

Our Source and Ground of Salvation (Titus 3:4-5c)

Man, in his natural state (in Adam) is a blunted-minded, hard-hearted, perverted-willed, carnal-minded, passionate-filled, malicious, envious, hating sinner in bondage, that is spiritually dead and unwilling to come to God (verse 3).

Take note of the “But God” statements of the Bible (Genesis 50:20; Romans 5:8; Ephesians 2:4-5; Titus 3:4). The good news is that God did something for us that we were unable and unwilling to do; He saved us.

1. The Source of our Salvation

Kindness of God:

- The English words “goodness” and “kindness” are synonyms, but in the Greek, they are different (Galatians 5:22).
- Kindness refers to a deed or an action that delights in contributing to the happiness of someone else; it is a cheerfulness that rejoices in alleviating distress.
- God’s kindness does not exclude men from their sin, but convicts them of it, and leads them to repentance (Romans 2:4).
- The kindness that is discussed in verse 4 refers to a specific act of kindness in the past (notice the present tense “appeared.”). That is, there was (past tense) a kindness that was disclosed and revealed to mankind.
- This kindness occurred at the fulness of time when God became a man.

God’s Love for Mankind:

- Literally “philanthropia” (in the English we have “philanthropy”).
- “Philos” (friend) and “anthropos” (mankind, or people). It means “love of humanity,” or “love for mankind.”
- Notice again that this love towards man, like the kindness, is spoken of in past tense.
- God, in the past, has displayed and revealed a love towards humanity as a whole that was previously disclosed to His Creation.
- Our text does not speak of God’s present love for His Creation. It speaks of a “past” manifestation of love that has been fully revealed.

Theologians define the “love” of God into three categories:

- A. *God’s love of benevolence*: this is God’s goodwill to men (Luke 2:8-14). This is without distinction. God’s motives are always pure as He constantly desires good for mankind.
- B. *God’s love of beneficence*: this refers to the act of benevolence. God acts on his benevolence (which is his beneficence). He sends rain on the just and the unjust (Matthew 5:45). God not only wishes well towards mankind, but He does good to them.
- C. *God’s love of complacency*: this refers to the filial love towards Christ first and foremost (and second to those who have been redeemed in Christ). This is not universal, and it is not unconditional.

Paul is not speaking to the current love of God, but the past demonstration of love, that is, the appearing of our Savior.

2. Our Grounds of Salvation

Not Because of Good Works:

- It was not because of our own good works (Ephesians 2:8-9). If man could be saved by good works, there would be no need for the Redeemer (Jesus Christ).
- The Greek words “He saved us” refers to an act that was accomplished in the past that has a current effect. Christians have been saved (delivered):
 - from the punishment of sin
 - from the guilt of sin
 - from the power of sin
 - towards holiness

Mercy of God:

Notice that it was according to God’s mercy. His mercy. Mercy is the Greek noun that is used in light of verse 3.

- Mercy: the outward manifestation of pity which alleviates the distress of the one in need.
- In man’s helpless estate, he needs mercy, because he has violated the law of God and stands before Him guilty.
- The mercy of God is natural and essential to Him, but the acting and exercise of it towards mankind is sovereign and free, according to His will. His kindness and love were manifested for mankind, but His mercy is the prompting cause for our individual realization of it.
- Notice the pronouns again; “He” saved “us” not because of works done by “us” in righteousness, but according to “His” mercy.