

Dr. Robert Yarbrough, Pastoral Epistles, Session 14, Titus 3 - The Pastoral Epistles: Apostolic Instruction for Pastoral Leaders and Their Followers, 6-min. Video Overview

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Alright, let's jump right in. If you ever read the short ancient book of Titus, you'll notice something pretty quickly. This one phrase keeps popping up again and again, doing good.

It's everywhere. But here's the thing. This isn't just about being a nice person.

We're going to explore the powerful and honestly pretty revolutionary engine that's supposed to be driving this whole call to action. And this phrase right here, this is the heart of it all. Notice the order.

It's not do good in order to be saved. It completely flips that script. The whole point is that people are saved first and then they do good.

So if good deeds aren't the cause of salvation, what is? What's really driving this change? Which leads you to wonder, right? Are we just looking at some ancient moral code? You know, another long list of do's and don'ts designed to make people behave themselves? Well, as we're about to see, the answer is way more profound than that. Okay, so to really get what this do-good thing is all about. We can't start with the rules.

The text doesn't frame it as a starting line, but as the finish line. It's the solution to a much, much deeper problem. The author, a guy named Paul, paints a, well, a pretty stark picture of what he calls the default human setting.

And get this. He's not pointing fingers at anyone else. He completely includes himself, saying, look, this is where I came from, too.

And I mean, just look at this list. It is bleak. And he says it's universal, foolish, disobedient, deceived, even enslaved.

He describes this world of malice and envy and mutual hatred. What he's saying is, this isn't just about a few bad apples out there. This is the very soil we all grew up in.

This is the starting point for everyone. But right after painting that really dark picture, the entire story just pivots on a dime. The solution that's offered is not what you'd expect at all.

So after describing that whole tangled mess of the human condition, the text says the solution isn't to just try harder. It's not about self-improvement or pulling yourself up by your bootstraps. Nope.

The fix has to come from completely outside the system. It's actually framed as a rescue mission. And this right here, this is the core of the whole reversal.

Salvation is presented as a totally unearned gift. It has nothing to do with your performance review or how many righteous things you've managed to do. It is based entirely on the character of the one doing the saving.

On mercy. On kindness. On love.

It just completely turns the whole idea of earning your way on its head. The text then kind of breaks down how this transformation works. It all kicks off with mercy.

That leads to what's called a washing of rebirth and a renewal by the Holy Spirit. And the end result? You're justified by grace. It's like a total internal renovation project.

From the inside out. Okay, so this brings up a huge question, right? If salvation is a free gift and it's not based on our actions, then why bother with good works at all? Where do they fit into the picture? How do you get from this internal, kind of theological idea to actual, practical, everyday change? Well, the idea is that the connection isn't one of obligation. It's not a chore you have to do to keep your spot.

Instead, it's presented as a totally natural overflow. The change on the inside just naturally produces good things on the outside. Not because it has to, but because that's its new nature.

Here's a great way to think about it. Just picture a child who lives in a deeply and unconditionally loving home. That child doesn't clean their room to earn their parents' love.

Of course not. They do it as a natural expression of the secure, loving relationship they already have. In the exact same way, the good works described in Titus aren't a payment for grace.

They're a product of grace. Now it is so easy for us to hear this and just nod along and think, yeah, okay, that makes sense. But we have to understand just how absolutely revolutionary this was in the ancient world.

This idea of directly connecting your personal ethics to your religion, that was not normal at all. So check this out. In the wider Greco-Roman world, religion was basically transactional.

You made sacrifices to the gods to keep them happy and maybe get some good crops. The gods didn't offer a moral code. Being religious and being moral were two completely separate things.

But Judaism and later Christianity came along and made this direct link. Who God is determines how you should live. That was a game-changing concept.

And this core message that you are loved and accepted first, and that this acceptance is the very thing that empowers you to live a new life- man, it was like rocket fuel. It took a faith that started as a small, despised minority in the Roman Empire and launched it into a truly global movement. And if you fast forward to today, the results are just staggering.

The face of the historic center of gravity is not in Europe or North America anymore. Not even close. Today, a stunning 44% of Protestants live in Africa.

You add in Asia with 18% and South America with another 18%, and you're looking at the vast majority. It just shows that this ancient message, this revolutionary idea of grace, keeps resonating and finding new homes in cultures all across the globe. So it all leaves us with this final question to chew on.

If the real engine for doing good isn't fear or trying to earn a reward, but it's simply a response to unearned love, what would change? In our communities, in our relationships, even in our own lives? What would it look like if grace were truly the engine? It's something to think about.