

## **UNDERSTANDING SALVATION – Part 2**

**Titus 3:3-7**

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The title of this sermon is “Understanding Salvation.”

This is a two part sermon that we began last week.

Last week we learned that the Greek word for salvation is *soteria*. That’s where we get our word “soteriology,” which is the study of salvation.

The word “salvation” means to cure, to provide recovery, to rescue, to deliver. It is often used in the Bible to refer to someone being rescued from physical danger, but most of the time, especially in the New Testament, the word “salvation” is used in a spiritual sense to refer to **deliverance or rescue from sin and all of its consequences and restoring us to a right relationship with God**.

And in this two-part study on salvation we are looking at eight truths about salvation.

Our text is **Titus 3:3-7 (CSB)**. Let’s read it again.

3 For we too were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved by various passions and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, detesting one another.

4 But when the kindness of God our Savior and his love for mankind appeared, 5 he saved us—not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy—through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit. 6 He poured out his Spirit on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we may become heirs with the hope of eternal life.

So this passage begins with our state before salvation in verse 3. “Foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved by various passions, living in malice and envy,

hateful, detesting one another.” This is what we were like before salvation. Lost in sin. Dead in sin.

And then in verses 4-7 the passage talks about our salvation. And Paul mentions eight truths about salvation. Last week we looked the first four. This week we’re going to look at the second four.

Let’s do a quick review of the first four truths about salvation.

**First salvation means deliverance from sinful living.** Verse 3 says that we were living very sinful lives before salvation. It talks about sin in the past tense. Before salvation we lived in sin. After salvation, we were not. Salvation does not just deliver us from the punishment for sin, but from a sinful life. If you are not striving to repent of sin and live in a way that is pleasing to God, then haven’t experienced salvation. Salvation doesn’t make us sinless, but it does place us on the highway of holiness.

**Second, salvation is accomplished by the death of Jesus Christ.** Jesus is the Savior. He is the only Savior.

**Acts 4:12** says, “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved.”

How did He save us? Before salvation we are under God’s wrath – we are enemies of God headed for eternal punishment in hell. God’s wrath is His extreme anger against sin that will be poured out on judgment day when Christ returns. In order to save us, Jesus absorbed God’s wrath upon Himself by dying on the cross and thereby turned God’s wrath away from us. And now, by faith in Christ, God will look up on us in favor. This is the meaning of the word “propitiation.” Christ satisfied, or absorbed, or turned away, or removed God’s wrath from us by taking it upon Himself.

**Third, salvation is the ultimate demonstration of God’s love for mankind.** Why did Christ suffer and die for us? Because He loves us. The extent of His love is

shown in that He saved us even though we were His enemies; and that He saved us by enduring crucifixion.

**Fourth, salvation is not by works, but by God's mercy.** We deserve God's wrath. How do we atone for our sins, or pay for our sins, or make up for our sins? Can we atone for our sins by doing good works – so many good works that God will forgive our sins? No. We can't be saved by good works, but by God's mercy. God's forgiveness. And how do we receive God's forgiveness? By believing in Jesus as our wrath-remover; as God's payment for our sins; as our propitiation.

Now let's move on to four more truths about salvation.

### **5. Salvation means regeneration.**

Look at **Titus 3:5** again. "5 He saved us—not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy—through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit."

What is regeneration? **When God saves us, He gives us a new heart with the desire and power to please Him.**

The Greek word for regeneration is *palingenesia*, and **it means new birth, or a radical new beginning.**

That's why Jesus described salvation in John 3:3, 5 as being "born again," or being "born of the Spirit."

Regeneration can also be defined simply as the new birth. When we are saved we experience the new birth.

Because salvation is a new birth, or a radical new beginning, that means that salvation must result in a change in a person's life.

And that's exactly what the Bible says in **2 Corinthians 5:17**. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!"

When you get saved you get changed; you are a new person; a new creation.

The KJV says "a new creature."

What kind of change occurs when you get saved?

The Old Testament prophets looked forward to the time of the coming Messiah because one of thing that He would do is that He would give people new hearts.

**Jeremiah 32:39-40** says, "I will give them integrity of heart and action so that they will fear me always, for their good and for the good of their descendants after them. 40 "I will make a permanent covenant with them: I will never turn away from doing good to them, and I will put fear of me in their hearts so they will never again turn away from me."

