



Lesson 13 August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024

## Devoted to Good Works

Study Scripture – Titus 3:3-11

Background Scripture – Ephesians 2:1-10

### Key Verse:

“But when the kindness of God our Saviour and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we did in righteousness, but in accordance with His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.”

**Titus 3:4-5**

### INTRODUCTION

It will be wise for us as we study this Lesson to bear in mind the words of the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 11:29-30

***“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.***

***Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.***

***For My yoke is easy and My burden is light”.***

And also the other words of Jesus:

***“Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.***

***For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.***

***For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?***

***Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”***

**Mark 8:24-28**

Jesus, in addition, gave a clear illustration, how His teaching must be applied in real life. In Matthew 25 Jesus gave a series of Parables about the kingdom of heaven and what our life on earth should be like as citizens of the kingdom:

***“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.***

***All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one for another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.***

***And He will set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.***

***Then the King will say to those on His right hand, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world,***

*for I was hungry and you gave Me food. I was thirsty and you gave Me drink. I was a stranger and you took Me in.*

*I was naked and you clothed Me. I was sick and you visited Me. I was in prison and you came to Me”.*

*Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink?*

*When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You?*

*Or When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?*

*And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly I say unto you. Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to me’.*

*Then He will also say to those on the left hand, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels,*

*For I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave me no drink;*

*I was a stranger and you did not take Me in; naked and you did not clothe Me; sick and in prison and in prison and you did not visit Me’.*

*Then they also will answer Him saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’*

*Then He will answer them, saying, Assuredly I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these you did not do it to Me.*

*And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life”.*

We are therefore looking at what seems to us a demanding and unpleasant statement of truth by the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember however this is only one of the critically important actions our love should motivate us carry out.

Our love means we should not abuse, enslave, steal, be sexually immoral, disobedient to the other commandments of the Lord, consider others as inferior to ourselves and treat them as unequal to ourselves, and show prejudice to them.

Those who do not attempt to understand and apply what the Lord is saying will be guilty of adhering to sinning and following a false gospel. Their leaders who teach contrary to apostolic teaching will also be following a false gospel. One writer therefore comments:

**“Many of today’s largest mega-churches and richest television ministries are built on the promise of this kind of cheap grace”.**

The sad thing is that many smaller ministries do exactly the same thing as the large ones and behave in ways directly rejecting of the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In addition, you will meet many professing believers who spend much of their time listening intently to these “cheap grace” teachings, loving those teachings, and lauding the integrity of the false teachers that the Apostle Paul warns about in this Study Lesson.

Clearly, the problems addressed by the apostolic injunctions here against false doctrines and false teachers (1 Timothy 1:3-7; 6:3-5; 10-22; 2 Timothy 2:17-18; Titus 1:10-16) are similar to problems faced as well in our century.



This pastoral Epistle written by Paul to Titus, his apostolic legate, who was entrusted to direct the Cretans ***“who were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another”*** are very relevant today for we behave no differently than they did.

Note that Titus was given the formidable and very tough task in Crete. An island 75 miles south of Greece, it was inhabited by people who had descended from the ancient tribe of the Philistines, the old enemies of Israel during the reign of Saul and David. These people then and still remained great sailors and pirates. Fighting and lawlessness was a prominent feature of their existence.

One of their prophets, says Paul in Titus 1:12, described the Cretans as:

1. Always liars
2. Evil beasts
3. Lazy gluttons.

Titus had to correct deficiencies in the church and in this Paul gave him qualifications for ‘elders’ or governing leaders who had to deal with people who acted like animals, fighting and griping at each other, spending their time in silly, unhelpful controversies, quarrelling, being lazy gluttons, winebibbers, easy-going and pleasure loving.

Don’t laugh, or feel superior, because we were all once like that, says the Apostle Paul.

These ‘elders’ had

- domestic qualifications,
- personal qualifications,
- certain negative qualifications, that is, things that they should not be doing,
- positive qualifications, that is, things that they should be noted for,
- doctrinal qualifications,
- as well as serious and significant responsibilities.

But all was not lost. God can transform the Cretans as well as us. He could transform men then. He can and does still transform men now so that the transformed men and women will enter into the kingdom of heaven to join with the transformed Cretan brethren.

Anyone involved in sin who do not meet the guidelines and requirements of God need not despair.

