

Titus: Becoming a Sound Church

05 Belief = Behavior

May 28, 2017

I. INTRODUCTION

How many of you have found it confusing when Christians talk about salvation being a complete work of God but then begin to talk about what we need to do. Wait a minute, if it is a complete work of God then why all this talk about fighting sin, maturing, growing in faith, and the likes.

This is because the way we discuss salvation is usually focused on one moment that we call conversion. When really salvation encompasses a comprehensive work in your life.

Salvation has many components of which some are a complete work of our sovereign God that we cannot do while others require obedience on our part, require work on our part. If we were to talk about the process/order of salvation it might look something like this¹:

1. Gospel Call (hearing the gospel)
2. Regeneration (being born again)
3. Conversion (faith and repentance)
4. Justification (right legal standing)
5. Adoption (membership in God's family)
6. Sanctification (right conduct of life)
7. Perseverance (remaining a Christian)
8. Death (going to be with the Lord)
9. Glorification (receiving a resurrection body)

¹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994) p 670.

So if you find it overwhelming to think about your behaviors and how far they are away from a person who is suppose to be saved, stand in line with a host of other solid believers... because like we introduced last week as Christians we are in what we like to call *already not yet*.

We are already saved but not yet fully restored—like we just saw in the process of salvation. So we are called to fight each and every day to live a life that reflects Christ to the world.

To my estimation there have been about 40ish attitudes and behaviors that should mark us as Christians here in the book of Titus. But don't miss the pattern that Paul has been using...the behavior is only possible because of your conversion, because God has saved you or we could specifically use the language of Titus 3:5 that states God has regenerated you even before conversion—which means that God imparts new spiritual life to you—which enables you to live like him in the world.

We cannot over look the reality that the book of Titus is deeply concerned with our works/how we live...mentions the word works/deeds 9 times throughout the letter. If we call ourselves Christians, well indeed we should live like it, because we have been enabled by the work of God to do so.

This is the part of the process of salvation we call sanctification...Our sanctification (*growing in right conduct of life*) is a work of God and man to become more like Christ and less sinful.

God works by regenerating us, justifying us, adopting us—saving us!—and we work by depending on God, by reading the bible, by meeting with other brother and sisters, by being a

faithful member at a local church...all of which we have seen in the book of Titus.

Lets look at this pattern again closely, which to be clear is 1) behaviors of a Christian, 2) rehearsal of the gospel signified by the word appearing, and then 3) commands them to declare or insist on the gospel truths, which is Christ appearing on our behalf and giving himself up in order to redeem, purify, regenerate, and justify.

Pattern

Behavior of Christians

Jesus Appearing

Declare and Insist on the truths about salvation

II. BEHAVIORS—ACTIONS TOWARDS OTHERS (READ 1-3)

No doubt about it that our salvation that appeared in Jesus that, as we learned last week, is training us towards personal holiness should also effect all relationship. Civil authorities and those outside the church.

- A. This extensive list Paul places before the church should characterize their interaction with others around them, particularly outside the church. It amazes me that we often don't think about the implication of our lives outside of here, how we act, speak, our work ethic, general kindness towards others, graciousness...you can hardly believe that you will be effective for the gospel if these first two verses do not describe your behaviors outside this room.

The greatest evangelistic effort LITD can put its hands towards, is you living rightly outside these doors. You living a life marked by graciousness, kindness, integrity in your work, faithful to your word, speaking well of others, and so on.

Helping others around the office, being a good listener and promoting peaceful solutions to conflict and modeling forgiveness. Of all people Christians should understand forgiveness, because as the text says...

B. For You Once Were (3)

1. A proper perspective on our lives before Christ is extremely helpful in making us a thankful and patient person. We would do well to reflect on who we once were and who would be right now if not for the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior! Which brings us the the next part...

The second part of Paul's pattern over the last two chapters is God appearing in Jesus...

