WE ARE SAVAED BY GOD, TO DO GOOD

Titus 3:1-15

Key Verse: 8

Good morning, everyone. The title of my message is “We’re Saved By God, To Do Good” based on Titus 3:1-15. To recap what we’ve studied so far, Paul wrote this letter to his younger associate Titus, because he left him behind on the island of Crete. Paul had left Titus to complete the work of God that still needed to be done. We’ll see today that Titus chapter 3 is a series of reminders linked together that are given to Christians on how we must act in our walk with God. The key verse for this passage is verse 8:

“This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those

who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is

good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone”

My message has two parts:

1. Remember God’s Great Salvation (1-7)
2. Remember To Do What Is Good (8-15)

Part 1 - Remember God’s Great Salvation (1-8a)

In our passage today, Titus is told to remind the Cretan Christians to submit themselves to their political leaders and authorities. Verse 1-2 says “Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.” True followers of Jesus must not only obey the laws of God but we’re also told to obey the government and the leaders of our country. We are called to be the most obedient people on the face of the Earth. Paul also emphasized not speaking badly toward others, being peaceful and considerate and having true humility toward all men. When we walk in the Holy Spirit, he’ll cause us to speak evil of no one. Why do you think Paul makes this point? Let’s look at Titus 2:10 “and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.” One reason Christians are called to be obedient to the laws of God and man is so we can make the gospel of Jesus attractive. However, let’s not forget we’re called to live in this world but not be of the world. *What’s the difference?* Well, the book of Daniel gives us a great example of this. Throughout his life, Daniel was subject to several pagan kings but he didn’t do whatever the kings said. When told to eat pagan food or drink wine from the king’s table, Daniel boldly said “no” because it violated God’s word. When King Darius put his decree in writing that no one must pray to any other gods except him, Daniel didn’t stop praying to God. The point is, we must obey the governing authorities until they ask us to violate the word of God. If we’re even faced with this situation, we must obey God and put His word first in our life. Let’s look at verse 3 “At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another.” Paul is saying that believers must always remember who they were before being saved by God’s grace. We were sinners. Keeping God’s grace present in our minds every day helps us remain humble and contrite and prevents us from being proud. Pride is a silent killer of a Christian’s faith. Many believers (both past and present) have missed out on all that God had in store for them because of their sinful pride. The only way to receive God’s favour is through genuine humility by recognizing how much we need Him. With God, we can do anything He might call us to do. Without God, we can do nothing. Next, verse 4-7 says “But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.” Paul is saying that it’s because of God’s kindness and love towards sinners that he sent the world a Saviour, Jesus Christ. God offers eternal salvation and washes away all our past sins through the blood of Jesus, when we repent and fully commit our lives to follow Him. This is the gospel. The apostle Paul is also telling Titus to remember that we (Christians) don’t deserve to be saved based on our merit, but because of the Lord’s mercy. I’m here today because of God’s mercy, you’re here today because of God’s mercy. However, the mistake some Christians make (especially new believers) is we get confused because we sometimes think we need to do good to go to heaven. Basically, the apostle Paul is reminding us that ‘we’re not saved by doing good…but we’re called to do good.’ We’re not holy. We don’t have the ability to live a holy life, apart from God. When a person makes the life decision sincerely and faithfully pursue God, it’s common for them to fall into sin and think…I need to try harder to be a Christian and earn my salvation. Satan wants us to focus on our past mistakes and current sins, to get discouraged and eventually give up our faith in God. As Christians, we’re not called to live a perfect life. We’re called to resist the sinful impulses of the flesh and yield to the impulse of the Holy Spirit. This is a lifelong growing process, but this is the Christian life. So, after we’re saved (because of God’s mercy) then we must do good. Let’s also remind ourselves, we don’t do good to keep ourselves saved either. God saved us through being birth again by the power of the Holy Spirit which we can generously receive through Jesus Christ. Every week we come to Sunday worship service, attend Bible study or have prayer fellowship to grow closer to God and make Him known to others, however, it’s also important to reflect back to who were before receiving the gospel and remember how the gospel has transformed our lives and changed us. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” Through the renewal of the Holy Spirit, we’re been made new. God never said we’ll be perfect, he said we’ll be a new creation. Each morning, every believer must say ‘thank God I am a new creation in Christ, old is gone…the new has come’. Praise God! Let’s look at verse 8a “This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, Paul says ‘this is a trustworthy saying’. The word trustworthy also means reliable, secure, solid, safe and dependable. Trustworthiness is something that most people seek throughout their life. People often say “I’m looking for a secure job” or “I want a safe investment vehicle for my money”. However, the reality is we live in an uncertain world where companies lay off thousands of workers by e-mail…or stock prices can drop overnight. But God’s word says ‘this is a trustworthy saying’. Paul tells Titus that he can trust what he has written.

