

All who are saved have a ✦ *personal relationship with*, a ✦ *faith-connection to Jesus and His finished work!*

- d. For what purpose? ⁷ **so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life** – By GRACE, *not by our works*, are we JUST in God’s sight; furthermore, we are heirs:
- i. children of God,
 - ii. brothers and sisters of Jesus,
 - iii. indwelt by the Spirit, and
 - iv. looking forward to the wonderful place Jesus is now preparing for us!

Conclusion: In our world today – *in which most sharp contrasts are fading away* – let us:

- See the *great difference* between sin and salvation!
- Rejoice that we – *through the Christ of Christmas* – are saved!
- *Live and share* the good news with others!

And all God’s people said: *Amen!*

Merry Christmas!

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“When We Were Living in Sin, GOD SAVED US!”

Based on Titus 3:3-7



The Nativity of our Lord – 2009
Friday, December 25 → 10:00

Introduction: *Merry Christmas!* Dear friends in Christ, sometimes things in life can all run together – *they can all seem very similar*. However, sharp contrasts – *though at times harsh* – can also stand out and make an impression:

- Taking a cold-only shower! (*A sharp contrast from a warm/hot comfortable shower!*)
- Leaving the movie theatre on a sunny day! (*A sharp contrast from the darkness of the theatre and the dim lights of the exit hallway!*)
- Traveling from Burkina Faso, West Africa to an air conditioned room in Parma in July! (*A sharp contrast from about 125 degrees to 70 degrees – a 55 degree difference!*)

Today, on our Savior's birth, we recall an even greater contrast which can be stated in various ways:

- From slavery → to salvation!
- From sin → to righteousness!
- From worry → to peace!
- From death → to life!
- From hell → to heaven!

In today's sermon we see the sad reality of our sin *in contrast to the happy, powerful, loving, salvation of the Almighty God!*

1. **When We Were Living in Sin:** Paul wrote this description to Titus, *which applies to us and all:* ³ **At one time we too were...**
 - a. **foolish** – thus senseless; we followed the wisdom of the sinful world, rather than the wisdom of God – *which comes from His Word.*
 - b. **disobedient, deceived** – *we were being deceived;* we lived in a state of believing certain things were true – when, *in fact*, they are not.
 - c. **enslaved by all kinds of passions** [lusts] **and pleasures** – Even though we thought we were proceeding according to our desires, *we were SLAVES TO SIN* – and we didn't even know it.
 - d. **We lived in malice** [evil] **and envy** – we were not content, satisfied with our blessings – *we always wanted more.*
 - e. [literally] **“hateful” and hating one another** – in many ways we had hate within us, which – *in turn* –

was translated to other people and things; we may have hated our jobs, our co-workers, our looks, and our lives. ***In summary, our lives were a mess!***

2. **GOD SAVED US:** ⁴ **But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared,** ⁵ **HE SAVED US...** – *Did you catch the sharp contrast?* When our lives were in a most deplorable situation – *deserving nothing but rejection, death, and punishment* – **GOD SAVED US!**
 - a. On what basis? **...not because of righteous things we had done, but BECAUSE OF HIS MERCY** – salvation is NEVER about the right things we do; instead, GOD SAVED US because HE CHOSE to hold back the punishment we deserve AND pour it out on His Son, the Christ – *the One whose birth we celebrate today!*
 - b. By the Holy Spirit: **He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit...** – God initially made people (Adam & Eve) spiritually alive, *but sin put all of us to death.* Therefore, by the Holy Spirit and through Holy Baptism, *God spiritually re-birthed us and renewed us!*
 - c. Through Jesus Christ: ⁶ **whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior...** – our salvation, rebirth, and renewal are all connected to Jesus Christ:
 - i. *He is God's Son!*
 - ii. *He came down from heaven!*
 - iii. *He lived without sin in our place!*
 - iv. *He received our sin and punishment!*
 - v. *He laid down His life and took it up again!*