

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

DATE

August 11, 2019

SPEAKER

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SERIES

Grace Does Good

PART

6

TITLE

Ready For Good Works

SCRIPTURE

Titus 3:1-7



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Well, good morning to you, Providence. I hope you are well. If you joined us livestream, good morning to you as well. If you have your Bibles, you can turn them on or open them up to Titus chapter three. If you're new to Christianity, maybe not familiar with Bible study, maybe you are exploring Christianity, you are not a believer, but you are here seeing what this is all about, and you don't have a Bible, we want to encourage you, right in front of you, there is one that you can take. That is a gift from us to you. You take that. That particular Bible under the chair, we'll be on page 998. 998 if you're not sure where Titus might be. Look at that. If you brought your Bible, and you turn to page 998, I don't know what is on that page. If you do get one of those Bibles, do that.

Again, if you're not familiar with the study of the Bible, there are some larger numbers that are in bold. Those are chapters. The smaller numbers are verses. Today we're going to be at the larger number three, number three. That will be chapter three of Titus. We'll unpack kind of how we got to this book in just a minute. Let me pray for us. Father, thank you for another day to live and to look into this word and have this word look into us. We pray that you would speak to us and that you would, by the power of your Spirit and through the authority of your word as we read it and it reads us and as we listen, that you would teach, that you would change, and that you would bring dead hearts to life even today. Accomplish all these things, we ask boldly in the one who has conquered death and in whose name that we praise, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

It's fitting to remind us some of the context of this amazing book. If you are not familiar with the island of Crete, where they were taken place, Titus was living, I want to show you a quick map here to just give us some context. In the Mediterranean Sea, one of the largest islands there is Crete. It's south of Greece. Now, these other Biblical places, Ephesus, Corinth, Philippi, are there. This is an island where Titus was living and was able to receive this letter from Paul. You ask, "How did they even get there?" Well, if you notice down in the far corner of the map is Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, according to Acts chapter two, there was a Jewish holiday, a festival. It was 50 days after Passover. It was Pentecost.

During this time, Peter would stand up and preach. He would preach in such a way that many heard the gospel in their own language, in their own tongue, and were able to understand it. It was a miraculous... It was the birth of the church that took place. As Peter was preaching, the Spirit of God moved. It was people from international places. It was an international gathering to celebrate the festival of the harvest. In one sense, it was an amazing harvest, not of wheat but of people. It was at that time that God birthed the church. It's interesting, in Acts chapter two verse 11, it says specifically, "Both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs, were there to hear the wonders of God declared in their own tongue."

We know from that point in the text that Cretans were there, that they came to faith. They went back to the island of Crete, planted a church, and then Paul, as he always did throughout the Mediterranean, would go from city to city and encourage those that had come to faith. He takes Titus to the island of Crete to encourage these churches. What he doesn't tell Titus is that he only bought a one-way ticket for Titus.

He ends up leaving Titus on the island. As he leaves and goes, he ends up writing a letter back to Titus to help encourage him with how to love and strengthen and do church ministry in a sense. He was a pastor. This is the letter that you have in front of you, which is miraculous in and of itself.

You think about what he's going to do in chapter three. In chapter one, he's helped church leaders to think through those that are qualified. In chapter two, he's like, "Men, how you do live with each other in the church? Older men, younger men, invest in the lives of each other. The same with women, helping one another, just encouraging each other." In chapter three, it's sort of looking at how Christians ought to live in a culture and be ready for good works. Listen to this. Here's sort of the question. How can we live that would either commend the gospel to others and invite curiosity and questions or invite criticism and complaints? Questioning the authenticity of the gospel is absolutely of great significance.

It's a call to live not a perfect life but to reflect the one who is perfect. This was ever so true in the few men that I was just with recently over in the middle of Europe in the Czech Republic. I took a team of about 30 folks over there. We ran a basketball camp. I'll show you a picture of the gym that we actually met in and did stations at. On the left there, your right, are two of our campers. The shorter one is one of our guys that went with us to help. The other big guy is a young man, is a freshman in college, one of the top players in Czech Republic. He's playing for their Czech national team right now. He actually came to faith in Christ last year when we were there, and he came back. We partnered with two church planters there. Their names are Vladia and Mulan. Their families live there, but we didn't just show up and do a basketball camp. They've been there for about 10, 11 years just plowing the ground of showing grace, getting ready for good works in a sense.

