

# Reflecting God to the World

## Titus 3:1–8

### 1. INTRO

- a. How do you tend to treat other people?
    - i. Other Christians who are struggling? W/ condescension or mercy?
    - ii. Christians who are “doing better than you?” Grumpy bitterness or joy?
    - iii. People who don’t know Jesus? Judge them or feel broken for them?
  - b. What is God like when you picture him? How do you think God views you?
    - i. Does he feel distant to you? Completely disinterested in your life?
    - ii. Does he seem a little harsh or heavy handed? Always ready to smack you for whistling?
    - iii. Do you feel that he has forgiven you but is now just tolerating you?
    - iv. Do you think he finds great joy in you, rejoicing over you w/ singing?
  - c. Something I thought about a few weeks ago at 3 am...
    - i. A little backstory → had been losing my temper a lot w/ my kids
    - ii. Was frustrated at them - exasperated by them - but also at myself for exasperating them in response!
    - iii. *Ephesians 6:4, Fathers, do not provoke [exasperate] your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*
  - d. Here is what I wrote: **How I think God sees me is how I will treat my kids.**
    - i. This cut me to the heart.
    - ii. Why am I so quick to react when they don’t listen? Why am I overbearing at times w/ silly things? Why am I slow to discipline (formative) yet quick to punish (punitive)? Why? Because I think that’s how God views me.
    - iii. **How you think God sees you is how you will treat others.**
  - e. I’ve been thinking about this the last few weeks completely unaware that this is the direction I would go in Titus 3:1-8, but let’s look together
2. *[1] Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, [2] to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people.*
- a. Paul is primarily concerned in chapter 3 w/ how we treat other people in the world around us, how we interact with people who need Jesus
  - b. In other words, we are Christ-followers living in a culture that is awkward to our new-DNA. We feel like we don’t fit in. Why? Because we are a square peg.
  - c. We think we have it rough, but remember that Cretan culture was terrible!
  - d. So “How do you interact w/ a corrupt culture?” “How is a follower of Jesus to interact w/ the world around him or her?”
  - e. We tend to have one of a few default responses:
    - i. We embrace culture wars - ready to go fisticuffs at any moment
    - ii. We run away and hide - maybe buy a cabin in the Great White North

- iii. We go along with the flow and blend in - chameleon style
  - f. Paul here suggests that really none of these are options
    - i. You can't have a culture war and be gentle, not speaking evil, avoiding quarrels, being submissive
    - ii. You can't run and hide because all of these commands involve your interaction with other people
    - iii. You can't blend in w/ the culture b/c we are called to stand out!
  - g. So Paul says to... <review list>
  - h. Here's a question: **Why should we behave in such a respectable way to people who stand in direct opposition to what we value?**
3. *[3] 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.*
- a. Why should we behave in such a respectable way towards others - even those who hate us? **Because so were we, but for the grace of God...**
  - b. If you think you're pretty decent on your own, you will look down on anyone who doesn't measure up with whatever standards you have created for yourself.
  - c. If you are impressed with your own ability to get stuff done, clean yourself up, and look the part, then you will be condescending towards everyone else
    - i. Jesus' words in Luke 18:13
  - d. Let me tell you about your actual former reality if you now know Jesus (or your current reality if you haven't trusted in Jesus to forgive you)
    - i. Your relationship w/ God was a mess
    - ii. **You were foolish** in your heart → thinking you knew right/wrong
      - 1. Fool = saying in your heart, "There is no God" (Psalm 14:1)
    - iii. **You were disobedient**, living as if God didn't exist, as if there were no consequences for your actions
      - 1. A disobedient person rejects God's rule and wants to rule
    - iv. **You were led astray** by your heart, your flesh, the world, others
      - 1. And you led others astray too...
    - v. **You lived in malice** (desire and intent to do evil)
    - vi. **You were envious of others** → Do you know what envy is? a feeling of discontented or resentful longing aroused by someone else's possessions, qualities, or luck.
    - vii. **You hated and were hated** → Jesus said hatred is murder in your heart
  - e. In the modern world, it's all about "tell people how awesome they are", isn't it?
    - i. You're a snowflake, just like everyone else.
    - ii. Yes, you're unique - you're so special **<demotivator poster>**
      - 1. Unique - Just b/c you are unique doesn't mean that you are useful.
    - iii. We all tell each other how great we are. Nobody sins, they made an oopsie. They weren't loved enough, hugged enough, etc
      - 1. Don't get me wrong, a positive environment is crucial
    - iv. Here's some truth, though → Your well loved child is a sinner.