I believe we’re all one choice away from changing our life forever. That one choice might be to marry a particular person. That life-changing decision might be to read a certain book or have a conservation with someone. Trusting (or ignoring) the written word of God is also a choice that we all make…hour by hour, minute by minute, all these choices have consequences which will directly affect us and those around us for our good, or to our shame. For me, my life changed forever the moment I decided to attend a UBF group Bible study back in 2014. By God’s grace, that one decision eventually lead me to commit my life to be a follower of Jesus Christ, marrying a God-fearing woman, having a family, serving Bible students and becoming a messenger of God’s word. But before that decision 9 years ago, my life was totally different. The apostle Paul said ‘we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures’

Before coming to Christ, I would constantly lie, steal or cheat and do everything in my power to satisfy my fleshly desires. I was once passionate about filmmaking and acting and my life was consumed with achieving worldwide fame as a respected artist. Like most people, I was believing the lie from Satan that achieving worldly will make me happy and give me a sense of self-worth. This is a powerful lie of the devil. I sometimes wonder what would my life look like if I had said “no” to that group Bible study invitation. I don’t know exactly how my life would have turned out, but I certainly wouldn’t be standing here giving this message. Thank you, God, for your rich mercy for a sinner like me.

Part 2 - Remember To Do What Is Good (8b-15)

Let’s continue with verse 8b “so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.”

Titus must emphasize the gospel message and God’s grace to all those people who are true followers of Jesus. These believers must stay devoted to doing good because it will profitable to them, in every way. So, what is considered “good” from God’s perspective? Who is good, according to the Bible? Luke 18:19 says “Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good--except God alone.” - According to the Bible, only God is good. God’s work is good. Therefore, doing good means 100% devotion to serving God and helping others get saved through Jesus Christ. Devotion also means spending intimate time with God every day through the discipline of Bible reading and prayer. Someone once said, “The gospel brings man to God, but devotions keep him close to God.” Daily devotion is important for Christians because it helps us draw near to God. The sincere follower of Jesus knows that God wants His people to draw near to Him with true and pure hearts, and that’s what daily devotion is all about.

Next, Paul gives Titus some advice. Verse 9-11 says “But avoid foolish controversies and

genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.” Paul warns Titus to avoid foolish disputes over matters which are not aligned with God’s word. Titus 1:11 “They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach--and that for the sake of dishonest gain.” - These foolish disputes are simply unprofitable and useless. Instead, Titus should focus on the simple word of God. Focusing on Jesus, who is the only way to be saved. Titus must also make sure to not waste his time preaching God’s word to hostile people who insist on going their own way. Their self-will makes them self-condemned.

Lastly, verse 14-15 says “Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive

lives. Everyone with me sends you greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith.

Grace be with you all.” - ‘Devote themselves to doing what is good’ is a recurring theme through Paul’s letter to Titus. Paul was concerned that Christians might be unproductive and unfruitful, yet still have a “wonderfully” confident assurance of their standing in the Lord. Instead of being unfruitful, we must learn to continuously teach and preach God’s word while also meeting the urgent needs of others. I have a question for us all to think about…

Is my life fruitful for the kingdom of God?

Remember what the Bible says, we’re put here for a purpose. Ephesians 2:10 says “For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” We’re not saved so we can just live for ourselves, we’re saved to be fruitful to the LORD. While meditating and preparing for this message, the Holy Spirit lead me to Colossians 1:10 which is a good scripture to end with. “And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God”

In conclusion, as God’s people, we must learn (and be repeatedly reminded) to do what is good and pleasing to the Lord. The result of spiritual fruitfulness (doing good) is that God is glorified, we grow to be more like Jesus, and others come to know Christ’s saving grace—this is the ultimate of good works for a child of God.