggestion and went on about preaching salvation and have continued to do so. This term is a marvelous and rich term. And it doesn't need to be loaded with so much quote/unquote Christian connotation that we lose the sense of what it really means. It means to be rescued from imminent deadly danger.

This word has become such a beloved word that you find it in the hymns and songs of Christianity throughout its history. That word you sung and heard sung this morning as I would imagine you do surely almost if not every Lord's day here at Grace Community Church and in most evangelical churches around the world, we sing, "Hallelujah what a Savior, hallelujah what a friend, saving, helping, keeping, loving, He is with me to the end." And we sing wonderful and beloved hymns like the one I learned when just a boy, "I found a friend, O such a friend, He bled, He died to save me and not only the gifts of life but His own self He gave me, not that I have my own I call, I hold it for the giver, my heart, my strength, my life, my all are His and His forever."

We sing about His salvation. We talk about His salvation. We even pray thanking God for saving us. It is a profound concept. It is the essence of Christianity. Christianity is a rescuing religion, if we want to call it a religion at all. It is a rescuing relationship. It is God saving men and women from their sin

and the inevitable and deadly eternal consequence of it. It is therefore the theme of our preaching. It is the theme of our witnessing. It is the theme of our worship, the theme of our prayers and the theme of our songs. Profoundly the great reality of the Christian faith is summed up in those magnificent words, "He saved us," from sin, its power and its penalty.

To remind us how desperately we need saving, look at verse 3. Paul included one of his familiar catalogs of human depravity. He says we were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. Those terms can be added to the plethora of terms that we find throughout the New Testament to describe the sad and tragic fallen condition of man. In Romans chapter 1 Paul describes fallen man as being a victim of the lust of his heart to impurity. He describes him as giving his body over to be dishonored. He says that he exchanges the truth of God for a lie, worships and serves the creature rather than the creator. He is given over to degrading passions, such as women exchanging the natural function for that which is unnatural, such as men burning in their desire one toward another, men with men committing indecent acts, receiving their own persons the due penalty of their error. He describes human depravity as having a reprobate or depraved mind, being filled with unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil, envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice, gossip, slander, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents. He says depraved fallen man is without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving and unmerciful. And even though he knows the ordinance of God and knows that those who practice such things are worthy of death, he not only does them but gives hardy approval to the rest to do them as well.

The Apostle Paul also described fallen man in 1 Corinthians 6 as made up of fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers and swindlers. In Galatians chapter 5 he describes human fallenness as engaging itself in immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing and things like that. And to the Ephesians he gives this description, they are futile in their minds, darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, ignorant, hard of heart, callous, sensual, practicing every kind of impurity with greediness.

And I suppose we could sum it up with the words of Paul in Ephesians 2. He says they walk according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit now working in the sons of disobedience. They are driven by the lusts of their flesh, the desires of the flesh and of the mind and are by nature the children of wrath. That's human depravity. That is a description of man before he is rescued, before he is saved.

Look at verse 3 for just a moment and remind yourselves of what this text says. He reminds the reader, Titus, and all who will hear from Titus in the churches at Crete that they used to be foolish, that is anoetosin Greek, it means ignorant, lacking understanding. They were disobedient. That is rebellious, lawless, resistant to God, His truth and His commandments. They were deceived, that is

led astray by every imaginable evil thing. They were led astray like a wandering star, perverted from the righteous path and standard. Enslaved, they are bondslaves to lust, that is evil desire and pleasure, the need to feel pleasure. They spend their life in malice, that simply means wickedness and envy which means ill will toward others. They are marked by being hateful and hating one another. Egocentric, isolated, they become detesting of everybody around them who gets in the way of the fulfillment of their pleasures.

All of that diagnosis from all of those Scriptures leads you back to Romans 1:18 where it says, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness." Back to Romans 6:23, "The wages of sin is death." Death, hell, eternal punishment.

From this horrifying fate we need to be rescued. And the obvious fact is we cannot rescue ourselves. And so we ask the question...who will rescue such vicious, such evil, such consummate sinners? No human has the desire. No human has the plan. No human has the power. Who will do it? And you come to verse 5 and those wonderful words, "He saved us." Who? Verse 4, God our Savior. Who? Verse 6, "Jesus Christ our Savior." God who is a saving God. Christ who is a saving Lord. They're committed to rescuing unworthy sinners. That's why He is called God our Savior and Christ is called Christ our Savior throughout this epistle...twice in each of the three chapters.

