

WHAT A WONDERFUL CHANGE IN MY LIFE HAS BEEN WROUGHT

TEXT: TITUS 3:3-7

INTRODUCTION:

1. The island of Crete is located in the Aegean Sea. It is the largest and most populous of the Greek islands.
2. In ancient times, the people of Crete had a terrible reputation.
3. In Titus 1:12 and 13, the apostle Paul said, “One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is true.”
4. Paul does not name the Cretan prophet, but it is generally thought to be Epimenides, who lived in the sixth century B.C. One author has paraphrased his statement this way: “Liars ever, men of Crete, Nasty brutes that live to eat” (Jerome D. Quinn).
5. The Cretans were known as liars and thieves, and the island of Crete was notorious for sheltering robbers and pirates. The Roman Cicero stated that “the Cretans consider piracy honourable.”
6. But many people in Crete got saved and churches were organized (cf. 1:5).
7. Which brings us to my text. Titus 3:4 says, “But after that...” Before, they were foolish sinners, but that was before they were saved (cf. 3:3, 4).
8. The songwriter put it this way: “What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought, Since Jesus came into my heart!” (Rufus H. McDaniel).
9. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

1. **REBELLION (3:3)**
2. **REGENERATION (3:4, 5)**
3. **RENEWAL (3:5b)**

I. REBELLION (3:3)

1. Titus 3:3 is an accurate picture of rebellious sinners. “Foolish” means “unwise.” It means, “not able to understand.” It means lacking in spiritual discernment. Romans 1:22 says, “professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.”
2. Sinners do not seem to understand that they are heading straight for hell.

3. Sinners are foolish. The Psalmist said, “So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee” (Psalm 73:22).
4. “Disobedient” refers to sinners having no qualms about disobeying God’s laws (cf. 1:16). They have no fear of God, and therefore they disobey God.
5. They disobey their parents. They disobey civil authority, and they disobey God, who has placed these authorities over them.
6. Proverbs 16:16 says, “by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil.”
7. “Deceived” means that sinners are easily led astray. They are deceived by false religion and by false teachings like socialism, communism, evolution, global warming, etc.
8. Sinners are deceived by Satan, who is called “the deceiver” in Revelation 12:9 and 20:3, 8, 10.
9. Sinners are deceived by false teachers, by their own hearts, and by the flattery and insincerity of others.
10. Second Timothy 3:13 says, “But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.”
11. “Serving divers lusts and pleasures” means that sinners are slaves to sin. Walking in the lusts of the flesh, they are literally enslaved to various passions and pleasures.
12. Lustful sinners are in bondage to pornography, adultery, homosexuality, and different sins of the flesh. We see frequent reports of disgusting men exposing themselves on the subway.
13. On Friday, a doctor who worked in the emergency room at Mount Sinai Hospital admitted in Manhattan Supreme Court that he sexually assaulted four female emergency room patients — including one 22-year-old woman he drugged with Propofol before attacking — as part of a deal that will put him in prison for two year.
14. Dr. David Newman, 45, said in court, “Compulsions twisted my brain.”
15. “Serving divers lusts and pleasures” brought disgrace and prison for this doctor.
16. “Living in malice” means some people are always angry, always ready to blow up, always seething. We hear these terrible stories about “road rage,” where total strangers start screaming and cursing and things quickly get out of hand and someone winds up dead.
17. Malice has been defined as “that evil attitude of mind which manifests itself in ill-will and desire to injure” (D. Edmond Hiebert, *Titus and Philemon*).
18. But they not only “live in malice,” Titus 3:3 says, “living in malice and envy.”

19. Envy “begrudges others their good fortune” (Hiebert). Proverbs 27:4 says, “Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?”
20. Acts 7:9 says, “And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him.”
21. King Saul was envious of David and repeatedly tried to kill him.
22. Matthew 27:18 says Pontius Pilate knew that “for envy” the Jewish leaders had delivered Christ to be crucified.
23. “Hateful, and hating one another.” Hiebert said, “Their detestable character and malignant disposition aroused mutual repulsion and antagonism” (*Titus and Philemon*).
24. “But...” (Titus 3:4). But God intervened!