III. JESUS—GOODNESS AND KINDNESS OF GOD OUR SAVIOR APPEARED (READ 4-7)

Notice once again how Paul is moving back and forth through the process of salvation from our work—sanctification, behaviors—to God's work—regeneration, conversion, and justification...which by the way is the ground and strength we pull from to work because...

- A. *He saved us...*not by our own works of righteousness but according to his own mercy by/through...
 1. *Washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit...*lets understand regeneration because don't miss it, this text is saying that we are saved because God first through the HS regenerates us, renews us.

He enables us to work. Other places within the scripture refer to this as being “born again” a new spiritual life is given. Here is a great definition for regeneration:

- a) *to experience a complete change in one's way of life to what it should be, with the implication of return to a former state or relation—'to be born again, to experience new birth, rebirth.'*²

So according to Titus 3:5 there is a washing, a cleansing that occurs and must occur, for us to be regenerated, to be made anew, born again.

The scriptures often follow the word “saved” with Jesus but here we get a bit more information on exactly how this all takes place, which come to find out is truly a work of God in the life of a person.

I think Paul is saying that God has worked extensively to save you; so, go...and work out of fullness of joy, not obligation but joyous duty. Your salvation was never meant to keep you on the sidelines but enable you to live in fullness of joy as a representation of God to the world.

2. As if being made clean by the washing of regeneration, having new birth, being renewed is not enough the text goes on. We are also justified—declared righteous before God. Yet another part of our salvation that cannot be accomplished by us.

Through the work of Christ, his righteousness becomes ours and we are in right standing before God, we can be in his presences. And not only in his presences but we become heirs. Brothers and sisters, we are heirs to eternal life with our father.

² Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 509.

THEREFORE...

IV. INSIST—FAITHFUL SAYING (READ 8)

- A. *Faithful saying*...the above statements in verses 4-7 apparently where agreed upon truths about Jesus and his work to save us. The Christian community had creedal type statements that summarized truth so that they would not forget them...to preserve *sound doctrine*. This is why I had us all read that section together, we were participating in a long standing practice of the early church.

Paul cannot talk about our behavior without talking about our beliefs. Beliefs influence our behavior, so our belief and understanding about Jesus saving us through a comprehensive work of washing us from our sins and making us new,

compels us to live for him, to behave like Christians, our life lived reveals our salvation—all of salvation, regeneration, conversion, adoption, sanctification...all of it!

- B. *Insist on these things*...we must be centered on the truths of Jesus work in our lives! If we are not, we are of no use to God and others, the text says so...the whole reason he wants them to insist on the truths from the faithful saying is...
1. *so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works...*
 2. Brothers and sisters it is right there in the text...

BELIEF = BEHAVIORS!

Those who have believed...devote themselves to good works, which are all the things discussed in chapter 2 and now three!!!

3. Since this is the second time Paul has told Titus and the church to speak about these truths lets take a second and get as practical as possible.

Back in 2:15 it states to declare/speak and here in 3:8 it says to insist/speak confidently the wonderful truth of our salvation in Christ by the regeneration of the HS. So the emphasis lies on speaking, saying these things often and not only saying but being confident in them, actually believe them whole heartily. So here are a couple of things we should do:

1. Read your bible in order to know these things
2. Memorize scripture, 3:4-7 is a good starting point
3. Meet with others and talk about these things, not just sports or the weather but these things
4. Rehearse these things daily by creating creedal statements
5. Lastly, the text itself gives it to us...

V. AVOID (READ 9-11)

- A. *foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, quarrels about the law for they are unprofitable...* quite the opposite of the faithful saying that we are instructed to insist on. Why spend all your time on unprofitable conversations? The unprofitable conversations for those at Crete were issues of genealogies—usually trying to trace someone’s lineage for spiritual benefit, or quarreling about the law in terms of what to follow how stringently.
- B. Person who stirs up division

1. warn once, then twice, then have nothing...

Why does Paul give those final instructs because belief influences our behaviors; belief = behavior!