1. The self righteous, has their act together contributing member of society is, by nature, a God-hater

**v. When we convince ourselves that we are wonderful people all we do is ignore the mountains of evidence that point to the contrary.**

- vi. People need Jesus. Including you.
  - f. Part of the reason we don't know how to treat sinful people (strangers, neighbors, one another, kids, etc) is because we don't have a true understanding of who we are / were without Christ
  - g. *"We will never understand the wonderful kindness and love of God until we face the reality of what we are like without him." - Pastor Tim Chester.*
  - h. Why do we need to be gracious and respectable to the world around us, a world that hates us, speaks against us, thinks we are loonies, etc? Because that's OUR heritage! And look how God treated us...
4. *[4] But when the **goodness and loving kindness** of God our Savior appeared, [5] 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, [6] whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, [7] so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

a. God saved us...

- i. Not because of our works... DESPITE our works... (Pro Con List)
    1. CON: Foolish, disobedient, slaves to passion, hating, envious, etc
    2. PRO: Nothing
  - ii. According to his mercy → not giving us what we deserve
    1. This isn't a scale situation. This isn't potential. This isn't pity. This is mercy despite bountiful reasons to condemn, despite numerous reasons to justify smacking us, yelling at us
  - iii. Saved us by:
    1. Washing away our sins (regeneration)
    2. Renewing us w/ the Holy Spirit (rebirth, new creation)
  - iv. He did this by sacrificing his own son in your place!
  - v. Why? So that we could become heirs in this new family → heirs of hope!
- b. Wow! That's how God treated me! That's how he treated you!

**c. How did God treat us? With excessive, lavish goodness and kindness.**

- i. Can we pause on that for a second and just let it soak in?
- d. Do you feel like that's how God views you? When you think about your relationship with God, does kindness make the list?
- i. Do you think God looks at you w/ all your short tempered screw-ups, your too much wine over New Years, your overeating, your excessive Christmas spending, your legalistic judgment of everyone I just described in this list...
  - ii. Do you think that God looks at you or others with kindness? With goodness?

- iii. I tell you that if we do not, we will never know how to be good and kind to others.
- iv. THAT is Paul's point. How do you bring the gospel to a cretan culture?
  - 1. Culture wars? Not gonna do it.
  - 2. Running away? Not gonna do it.
  - 3. Blending in w/ everyone? Not gonna do it.

**e. How do you treat a culture that stands in opposition to you? Just as God has treated you - with goodness and loving kindness.**

5. *[8] The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people.*

- a. The previous verses are probably an early hymn or creed. Paul is affirming them
- b. Insist on them - memorize them, dwell on them, rewrite them, journal about them
- c. They will teach you to be people of goodness, zealous for good works which is profitable and good for other people
  - i. Profitable for you || Profitable for others
- d. Isn't this the whole book of Titus? God saved you, transformed you, set you apart to be holy and zealous to do good → even good towards wicked people, apathetic people, misguided people.
- e. Why? Because so were you. That was you, but by the grace of God.

6. Conclusion:

- a. How do you see God? How do you think God sees you?
- b. **How you think God sees you is how you will treat others.**
- c. Truth be told, we tend to project our own views of self, parents, family onto God and think he's like us rather than realizing how otherworldly he is
- d. How do you reach a corrupt culture? The same way you were reached.
- e. Remember, so were you! But God showed you goodness and kindness, so we show goodness and kindness as well.
- f. Think about the people in your life. Who is God bringing to mind?
  - i. Do you show them goodness and kindness?
    - 1. Doesn't mean you don't tell them the truth - it's not kind to not let someone know the bridge is out up ahead. That's not kindness.
  - ii. Do you truly show goodness and kindness to people you disagree with or grate against you? Why not?
  - iii. How do you think God sees you? Is his countenance towards you one of kindness? Why not?
  - iv. How can you be reprogrammed to have a healthier understanding of God's grace for you?