They've been doing English camps. They've been doing these basketball camps for five or six years. It's interesting. For seven years, they didn't see anyone come to faith in Christ. Their church plant had about eight people in it, and it was their two families because you're in a country that's decades of communism that created an atheistic worldview. In that worldview, many don't believe that there's a God. By showing grace and being faithful to live in such a way that commended questions, that commended, "Why would you come and show this kindness?" Three years ago, after seven years of ministry, they saw their first person come to Christ. Matter of fact, Vladia had never baptized anybody, so he takes the other church planter out to the water to practice baptism because he doesn't know how to do it. Then, he ends up baptizing one of the new believers. They have more that have come.

This past two weeks ago when we were there, on Sunday, there were about 40 folks from the Czech, that city, that had come to church that morning. It's interesting because it's this grace that they're showing that's readying it for good works that's moving in the hearts of the people there because one individual I had a conversation with... We would do things at night to just create fellowship and some opportunities to engage with conversation. One of the guys, had become good friends with both of his children, a part of the camp. I said, "Man, walk me through your spiritual journey, what you believe."

He goes, “Man, I’m not 100% atheist. I’m 110% atheist.” I’m like, “Well, okay. Let’s walk through that.” Yet, he comes to all of these events, being drawn, I believe, by the kindness of the team that’s living there, trying to minister there.

This morning, I want to just show you three truths about God’s grace and how it can ready us for good works from the text. Let’s read this text together. In verse one, it says, “Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, and to be gentle and to show perfect courtesy toward all people. For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared,” notice these words, “he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior. So that being justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

Three truths really quick. The first is this. God’s grace in Christ causes us to live a certain way. The Roman Empire had governing authority and influence over the island of Crete all the way back to 67 BC. Paul is telling Titus to encourage the Christians that are living there to live a certain way, not to get them back to a cultural Christianity. There’s no cultural Christianity, not to get them back to the good old days as sometimes we say. There’s no good old days. They’re full of sin and strife. There’s a day that’s coming that we point people to, but we don’t go back to the good old days. There’s not even any good old days in Crete. The Crete culture was engulfed with idolatry and extortion and exorbitant taxation. It was enough to make the society, even the believers that were living there, angry at the society. Paul, extorting Titus, he says, “Listen, you can’t reform idolatry and immorality and corruption with moralism. Let’s just be better. Let’s have better policies, and it will change everything.” They need a new heart.

He called for the believers to live in such a way as to commend the gospel in which they believed in hopes it would create a curiosity that would lead to conversation that would lead to conversion. He said there’s a certain way to live. True, lasting change comes from a personal relationship with Christ, the resurrected Son of God, by the power of the Spirit of God. Christianity’s not an outward conformity that plays the part. It’s an inward transformation that produces fruit. It’s a tree that grows, in a sense, in your heart. It produces fruit. It produces fruit like love and joy and peace and patience and kindness and goodness and gentleness and faithfulness and self-control. It produces the fruit of the Spirit in you, produces these things.

If I had two plants up on the stage and one was an artificial, and it was bright, and it was green, from a distance, you wouldn’t be able to tell maybe which one was alive and which one was fake. Yet, the real plant, over a period of time, would eventually produce a flower. It would produce some type of fruit in a sense. This is what Paul is telling Titus. Listen, we’ve got to live in such a way where the fruit of the Spirit is being evidence and we’re commending the gospel.

He lays out seven things in verses one and two. I'm going to sum them up in four. The first is this, is to submit joyfully. He reminds him to be submissive to the rulers and authorities and to be obedient. I was going to speak about the speed limit maybe, but we'll just skip that one in our culture and anything that limits you, propels you to want to break it. Unfortunately, it's a confession of sin this morning from one of your pastors.

Let's go with taxes. Let's go with Luke 20 even. You've got the Pharisees that are trying to really trap Jesus in this conversation about taxes and who should you pay and how much. Jesus just says basically, "Well, whose likeness and inscription does it have?" They said, "Well, Caesar's." He said, "Well, then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." That's not a profound statement, but the end of the text says, "Marveling at his answer, they became silent." Why did they become silent at that? I mean, he's taken a coin, and he's showing one side of it's got Caesar's image on it. He's saying, "Listen, just render to him, pay the taxes that are laid out and render to him what's due." Then he says, "But then render to God what is God's." I believe why they marveled, because they started reflecting back on the reality of Genesis one that says that we are created in God's image.

