Jesus Saves!

Last time I spoke on the Parable of the “Buried Treasure” in Matthew 13:44

It’s funny (and sweet), sometimes how people respond when they discover this AMAZING, priceless treasure in Christ…, they sometimes say things like; “I’ve found God” or “I’ve accepted Jesus”.

It’s perfectly fine (and expected) that new Christians would use those terms, but as we grow by the application of God’s Word, He changes our perspective.

We discover the ( “I” ) (meaning we), have VERY little to do with Salvation, other than the fact that we are sinners in need of saving.

Prayer

Titus 3:1-7

The context of this passage is that the Apostle Paul had written to Pastor Titus, who was sent to help grow the Christians on the Isle of Crete, in the Mediterranean Sea.

Paul calls for church order and living a righteous example in a place that was known for laziness, gluttony, lying and other ungodly examples.

Do you think that message might still be relevant for the church in America today?

While you ponder that question…

Let me just say that this dovetails perfectly with our Study in Genesis on Wednesday’s where last week we discussed how Noah could remain faithful & holy in God’s sight, in a world that was totally unfaithful and unholy…

Which is basically what Paul is instructing Titus to teach the believers in Crete that…

1. Jesus Saves - “To be” different

Regardless of what the rest of the world is choosing to do, Jesus saves people to be something the rest of world is not (but was in the beginning)…

Titus 3:1-2

* “To be” subject (obey/submit) to rulers & authorities even if you disagree.

Why? Because Paul wrote in Romans 13:1-2 that God has put them them there above you.

1 Peter 2:16-17

“Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God’s slaves. 17 Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor.”

Think of what our world would be like if everyone claiming to be a believer did this?

Asking, “will what I am thinking, saying, or doing, going to hurt my Father in Heaven?”

That is why Jesus Saves! So we can do that live His righteous & holy way, and be the living difference.

Jesus has not saved us to be like the rest of the world… 2 Cor 6:17 even tells us to come out from among them and be separate.

* To be ready to do whatever is good (beneficial for the advancement of God’s kingdom). Physically, Spiritually, emotionally, & financially

We go to the SAM, not simply to provide a meal…, the meal is simply a vehicle (a means) of being able to go in and spend an hour of our lives every month to go into a place, prayer, share God’s Word, and “BE” the “GOOD NEWS” of Christ to people who need it.

* To slander (talk down about) no one (Why? because they are God’s creation).
* To be peaceable & considerate, and always…
* To be gentle (showing true humility) towards everyone (including those who may disagree with you).

The Apostle Paul knew first hand how easy it is for people to become religious and and begin looking down on their culture with contempt, rather than striving to help them to know God thru the compassion of Christ.

Paul gives Titus the way to prevent this in V3… which, as we’ll see in a moment, is the believer needing to stay in touch with their “pre-Christian” condition.

Because just like the Bible has an O.T. & N.T… “true believers” also have an old and new… life.

Many things about our old life can make us unhappy and sad…

But for the believer, God has forgiven & forgotten most of those things.

Things that the enemy longs for us to go back to… which we must never do…

Not forgetting the quote from the 16th century English reformer & martyr - John Bradford… Who saw a group of prisoners being led away to be executed; saying “there but for the the grace of God go I”…

We would do well to remember who God has saved us “TO BE”… Secondly

1. Jesus Saves - from ourselves. V3

At one time we were;

Foolish = darkened in our understanding and separated from the life of God. Psalm 14:1

Disobedient to God – which is the stain that marks the “pre-Christian” life. “Who is anyone to tell me anything…” “I’ll do as I please…”

Only the blood of Christ can wash away that stain and make us something we were not…

Deceived – Easy prey for all kinds of false teaching… “iching ears”

Enslaved by all kinds of passions & pleasures – trapped by a desire for money, stuff and various pleasures…

This is who people are outside of Christ.

Living in malice, envy, being hated and hating one another – truly not a life that anyone should desire (but apart from Christ, that’s what awaits…

And it’s being modeled and passed down to others on a massive scale everyday.

