

FPFWC Christian Development



Eternal Hope

August 2024

Summer Quarter

August 24, 2024

Lesson #4 – The Washing of Regeneration

SCRIPTURE TEXT – Titus 3:3-11

ICE BREAKERS-

1. What steps do you take to ensure that you don't harbor feelings of envy and malice toward others?
2. How do you discern what things are profitable for your spiritual maturity and what things are "unprofitable" and vain?

Key Verse: "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;—Titus 3:4–5

LESSON BACKGROUND –

The context surrounding the island of Crete and Paul's travels there has been covered in the Lesson Context of the previous lesson—lesson 12.

Paul had written this letter to address certain disturbances that faced the believers on that island. There had been a lack of godliness that had led to meaningless controversies and distractions (Titus 1:10–15). Paul instructed Titus to appoint godly leadership (1:5) to encourage others with gospel truth and refute the teachings of the opposition (1:9–16).

Old or young, male or female, husband or wife, free or enslaved, Paul instructed his readers to demonstrate self-control and pursue lives of godliness (see Titus 2:1–15). Paul also directed Titus to encourage the people to obey authority, be eager for good works, and live with gentleness and meekness (3:1–2). The worst thing that could occur would be for controversies to arise and distract the believers in Crete from focusing on the gospel.

LESSON COMMENTARY

3:3–8. Unbelievers are what believers once were: foolish rebels who were deceived, enslaved, and filled with malice (v. 3). Believers lose patience with the lost when they forget their own past. Kindness describes God's benevolent disposition toward sinful humanity (v. 4; cf. Rm 11:22; Eph 2:7). The Greek word translated **love for mankind** was used in secular Greek to describe the magnanimity of rulers. Paul had repeatedly emphasized the importance of godly behavior but was emphatic in denying that such works are the basis for our salvation. **Washing of regeneration** and **renewing by the Holy Spirit** (v. 5)

describe how **His mercy** is demonstrated. Regeneration is new birth that comes as a result of the work of Christ and is imparted by the Holy Spirit. It is further described as “renewal,” the same word used by Paul in Rm 12:2 when he speaks of the “renewing of your mind.” Regeneration and renewal are both symbolized by the ordinance of baptism. God’s Spirit is the agent of our regeneration and renewal (v. 6), and is given through Jesus Christ (cf. Jn 15:25; 16:7). The Holy Spirit is also described as dwelling within us (1Tm 1:14, cf. Rm 8:11; 1Co 3:16; 6:19; Gl 4:6; Eph 2:22). He is the possession of all who have been **justified** by the grace of Christ (v. 7). His presence guarantees our inheritance of **eternal life** (2Co 1:22). **This is a trustworthy statement** (v. 8) probably refers to the previous verses. The certainty of eternal life offers a powerful motive **to engage in good deeds** (for the connection between Christian ethics and immortal life, see the comments on 1Co 15:29–34). Faith and works are fully compatible as long as faith has precedence.

C. Unity in the Congregation (3:9–11)

3:9–11. Foolish controversies, genealogies, and disputes about the Law (v. 9) were all characteristics of the false teachers (1:10–16; cf. 1Tm 1:4; 6:4; 2Tm 2:16–17, 23; see the comments on 1Tm 1:3–5). Instead of building up the church, they create discord. The **factious man** (v. 10) is not always one who adheres to false teaching. It can also describe someone who is a member of a divisive party in the church (cf. 1Co 1:12; 11:18–19). A first and second warning implies that a process of confrontation and rebuke has been carried out (see the comments on Mt 18:15–18). The factious person’s obstinacy after repeated warnings is proof of twisted thinking (v. 11). His or her persistence in divisiveness constitutes sin and demonstrates guilt.

LESSON NUGGET – Remember what you were. Remember what God did for you. Remember what God expects of you.

Sources: Moody Bible Commentary, Standard Lesson Commentary, and The Essential Everyday Bible Commentary