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Titus 3:1-7

Put them in mind to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to every good work, (2) to speak evil of no one, not being quarrelsome, but forbearing, showing all meekness to all men. (3) For we ourselves also were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, slaving for various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. (4) But when the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, (5) not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, (6) whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, (7) that being justified by His grace, we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

God changes our heart through the washing and regeneration of the Holy Spirit.

The old nature is described by Paul thus: "For we ourselves also were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, slaving for various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. " (Verse 3) Lust, folly, self-deception, envy, malice and hatred – you can see them clearly in most workplaces: The office Lothario, the self-deceived and pompous supervisor, the envious schemer, the malicious backstabber and the vivid hatred between management and staff in many firms. Paul is not exaggerating our condition prior to Christ – a condition desperately in need of transformation. The unregenerate human heart is the source of so many of this world's ills.

And secular education does not cure it! Both my wife and I have worked as academics and seen spectacular turf fights and heart-breaking folly among people with high intelligence and good education. We have seen graduate students fall into moral sin, and lecturers become alcoholics, and unnecessary divorces and financial ruin. We have seen enough to convince us that no amount of education can cure the condition of the human heart – only Christ!

Now education is good and to be commended – but it does not fully tame the flesh or subdue the ego. Education may train the mind, but even the strongest mind cannot conquer forces such as envy, lust and disobedience to God. Secular education can fit us for earthly service and a career but it cannot fit us for God's service and for Heaven. But this is not a bible study against education - rather it is an exhortation to consider Christ and the Holy Spirit! For it is Christ that change our heart and our unruly ways and the Holy Spirit that washes and regenerates us.

In verses 4-7 Paul gives a brilliantly brief gospel outline: (4) But when the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, (5) not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and

renewal of the Holy Spirit, (6) whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, (7) that being justified by His grace, we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

That is almost as close to a creed as you can get! Remember yesterday we saw that Christians were to be practical about their faith and “zealous for good works”. Now Paul quickly disabuses any notions that may flow from that by saying that good works do not establish our righteousness with God: “not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.” And later “that being justified by His grace, we should become heirs..” Our inheritance and our salvation flow from grace and mercy –not from a righteousness we establish by our own efforts at being good.

Blessings,

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