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September Memory Verse, 1 Thessalonians 4:15 (NKJV)
For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

Commentary on Titus Chapter 3 by Chuck Smith 9.1.24

Includes The Apostles' Creed at end of commentary

But put them in mind to be subject to the principalities and powers, and to obey the magistrates, and to be ready to every good work (Tts 3:1),

So here as in many other places, the Christian is exhorted to obedience to the governmental authorities that are over us. It isn't just when I like what they are doing, but even in those areas that I find very galling to me. Even in areas where I feel they are wrong, I am still to be in subjection to those authorities that have been placed over me. Romans 13, All authority is of God. Be in subjection, Peter tells us to be in subjection. Now Paul is saying the same thing for Titus to teach the people the obedience to the governmental authorities.

To speak evil of no man, not to be a brawler, but be gentle, showing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves also were at one time foolish, and disobedient, deceived, as we were serving our diverse lust and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another (Tts 3:2-3).

Now, this is much like Ephesians chapter two where Paul gives a very interesting before and after contrast. "And you, [he said] who were dead in your trespasses and sins: who in times past walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, that even now works in the children of disobedience: Among whom you all had your living, as you lived after the lust of your flesh and of your mind; and were by nature the children of wrath even as others. [The before life,] But God, who is rich in His mercy, wherewith He has loved us, and who has seated us together in Christ in heavenly places: And manifested that in the ages to come He might manifest the exceeding riches of His grace and love toward us in Christ. For by grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of yourself" (Ephesians 1-8). So, the before and after.

Now here we have the before and after also. And in the before, he divides it into three sections. The first section, are the foolish things that we did.

For we ourselves also were at one time foolish (Tts 3:3).

It is foolish to disobey God. Foolishness was marked by disobedience, as Samuel rebuked Saul when he did not utterly wipe out the Amalekites and offered some flimsy religious excuse for his failure of total obedience. I brought them back to sacrifice them. He said, "To obey is better than to sacrifice and to hearken unto God is better than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22). In that you have not done what God commanded you, you have done foolishly. It's always foolish to disobey God.

The second manifestation of his foolishness is his being deceived. And what a deceptive thing sin is. You remember Samson after his hair was cut and Delilah said, Samson the Philistines are upon you. He said, I will jump up as I did before, and he knew not the Spirit of God had departed from him. He was deceived as to his own capacities and his own strength. And a person who is deceived about the truth of their condition is foolish.

Now the second category is under the category of slaves, that is the same Greek word "douleia", as you were slaves to your "diverse lusts and pleasures". And it is easy for a man to become a slave to his lusts, all too easy. And all around you can see people who have been enslaved by their lust, their desire for drinking, their desire for alcohol, their desire for sex. These pleasures that they pursue, they become masters over them, tyrants ruling over them, and a man can become so easily enslaved by his fleshly appetites when we carry them to extremes.

The final listing is in the lifestyle, living. What is your lifestyle? "Living in malice and envy", the world around you. James said, From whence come the fightings and the wars among you? Come they not from your own desires, your lust? You desire and you have not. You envy those that do have. This envy, how hateful it is and how hateful it makes you. And so hateful and being hated, the world around us.

Paul said, That's the way we were. At one time we were foolish, we were slaves living a miserable lifestyle filled with malice and envy, hateful and being hated. Even as he gave the black picture in Ephesians, concluding that by nature, the children of wrath, he began the next verse with the word "But", which is a disassociative conjunction. How I thank God for that disassociative conjunction. Here I am in this miserable, hopeless, lost state, alienated from God because of my lifestyle, walking after the flesh, denying the things of the Spirit, but God loved man in that fallen miserable state. The love of God conquered. But God, Paul said, who is rich in His mercy, wherewith He has loved us. And here having again listed these things.

But after that the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared (Tts 3:4),

Here was man in this terrible condition, still loved of God, and in time God's love was manifested. The kindness of God manifested to man in this helpless, hopeless state. So the time together of the contrasting ideas, man in his wretched fallen state and God in His glorious loving state, desiring to redeem lost, wretched man, but after the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared.

Not by the works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us (Tts 3:5),

Paul, in Ephesians, "By grace are you saved by faith and that not of yourself: it is a gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). So here he declares not by the works of righteousness, which we have done, that doesn't save me, my works of righteousness can never save me. There is only one work that can save me and that is the work of Jesus Christ.

And when they came to Jesus one day and said, "What must we do to do the work of the Father?" Jesus said, "This is the work of the Father, believe on Him who He has sent" (John 6:28-29). And so the only work that will bring you redemption is the work of Jesus Christ upon the cross. And there is not one single work that you can do to save your soul from the damnation that it deserves. But by believing in Jesus Christ, God will grant to you forgiveness, pardon, and eternal life. Oh, the depths of the riches of God's mercy and love towards us in Christ Jesus. Not by the works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.