II. REGENERATION (3:4, 5)

1. Our English word “regeneration” is of Latin origin and simply means “to be born again” (Titus 3:5).
2. Jesus said in John 3:7, “Ye must be born again.”
3. Regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit. John 1:12, 13 says, “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” It is this spiritual birth that produces a change in the life of the Christian. “What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought, Since Jesus came into my heart!” (Rufus H. McDaniel).
4. We see that change here in Titus 3:3-7.
5. “Wherefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (II Cor. 5:17).
6. Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, Lutherans, and other liturgical churches equate the new birth with baptism. Therefore, most of these people do not understand what it means to be genuinely saved.
7. Being born again means being “born of the Spirit” (John 3:6). It is a spiritual birth. Our Lord said in John 3:6, 7, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”
8. Titus 3:5 speaks of the “washing of regeneration.” This should not be confused with water baptism. The waters of baptism do not regenerate. Baptism is a picture and a symbol of the new birth.

9. The waters of baptism cannot wash away sin. Only the blood of Jesus can wash away sin. First John 1:7 says, “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”
10. What a sharp contrast between verses 3 and 4!
11. Salvation is all by the kindness and love of God our Saviour (3:4). It is not based on our good works, but it is all according to God’s mercy (3:5).
12. “Saved” in Titus 3:5 is in the past tense. Many religious people have no assurance of salvation, but those that have been regenerated and renewed by the Holy Spirit know they are saved.
13. The Bible says we “have passed from death unto life” (John 5:24; I John 3:14). Have *you* “passed from death unto life”?
14. The same word “washing” is found in Ephesians 5:26 – “That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.”
15. “By the Word” in Ephesians 5:26 means we are sanctified and cleansed by the Word of God. Our Lord said in John 15:3, “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.”
16. The Spirit of God takes the Word of God and transforms a sinner into a child of God.
17. Psalm 119:9 says, “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.”
18. First Peter 1:23 says, “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.”
19. There is a distinction between regeneration and renewal (Titus 3:5). The renewing work of the Holy Spirit began when we were regenerated, and it continues on till we get to heaven.

III. RENEWAL (3:5b)

1. Romans 12:2 says, “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”
2. The Bible teaches us that renewal is a continuing experience. We are continually being transformed by the renewing of our mind.
3. Regeneration takes place one time. Renewal is a continuous experience. Renewal is the development and extension of regeneration. Renewal is the continuing work of the Holy Spirit.
4. The Holy Spirit was “shed on us abundantly” (poured out) when we were saved (3:6). Titus 3:5 says, “by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

5. There is a distinction between regeneration and renewal. One preacher put it this way, “Rebirth emphasizes change, renewal vitality” (John Benton, *Straightening Out the Self-Centered Church*).
6. Second Corinthians 4:16 says, “but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.”
7. The word used in Titus 3:6 is “shed.” It literally means “poured out.”
8. Our Lord referred to this refreshing outpouring in John 7:37, 38. “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”
9. Then the next verse says, “But this spake he of the Spirit” (7:39).
10. We need this refreshing outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
11. Isaiah 44:3 says, “For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.”
12. Acts 3:19 says, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.”
13. If your Christian life is dry, then you need this refreshing.

CONCLUSION:

1. Henry Clay was born in 1777, and he died in 1852. He was a plantation owner, a lawyer, a statesman, and a skilled orator. He represented the state of Kentucky in both the United States Senate and in the House of Representatives.
2. He served as Speaker of the House, and he also served as Secretary of State.
3. Henry Clay ran for president in 1824, 1832, and 1844. Furthermore, he tried unsuccessfully to get his party’s nomination in 1840 and 1848.
4. Being from Kentucky, Henry Clay was very familiar with the legendary hillbilly feuds in the rural areas of Kentucky and West Virginia. These feuds would sometimes go on for many years, even for generations.
5. I read something very interesting about Henry Clay. Henry Clay once said that he did not understand what Christians meant when they talked about having new life in Christ, but he had seen long-standing Kentucky family feuds healed by Christian revivals, and he said that whatever could heal a Kentucky family feud had to be from God.