

The Nativity of Our Lord – 2022

Sunday, 12/25 at 10:00

Christmas Day



Text: Titus 3:3-7 NAS 1995

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: *Merry Christmas!*

Outside it is cold, *but our hearts are filled with joy because of the Christ* – ♥His birth, ♥His saving work, and ♥the eternal gifts we possess through faith in Jesus!

In this sermon, *based on a section of Titus chapter 3*, ➡let us see our past and be sad; then, ➡let us be glad in God's great work to save us!

1. **Our Past:** When we compare ourselves with the guy next door, *we seem like pretty decent people*. But when we use the Bible for our comparison, *we quickly realize our grave trouble in the sight of God*. Paul used these words to state our past: ***<sup>3</sup> For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.*** // What do those words mean?

- a. Foolish – *not thinking things through, like living in opposition to God, **yet** expecting to go to heaven.*
  - b. Disobedient – *knowing the right **but** doing the wrong.*
  - c. Deceived – *being led astray.*
  - d. Enslaved to various lusts and pleasures – *being **controlled** by what is sinful.*
  - e. Spending our lives in malice and envy – *in other words, wickedness, and jealousy.*
  - f. Hateful, hating – *having a strong **sinful** dislike for some persons or some things.*
2. **God's Saving Work:** Even though we strongly connect Jesus with Christmas, think about it like this: ➡The focus of **Christmas** is *God the Father*, ➡the focus of **Good Friday/Easter** is *God the Son*, and ➡the focus of **Pentecost** is *God the Holy Spirit*. With that in mind, *notice how the emphasis here is on God the Father:*
- a. **<sup>4</sup> But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, <sup>5</sup> He saved us,**
    - i. God our Savior is God the Father: “For God [the Father] so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...” (John 3:16).
    - ii. The Father loved us, then His love appeared in the Person of His Son.
    - iii. Jesus is the One people saw, but God the Father was working through Jesus to accomplish His saving work.
  - b. **Why? not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy,**

- i. Sometimes we must reject common sense: It's normal and natural for us to rely on our own goodness. But the Bible clear: God did NOT save us because of the good things we have done. Whenever there is a difference between
    - ♦ common sense and ♦ the Bible, *let us always go with the Bible!*
  - ii. What is God's mercy? He held back from us the punishment we deserve; then He *fully poured out our punishment upon Jesus*.
- c. How? by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, // What do those words mean?
- i. Washing – *a baptismal washing*. And who is doing it? The person being baptized: **No!** The person applying the water and saying the words: **No!** Who is doing it? **God the Father!** *He saved us by the washing of regeneration!*
  - ii. Regeneration – renewal, rebirth – *as in being born again!* Jesus said to Nicodemus: “**unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God**” (Jn. 3:5 NAU). So, what is baptism? God the Father, *working in conjunction with the HS and through the water and the words of Holy Baptism*, to give the person being baptized spiritual life!
- d. The Day of Pentecost – <sup>6</sup> **whom He** [G-the-F] **poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, //** The Father gave the HS to the Son, *then the Son poured out the HS on the Day of Pentecost*.

- e. Why all such things? <sup>7</sup> **so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life.**
- i. Justified – just, right, holy in God’s sight: **not** because of our goodness, **but** because of God’s grace, *which is God’s undeserved love.*
  - ii. Heirs – *wow*: membership in God’s family, God’s kingdom.
  - iii. Hope – the blessed **certainty** that we have God’s promise of eternal life through our God-given relationship with the Christ of Christmas!

**Let Us Pray:** Dear F, S, and HS, we are overwhelmed by Your love and mercy and relentless work to wash us clean and bring us into Your holy family! Grant us great joy on this day of Christmas and help us to tell others of Your love, Jesus’ victory, and the fact that everyone is welcome to receive Your eternal gifts of forgiveness, peace, and eternal life!