It's his image that's upon us. I think what clicked in their head was they actually owe their whole life to God. You render to Caesar what's Caesar's but to God what's God's. I think the image of God, we're image bearers of God as creator. He would desire for us to offer all of our life to him. Is there a time that you don't submit joyfully? I think Acts four lays that out where they had restricted them to speak the name of Jesus. They said, "We can not but help but speak the name that has saved." Yes, many of our brothers and sisters around the world, they are trying to submit joyfully to many of the laws of the land in which they live, but the one that they will not submit to is the forbearing the actual preaching of the gospel. They do that. We partner with some. We support some of those pastors in hard places.

The second is this, is to serve readily. Notice the text. It says to be obedient and to be ready for every good work. There's a readiness from the Christian as you're living in culture that postures you not to just wait for a moment to do good, but you're actually looking for opportunities to do good. You're looking for these opportunities to actually seek to do good. Titus chapter two, we heard a few weeks ago. We are to be zealous for good works. It's the reason we're zealous for good works is because the ultimate good work that's taken place is that Christ has come and conquered sin and death. It's that good work that then produces good works in us. It's an overflow. To be loved by God is then to show that love of God through, actually, we're not doing good works to be loved by him. We're doing them because we have been loved by him.

Also, notice the next text, the text that says in chapter three verse two, it says to avoid quarreling and to be gentle, in other words, to speak kindly. Could you imagine a culture where we, as those who are followers of Christ, would speak evil of no one? We would avoid quarreling. We would avoid this gossip. There's no room in the Christian worldview to verbally abuse anyone in the home or on social media. There's no room. He says to speak kindly.

God says in his word, Ephesians chapter four, “Let no unwholesome talk, corrupting talk, come out of your mouth, but only such as good in building up so that it may give grace to those who hear it.” Do you know your words can actually give grace in what you speak and how you speak? He also says to show perfect courtesy. Notice the text. It says to show perfect courtesy toward all people. What does that look like, to be courteous in every single action where you live, where you work?

I think it carries the idea of show hospitality, the idea of showing hospitality. 1 Peter four says to show hospitality to one another without grumbling. See, listen, the gospel, you know how the gospel spread rapidly in the first century? It didn't spread by churches being planted necessarily. It spread rapidly by Christians, ordinary folks following an extraordinary God, being hospitable, opening their homes. Matter of fact, the Christians in the first century in the Roman Empire were considered atheists because they didn't believe in all the Roman Pagan gods. The priests of the Pagan religions were so furious with the Christian believers because so many people were following Christ. They were just being kind and inviting them to their table, inviting them to their home. The Pagan priests were trying to train those who were following the Pagan gods and the Roman gods how to be more hospitable. They couldn't do it because they didn't have the Spirit of God in them. Christianity spread through kindness, through hospitality.

Listen, there's a lady named Rosaria Butterfield. She says this in her book. Rosaria has an amazing story. One of her books is called *An Unlikely Convert*. She was a lesbian teacher at Syracuse University in the department of Literature. She was head of that. A friend invited her, a pastor and his wife, to read some great literature called the Bible. Over two to three years of reading the Bible together and coming to meals around the table, she came to faith in Christ. She left that university and that lifestyle, and she married a pastor over in Durham, North Carolina. She speaks all over the country. She recently wrote a book I just finished. It's called *The Gospel Comes With a House Key*. This is what she says about hospitality. She says, “Radical ordinary hospitality is this: using your Christian home in a daily way that seeks to make strangers neighbors and neighbors family of God.”

See, Romans two says it like this. It's the kindness of God that leads to repentance. John Newton, the former slave trader in the 1700s, had come to Christ and then took a stand against slavery. He says, “I pray the Lord to give you a gentle and loving spirit towards all men and a practical conviction that grace alone has made you to differ.” Is your life different in your home, in your hobbies, in the marketplace? Do you look more like the word or the world in how you live? Paul would tell Titus that the gospel causes you to live, the grace of God causes you to live a certain way. The second truth is this, is that God's grace in Christ compels us to remember how we once lived. It compels us to remember how we once lived.