When you come to God, we don't come to God and say, Oh God, justice, I want justice, but I come and say, God mercy, I need mercy. I deserve the judgment of God for my disobedience and rebellion against Him in my past life. But God is merciful towards me. God loves me. God has been so good and kind to me. And "not by the works of righteousness that I have done, but by His mercy He has saved me,"

by washing me with the regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit (Tts 3:5);

That is that regeneration being born again by the Spirit. That's where I find my new life and that's where I find my hope. I've been saved by the work of God's Spirit within my life, that washing and cleansing of my sin and of my past. That's the glorious thing about the Gospel is no matter what might be in your past, what horrible, ugly things may exist there. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son cleanses a man from all sin, and by your coming to Jesus Christ there is a complete washing, a total obliteration of the past. And as far as the east is from the west, so far has He separated our sins from us.

Aren't you glad He didn't say as far as the north is from the south He has separated our sins, because my sins would only be eight thousand miles away if I went straight through or twelve and a half-thousand if I went around. Because I can only go north so far and then I hit the North Pole and I start going south. And there is a definite measurement between the North and the South Pole, eight thousand miles going through, twelve and a-half thousand miles going around. But He said as far as the east is from the west.

Now you start out east tonight and you can fly east the rest of your life or you can start out flying west tonight and you can fly west the rest of your life. You'll never fly east flying west, but you can't ultimately fly south flying north. The moment you hit the North Pole, you are flying south from the pole. As far as the east, did David figure that out

when he said that or is that inspired of God? As far as the east is from the west, so far has God separated my sins from me. Oh, how good and how loving and how kind God is to me, a hopeless, miserable, wretched sinner. The washing, the regeneration, the being born again, a new creature in Christ and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, who renews me day by day.

Which he shed upon us abundantly (Tts 3:6)

Oh, how God has poured out His spirit of mercy and grace upon our lives because we needed it abundantly.

through Jesus Christ our Savior (Tts 3:6);

All that God has for you is wrapped up in Jesus. You don't get anything apart from Him. He is the package and it's all in Him, all-inclusive. This is the record God has given to us, eternal life; the life is in the Son. He who has the Son has life. God has given us peace; this peace is in the Son. He who has the Son has peace. God has given us love. He who has the Son has love. God has given us joy. He who has the Son has joy. It's all in Jesus. God has nothing for you apart from Jesus all wrapped up in Him, which He has shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.

That being justified [having been justified] by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life (Tts 3:7).

So having now been justified; that is, declared innocent, declared righteous by God.

The word justified is a declaration of my total complete innocence. How can God do that when I am so guilty? Because all of my guilt was placed upon Jesus Christ and He died for me. So the forgiveness of God towards me is a total forgiveness, so total that my past will never be brought up to me by God.

Paul the apostle said in Romans chapter eight, "Who is he that shall lay any charge to God's elect?" Oh, he's a liar. Oh, he's done this. Oh, he's guilty of that. And he said, "Who is going to lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" He said, "It is God who has justified." In other words know this, God isn't charging you with any wrong. The opposite, God has declared you totally innocent of all charges, justified you through Jesus Christ.

So being justified by His grace, we should be made the heirs. The effect of that is I am now an heir of God, of God's eternal kingdom. The riches of the glory of eternal kingdom of God is mine. I'm the heir of God. I'm a child of God. And if a son of God, then an heir, an heir of God and a joint heir of Jesus Christ. Oh, the glorious work of God's salvation, not just saved from the wrath of God, that is to be revealed against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men who hold the truth of God in unrighteousness. But saved for the glory of God, to experience the glory of God through all eternity as a child of God and as an heir of God, this hope that I have of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

Listen, the world has nothing that can even come close to offering to you what God is offering to you tonight. If the world could offer you the whole world, with all of its glitter and all, it would be a sham compared with what God is offering you through Jesus Christ. Because if the whole world were yours, the glory of the kingdoms, the grandeur, the pomp, the circumstance, the adulation, how long would you have it? How long are you going to live? How many more years are you going to be here? Say you could have it for a hundred years, what is that compared with eternity?

Moses made a very wise choice when he chose rather to suffer the affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproaches of Christ, greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. By grace, we've been saved, we become heirs, we have the hope of eternal life.

This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that you affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works (Tts 3:8).

Now you say, Oh that is the opposite of what you've just been telling us. No, it is not at all. It's the next step. By grace you have been saved through faith, not of works that we have done, but by the grace of God you are saved. But you that are saved, you now need to bring forth fruit unto righteousness by your good works. Your good works don't save you. They cannot save you, but your good works are a proof of your faith, for faith is active. Believing is an active verb not a passive verb, and true belief will manifest itself in the works of a person's life. So that James said, You show me your works and I will show you your faith. You say you have faith, faith without works is dead. You don't really believe it.

