

Opening Reflections for Committees: July 2018

Witness and Fellowship Ministry Team

Renewal

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and **renewal** by the Holy Spirit. (Titus 3:4-5)

We once were foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared What amazes about God's love is that he loves us in spite of who and what we are. Titus describes what kind of qualities we had before knowing Christ.

What Paul describes here is a person or people that are unlovable. To think that the God of the Universe, perfect in every way, chose to love us in spite of ourselves. He loves us completely/unconditionally. No matter how bad we were or are, He still loves us. Titus 3:5 says that He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness. God gives us the gift of eternal life by His Grace. Grace is when you get something that is awesome that you absolutely don't deserve. What is God's grace like? Billy Graham told this true story: Billy Graham was driving through a small southern town, he was stopped by a policeman and charged with speeding. Graham admitted his guilt, but was told by the officer that he would have to appear in court. The judge asked, "Guilty, or not guilty?" When Graham pleaded guilty, the judge replied, "That'll be ten dollars -- a dollar for every mile you went over the limit." Suddenly the judge recognized the famous minister. "You have violated the law," he said. "The fine must be paid--but I am going to pay it for you." He took a ten dollar bill from his own wallet, attached it to the ticket, and then took Graham out and bought him a steak dinner! "That," said Billy Graham, "is how God treats repentant sinners!"

God's love FOR us compels Him to pour His grace out ON us.

We can't work and earn our way to Heaven: Jesus has already paid the price for our redemption/forgiveness. God already owns everything. There is nothing you can offer Him that He actually needs.

He saved us.... but according to His mercy. Mercy is when you don't get something bad that you do deserve! But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ by the washing of regeneration and **renewing** by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior. With salvation, comes the greatest gift that God could give us. The Holy Spirit of God comes to live within us. I'm amazed by that!

Prayer: Lord, we are your people, the sheep of your flock. Heal the sheep who are wounded. Touch the sheep who are in pain. Clean the sheep who are soiled. Warm the lambs who are cold. Help us to know the Father's love through Jesus the shepherd, and through the Spirit. Help us to lift up that love, and show it all over this land. Help us to build love on justice and justice on love. Help us to believe mightily, hope joyfully, love divinely. **Renew** us that we may help **renew** the face of the earth. Amen