Listen, you will never fully grasp the depth of his grace if you are not gripped with the devastation of your sin. If you don't see yourself as that bad, you will never see him as that great. Notice the list in verse three. In verse three, he says, “For we ourselves were once...” He's reflecting briefly on who they were before grace exploded in their hearts. He says, “For we ourselves were once foolish.”

This is sin that makes you do dumb things. You could be as bright and intellectual with multiple degrees and still live and act foolishly. He says, "You were not only once foolish but also disobedient." We're so self-sufficient, are we not, and self-centered that it leads to a disobedience that thinks that we are at the center of the world.

I remember seeing this clearly, not only in my own life but in the life of our children as we started a family. I remember, I won't name their name, but he was one year old. When he was one, he had a lot of peanut butter on his hand. He had stuck his hand in the peanut butter, which he wasn't supposed to do. Then, he's leaning right up against the table where the DVD player is. He had his hand, he's getting ready to stick it inside the DVD player. I'm like, "Bro, don't do that, man. That's not going to go well for you." He looks at me. He's one. He can hardly talk. He's looking at me, and he looks back really slow. He looks back, and he goes, and he looks at me again. I'm just like we didn't sign him up and take him to disobedient daycare center of Raleigh, North Carolina. I didn't have to train. That's in the heart. That's in your heart. That's in my heart. We're born with this disobedient propensity, disobedient leaning.

Notice what the text says. He says led astray, that we're slaves to passions and pleasures. We think there's something so subtle about sin that it makes this promise to you that it never fulfills, that you're liberated and free, when actually you're just continuing to wrap yourself with chains and bondage by going down a certain path. It looks like this in some ways, and I can illustrate it with this picture of these two divers. One is preparing to do a record dive in the depths of a body of water. The other one's sort of helping out but can only be so far because they don't have the tanks that the one other does. One looks more restricted, three, four tanks, a lot of weight. They're going to make this record dive. One looks more liberated, a sense of being free, without all of this around. Yet, we know if both go deeper and deeper, one's going to live, and one's going to die.

That's the way we approach Christianity a lot of times. We see it as this list of rules that's like multiple tanks on our backs. It's going to kill us. In reality, it's actually going to give you life. He says led astray. He says we're passing our days in malice, this evil attitude and desire to actually hurt others. We're passing our days in malice. We're passing our days in envy, being envious of others, this unquenchable desire to have what we don't have and crave what others do have. There's this jealousy that takes place. Hated by others and hating one another the text says. Listen, this is why we have compassion on nonbelievers, because you and I were once like this. Listen, do you remember? Do you remember how you were once were?

I remember how I once was. I remember clearly. Every time I go to work out at the North Raleigh YMCA off of Baileywick Road, I remember. I remember every time I walk in there, and I see a gym where I used to play ball all the time. Every day at 5:00 when I would play and every Friday at 12:00 I would play and every Sunday at 1:00 when I play, I would play with such an arrogance and attitude that I would use profanity for most all the game. When I would hit a certain shot in someone's face, I would follow up with some sort of profanity that was trying to make me look good.

I remember how I once lived. I used to make fun of those that couldn't play as well, and I would see a passage on the wall. It was Ephesians four. It just talked about not letting anything come out of your mouth, and I totally ignored it all the time.

I remember how I used to live. I remember every time I ride back to Virginia, and I go through a small town where I went to a small college, and I played two sports and was a founding father of a fraternity there. I wanted to make a name for myself in the way I performed in athletics and life and social. I led a life of total ungodliness for those four years. I remember. It's crushing at times, the scar tissue on my heart, some of the decisions I made. I remember. I wish I had known that there was another name that was much greater than mine. I wish I lived to make his name known. Listen, lean in real quick with me on this one. If you came to Christ at a young age, and you've come to the conclusion that you haven't lived a wretched life, and you say to yourself, "I don't have a powerful testimony," listen, you had the capacity for every single thing laid out in this text. In God's great grace and provision for your life, he protected you and spared you and saved you early on.

In one sense, you have an amazing story. Look, why in the world would God not allow you to live in such a way as to destroy your life and have scar tissue on your heart and always hurt others, hating and being hated? Why? It's because grace. It's his grace in your life. Why in the world, when you have lived this way and manifested all of these things to the 10th degree, why in the world would he save you? You know why? Because of grace, because of God's great grace. Listen, remembering where you came from helps you appreciate where God's taken you. Don't laugh at and point at those who live this way because you once lived that way or had the capacity to live that way. If you do, listen, if you get over where God's taken you from, you know what's going to happen? You know what tree is going to grow in your heart? A tree of cynicism and complaint. That's what's going to grow.