So, Paul reminds these believers to remember not THAT, God has simply delivered them, but WHAT He has delivered them from…

Do you remember the old you? B.C

In 1807, John Newton, a worker on a slave ship in the Royal Navy said… with his memory almost gone; I remember two things: “I am a great sinner” and “Christ is a great Savior”.

He didn’t forget who he was apart from the redeeming love of Christ.

What did Jesus make of him? An Anglican Pastor and Abolitionist.

Back to Titus 3:

* When - Contempt is present in the church, rather than compassion
* Self-satisfaction & self-importance, rather than sacrificial love, and
* Smug disobedience rather than humble obedience, you can be pretty sure Christians have forgotten V3

But Paul is saying, since we were once like these people, let’s NOT judge them or treat them harshly, but be EAGER to treat them with the same love, mercy, kindness & Grace that we have received from God.

So that we might see some of them come to a true saving faith in Christ, living changed lives, becoming disciples who make disciples.

V1-2 – Jesus saves us “to be”…

V3 – Jesus saves so we can look back and remember our former life…

1. “Good News” - Only Jesus Saves V4-7

Paul was a living example of the very “Good News” that he was instructing Titus to teach the believers in Crete…

The Lord led me to one excerpt from Paul’s life to see this in Paul.

In Acts 16:16 and following… after he had cast out a demon from a fortune telling girl, which caused her not to tell fortunes any more...

Her owners weren’t too happy about their sudden loss of income, so a riot ensued, but Paul & Silas never fought back… I wonder why???

They were stripped, beaten with rods and the jailer threw them into the deepest, darkest, nastiest, part of the prison so they couldn’t escape.

We’ll pick it up in V25-26

Some things took place there that are opposite of what the pre-Christian world (and dare I say some the Christian community) believes today.

Paul & Silas shared the Gospel with “bad” people in jai without concern for themselves.

Again, they didn’t fight back, and “take out” as many people as they could.

They didn’t let what was happening to them change who God saved them to be. Proven by being singing with Joy at midnight!

V27 When the jailer was about to end his own life, Paul didn’t say; “Go ahead you miserable wretch, that way I can get out of here and preach the Gospel to people who deserve to hear it”.

No, Paul remembered that he too had been a miserable wretch, and didn’t deserve to be saved…

V28-29 – the kindness and love of God appeared to the jailer thru Paul…

Many, if not all of us, can recall when we fell something very bad was going to happen, but then something very good happened instead…

Those moments are sufficient to convince people that God exists, but not to convert/save them… as seen in V30

V30 - Paul didn’t respond how some in our world might today;

You’d bettered find God! He’s super hard to find!

You have to get to the Vortex in Sedona, or get up into the mountains in nature somewhere…

If mankind could be saved thru the creation or created things, we would have to legitimize and accept Pantheism (that God is in everything – especially the universe) and that Jesus & the Bible aren’t necessary for someone to be saved…

Which is not true…

The Bible actually tells us the opposite...

* People are hiding from God… and He is searching for them…
* The only way to the Father is thru Jesus the Son… Forgiveness
* The washing and regeneration of the Spirit… New life

Paul gives the Jailer the condensed version of this in V31-34

The creation cannot do that…

Isaiah 53:6a “We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way;… NIV

And here is the GREAT NEWS – V6b NLT – “Yet the LORD laid on him (the Good Shepherd) the sins of us all.”

The Good Shepherd not only seeks the sheep, but dies in their place!

Only Jesus Saves… the creation can not…

To God be the glory great things He has done

So loved He the world that He gave us His son

Who yielded His life an atonement for sin

And opened the life gate that all may go in

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord let the earth hear His voice

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord let the people rejoice

Come to the Father through Jesus the Son

Give Him the glory great things He has done

Let’s all stand… Today is your day…

No one will judge you here…

Samantha is going to come and play a couple verses of a wonderful song and as she does,

you are invited to come to an altar and talk to God about forgiveness and the new life that He has waiting for you…

You are in a safe place surrounded by people who have either been saved by Jesus… or need to be…

Come forward as we sing.