What is the goal of this? He saves us for what reason? Look at the end of verse 7, "That we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." That instead of living in the fear of death and the fear of hell and the fear of eternal punishment and under the power of sin, we might be heirs of eternal life and live in the hope of heaven. In other words, He rescues us to change our eternal destiny. And consequently, to fill our hearts with hope instead of dread. To make us, as Paul says in Romans 8:17, "Heirs and joint heirs with Jesus Christ," to give to us as Peter says in 1 Peter chapter 1, "an inheritance that is incorruptible that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us." He saved us from the consequence of sin which is hell. He saved us from the place of eternal death that fills the heart with fear. And He saved us to the place of eternal life that fills the heart with hope, namely heaven.

So here in these verses, verses 4 through 7, Paul focuses on the most important element of the Christian gospel...that is salvation...the rescue of sinners from wrath and hell and the preparation of them as saints for blessing and for heaven.

Now by the way, verses 4 through 7 are a monumental statement about salvation...very very powerful and loaded with so much theology. And I don't want to belabor the point as I said earlier so we'll look at it rather lightly in comparison to what it deserves and trust that you can fill it in with the things that we've learned through the years in other texts. But it is a magnificent passage. It could stand alone isolated as a statement on theology and probably did. You remember I told you it was probably an early church creed or maybe an even early church hymn and as such it would be recited by repetition,

it would be committed to memory by many that's why in verse 8 it's called a trustworthy statement, or it might well have been sung to some tune as a hymn. It does stand alone.

It also fits into this context because throughout chapter 2 and 3 Paul is instructing Titus to teach the church how to live. In chapter 2 how to live within the church. In chapter 3 how to live in the world in the pagan system. And one of the things that is very important for them living in a pagan world is to make sure that they remember the only reason they're different is because God saved them. They can't live with smug self- righteousness, looking down on everybody in a condemning attitude. They cannot live hostile to a pagan culture, contentious, fighting that culture, demeaning that culture, abusing the people in it, attacking them personally. No, they have to realize the only reason they're not a part of that culture is because God saved them. And so it is with a sense of mercy and compassion that we live in our pagan society and we view the tragic condition of the lost of which once we were so much a part. We don't resent them. We don't hate them. We don't fight against them. We don't treat them with contempt or unkindness, even the most pagan of them. We don't feel better, superior or wiser. We are grateful that God saved us.

Now I want you to notice that statement again in verse 5, "He saved us." Simply it reflects the fact that salvation is totally the work of God. That's what it's saying...He saved us. Paul is emphasizing the independent, uninfluenced sovereignty with which God saves, totally outside of us, He saved us. The point being that we couldn't do anything about our condition. We were hopeless, dead in trespasses and sins. We could do nothing, He saved us.

Now as we look more closely at this sovereign salvation, we're going to see how that that idea that God is sovereign in the whole work of salvation unfolds in a seven-fold way. Okay? There are seven aspects to God saving us. And they flow around that statement "He saved us." Here they are. He saved us by His kindness, by His love, by His mercy, by His regeneration, by His Spirit, by His Son and by His grace. That is the seven-fold divine operation that brings about our rescue. These verses form one long sentence, sweeping over the divine sovereign initiation and accomplishment of the reality of salvation. We're going to look at these seven aspects that tell us how He saved us.

First, He saved us, number one, by His kindness...by His kindness. Verse 4, "But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us." It was kindness that caused God to effect a saving plan. God is kind. What do we mean by that? The word literally means "goodness of heart." It means that He has a concern in His heart toward people in misery. God is basically good. He is inherently good. He is inherently kind.

In Luke, for example, and there are many places where you could go to see the kindness of God but I think it's summed up most concisely in Luke 6 verse 35, Jesus teaching says this, "Love your enemies and do good and lend, expecting nothing in return and your reward will be great...and listen to this...and you will be sons of the Most High for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men."

There is the very essence of the attribute of God, kindness. He is kind, even to ungrateful and evil men. It is God's innate nature to be kind, to be patient to very undeserving sinners, to very ungrateful sinners. He is patient, He is forebearing, He is good. The Bible says He lets the rain fall on the just and the unjust. He saves all men, 1 Timothy 4:10 says, in a temporal sense, delivering them from the immediate death and damnation that should come after the first time they commit their first sin or have their first evil thought. He is good.