The honest of heart and the willing, can be changed and transformed by the Holy Spirit into effective servants and ministers of God.

They can be changed by God and do “good works”, once they are prepared to receive **“sound doctrine”**, and to **“do good deeds”**.

Our Study accordingly will look among other issues at

- our relationship with authority and earthly rulers,



- our position of justification where we have been saved by the Lord Jesus Christ
- our dependence on Him as we could not on our own ability do “**works of righteousness**”,
- **the washing of regeneration**, being born again by the work of the Spirit,
- the richness brought by the work of the Spirit,
- the significance of the **grace** of God
- our being made heirs of God
- the kindness and gentleness and love flowing from “the saved” toward mankind
- the magnificent hope of the appearing of the Lord,
- the **hope of eternal life**.

We are therefore now studying who we are as Christians and our justification by Grace. The Apostle will warn us of heresies and the dangerous nature of heretics.

Let us be clear about the deviations of professing Christians and the visible Church from the teaching of the Apostles, including the teaching of the Apostle Paul. We know from the lips of Jesus what He expects us to do. He has established the ‘plumb line’. If we are saved our salvation will be manifested in certain ways.

Salvation does not involve simply having a ‘fuzzy feeling’, and a desire to sing and enjoy and be enraptured by what we consider to be ‘spiritual songs’, and clap and be joyful in our worship services. We can certainly feel what we want to feel, think we can establish rules for our salvation, ignore the needs of the world, and feel we are all-right by behaving what the Book of James Chapter 1 denounces. But there is more of which we should be aware.

Grace is a principle of human salvation. Our relationship with God comes as a free gift of God to us

Justification is by faith. That justification brought by the Lord brings us life. And accordingly, our justification by faith is to issue in “good words”.

Never forget that we are reminding ourselves that ‘love’ is an action word, and so ‘love in action’ results in works.

As we look forward to that blessed hope and the glorious appearance of our great God and Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, our Study Chapter focuses on ‘good works’ in public life. Thus the Apostle begins this Chapter with an exhortation to be subject to rulers. As Jesus taught, we should render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.

## THE TEXT

### FACTS TO REMEMBER



The upcoming verses clearly is an address to believers, those who understand how their faith will be important to the message that is being given, where a non-believer who find such things foolish and a waste of time.

Believers are asked to consider and prepare to take a deeper look at why God would demonstrate His type of love towards us, that being our adoption of us becoming the Children of God.

The Father adopts all the children of the Son. The Son has called, and makes those who He has called His brethren, and thereby He confers upon them the power and dignity of the sons of God. This is the love God has for us. It demonstrates the condescending love of the eternal Father to His children. Where once we were separated due to our corruption, disobedience, and ingratitude, now God has pulled us towards Him freeing us from sin and guilt in a way that a holy God is not ashamed to be called our Father, and to call us His sons.

Scripture teaches us this love has been **bestowed**, this shows that what God has done is more a one-sided giving, instead of a return for something earned.

God wants us to see the love He has demonstrated to us, demonstrated to Him and our brethren. He is not ashamed to show it to us. We should strive to not let things like feelings of pride or unbelief hold us back from fully experiencing what God has intended for us.

We as Christians have to Holy Spirit living inside of us. With that said, as children of God, then it should show in our likeness to our Father and in our love for others. As children of God we have received the love of Jesus in a life of fellowship and trust with Him.

It is the hope of our Father that we share with those who do not know the love of God expressed to all of us in the giving of Jesus for the sins of the world, that way they too may be exalted to the position of children of God as believers have come to understand it.

Our duty still remains that we should show the love that God has for the world to them in hopes that some might change their ways.

**Verse 1.** When we consider the low spiritual condition of the church in Crete which required strong medicine, we must also consider that one scholar among many warns **“of the low spiritual condition, the low spiritual standards that exist in the church of Jesus Christ.**

**One of the reasons that this does exist, that is, lower spiritual standards, is because we have neglected the doctrine of discipline in the New Testament. We have not exercised discipline as the New Testament sets forth our responsibilities. And the problem of apostasy has not been dealt with as it should be dealt with”.**

It is shameful that Scholars and other people routinely reject the authority of the Apostles and their teaching. Some even deny Jesus Christ ever existed. If they admit a man named Jesus came they deny He is God and deny the efficacy of His work on the Cross for redemption of sin. Some teach the demonic doctrine that eventually all will be saved no matter what they believed or are doing consistently.

