

Salvation Complete.

Text: Titus 3:4-8

Suggested Hymns:

521, 140, 139 (creed), 141, 136T322, 296

1) It originated with God the Father

2) It was completed by God the Son

3) It is offered by God the Holy Spirit

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Titus 3:4-8, *⁴ But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, ⁵ not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

⁸ This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men. (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

One half of the Church year has passed. The Festival half closes today. During the past half we have heard of the great love the Triune God has towards us.

Christmas told of the Father's love to mankind. Holy Week showed us the Son's great love to mankind. Pentecost showed us the Holy Spirit's great love to mankind. And now comes the Trinity Festival.

Our text is very suitable for the Holy Trinity festival. It is true that there is only one text, containing the names of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, namely, Matthew 28:19, *¹⁹ "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."* But there are other texts in which the Three Persons are named. Many of these other texts show how all Three Persons were active in our salvation.

Such a text is the one chosen for today's sermon. On this Trinity Festival, let us hear once more how each person in the God-head assisted in our salvation. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. Our Salvation

Originated With God The Father

Our salvation originated with God the Father. Verse 5 of our text says *He saved us*. What is salvation?

Firstly, we are saved from sin. The angel Gabriel told Joseph in Matthew 1:21, ²¹ *“And she [Mary] will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.”* John the Baptist makes it very clear that Jesus saves us from our sins in John 1:29, ²⁹ *“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”* Also we read in 1 John 3:5, ⁵ *“And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.”*

Secondly, we are saved from death. We read in 1 Corinthians 15:55, ⁵⁵ *“O Death, where is your sting? O Hades [grave], where is your victory?”* ⁵⁶ *“The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.”* ⁵⁷ *“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* In 2 Timothy 1:10 we are told that *our Savior Jesus Christ, has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*

Thirdly, we are saved from the devil. We read in Hebrews 2:14-15, ¹⁴ *“Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,¹⁵ and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”*

The purpose for which Christ appeared is told to us in 1 John 3:8, *“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”*

This salvation did not originate with man. Verse 5 of our text tells us that we are saved *not by works of righteousness which we have done*. What are works of righteousness? They are summarised in Luke 10:27-28, ²⁷ *“So he answered and said, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart,*

with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,’ and ‘your neighbor as yourself.’” ²⁸ *And He said to him, “You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.”* God demands perfection. Nothing less will do.

Our works of righteousness, because they are imperfect, possess no saving effect. Man’s righteousness avails nothing before God’s throne. All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, as we read in Isaiah 64:6, ⁶ *But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.*

Is there an inborn righteousness in us that saves? Psalm 51:5 answers that question. ⁵ *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.* We are even conceived in sin. When we arrive on this earth, we are dead in trespasses and sins.

We read in Ephesians 2:1-5, ¹ *And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.*

⁴ *But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).*

This means that we have done no righteous works that can save us. Any good works that we strive to do, are the evidences, not the causes, of our salvation. Man may say that our works save us, but God says in Romans 3:20, ²⁰ *Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

And Galatians 2:16, ¹⁶ *“knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.*

This is summarised in Ephesians 2:8-9, ⁸ *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

Besides, *“if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain”* as we are told in Galatians 2:21.¹ The final conclusion is in Romans 3:28,²⁸ *Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.*

With our whole Church we confess in Third Article, *I believe that I cannot by my own understanding or effort believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, and sanctified and kept me in the true faith.*

So, you can see that our salvation originated with God the Father. The Father is the Author and the Beginner of our salvation. *“He saved us,”* our text says. In verse 4 our text says *“God, our Savior.”* The Father devised the plan of salvation. It is His own idea. And He, all-knowing, foreseeing man’s fall into sin, made plans for man’s salvation long before world was made. We read in 2 Timothy 1:9, [He] *has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.*

And the plans that God the Father made were made *“according to His mercy”* our text says in verse 5. What motivated God the Father to be merciful toward man? It was *“His kindness and love.”* “Kindness” is good will toward man, gentle friendliness.

“Love” — literally it is philanthropy, by which God not only shows His kindness but also offers to the world the full and free use of all gifts of His heaven. Remember John 3:16,¹⁶ *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

And 1 John 4:9,⁹ *In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.*

Likewise Romans 5:8, ⁸ *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

And v.7 clearly states that *“by His grace”* we are justified. “Grace” is undeserved mercy. We read in Romans 3:24, ²⁴ *being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*²

2. Our Salvation Was Completed By God The Son

Our salvation was completed by God the Son. Verse 4 of our text says, *the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared*. The Father’s love of the world was seen, and became known, through Jesus Christ. We read in Titus 2:11, 13-14, ¹¹ *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ...* ¹³ *looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,* ¹⁴ *who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*

This love appears in many promises that the Father gave His chosen people about a Saviour who would come. The promise of a Redeemer was first given in Genesis 3:15, ¹⁵ *And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.*

And in Numbers 24:17, ¹⁷ *“I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel.”*