Paul even tells us that His goodness is purposeful in Romans chapter 2 and verse 4, "Do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?" God is good and He's kind and He's patient and He's forebearing in order that men might have time to repent. In chapter 5 Paul says wherever sin abounds, grace even more abounds. That's reflective of the kindness of God. In Romans 11 and verse 22 again, "Behold the kindness and severity of God to those who fell severity but to you God's kindness." God is kind. God is good.

He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. He will have all men to be saved. And this reflects His heart of kindness toward sinners who are His unworthy enemies. And it was this very innate virtue, this component in the eternal being of God that moved God to save us. This contrary, by the way, to the gods of ancient times who were basically evil, at least in the concoctions by which men designed them in their own image. John Calvin wrote, "God will never find in us anything which He ought to love," end quote. But He is kind and His kindness reaches out to unworthy sinners. He saved us by His kindness. The whole thing is initiated in the uninfluenced and sovereign kindness of God

Secondly would you notice in Titus 3, He saved us by His love. Verse 4 says, "But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared." He loves mankind. That's a very broad sweeping far-reaching generic term. The kindness that is His virtue manifests itself in love toward mankind. The word for love here is quite an interesting one. It's not a word that is normally associated with love in the New Testament, it is the Greek word philanthropiafrom which we get philanthropy. It literally means pity, compassion, eagerness to deliver from pain or distress because of strong affection. It has the idea of a strong affection. It doesn't have some kind of self-serving component in it. It's not pity for the wrong reason. It's pity out of strong affection. God is kind. He is kind toward the ungrateful and evil men, as Jesus said, and His kindness causes Him to have a strong affection out of which He wants to act in pity and compassion. It's a magnificent concept.

There is God in the glory, perfectly holy. Here in the world is fallen man and it is God's nature to long to be kind to fallen man, to strive as long as He can with fallen man in patient forbearance so that he might repent. And out of that kindness comes God's philanthropy, God's pity, God's compassion, God's eager affection to touch the life of the miserable sinner and make it good and better.

We find the usage of this word well illustrated in Acts 28 where the Apostle Paul along with the company on the ship had come to the end of the shipwreck. The boat had been beaten into planks with the waves crashing against it as it was stuck in the sand, you'll remember. They had landed on an island called Malta and verse 2 of Acts 28 says, "And the natives showed us extraordinary kindness." There they were wringing wet, they had just been driven to the shore by the crashing waves. All souls had come to the shore alive by the providence of God. They had no food. They had no resources. There was a storm and a rain going on. And these folks showed them, it says in the New American Standard, extraordinary kindness. They took them in. They fed them. They warmed them. They had a fire, they clothed them.

The literal Greek says this, "And the barbarians showed us not the ordinary love." That's philanthropia. It is a love that is not just an emotion, it reaches out with a strong affection in pity and compassion. It is translated in the twenty-seventh chapter of Acts by the word "consideration" which takes it from a feeling to an act. God then is kind in His nature and He is good. And all you have to do is look around your world to see that. Here is a beautiful and glorious and wonderful world filled with all kinds of expressions of God's kindness toward unworthy sinners who hate the very God who is kind to them. He is kind and compassionate by nature and His kindness and compassion cause Him to reach out with a strong affection and thus does the Scripture say His love for mankind.

The Old Testament celebrates His loving kindness, Lamentations 3:22 says it is a daily gift from God, His mercies are new every morning. His loving kindness extends day to day. Great is His faithfulness.

But nowhere is His love and the expression of this strong compassionate pity expressed better than in the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15. God is the father and the son is the unworthy sinner. The unworthy sinner comes back toward the father and in Luke chapter 15 what you're finding out here is all about God's love. It says in verse 20, "The father when he was still a long way off saw the son and felt compassion and ran and embraced him and kissed him repeatedly." That's the heart of God. He is not reluctant to receive the sinner. He is not diffident. He is not distant. He is not stoic. He runs and He throws His arms around the sinner and embraces him and kisses him because He cares so deeply because He is so kind. And the son, you'll remember, says, "I have sinned against you and in your sight and I'm not even worthy to be called your son. And the father says forget that, called for the feast, get out the robe, put the ring on his finger, kill the fatted calf and gives him a feast like no other feast." That's the kindness of God. That too in utter contrast to the indifference of the gods of the age in which this was written.