It is a shame to look at the public life of many believers and their doings, the practices they support, and the discrimination and violence against others they support.



So, the Apostle begins by reminding the leaders in Crete, and ourselves, that obedience and kindness and doing good works belongs to those looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

This reminder to be subject to the principalities or rulers and authorities matches up with every good work. The character of a Christian involves to

1. **“speak evil of no one**
2. **To be peaceable, gentle**
3. **Showing all humility to all men.**

That means believers are not to be brawlers. They are not to be gossips.

Verse 3. The reasons why the men of Crete and the men today acts as they do is because they are not under the state of grace.

Believers should remember that the men and women on the outside were just like you were in your past life.

God has been kind to all believers and so they should be kind to all men. So, never forget who you were in your former life.

Remember John Newton’s song, **“Amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me”**.

He was a perfect wretch, a slave runner, intermingled with the lowest of wretched and iniquitous society. But by the grace of God he was converted and preached everywhere about the grace of God.

The Apostle therefore reminds Gentiles like myself that we **“who were afar off have been brought nigh”**.

He contrasts the seven vices of Verse 3 with the 7 virtues in Verses 1 and 2. Formerly our lives were characterized by evils of the mind, evils of the heart, and we pursued those evils, being foolish, living in malice and envy, behaving hatefully and hating one another.

So, here we see the warning. Do not think that just by being a Church member, being baptized, attending all the Church meetings faithfully, holding offices in the Church, being at Lord’s Supper always, that all this makes us acceptable to God. Once you pursue evil things, serve the different lusts, pleasures, and practices we think suit us, hating the truth, and hating people, everything you touch is spoiled. That is how God sees you.

So begin to be cured. Be kind to all men. Remember who you were before you came to Christ.

**Verse 4.** The clear pointer is toward **divine salvation**. Verses 4-7 in the original Greek is one long sentence. Paul wants us to know everything he is speaking about hang together and cannot be separated.

He tells us that the kindness and gentleness of God appeared for God’s heart of love worked in favour of those who had rebelled against Him and walked away from Him.



This Greek word *chrestotes* does not mean God has a warm and fuzzy feeling. It means this was true kindness to those in need.

One Greek scholar analyses the word Paul uses so we will understand what is involved.

**“The Greek word *philanthropia* (love toward mankind) combines *philos* (love) and *Anthropos* (mankind), humankind).**

**We have brought the Greek word into the English language as “philanthropy”. That would have some to mean the giving of money, but at its core a concern for the welfare of others. The Greek word *epiphaino* (appeared) combines *epi* (over or upon) and *phaino* (to shine), so it means “to shine a light upon” and came to mean “to appear”.**

**We have brought this word into the English language as “Epiphany” which we use to speak of the visit of the Wise Men to Jesus—an early appearance (epiphany) of the Lord to Gentiles”**

Remember now that all these Greek words have precise meanings which impact our understanding of “Good Works” which we do automatically since we are children or sons of God. We hope the meaning of the words used by Paul will enlighten and motivate you to ‘do good works’.

**Verse 5.** When the Apostle speaks of **divine salvation** he makes it very clear that salvation comes because of God’s mercy. It is not because of any work of righteousness that we have done.

The origin of salvation is God’s great mercy.

Salvation cannot come out of good human works.

The problem for Gentiles and Jews is what their view of what righteousness is. The Greeks thought righteousness meant conforming to their customs and traditions. They therefore thought those who did not think highly, or worship pagan gods were thought to be haters of mankind, and they attacked early Christians as haters of man who would therefore because of their stance bring judgment from the gods on the earth and the nations.

The Jews thought having righteousness meant obedience to the laws of the Torah. But when they failed at obedience to that they constructed their own view of righteousness which the Scriptures call the “tradition of the elders”. Jesus accused the Pharisees and scribes of hypocrisy in creating what was in opposition to the laws of God.

Some will wonder and will question why some men who do so much good will not be going to heaven. It must be recognized that by human standards some ‘good works’ may be genuinely ‘good’ and sometimes these might very well conform to the ‘good works’ of God.

But most often than not we see ‘good works’ and judge them ‘outwardly’, and we do not judge them by what they came from ‘inwardly’.