When you just reflect every now and then on what God has done in your life and where he's taken you from, you know what grows in your heart? It humbles you. It doesn't puff you up. No, when you reflect on that, you know what happens? Compassion fills your heart. If a blind man's walking down Crabtree Mall and he trips and falls, you don't make fun of him. You help him up because you can see. You don't make fun of people who can't see. Spiritually, there are people blind all in our city. He's like, "Listen, there's a certain way you need to live among this city, and you need to remember that you were once this way." Thirdly, he says this. God's grace in Christ, yes, it compels us to remember how we lived, but it also creates a new heart in us. It creates a new heart in us without help from us. Listen to that. It's God's grace in Christ creates a new heart in us without help from us.

All four of these verses, four, five, six, and seven, they're one sentence in the original Greek. It says Paul gets so excited when he comes to this portion that he just can't stop. He doesn't use anything but just one word after another. He doesn't stop with a period. You would think it's very fitting after verse three, "For this is how we were once were," verse four would flow with some consequences to that, that verse four with flow with some thoughts of, "And this is why God's wrath came."

You would think it would be fitting for that to happen, but that's not what happens. Notice what happens. He says, "But this is how you once lived, this is who you once were, but when the goodness and the loving kindness, the mercy of God, our Savior appeared." What is that? That's the incarnation. It's the arrival of the Son of God on the planet earth. It's the promise that was made in Genesis three that there will be one who will come and make all things right. It's the fulfillment of that. The Savior, the Son of God appeared in a miraculous birth.

Notice what the text says. If you don't get anything else this morning, get these three words in verse five, "He saved us." God did not withhold wrath. He redirected his wrath at his Son. Notice the text. Notice the Trinitarian language of the text, "God the Father ordains this plan. The Savior appears to carry out this plan. The Spirit of God procreates this to our hearts and causes this regeneration." Notice the text, what it says, "But when the goodness and loving kindness of our Savior appeared, he saved us." Notice what could come right after that. He saved us. You could flow theologically with, "How did he do it?" Notice what he does. I think he's addressing the propensity in our hearts. What we do, often times, is that we try to save ourselves, but he clears that up with specific language that says not because of works done by us in righteousness, not because of our righteous deeds, not because of any of the self-righteous things that we have done, maybe good things. No, he makes it extremely clear. It's not because of those works done.

Matter of fact, Isaiah will say, "Your righteousness on your best day is like a filthy rag." You know what he's saying there? He's basically saying that the best day, the most righteous act that you've ever done is equivalent in God's faith, because of his holiness and greatness, if we went down to the nursery station and got a used diaper out and offered that to God, that's what he's saying. Notice what he does. It's according to. It's not according to our good works. It's according to his mercy. His mercy, he's withholding what we deserve. We deserve wrath. When God shows mercy, he withholds that. This is how he saved us. He withholds that, redirects that to Christ, this wrath. Then the text says, "By the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit." What does that mean, this regeneration? It's not talking about water baptism. There's no opportunity for water to cleanse us of sin.

No, the Spirit of God is making our heart, in those moments of belief, righteous. He's taking the righteousness of Christ, and he's applying it to our heart. He's taking our sin and applying it to the Savior's, the great exchange. This is what's taking place. It's a renewal of the heart. It's a new heart he gives us. Notice how he does it. He poured out on us richly through Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace, given us what we do not deserve, mercy, not giving us what we do deserve. Justified, what does justified mean? It means to be declared. It's a status before a holy God that he grants. Listen to me this morning really quick. In closing, there's no sin so great that God can't forgive and let you into heaven, and there's no righteous act so noble that he will accept as a payment for entrance into heaven. Did you hear that this morning? Listen. There's no sin too great that God can't forgive and let you into heaven. There's no righteous act so noble that he will accept as payment for entrance into heaven.

Luke 15 reminds us of this. You remember Luke 15 with the two sons? You have two sons that are there. One's older. One's younger. The younger son comes to dad, and he says, "Dad, listen. I want my inheritance. I want it now. I want to go ahead and get it. I know you've made a will, and you've left us some things, but I want it now." In that culture, you know what that's saying? That's saying, "Dad, I just as soon off you be dead. I want my money now." He takes it, and he squanders it on wild living to the point that he finds himself homeless, impoverished, and no food. He ends up working at a farm in a pig stall, eating some of that food just to stay alive. The text says this. Now, watch this. Lean into this morning and watch this. It says, "And when he came to his senses, he returned home."