Kindness and loving compassion were thought to be the highest virtues that ancient Greek gods could ever have, but there weren't too many who seemed to have them. But here in Titus we note that these things appeared, the kindness of God and His love of mankind appeared. When did they appear? Just as in back in chapter 2:11 when the grace of God appeared, that's a reference to the

incarnation. It isn't that they had never appeared before, God's kindness and God's love could be seen in a myriad of ways. But the full visible, personal manifestation of the grace of God, the kindness of God and the love of God came in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. He was compassion. He was pity. He was love. He was kindness. He was goodness in human form. He was the eternal God made visible. And all of the divine Father's attributes that loved sinners were made visible in Jesus. If you ever wonder whether God loves sinners, look at Jesus crying over them. When He appeared, kindness and love were incarnate and He saved us. We couldn't rescue ourselves. It was the kindness and the love of God that appeared in Christ that started that rescue operation.

By the way, that appearance historically doesn't mean anything unless it appears in your heart by faith...by faith. I believe what he's referring to in verse 4 is the incarnation, that the kindness of God and the love of God did appear, being made visible or manifest in Christ. But that appearance is lost to those who never put their faith in Him. So salvation is by kindness and by love.

Thirdly, He saved us by His mercy. Not only by His kindness, by His love but now we move to His mercy. His kindness caused Him to feel strong affection. His strong affection, compassion and pity caused Him to be merciful. And so we look to verse 5, He saved us not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy.

Mercy is a magnificent word, hileos. It's different than grace. Grace relates to guilt. Mercy relates to misery. Grace relates to the state of the sinner before God the judge. Mercy relates to the condition of the sinner in his sin. Grace is a judicial concept that forgives the crime. Mercy is a compassionate concept that helps the criminal recover. Mercy looks at misery, grace looks at guilt. And here he's talking about mercy. And he says it was God's mercy, He saved us not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness.

My dear friend, you make no contribution to your salvation. You have no capacity to make a contribution. In no way can you earn your salvation, deserve your salvation, or contribute to it. Your rescue and your transformation, your deliverance from sin and death and hell come from God and God alone. Paul, you'll remember, spent most of his life before his conversion trying to accumulate enough religious righteousness to purchase his own salvation, didn't he? Philippians chapter 3 he says, "Look, I was circumcised the eighth day, when it comes to ritual I had the ritual. I was of the people of Israel, the race of Israelites. I was of the tribe of Benjamin. I had tribal privilege as well as racial heritage. When it comes to being a Hebrew I was a Hebrew of the Hebrews." What does that mean? I was a traditional orthodox Jew. When it comes to the law I chose to be a Pharisee cause I wanted to take it to the inth degree. When it comes to righteousness, there wasn't one thing in the law for which anybody could hold me blameable. I had done all of it. I had covered every conceivable human base of righteousness and then I realized it was all rubbish. And all those things that once were counted gain to me, he says, I count it loss for the sake of Christ...skubalon, manure, dung, rubbish, garbage, trash, filth. The best of the deeds that I have done were nothing but trash.

He saved us not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, that's trash.

Philippians 3 Paul says, "I threw it all aside for the surpassing value of knowing Jesus Christ my Lord from whom I received a righteousness not my own on the basis of works but the righteousness of God." And that's mercy...that's mercy. We deserve wrath, we receive salvation. Why? Because God is kind and God has compassion and pitiful love which is expressed in mercy toward miserable sinners. Certainly Paul could give that testimony, "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord," he wrote to Timothy chapter 1 verse 12, "who strengthened me because He considered me faithful, putting me in to service, even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor and I was shown mercy." That's how it all happened. God was merciful-- undeserved, unearned, uninfluenced, spontaneous mercy expresses God's amazing kindness and God's amazing love toward sinners even though He is perfectly holy. Sovereign mercy then led God to kindly and lovingly grant forgiveness and eternal glory to pitiful transgressors and that's what it means when it says He saved us...by kindness, His kindness...by love, His love...by mercy, His mercy.

