

GOD'S CIRCLE OF SALVATION

Titus 2:11 - 3:8

INTRODUCTION: Paul's letter to Titus is exceedingly brief, but it contains a marvelously useful passage in it that can help any believer and can work to the profit of many who do not yet follow Christ.

If I were to give a title to this passage, I would call it God's Circle of Salvation. As we read it, see if you can pick up on the circular process he describes.

Titus 2:11–3:8

11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works.

15 Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you. 1 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, 2 to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.

3 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.

4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.

There are three parts to the Circle of Salvation Paul here describes.

I. GOD SAVES US BY GRACE.

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,

A. Grace came in the person of Jesus Christ.

Listen to Simeon as he took the baby Jesus in his arms.

Luke 2:28–30 28 he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: 29 “Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; 30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation

Listen to the Apostle John describe who Jesus was and is

John 1:14, 16 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. ... 16 And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. Or grace upon grace.

Paul is saying that grace was incarnate in Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the One that brought grace in all of its fullness to make it available to people.

And note that it has appeared to all men.

- Not all have accepted that grace.
- Not all have appropriated that grace through faith in Jesus Christ.
- But that grace is available to all.

B. By grace God saves us from sin.

Titus 2:12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,

Salvation is not only freedom from the penalty of sin but freedom from its power and slavery to sin.

C. By grace God saves us for eternity.

Titus 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

In Christ's first coming, He was grace personified.

In His second coming, He will be glory personified.

At His glorious appearing, the glorified and resurrected Jesus will come in all His might and power. His enemies will fall before Him. He will first sit in the judgment of the nations, and then He will ascend Zion's hill to take His throne and begin His rule as King over the earth.

And we who have been saved by grace through faith will be there in the Millennial Kingdom and shall rule and reign with Christ.

This is the first part of the circle.

God saves us by grace through faith.

The very next verse reminds us that before we fulfill our purpose in the Millennial Kingdom

By grace God saves us for a purpose upon this earth.

Titus 2:14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His own special people, zealous for good works.*

II. GOD'S SALVATION IS INTENDED TO PRODUCE LIVES OF GOOD WORKS.

This adds the second part of the circle.

A. We who are saved are God's people.

We do not become His people during the Millennial Kingdom. Believers are God's people now.

What about the Jews?

- They were God's first people, chosen to bring other nations to faith in the One True Creator God.

- The recipients of promises which God will still keep, not because of the faithfulness of the Jews but because God is ever faithful to keep His word.
- But the Jews as a people group were cut off from God's family tree because of unbelief.
- And the Gentiles who did believe were grafted into the family tree of God.
- At the glorious appearing, the Jews who are then alive will look on Him whom they pierced and mourn over their rejection and disbelief. In faith they will turn to Christ and be saved.
- Then God's people will be Jew and Gentile alike, all united by faith in the One who paid our sin debt on Calvary.

We who have trusted Christ are the people of God!

And what is a hallmark of those whom Christ has redeemed, forgiven, and transformed?

B. To be zealous for good works

Folks, do not be confused about the relationship of grace, faith, and works in the Christian life. It is not either/or but both/and.

Ephesians 2 makes it abundantly clear.

Ephesians 2:8–10 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

1. **Salvation is made available through God's grace.**
2. **We receive God's gift of salvation by faith (our trust in Christ as Savior and Lord).**
3. **We who are saved are transformed by Christ to perform the good works God has selected for us.**

Here is the order:

1. **Grace – God initiated**
2. **Faith – Response to what God has done**
3. **Works – Result of salvation by grace through faith**

We Baptists are often loud and clear on grace and faith.

Sometimes we are a little too quiet about works. Works will not get the lost sinner into heaven's gate. But a life without works is very likely a life without salvation by grace through faith.

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Why are our good works important to God?

III. OUR GOOD WORKS ARE TO HELP DRAW OTHERS TO SALVATION BY GRACE.

Titus 2:15–3:8 15 Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you. 1 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, 2 to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.

3 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.

4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.

Paul says to Titus, look, tell the folks in the church this.

1. Salvation comes by grace through faith.
2. But once you are saved, as a part of the people of God, live transformed lives doing good works.

A. Some characteristics of the transformed life are particularly important to lost people watching us.

1. That you live in obedience to God-appointed authority.

- Otherwise, you just seem like a rebel or a troublemaker.
- How can you really be transformed by God if you won't obey those God has put in charge?

2. Don't be bad mouthing people. Don't be talking bad about other folks.

- It makes you sound like a grump.
- Makes you seem high on yourself and low on others.

3. Live peaceably. Be a peacemaker like the Lord said. Don't be contentious.

- Just a word here so that we don't misunderstand. Jesus is our example as always. Jesus lived peaceably and was a peacemaker. Yet there were times that Jesus did things that were not peace-filled.
 - He called the Pharisees a brood of vipers and whitewashed tombs to their face.
 - He overturned the tables of the money changers and drove those abusing the temple of God out of the courtyard with a whip.
 - The key to understanding is to observe that Jesus never used His power to defend Himself.
 - He only used it to defend the Father.
- The point here is that the Holy Spirit is not commending peace at any price.

- He is commending peace at personal price.
 - When we are insulted, forgive. Choose peace.
 - When we are offended, overlook. Choose peace.
 - When we are taking a loss, take the loss. Choose peace for the sake of your testimony that Christ has saved you and changed you.

4. Be gentle. Be kind. Be considerate.

5. Be humble, meek (keeping your strength under control).

Why does the Holy Spirit speak of these qualities as especially important?
Are they the most important characteristic of the Christian life?

They are important, but they are not listed here because God necessarily says these are the top five.

They are here because these are things that lost people can quickly observe.

If they do not see these things in your life, it will be hard to convince them that God has transformed you.

B. We couple our testimony of being sinners with the transformation God has done in our lives.

Titus 3:3 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.

It is important that lost people do not sense an arrogance about our testimony. They must understand that we by nature are sinners just as they are.

When I am sharing the Evangelcube, whether it is in Brazil or the counseling room at the Benevolence Center, with the very first panel I tell the person,

- This man represents me and you.
- He is surrounded by darkness.

- Because the Bible says, “All have sinned.”
- I am a sinner. My friends with me today are all sinners.

This is the reason we know for sure... Not because we are better than others. We are not. One day someone told us – we believed, we trusted, we were forgiven, and we received eternal life as a gift.

C. And then we tell them Who changed our lives.

Titus 3:4-7 4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, ... that ... by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

We share the gospel.

- **Jesus, God’s Son, died on the cross to pay the penalty for my sin.**
- **He rose from the dead, proving that He really is the Son of God.**
- **Jesus offers forgiveness of sin, transformation of life, and the gift of eternal life to all who will trust Him as Lord and Savior.**

This is the third part of the circle of salvation.

Our good works, testimony, and the gospel help bring others to salvation by grace.

CONCLUSION: Paul concludes this portion of his message saying, “This works.” Keep doing it. It is good for people and it helps them.”

Paul has shown us in words the Circle of Salvation.

God saves us by grace through faith.

God’s salvation produces good works in our lives.

Our good works, testimony, and the gospel help bring others to salvation by grace.

- Where are you on the circle?

- Are you ready to receive God's salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ?
- Are you saved by grace through faith? Are you letting God transform your life and produce good works in you?
- Are you coupling the transformation God has done with your testimony and the gospel in order to help others come to salvation by grace through faith?

Is there anything you need to change to make the circle of salvation work more often or more effectively around your life?