

# 1

## He Saved Us

Sermon preached by Pastor C. John Steer  
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Scripture: Titus 3:1-8

Today I want to draw your attention to three wonderful words in Titus 3, verse 5. They are **"He saved us." (v 5)**

The Apostle Paul is referring to a great company of people whose testimony is "God saved us."

Now I want to ask a very important question.

Do you belong to that company?

Can you say with absolute conviction "He saved me."

I hope you can because there is no issue more crucial than our salvation.

It is so significant that God has given us a book that from cover to cover is the story of salvation.

Throughout its pages we find this word "saved".

In the Old Testament God says **"Turn to me and be saved all you ends of the earth." (Isaiah 45:22)**

In the gospel Jesus says, **"I am the door, if anyone enters through me he shall be saved." (John 10:9)**

In the Epistles Paul writes, **"Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved." (Romans 10:13)**

This is why the Bible was written.

This is why Jesus came, why he died, why he rose and why he returned to heaven so that we might be saved.

Today I am going to try and answer four questions that people ask about this matter of salvation. They arise out of this passage in Titus chapter 3. So please turn to that chapter in your Bible and take out your message outline.

### 1. WHY DO WE NEED TO BE SAVED?

Verse 3 gives us the reason, **"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." (v 3)**

Here is God's description of a person who is not saved.

It doesn't make complimentary reading.

Perhaps we object, "But I am not like that."

The Apostle Paul says we are.

He uses the pronoun "we". He includes himself.

Now every branch of the Christian church recognizes Paul as an outstanding saint and yet here he says, "This is what I was like and this is what you were like."

This is the kind of the people we are until we are saved.

This is a family picture of the human race suffering from the consequences of sin.

Someone objects, "We do not believe in sin anymore.

Sin is an old-fashioned idea."

Well it is true that our society as a whole does not believe in sin but we certainly believe in the effects of sin.

Issues like crime, violence, drugs, war and greed are matters of national concern.

The reality is that sin is a problem in our society.

That is why we should welcome a message of deliverance from sin and its consequences.

But in case we are not yet convinced that we need to be saved Paul outlines three damaging results of sin.

First, **Sin spoils our relationship with God**

**"At one time we too were foolish." (v 3)**

This foolishness is not a reference to our intellect but rather a statement that we are devoid of knowledge about our creator.

The fool in the Bible is not the person who dropped out of high school but the person who says there is no God.

Conversely the wise person in scripture is not the individual with a PhD but rather the person who knows God.

So sin prevents us from knowing God and that is why we need to be saved.

Second, **Sin spoils our understanding of ourselves**

Sin causes us to be **"Deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures." (v 3)**

If we are wrong about God we will be wrong about ourselves. God created us to enjoy him and glorify him forever.

If we are not fulfilling that purpose we will not be happy.

We will have a nagging sense of dissatisfaction.

Far too many people suffer from that.

We call it by different names.

Students try and find themselves.

40 somethings have midlife crises.

Seniors try and complete their bucket list.

Our society goes to great lengths to find meaning to our existence and put excitement into our life.

The results is that we become self centered and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures.

# 3

Sometimes we think we have found the answer but then disillusionment sets in. We identify with Solomon when he said, **"There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death." (Proverbs 14:12)**

There is only one person who can fulfill the longing of our life. His name is Jesus. He alone fits the God shaped gap in our soul. And that is why we need to be saved.

Third, **Sin spoils our relationship with others**

**"We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another." (v 3)**

The person who is only concerned about their own passions and pleasures doesn't make a very good husband or wife.

The person who is only concerned about their own happiness doesn't make a very good friend.

The person who is totally absorbed with themselves makes a poor worker and an even worse manager.

God never intended it to be this way. Before sin came into the world there were perfect relationships in a perfect planet  
But sin has spoiled God's world.

The men's small group I am in are studying Romans.

This week we were looking at the appalling consequences of sin.

Someone pointed out that sin is like a virus that has infected the human race.

Then one of our members who knows rather a lot about this sort of thing said, "But God has provided a vaccine. It is called Jesus."

So we see that salvation is very practical.

It changes our relationship to God.

It changes our understanding of ourselves.

It changes our relationship with others.

## 2. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE SAVED?

What does it mean to proclaim, "He saved us"?

First, **it means to be born again.**

We are saved **"through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit." (v 5)**

This is the one place in all Paul's letters where he talks about the new birth which Jesus discussed with Nicodemus in John chapter 3. Paul's point is that this new birth washes us clean from everything that had previously polluted us.

It is very important we are born again.

Jesus told Nicodemus, **"No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." (John 3:3)**

Second, **it means to be justified.**

Paul continues, **"Having been justified by his grace." (v 7)**

## 4

When we are saved we not only receive a new life but God does something about the old life.

He forgives and forgets our sins. He justifies us.  
This means he treats me just-as-if-I'd-never sinned at all.  
Sinners we may have been but forgiven sinners we are.

Once a man was moaning to Augustine about his sins.  
Augustine told him, "Look away from your sins and look to God."

Third, **it means to become an heir.**

Paul tells us that when God saved us we, **"Become heirs." (v 7)**  
Now an heir inherits when their benefactor dies.  
Jesus died and we inherit all that was his.  
His life, his home, and his power.

Just think for a moment about the miraculous change that has taken place in the individual that Paul is describing in this passage. The person in verse three is lost.  
They have a wrong relationship with God, a wrong understanding of themselves and a wrong attitude to others.

But the person in verse five is saved.  
They have a right relationship with God because they have been regenerated and justified.  
They have a right understanding of themselves because they know they are heirs of God.