Fourthly, by His regeneration. Verse 5, "He saved us not on the basis of deeds which we've done in righteousness but according to His mercy by the washing of regeneration." The word regeneration, palingenesiameans to be born again, to receive new life. And only God can do that. That's what Jesus called being born from above in John chapter 3. You must be born from above He said to Nicodemus, born again. Only God can do that. Here is the sinner dead in trespasses and sin, hopeless, can't pick himself up, can't rescue himself. God comes from the outside and regenerates him, gives him life. And in the process cleanses that old dead life so that regeneration...regeneration is called a washing. The old life was filthy, a dead filthy vile corpse, it is washed and regenerated, new birth.

The New Testament has so much to say about that. Paul talks about being crucified with Christ, Galatians 2:20, nevertheless I live, that's resurrection life, Romans 6, we are buried with Christ in His death, we rise to walk in newness of life, John 3, 1 John 2, 1 John 3, 1 John 4, 1 John 5 all talk about regeneration, new life, being born again, being cleansed, being washed. It's all the work of God. By the way, he uses the word, the word is the agent of cleansing in James 1:18, it says that He brought us forth, that is to say we were born again by the Word of truth. First Peter 1:23 says that we are born again through the living and abiding Word of God. It's the Word that gives life. The Word comes and washes and cleanses and brings new life. Obviously we can't cleanse ourselves, we can't give life to ourselves. That's all the work of God. He saved us by His kindness, His love, His mercy, His regeneration.

Number five, by His Spirit...by His Spirit. The end of verse 5 looks at our salvation and says, "He saved us by renewing by the Holy Spirit." Salvation demonstrated His kindness, His love, His mercy. It demonstrated His power to give life and wash and regenerate and also it demonstrated the Holy Spirit and His power of renewal. This is the next logical step. The effect of regeneration is new life.

And that new life emerges out of new birth which is effected by the Word and the Spirit. And again there's so much that could be said in all of this but just touching lightly on it this morning, I trust you'll grasp the great reality of God's sovereign saving work.

The Holy Spirit is the one who renews us. This is a radical renewal. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creation." What does Paul say? "Do you not know your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which you have of God, you're not your own, you're bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and your spirit which are God's." We are whole new creations, we walk in newness of life, we have put on the new man. Life is totally renewed. It's not like it used to be in any way, shape or form. We have new identity. We have new longings, new aspirations, new desires, new passions, new affections. And that's the work of the Spirit.

Would you please notice the beginning of verse 6. He says of the Spirit, "We were renewed by the Holy Spirit whom God poured out upon us richly." We couldn't do anything to get the Holy Spirit on our own. You remember Simon in Acts who tried to buy the Holy Spirit? And Peter said, "May your money perish with you." There's nothing you can do to get the Holy Spirit. There's nothing you can do to gain or earn the renewal work of the Holy Spirit. That's something God pours out and it tells us in verse 6 He poured out the Spirit upon us richly. So richly that we can do exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think according to His power working in us, says Ephesians 3:20. Colossians 1:29 says, "The power of the Spirit is working in us mightily."

So by the new birth God poured out an abundance of blessing in and through the presence of the Holy Spirit who gave us life, sustains that life, empowers that life, ultimately guarantees our eternal glory. We are regenerated through the work of the Spirit. Jesus said you have to be born of the Spirit. And then the Spirit is poured out upon us in all His fullness and we become the temple of the Holy Spirit. What a tremendous thing it is to contemplate what God has done. He saved us by His kindness, His love, His mercy, His regeneration, His Spirit. He did it all.

And number six, by His Son...by His Son. All of this, he says, through Jesus Christ our Savior. He saved us by mercy. He saved us by the washing of regeneration. He saved us by the renewing of the Holy Spirit. He saved us through Jesus Christ our Savior. We couldn't even have this list without this one, could we? The person and work of Christ made it all possible that's why Peter preaching on the day of Pentecost said, "God according to His predetermined plan had Christ crucified." Jesus came to pay the price for sin and conquered death. That was Jesus' part of the eternal covenant. Remember the Father made a covenant to give to the Son a redeemed humanity as an expression of the Father's love and He said to the Son, "I want to give You this redeemed humanity so that forever and ever and ever in glory they will praise You and praise You and praise You. And I only ask You to do one thing and that is to go the earth and pay the price for their sins." And that's what He did. Justice had to be satisfied and the wages of sin is death and somebody had to die and all of the sins of the world were placed on Jesus Christ and He paid the wages. He satisfied the justice of God, the

price was paid, death was conquered and it is through Jesus Christ our Savior that He saved us.