**Ezekiel 36:26-27** says, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will place my Spirit within you and cause you to follow my statutes and carefully observe my ordinances."

So the change that happens to us in regeneration is that **God gives us a new heart with the desire and power to please Him.**

Before we get saved we live for ourselves, and we can't help it.

Living for self rather than for God is called sin.

Going our own way rather than God's way is sin. And that's what we did. And we couldn't stop being that way. We were enslaved to sin.

But when God saves us He regenerates; He gives us a new birth; He gives us a new heart with the desire and power to please Him.

Regeneration does not perfect us. But it does give us the desire to please God, and it gives us the power to say No to sin and Yes to Christ.

This is why 1 John 3:9 says, “9 Everyone who has been born of God does not sin, because his seed remains in him; he is not able to sin, because he has been born of God.”

Once you are saved, or born again, because of regeneration, you are different;

you are striving to please God.

You still sin.

But your desire and direction is holiness and righteousness and obedience.

Look at the words surrounding “regeneration” in Titus 3:5.

Regeneration is described as a “washing.” That’s what regeneration does. It washes us of sin, because now we no longer want to sin; we want to please God.

Regeneration is also described as a “renewal” because it makes you into a new person. It’s like you are starting a new life.

And notice that regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Each person in the Trinity plays a role in our salvation.

The Father sent His Son.

The Son died for our sins and rose again.

And the Holy Spirit regenerates us.

This is why Jesus said in John 3:5 that being born again is the same as being born of the Spirit.

## **6. Salvation means the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.**

Now look at **verse 6**. “He poured out his Spirit on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.”

When you get saved, not only does the Holy Spirit give you a new heart, but He also indwells you. He comes to live inside of you. This is called the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

What does the Bible say about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit?

### **First, the Holy Spirit indwells every Christian.**

**Romans 8:9** says, “You, however, are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him.”

Notice that it says that if you don’t have the Spirit, then you are not a Christian. This means that all Christians have the indwelling Holy Spirit.

**1 Corinthians 6:19** says, “Don’t you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own.”

The interesting thing about this verse is that Paul was writing to the church in Corinth which really struggled with sin. In fact this very passage is about their struggles with sexual sin. Yet Paul tells them that Holy Spirit lives in them. In other words, the Holy Spirit doesn’t only live in holy Christians; He lives in all of us!

### **Second, the Holy Spirit indwells the believer at the moment of salvation.**

How do I know that? Because Romans 8:9 says that if you don't have the Holy Spirit then you are not a Christian. Therefore we have to receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation.

This is why some theologians, and I would agree, believe that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the same as the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

In Matthew 3:11 John the Baptist said that while he only baptized people with water, Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit.

I believe that this is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Why? The word baptism.

Water baptism only happens once. The Holy Spirit only indwells us once.

Water baptism happens at the beginning of your Christian life. The Spirit's indwelling happens at the beginning of your Christian life.

Water baptism means that water gets all over you. The Spirit's indwelling means that the Spirit gets all over you.

So it would make sense to call the indwelling of the Holy Spirit the baptism with the Holy Spirit because the word baptism fits well with both experiences.

**Third, the Holy Spirit never leaves you.**

Once the Holy Spirit indwells you, He indwells you permanently.

We already saw how Paul told the sinful Corinthian believers that the Holy Spirit lived inside them. In other words, their sin didn't cause the Holy Spirit to depart.

As well, Romans 8:9 says that all Christians have the Holy Spirit. And since we know that we can't lose our salvation, then that means that we cannot lose the Holy Spirit.

What does the Holy Spirit do once He indwells us? He does a lot. The Bible says the Holy Spirit in you...

Leads you to the truth. (Jn 14:16-17)

Teaches you everything and reminds you of everything Jesus said. (Jn 14:26)

Testifies to you and through you about Jesus. (Jn 15:26)

Convicts you of your sin, of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment. (Jn 16: 8)

Guides you into all truth. (Jn 16:12)

Empowers you for ministry by giving you spiritual gifts. (1 Cor 12)

Changes your desires so that you want to please God. (Phil 2:13; Gal 5:17))

Gives you the power to obey and please God. (Phil 2:13)

Transforms you to be like Christ. (Gal 5:22-23)

Gives you boldness to be a courageous witness for Christ. (Acts 4)

Helps you to pray when you don't know what to pray for. (Rom 8:26-27)

Keeps the church unified. (Eph 4:3)

## **7. Salvation means justification.**

Go back to **Titus 3:6-7**. "6 He poured out his Spirit on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we may become heirs with the hope of eternal life."

