**Becoming Joint Heirs With Christ**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Titus 3:1-7**

**Wednesday Evening**

**December 7, 2022**

**Titus 3:1-7**

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.

**1 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work,**

Saints, in addition to teaching, encouraging, and correcting, a Christian leader must also remind his congregation to submit to the government and its officers.

As the believers awaited the return of Christ and living eternally with him in his government, they had to live under worldly authorities.

So Paul explained how believers in Crete could best do that—by subjecting themselves to government rulers and authorities and by obeying civil laws. He did not want any trouble with the authorities that would bring the church under suspicion.

**Romans 13:1-7**

1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.

3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. 4 For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.

5 Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. 7 Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

**1 Peter 2:13-17**

13 Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good.

15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men-- 16 as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. 17 Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

Saints, Christians understand obedience to the government in different ways. All Christians agree that we are to live at peace with the state as long as the state allows us to live by our religious convictions.

For hundreds of years, however, there have been at least three interpretations of how we are to do this:

**1.** Some Christians believe that the state is so corrupt that Christians should have as little to do with it as possible. Although they should be good citizens as long as they can do so without compromising their beliefs, they should not work for the government, vote in elections, or serve in the military.

Although this fulfills the principle of abstaining from evil, it prevents the Christian from being salt and light in the governmental, political, and military systems.

**2.** Others believe that God has given the state authority in certain areas and the church authority in others. Christians can be loyal to both and can work for either.

They should not, however, confuse the two. In this view, church and state are concerned with two totally different spheres—the spiritual and the physical.

Thus, they complement each other but do not work together. This view is very legitimate and supports Jesus’ teaching to give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s, but it can lead to isolation from the political world and indifference toward state leaders.

**Matthew 22:19-22**

19 Show Me the tax money." So they brought Him a denarius. 20 And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?" 21 They said to Him, "Caesar's." And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." 22 When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left Him and went their way.

**3.** Still others believe that Christians have a responsibility to make the state better. They can do this politically, by electing Christian or other high-principled leaders.

They can also do this morally, by serving as an influence for good in society. In this view, church and state ideally work together for the good of all. This view is preferred and seems to best portray the New Testament teaching.

Nowhere does Jesus call laymen to leave political or social service as a requirement for discipleship. Its inherent danger would be for the Christian to get so involved in worldly affairs that the Christian mission is lost.

Besides being obedient, Paul mentioned readiness to do what is good—in other words, a willingness to serve. No doubt Christians who obeyed the government gave a good witness for their faith among the authorities; Christians active in community service and/or government had great opportunities to witness for Christ.

**2 to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.**

Saints, these bridge-building characteristics revealed changed lives and made the gospel message attractive to unbelievers. All Christians should check their conduct against these traits. To not speak evil of anyone meant forbidding Christians to spread evil rumors or gossip.

**James 3:8-10**

8 But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. 10 Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.

Believers were not to be caught making reports about others that would prove to be untrue. We should be like Christ, who did not retaliate when he was insulted.

**1 Peter 2:21-24**

21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 22 "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth";

23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; 24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed.

Saints, to avoid quarreling means to be peaceable. Christians were to be known as peacemakers in their relationships and within the church. There may be disagreements, but the believers should actively avoid, not the disagreement, but quarreling about it.

When disagreements degenerate into quarreling, there is little possibility of preserving peace and working toward a solution.

To be gentle and show true humility follows Christ’s example. Christians should not be agitators but conciliators. Believers could show gentleness and humility to unbelievers in their neighborhoods by offering help without strings attached. When we help unbelievers, we open a door for the gospel.

**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.**

Saints, the Cretans had a reputation for certain vices, yet Paul well understood that all believers once were sinners and had lived far from God.

**1 Corinthians 6:9-11**

9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,

10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

**Ephesians 4:17-24**

17 This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart;

19 who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. 20 But you have not so learned Christ, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus:

22 that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

Saints, Paul never forgot the change that God had made in his life, beginning with his experience on the Damascus road.

**Acts 9:1-22**

1 Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2 and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

3 And as he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. 4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" 5 And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads."

6 So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" And the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." 7 And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one.

8 Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

10 Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." 11 So the Lord said to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying.

12 And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight." 13 Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem.

14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name." 15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. 16 For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake."

17 And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

18 Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized. 19 So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus.

20 Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. 21 Then all who heard were amazed, and said, "Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?"

22 But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ.

Saints, Paul included himself, Titus, the believers in Crete, and all believers across the world in the list of past rebels.

Foolish is used here as it is in Proverbs for those who arrogantly rebel against God and go their own way. Instead of being submissive, obedient, and ready to do good , they were disobedient toward God because of sin, and misled by false teachers so that they became slaves to many wicked desires and evil pleasures. Without God, all unbelievers are enslaved to their passions and desires. Left alone, human nature can only go from bad to worse. Instead of avoiding slander and quarrels, being peaceful, considerate, and humble, their lives were full of evil and envy.

No matter how much “love” the world tries to create without God, the overriding power of sin produces a greater amount of hatred. Thus there is no hope for sinful humanity apart from the intervention of the holy God, our Creator.

**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,**

Saints, fortunately for us, God intervened. God’s kindness and love appeared in the human form of Jesus Christ. By his death, he saved us from our deserved punishment for disobeying God.

He offered this salvation because of his mercy alone, not because we deserved it by doing good things. Paul summarized what God does for us when he saves us. God washed away our sins.

As Paul explains the transaction, when believers receive this washing of rebirth, all sins, not merely some, are washed away. We gain new life with all its treasures. The process is complete.

We can experience what we have in new ways, but we have received the whole package! We live a “new” life because of the Holy Spirit whom he generously poured out upon us because of what Jesus Christ our Savior did.

**Romans 8:9-17**

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. 10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors--not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

17 and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

All three persons of the Trinity are mentioned in these verses because all three participate in the work of salvation. Based upon the redemptive work of his Son, the Father forgives and sends the Holy Spirit to wash away our sins and continually renew us.

**7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.**

Saints, from Adam we inherited guilt, a sinful nature (the tendency to sin), and God’s punishment. Because Jesus took the punishment we deserved for sin and made us right before God, we can trade punishment for forgiveness.

We have been declared not guilty. We can trade our sin for Jesus’ righteousness. When we do that, we know that we will inherit eternal life.

Eternal life began the moment we gave our life to Christ, but there is more to come! Our experience now is only a foretaste of what God has guaranteed to us in the future!

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

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**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**