We have to ask ourselves whether the ‘good’ works we see arise from a heart that loves the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father, for if they do not come from that love they being unbelievers have no desire to obey God. Only the love of God is the source of good works.

So, are ‘good’ works we see designed to glorify God?

Or are they designed to glorify the man who gave them?



It is of course possible that some cultures have built in some desire to do some 'good things' for their own tribal, community, or national survival. They learn from experience to avoid certain types of actions, and as the Apostle stated in Romans 3, Gentiles often do what is right, simply because they have the word of God written on their hearts. When exposing that all men, Jew and Gentile, are guilty before God, the Apostle pointed out in Romans 2:14-16, ***“for when the Gentiles who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or also excusing them, in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel”.***

The 'good' that natural or carnal men do, do not measure up to God's standard of perfection. It comes short, Paul states.

God saves according to His great mercy. Salvation is measured by divine mercy

Your moral behaviour, beginning at your salvation, is to grow out of you. There is not be no human pride.

Your moral behaviour is not the cause of your salvation.

You have been washed by the washing of **regeneration**. This Greek word ***palingenesia*** combines the word ***palin*** (**again**) and ***genesis*** (**birth, generation**). We therefore call this “born again”.

This is what Jesus spoke to Nicodemus about. The grace of God would work to remove the defacement of the image of God in man. So God recreates us in His image, and we call that regeneration.

See Romans 6:3-4 for a description of this process.

Man is not responsible for this “new birth”. It is the work of the Holy Spirit who is so gracious He creates new life in believers in the word. The Holy Spirit cleanses believers and brings spiritual life to them.

Clearly therefore we see that human beings are completely dependent on the work of the Sovereign God.

He works righteously and would never compromise His holiness or His goodness. Believers are born of God and not of the will of man or of the flesh.

This gift is renewed by the Holy Spirit.

In Romans 12:2 the Apostle insists on the importance of this renewal of the believer's mind, for they need that renewal to prove what is the good, well-pleasing and perfect will of God.

Our salvation is first-rate for believers have the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ.





**Verse 6.** God pours out the Spirit and the renewal richly or abundantly. This is the kind according to Luke 6:38 **“good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be given to you”**.

Everything comes through Jesus Christ and His work was essential to this gift given to us. He made all those things possible.

**Verse 7.** Now it is stressed that believers have been justified, declared righteous, by His grace. Justification means one is made morally upright or legally correct so that one now free from sin or the guilt of sin, can now act according to divine or moral law.

Justification means the believer in Christ is absolved of criminal conviction. He or she is cleared of any charges for sin held against him or her.

This is an amazing act of God. The Apostle has already declared all have sinned and come short, and are destined for death.

But God has acted and there is to be no boasting. Romans 3:27 tells us boasting is excluded for we have not and could not have done any work to justify our justification.

This is a gift of God to all who accept the Lordship of Jesus Christ. This is a manifestation of extraordinary generosity from God.

Be careful to note that you can only be justified if you are innocent or if you could afford to pay the penalty for your actions. Because all men are sinners they can only be justified by paying the penalty of eternal death so then they are forever lost. They have no ability to free themselves from sin or given life.

So God the Father knowing we need someone to pay the penalty for us, sent the Lord Jesus Christ to pay the penalty the righteous God required to clean up the mess into which we had gotten ourselves. So God justified us by His grace.

That was an unbelievable move!

But God’s gracious action went even further than justification. God gave us believers the legal right to an inheritance. God had given His firstborn Israel an inheritance (Exodus 4:22; 2 Samuel 7:14; Romans 9:4-5).

In Hebrews 1:2 we have been told that God the Father appointed His Son **heir of all things**, and now the Apostle tells us we have become joint heirs with Christ (Romans 8:14-17) because we have been adopted into God’s family (John 1:12-13).

We have been thus given the **hope of eternal life** as an eternal inheritance, and this involves entry into a better city, the new Jerusalem. The Apostle Peter tells us this inheritance is undefiled, incorruptible, never fading, and reserved in heaven for all the children of God..

**Verse 8.** The Apostle now affirms that what he has said about us, and what God promised to us is certain to be delivered. This is a faithful saying, he says.



Note however he is saying we believers must be careful in what we do. We must always do good works. We are no longer in trespasses and sins and are awakened from those to do good works.