When he comes home, the dad sees him from a far distance, and he doesn't condemn him. He looks at him. He says, "There's my son who was once lost and is now found. He was dead and now alive." He welcomes him. He gives him the best of clothing. He says, "Let's get the fattest cow and bring it out. We're going to throw a massive party. My son's home." Jesus is telling this story to show a couple of things, one, that there's no sin so great that you're outside the mercy of God. As he welcomes him in and you see that, the people that he's telling this story, that Jesus is telling this story to, some there are Pharisees, these self-righteous people who put their hope and trust in what they do rather than what God's done in Christ. I could even see them smirking at this, "Man, why would you let anybody that's done all that back in?"

Then, Jesus turns the whole story to the older son. He turns it to the other son. He tells the son's reaction. The son's over here, and he asks somebody, "What's going on?" He doesn't ask it with anticipation of joy that his brother's come back. He asked it in anticipation of being full of envy and jealousy. He says, "What's happening?" The text says, listen, Providence. The text actually says the older son gives the description of how the younger son spent the money. Up in the text, it doesn't say specifically how he did it, but the older brother then attributes with specificity how he's wasted the money. He says, "What? Dad's throwing a party for him? Are you kidding? He wasted his money on prostitutes and drunkenness." The dad says, "Son, what are you doing, man? What are you doing? You've always had access to me but not necessarily embraced me."

What he's saying is this. It may be easier for you to come to your senses from a pigpen than a chair in a church because if you always compare yourself while you're sitting in the chair to the people in the pigpen, you always win in the moral war of your heart. You'll always win that one. When you compare yourself to people in prison, you always win that. You always come out on top, and you don't think you need a Savior because you're in a chair. You can be in a church and not in Christ, but when you compare yourself to the holiness of God, the greatness of Christ, you realize that there's no sin so great it can't be forgiven and there's no self-righteous act so noble that he'll accept it. That's why you both need to repent and trust Jesus.

See, for many of us, we think of Christianity being this thing where Jesus is on the edge of this dark doom pit, and it's leading to hell. It's full of unrighteousness and sin. Humanity is moving, and Jesus is here. He's trying to save people in a sense. If you look at him, and you hear, he says, "Man, listen. I'll give you eternal life."

Okay, eternal life's better than not having eternal life, so maybe, but let me just look at least because it looks like it's fun in the pit. This is how we think sometimes of it. Biblical Christianity actually teaches that we're all already in the pit. We're already in the pit. One of the objections to Christianity is, "How can a loving God not save everybody?" which is a great question, but I back it up sometimes and just ask this question. I want to ask the question, "Why does he save anybody? How in the world does he lift anyone's head and pull them out and put their feet on a firm rock?"

You know how he does it? You know why he does it? It's grace. It's his grace. I'm shocked he saves anybody, especially me in the wretchedness of my heart. Listen, when you experience his salvation, it doesn't cause you to be prideful and arrogant. It humbles you and shocks you that he would show you grace. As Ephesians says this, "Because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions." We didn't add anything to this. We're dead, and he awakens our hearts to belief. "It is by grace you have been saved." Let us this morning, let us trust Christ if you never have. Let's never get over being saved. Let's never get over. Let's not camp out there. No, we're headed this direction toward glory, but don't forget what he took you from.

Let's live in such a way, Providence, let's live in such a way that we commend the gospel, that we would invite curiosity from others to evaluate the evidences of grace in our life, not for our sake but for the sake of the Savior. Let's be a people marked not by hypocrisy but hope and not hate but hospitality and not a people who are rude but always rejoicing in the goodness and kindness of God. He has saved us. A miracle. All praise be to God. Let's pray. Father, we love you. We are so grateful for your kindness to us. We are amazed at this grace that has readied us for good works. God, you know our hearts. We'll never be able to do good works in such a way that would influence and change a culture if we're not gripped by the grace and the good work that you've done in us. God, would you, in your kindness, continue to transform our hearts? Would you solidify these truths from your word and whisper these promises to us, God, even this week? We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.



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