My actions, my works, must correspond with what I declare to believe. If I truly believe it, then there will be corresponding works that will be a witness to what I am believing and declaring that I believe.

That's what the Bible is saying, so that if your works are not in harmony with your profession, your profession is a lie. It is empty and you'll never be saved by a lie. I believe in Jesus Christ. Oh, great thing to say. Then let's see what it has done in the changed life. If you're still living after the flesh, if you're still doing the same old things that were a part of the past life, and yet you say, Oh, I believe Jesus is my Lord and Savior, you're a liar.

In the first little epistle of John, John is going to give us several professions that people make. Oh, I walk in the light. Oh, great thing to say, isn't it, but if you say you walk in the light and are walking in darkness, you are lying, you're not telling the truth. Oh, I'm not sinning. Hey, hey, wait a minute. If you say you have no sin you make God a liar and the truth isn't in you. Oh, I abide in Christ, what a glorious thing. If a man says I abide in Him, that is a glorious thing to say. But if you're abiding in Him then you ought to be walking as He walks. Oh, I love God. Another glorious thing to say. But I hate my brother. John said, You're wrong, you've got a mistake here. How can you love God whom you have not seen and yet hate your brother, whom you have seen, who was

made in the image of God? So, it's not what I say, it's the works that prove my belief and my faith.

And so Paul said, "Now, affirm to those that believe in God, affirm constantly this truth, that they maintain good works". Let your works be in harmony with your declaration of faith.

But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies (Tts 3:9),

Ministers can become ensnared in so many foolish questions, which quite often are not really asked with an honest desire for an answer. And there's a difference between foolish questions and honest, serious questions. I have no time for foolish questions where a person is just wanting to cast doubt on the Scripture. Where did Cain get his wife? "Avoid the foolish questions, and genealogies,"

and the contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and they are vain (Tts 3:9).

They're a waste of time. Every once in a while I get caught up in them, some kid will come along and start asking questions just to create arguments. Sad.

[Now] a man that is a heretic (Tts 3:10),

And that's a man who believes something that you don't, his beliefs differ from yours.

after the first and the second admonition then reject him (Tts 3:10);

In other words, if he continues after you have admonished him twice, then reject him. Admonish him a couple of times. Give him a couple of chances. If he is a heretic and has got some weird doctrine, give him a couple of admonishments. And if he doesn't heed the admonishments then put him out of the fellowship, reject him.

Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sins, being condemned of himself (Tts 3:11).

Now he finishes the epistles with different little personal sides to the different ones.

When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me in Nicopolis: for I have determined to stay there this winter (Tts 3:12).

So, he was going to send some relief to Titus. Either Artemas or Tychicus were going to go and take up Titus's position, so that Titus could meet Paul there in Nicopolis, where Paul was planning to spend the winter.

[Now,] send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos (Tts 3:13)

Apollos that great interesting man that ministered in Ephesus and then later in Corinth. He became no doubt, a companion with Paul. I imagine they had a great time together because they were both so knowledgeable of the Hebrew Scriptures and they were both able to convince men mightily from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah.

So, he wanted Zenas the lawyer, and Apollos, sent on their way with adequate provisions.

don't let anything be wanting unto them. And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful. All they that are with me, [greet] salute you. And greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen (Tts 3:13-15).

May God be with you, and may God bless you, and may God keep you in the love of Jesus Christ, and may God help you to abound in all good works, for the glory of His name and of His kingdom. And may God strengthen you in your walk with Him, in Jesus' name.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Where Did this Creed Come From?

Although the Apostles' Creed is the oldest formal statement of Christian beliefs.

The Apostles' Creed originated as a Roman creed used as early as the second century. Later, a fourth century letter first referenced a version of that Roman creed as "The Apostles' Creed." The rendition of the creed we recite today first appeared in the year 753 AD in a handbook for pastors, written by a man named Pirminius from England.

What Is the Apostles' Creed?

The Apostles' Creed summarizes the teaching of the Bible, and more specifically, the New Testament. The Creed concisely states the Bible's teachings about God existing as three Persons in one being: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the Trinity). It also explains the life and work of God the Son, Jesus Christ.

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The creed includes two controversial and misunderstood statements:

First, "He descended into hell," which is based on Bible passages like 1 Peter 3:18-20, that state that at some point between Christ's death and resurrection he preached good news to "the spirits in prison. (Jesus actually went to what is known as Abraham's bosom or Paradise)

Second, "catholic church" does not refer to what is known today as the Roman Catholic Church. The word catholic means universal and refers to past, present, and future believers in Jesus Christ in every region of the world.

Is This Creed Relevant?

Today, many Christian traditions accept and recite the Apostles' Creed as a reliable statement of biblical beliefs. Ultimately, the creed is valuable insofar as it reflects the teachings of the Bible. It has done this job well.