And then lastly, He saved us by His kindness, His love, His mercy, His regeneration, His renewal, His Spirit, His Son and summing it all up by His grace, verse 7, "That being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." By grace, grace deals with our guilt. Grace says you are pardoned, you are forgiven because of the sacrifice of Christ. Grace takes the righteousness of God and imputes it to us, puts it to our account, declaring us righteous and just in God's eyes because Christ has made a satisfactory atonement for our sins. He paid the price and therefore our sins are removed, justice is fully satisfied, kindness, love, mercy and grace can act freely. Justified by His grace. Grace is giving us what we don't deserve. We don't deserve to be forgiven. We don't deserve to have our sin removed. We don't deserve to be imputed the righteousness of God. We don't deserve that. We don't deserve to be just before God. We don't deserve to come into His presence. We don't deserve heaven. But grace gives it to us because God's justice is satisfied in Christ and He declares us justified...justified. That, by the way, is a repeated theme in Romans and in Galatians that you read over and over again.

Just a footnote, when he says that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life, I think Paul here is using justified in the broadest sense. I know justification has a narrow sense. I know it has a narrow definition that is forensic, that justification technically is God declaring someone righteous because of the merits of Christ applied to them on their behalf through faith. I understand that. But I also believe that there are times and places in the New Testament where justification means more than the narrow forensic definition, the limited definition that it sometimes has. And that would be true of many other terms. We could talk about regeneration as a narrow term, looking at one aspect of salvation or as something that simply describes the whole saving work. We could talk about conversion as one narrow feature or the whole thing. We could talk about adoption as one narrow feature or the whole thing. And certainly the term justification often in the New Testament is used in a broad sense though most frequently it is used in its narrower sense. The broad sense simply meaning here he is using it as a synonym for our salvation. And by the way, I'm not alone in seeing a broad definition of that word here. Even John Calvin, a stickler for the narrow definition of justification recognizes here that it is a term synonymous with salvation. He says, quote: "What does he mean by the word justified? The context seems to demand that its meaning shall be extended further than to the imputation of righteousness," end quote. You see here the great vast essence of salvation in God by grace declaring us righteous and all that came leading up to that and all that flows following out of that.

All of this results in the most immense and the most amazing benefit to undeserving sinners. They are made heirs, joint heirs with Christ of all that God possesses according to the hope of eternal life.

Why? How did this happen? Did we do anything? No. God felt kindly toward us. He loved us compassionately. He showed us mercy. He washed us from our sins. He gave us new life. He put

His Holy Spirit in us. He graciously poured out His righteousness upon us and thus He made us heirs of future glory forever in heaven. He did it all.

You say, "What about our faith?" Well He gave us even that. For in ourselves we would not have the faith to believe, we would not have the heart to seek. Such a recognition is that God has done it all and Paul's message here to Titus and to these Cretan Christians and all the rest of us is...look, you're living in a godless pagan culture, don't you sit in smug self-righteous condemnation on that culture, you be grateful that God in His sovereignty saved you. Don't look at them as the enemy. They're the ones you're to reach in love.

I love what Spurgeon said, "In the everlasting decree of the sovereign God," he said, "the footsteps of mercy were every one of them ordained."

Predestination marked the path and mercy walked it. He saved us. So who gets all the glory? He does.

Father, we thank You for this wonderful reminder again that as we live in the world in which we live and as we see it increasingly pagan, it's so easy for us to become contentious, even malicious, unkind, ungracious, hard, critical, to fight back, to demand our rights. May we be reminded to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be eager to do every good deed for them, to malign no one, to be uncontentious, gentle, showing every consideration for all men, remember that if it weren't for the fact that You saved us we would be just like them. Father, may the fact that we are grateful for Your salvation lead us to the recognition that it is Your salvation and Yours alone. And may we look on the world the way You do, with kindness and compassion and mercy. And may we be faithful to plead with You to save them as You saved us. And for all that You save and bring to glory we give You praise and most personally do we thank You for the inexplicable mystery that You saved us. But You did and our gratitude must show in our lives, devoted and dedicated to being all You want us to be in the church and in the world...for Your glory in Christ's name. Amen.

Available online at: http://www.gty.org
COPYRIGHT (C) 2016 Grace to You
You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright).