



Justified by Grace



A New Beginning (Part 12) by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again. We're continuing this week with our theme from the two previous weeks: A New Beginning. It's a theme that contains in it the power to make a radical and permanent change in your whole life change for the better.

We've been systematically analyzing the series of logical steps which Paul unfolds in Titus chapter 3 verses 3 through 7. I've read those verses a number of times in the course of these two or three weeks. And I do trust that they've somehow been imprinted by the Holy Spirit on your heart and mind in a way that nothing will ever erase. So I make no apology for reading it once more Titus 3:3 through 7:

"At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our

Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life." (NIV)

So far in reading through that passage we've analyzed the following steps.

Number one, we saw our natural condition of need summed up in those words that are so powerful and so severe and yet so true foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved, living in malice and envy, hated and hating.

And then we saw God's historical intervention in the person of Jesus. God came on the scene of human history and the result of His coming He saved us. He brought us salvation. Salvation that we did not have to earn. It was not because of our righteousness, but because of his mercy and the outworking of that salvation washing, rebirth, renewal by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit moving within us.

And then following that inner change of rebirth, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon us the supernatural clothing with power from on high to make us effective witnesses for God. And I've pointed out that there's a difference between the rebirth of the Holy Spirit and the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The first qualifies us for heaven, but the second the baptism equips us for life on earth equips us to be effective witnesses for Jesus. You'll recall that when Jesus sent out His first disciples whom He had trained so carefully for three and a half years, He did not permit them to go out until they had received this supernatural empowering to become His witnesses. If those first disciples whom Jesus had trained personally for more than three years were not equipped to live and work for Jesus without that supernatural power, then I do not see how we can possibly believe that we could be so equipped without it.

Now, I'm going on to the next step which is found in Titus 3 verse 7. After speaking of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon us, Paul goes on:

“So that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.” (NIV)

At various points in this series of talks on A New Beginning, I have referred to the prayer of King David in Psalm 51 where he's confronted with his own sinful condition the lost condition of his heart, his own inability to do good or to change himself. And we've quoted a number of verses from that prayer which found their answer in God's intervention and salvation through Jesus. Let's look again at a prayer that David prayed in Psalm 51 verse 9:

“Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.” (NIV)

We see there that somehow David was conscience that a record of his sin was always before God. In fact, not only was it before God, but it was before David's own mind. And he cried in agony, “Hide your face from my sins. Stop looking at my sin. Blot out all my iniquity. God take away that record. I don't want to have to be confronted by it through out eternity.” And the answer to David's prayer is contained in a large measure in that one word that Paul uses here in Titus chapter 3 in verse 7:

“So that, having been justified by His grace...” (NIV)

The word “justified” says so much. We could translate it “acquitted”, “found not guilty”, “the charge dismissed”, “the record expunged from the proceedings of the law courts.” But more than that, to “justify” means in the fullest sense “to

make righteous.” And so when Paul says we've been justified by God's grace, it means not merely that we've been acquitted, not merely that the record has been expunged but that we have been accounted righteous. We're no longer guilty. There's no longer even the taint of guilt somehow it's been done away with. And we make that totally new start without any shadow of guilt over our lives. This is provided only through the death of Jesus Christ. Paul says this so plainly in Romans chapter 5 verse 1 one of those great key verses of the New Testament:

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (NIV)

“Justified, acquitted, made righteous, no longer does God have a case against us, no longer is there in anything in the records of heaven that we have to answer to.” The record has been cleansed. There's no charge to answer now. We have been made righteous, acquitted. That's the meaning of that word “justified.”

How can it be that we who were so guilty have been made righteous? How could it ever come about? The answer is, “It was made possible only through the cross through the death of Jesus, that which took place when Jesus hung on the cross and died there.” It's summed up in one very vivid beautiful verse in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verse 21. Speaking about the death of Jesus for our sins, Paul said:

“God made him who had no sin [that is Jesus] to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.” (NIV)

There was an exchange that took place. The evil that was due to us and to our sin came upon Jesus that in return the good that was due by eternal right and by His perfect obedience to Jesus might be made available to us. I want to say that very simply. I want to impress it on your mind. May you never forget it. May it stay with you in moments of doubt and darkness and fear and loneliness. God visited on Jesus the evil that was due to all of us that in return He might make available to you and to me the good that was due by eternal right to Jesus. There are many aspects of this exchange. Jesus died our death that we might have His life. He was wounded that we might be healed. He was banished from the presence of God that we might be welcomed into the presence of God. But one of the most central aspects of this exchange is that which Paul states here in 2 Corinthians 5:21:

“God made him [Jesus] who had not sin to be sin for us, so that in him [Jesus] we might become the

righteousness of God.” (NIV)

I want you to meditate on that. We do not have to patch up our own righteousness. We don't have to mend that tattered garment, but God says, “Cast it away. It's only filthy rags at best. I'll give you a completely new garment.”

The prophet Isaiah says that God provides us with a garment of salvation, and a robe of righteousness. Don't forget that when you receive salvation, that's the first item of clothing, but God follows it with a robe of righteousness the spotless righteousness of Jesus Christ. You are justified made righteous with a righteousness that you could never achieve by your own efforts. Remember, it's not because of our righteousness; it's because of God's mercy. And the outcome is summed up in two beautiful words in Romans chapter 8 verse 1. The two words are “no condemnation” Romans 8:1:

“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” (NIV)

The “therefore” follows on after explaining what has been accomplished by the death of Jesus on our behalf. As a result of His death, there is “no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” We are acquitted; we're reckoned righteous; the record of our sin is blotted out; we begin with a totally new start. This is the gateway to fullness of life.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this same time. Tomorrow I'll be sharing with you the final culminating step in God's provision for A New Beginning: becoming heirs of eternal life.

Radio Program

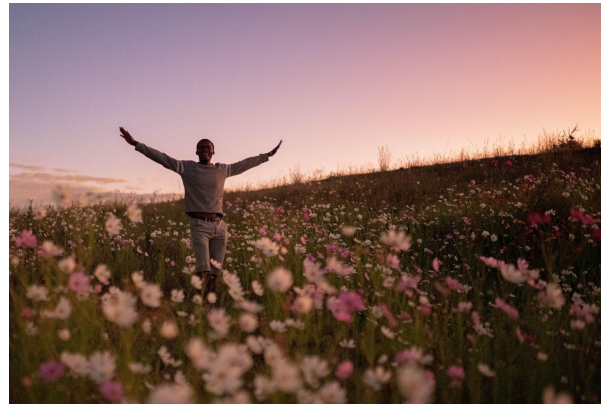
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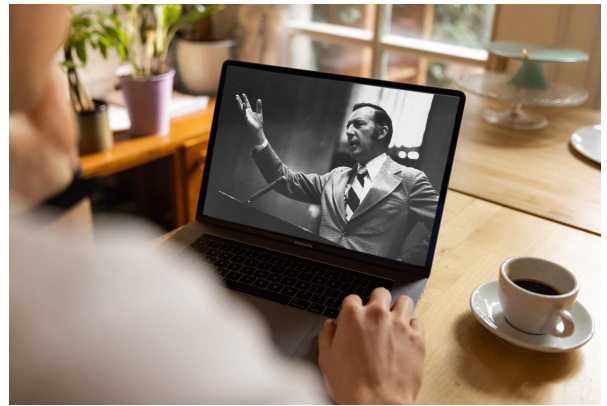
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