The new life in Christ, now we have been 'born again', means we have the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit to live as God wants us to live in a godless society.

**Verse 9.** Note that this matter of discipline emerges and is made strong. For these instructions are good and profitable for all men.

There is to be no profession in the church that states there are certain inspired knowledge that others in the church do not have. That position comes from the ancient philosophy of Gnosticism, that affected the early church in Crete and elsewhere.

These false teachers would tell the brethren they had been reserved by God and given special knowledge not available to all the brethren.

If anyone comes to you with this kind of doctrine the Apostle tells you to reject them outright. They only have foolish rules and practices intending to deceive.

They have myths based on the Old Testament genealogies and they took these long lists of names and constructed biographies for the people in these Old Testament lists. These were purely imaginary biographies, and they would argue about them expecting others to listen to their creations, instead of spending time looking at Scripture and following them.

The Apostle called these practices of arguing about genealogies and superior hidden or Gnostic knowledge foolishness.

We must learn to avoid these complicated theological arguments based on sundry philosophies for these do not increase your spiritual growth, make you good evangelists and teachers about the gospel, and make you people of good works. These arguments do not profit. They are useless. They do not lead to or increase righteousness and holy living. They are simply finely tuned arguments of vanity to impress.

**Verses 10-11.** The instruction then is for discipline in the Church. Divisive men as the Judaizers, the Gnostics, people who pervert the Scriptures, those who create rules which have no basis in Scripture, but which suits their cultural preferences, those who do not promote moral values and behaviour, and those who keep on sinning and try to justify their sinning should be rejected.

Note there are cases where churches break their own biblical positions and are offended if believers point out to them what they are doing.

We read in Revelation 2 of Jesus denouncing the corrupt Church of Thyatira which permitted the prophetess Jezebel to teach immorality. But it is noted that there was a minority which did not know the depths of Satan and who were encouraged to hold fast until Jesus came.



We must be careful here for many times it is men that promote sexual immorality and all kinds of materialistic horrors. But it is to be noted that sinful behaviours in the modern church are sponsored in many cases by men as well as women. The Newspapers are replete with these shameful actions by both profession of men and women. Satan is an equal opportunity employer.

Here the Apostle goes back to the instructions in Matthew 18 from Jesus' mouth. Paul speaks therefore of the heretic after the first and second admonition.

In Verse 15 Jesus instructs that if there is a private trespass, the believer is to go to him or her and tell them privately what they have done.

When you see a Christian brother or sister not living as Scripture requires the first step is not to go and tell your friends or their friends, or the elders, or your wife or husband as the case may be, or anyone else. The instruction from the Lord is that the person involved is to go to the one doing the trespass alone and give a private rebuke.

If the one doing the wrong refuses to hear then two or three witnesses should be brought in to establish every word of truth.

If there is no response to counselling then the elders of the church can be involved

Then if the trespasser refuses to hear, he or she should be treated to public rebuke and church privileges withheld.

That person must not be counted as an enemy but as a brother. The right to participate must be withheld.

There must be constant personal appeals to the one out of fellowship. No fellowship must be maintained.

Note excommunication is always to be aimed at restoration.

So the Apostles refers to a man who is a heretic, after the first and second admonition and he teaches that that person is to be avoided.

Note there are stages in heresy. The meaning of this word is critical for it speaks of false doctrine about the Christian faith which leads to destruction.

Some will bring in damnable heresies. They are to be disciplined. Fellowship is to be withheld.

Note that the Apostle gives no credence or support to those who use their power in the Church to make corrupt decisions against others or affecting the Body of Christ.

We can always tell who is on the right side of God by who produces good works. In the final analysis however, God will remain the final Judge.

## **CONCLUSION**

Jesus' coming brings salvation and great generosity. Those who were astray can be brought into obedience and made ready to do 'good works'.

There is renewal and rebirth through the work of the Holy Spirit who brings new life, new birth, regenerates, renews, guides and keeps.



Believers like those in the church at Thyatira need not fear ungodly behaviour from the powerful. Wonderful grace has brought believers to salvation.

We do however need purity of Christian doctrine. If we deviate the Church will suffer. It will become unfruitful. And we will be judged. So, let our sins go before us to judgment. Let us devote ourselves to good works.