Notice that it says that salvation also means justification. We have been justified by His grace.

What is justification? **When God saves us, He declares us legally righteous in His sight.**

When we put our faith in Christ to save us, God takes our sins and considers them paid for by Christ on the cross, and He takes Christ's perfect righteousness and gives it to us.

Practically speaking, justification means that when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ we will not be condemned for our sins, because we have been declared legally righteous through faith in Christ.

**Romans 8:1** says, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus."

Now be careful that you don't misunderstand justification. Justification is God declaring us legally righteous in His sight. We are legally righteous so we will not have to go to hell for our sins; we are no longer God's enemies.

But that doesn't mean we are practically righteous.

To become practically righteous in our character we must cooperate with the Holy Spirit's lifelong work of sanctification in which He gradually grows us more and more like Christ.

Justification is God declaring us legally righteous in His sight.

Sanctification is God (the Holy Spirit) growing us more and more righteous in our character.

Justification happens once, the moment we are saved.

Sanctification begins the moment we are saved and continues until the day we die.

Notice that **verse 7** says we are "justified by his grace."

This is a reminder that God does not declare us legally righteous because we earned it.

Justification is a free gift because Christ paid for our sins in the cross.

**Romans 3:24** says, “They are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”

And the Bible makes it very clear the way to receive the gift of justification.

**Romans 3:28** says, “For we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.”

We are justified, or declared legally righteous in the sight of God, by faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. By trusting in what Christ has done for us.

## **8. Salvation means eternal life.**

Look one more time at Titus 3:6-7. “6 He poured out his Spirit on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we may become heirs with the hope of eternal life.”

Now that we have been justified, or declared righteous, we have become heirs with the hope of eternal life.

What does it mean to be an heir? It means we have been promised an inheritance.

What is that inheritance? The hope of eternal life.

The word “hope” is an interesting word in the Bible.

When we use the word “hope,” we mean that we “desire,” or “wish,” or “long for” something to happen. Strong desire.

That’s not what the Bible means by “hope.”

The Greek word is *elpis*. It means a desire for something with the absolute assurance and certainty that it will happen.

Just knowing that something will happen is not hope.

And just wishing for something to happen is not hope. Not the Biblical word *elpis*.

*Elpis* hope is desiring something, looking forward to something, longing for something that you know with absolute certainty is going to happen.

This is the way it is with Christians and eternal life, or heaven.

We have the hope of eternal life. That's our inheritance from God as Christians.

And the hope of eternal life means two things.

**First, we know with absolute certainty** and assurance that it is ours. If you are saved, then you can know for sure that when you die you will wake up to be with God in heaven.

But we don't just have confident assurance. We also have deep desire. We have hope. **We deeply desire and are confident of eternal life.** We look forward to the day when we go to heaven, because then we will see Jesus face to face, and we will no longer have to worry about sin, and suffering, and sorrow, and sickness, and strife, and socialism (just kidding on the last one!).

When people die they will spend eternity in one of two places: Heaven or hell.

God loves you and wants you to spend eternity in heaven with Him. But in order to go to heaven you need to be saved.

Let me teach you **two important facts about eternal life.**

First, it is a free gift. **Romans 6:23** says, “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

That means you don’t get eternal life because you earned it.

The last thing you should want is for God to give you what you deserve. Eternal life is a free gift.

How do we receive it? That brings me to the second fact about eternal life.

We receive eternal life by believing in Jesus.

**John 3:16** says, “For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”

To be saved and receive eternal life you have to believe in Jesus.

**That means two things.**

First, stop believing in your good works to save you, and start believing in the death of Christ to save you.

Second, stop believing in yourself as the leader of your life, and start believing in Jesus as the leader of your life. To believe in Jesus means to invite Jesus into your life as your Savior and Master.