Because of this they have a right attitude to others.  
They are given the ability **"To be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility towards all men." (v 2)**

This transformation is a cause of tremendous celebration.  
That is why Paul tells Titus to remind the Christians in Crete of what they were once like.  
If we have been a Christian for a few years we do need reminding. It is easy to forget the story of our salvation.

### 3. HOW CAN WE BE SAVED?

How does the lost person of verse 3 become the saved person of verse 5?  
This is the all important question.

Paul answers it negatively and positively.  
The negative answer is, **"Not because of righteous things we had done." (v 5)**  
We don't like that. If you ask the average person how to get to heaven they will answer "live a good life."  
In other words "because of righteous things we have done."

But God's way of salvation is not on the basis of deeds which we have done.  
The Bible makes it absolutely clear that we cannot be saved by our own efforts, **"For it is by grace you have been saved through faith . . . it is the gift of God not by works, so that no one can boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)**

## 5

I heard about a father who had to look after a lot of children one Saturday afternoon. He was frustrated by the change of plans.  
He had hoped to watch the football game in solitude.  
Suddenly he had an idea.  
He put a bucket on the floor of the garage and placed \$20 in the bucket.  
He offered the money to any child who could stand in the bucket and lift themselves up by the handle.

The children spent the whole afternoon trying. The dad had a peaceful few hours watching his game and he kept his \$20.  
We can't lift ourselves half an inch off the floor, let alone raise ourselves from the grave of our sin.

Well if we are not saved by good works how are we saved?  
Between verse 3 and verse 5 comes verse 4.  
It gives us the positive answer, **"But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us . . . because of his mercy."** (v 4-5)

The word "appeared" takes us to Bethlehem and the word "saved" takes us to Calvary where Jesus paid the price for our salvation.  
Do we have a part to play in our salvation?  
Martin Luther answered by saying, "O yes, we provide the sin and rebellion."  
But perhaps we can go further. Our part is to believe the trustworthy statement that God sent his son to save us from our sin and in response we give our lives to him.

Now we have probably heard that before but have we acted on it? Can we look back at a time when we moved from the foolish disobedience of verse 3 to the washing of rebirth of verse 5? If you are not sure, let me encourage you to be sure.

Do you realize that you can be saved right where you are, even while I am speaking.  
Talk to God, tell him you want the salvation he offers.  
Talk to me after the service or some time this week.  
I would love to pray with you.

Can it really be that simple?  
Listen to this, **"To all who receive Jesus, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."** (John 1:12)

Let me give you a simple way to remember what salvation is.  
Salvation is an **act**. God saved me.  
Salvation is a **fact**. Jesus died for me.  
Salvation is a **pact**. Between me and God sealed by the Holy Spirit

### 4. WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE OF BEING SAVED?

The problem is that if I don't have to do anything but accept that Jesus died for me, how do I know that anything has happened?

Will I feel different?

Well, I might but feelings come and go.

People who put their trust in feelings often lack assurance.

There is a way to know that we are saved.

It is the evidence of a changed life.

That is why it is good to remember what we once were like so that we can see how far we have come.

If we can't see any difference we better ask ourselves "Am I really saved?"

Verse 8 tells us that the result of being saved is, **"Doing what is good." (v 8)**

Notice we are not saved by our good deeds, but when we are saved by God's mercy the evidence is seen in our good deeds.

Now what exactly does it mean to "do what is good?"

We find the answer at the beginning of the chapter.

**"Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do what is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men." (v 1 & 2)**

Now isn't that wonderfully practical.

To hear some people talk you would think that being saved was a private, mystical experience that has no bearing on the outside world. But nothing could be further from the truth.

A person who is saved will be a tremendous asset to society.

First we will be **a good citizen.**

We will, "Be subject to rulers and authorities."

We will, "Be obedient."

There is a growing concern about the lack of civility and respect in our society.

You see it towards the President and it doesn't matter whether it was President Bush or President Obama.

You see it sports towards referees.

And you see it in the classroom towards teachers.

You see it in the home towards parents.

That breakdown of authority and that lack of a respect is a consequence of sin.

Saved people will respect authority because we know that God placed the person in their position of authority.

Paul wrote to the Romans, **"Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God." (Romans 13:1)**

We show respect for authority by keeping the law, paying our taxes, obeying our leaders and parents, and yes, even umpires.

We are grateful that we live in a democracy. That means we can disagree with our political leaders. However, we do so with restraint and respect and as Christians we pray for our

President and all who are in positions of power because we acknowledge that they have been established by God.

Second, we will be **a good Samaritan.**

**"Ready to do whatever is good." (v 1)**

I want to commend you for the way you have been doing good. At the Missions Festival we asked you to participate in ACTS which stands for A Call to Serve.

We invited you to provide food for the IN HIS NAME Food Bank. You did "whatever is good" and provided:

464 boxes of cereal

340 jars of Peanut Butter

350 jars of jelly

346 miscellaneous canned goods

40 bags of groceries

That generosity brings pleasure to the heart of God.

A third evidence of being saved is that we will be **a good friend.**

We will, **"Slander no one, be peaceable and considerate, and show true humility." (v 2)**

What a great person to spend time with.

Wonderful to have that type of individual as a neighbor, a spouse, a friend, an employee, or a boss.

We would love to be in their company.

Thanksgiving is next Thursday.

It is a day when we count our blessings.

I can think of no better reason to be thankful than to be able to say: "He saved us." God saved me.

My past is pardoned, my present is powered by the Spirit of God and my future is provided for in heaven.