And in Deuteronomy 18:18, ¹⁸ *‘I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.’*

At Christmas we are reminded of the promises in these texts, Micah 5:2, ² *“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.”*

And in Isaiah 7:14, ¹⁴ *“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”*

The Father's love to man also appears in the many Old Testament "types" of Jesus, such as Abraham, David, Solomon, and others. It also appears in the varied sacrifices offered in the Temple, and in the various happenings in the national history of the Jews. We read in John 3:14, ¹⁴ ***"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up."***

These were a shadow of things to come as we read in Colossians 2:16-17, ¹⁶ ***So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths,*** ¹⁷ ***which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.***

However, the Father's love for man fully appeared in the sending of His Son to save the world from its sins. This Son was Jesus Christ. He is called "***our Saviour,***" in verse 6 of our text. He is our Saviour because He fulfilled the Law in our stead as we read in Galatians 4:4-5, ⁴ ***But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,*** ⁵ ***to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.***

Jesus did that perfectly, so perfectly that not only could His enemies find no fault with Him but that God accepted His work. He is our Saviour because as our Substitute He shed His blood. We read in Colossians 1:14, ¹⁴ ***in [Christ] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.***³

He is our Saviour because as our Substitute He died. We read in 1 Timothy 2:6 that Jesus ***gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.***⁴

Salvation is secured. We are justified. Our text says in verse 7, ⁷ ***that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.***

We are declared righteous by the merciful God on account of the satisfactory work Jesus performed as our Substitute. We read in 1 Corinthians 6:11, ***But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.*** And in 1 Thessalonians 5:9, ⁹ ***For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.***

By His stripes we are healed.⁵ Salvation is freedom from sin, from death, and from the power of the devil. We read in Romans 5:1, *¹ Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

And now we are *heirs according to the hope of eternal life*. Eternal life is Salvation from sin, death, and the devil. This eternal life Jesus has won for us by what He did as our Substitute.⁶ This eternal life we shall inherit as we read in Romans 8:14-17, *¹⁴ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."*

*¹⁶ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs -- heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*⁷

3. Our Salvation Is Offered To People By God The Holy Spirit

Salvation is offered to people by God the Holy Spirit. Salvation offered to us *through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit* our text says in verse 5.

The Holy Spirit regenerates us. We are born again *not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*⁸ A new heart was created in us.⁹ We are new creatures, the old things, old principles, motives, and aims have passed away. We read in 2 Corinthians 5:17, *¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.* The old state of wilful sin is suppressed.

Such things we read in Titus 3:3, *³ For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.* The old are done away with.

The Holy Spirit renews, renews our heart and mind. We are a vessel with a new commander, steering a new course, with a new compass, to a new haven. He brings back the wanderer.¹⁰ He settles the unstable.¹¹ He comforts the fearful.¹² He separates us from things hindering our spiritual growth.¹³ He brings us closer to the Fountain of supply.¹⁴

The Holy Spirit illuminates the mind, as we read in Romans 12:2, ² *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.* And in Colossians 3:10, ¹⁰ *and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.*

The Holy Spirit gladdens our heart.¹⁵ He strengthens the will.¹⁶ He changes our character.¹⁷ As vital blood is driven by the heart to every extremity of the body, so is the renewing power of the Holy Spirit. It goes to every part of the soul in which the Holy Spirit lives.

This regeneration and renewing is wrought by the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ, as we learn from verse 6 of our text, ⁶ *whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.*

The Holy Spirit does this through the Word of the crucified Saviour.¹⁸ That Word, whether read, heard, or remembered, will not return void.¹⁹ The Holy Spirit does that also through Baptism and the Lord's Supper where Christ gives His body and blood for the remission of our sins.

Salvation is offered and assured to us in the Lord's Supper by the Holy Spirit. So the Holy Spirit saves us by bringing to us the saving Word of God and the two Sacraments.

The Triune God has saved us from sin, but also for service to Him, as verse 8 of our text says. ⁸ *This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.*

Like Jesus, let us go about doing good, let us be active in every good work. We read in Philippians 4:8-9, ⁸ *Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy -- meditate on these things.* ⁹ *The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.*²⁰

So you can see today, that our salvation originated with God the Father, was completed by God the Son, and is offered by God the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ See also Hebrews 7:11

² See also Romans 4:16

³ See also 1 Pet. 1:19, Rev. 1:5, Rev. 5:9; Heb. 12:24

⁴ See also Romans 5:10, Matthew 20:28

⁵ Isa. 53:5; 1 Pet. 2:24

⁶ See Titus 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:3; 5:10.

⁷ See John 14:1-6; 1 John 2:25; John 6:47.

⁸ John 1:13, See also John 3:5-6

⁹ Psa. 51:10

¹⁰ Hos. 14:1-2

¹¹ Eph. 3:17

¹² Psa. 23:3,4

¹³ 2 Cor. 6:16-18

¹⁴ Isa. 41:13

¹⁵ Rom. 15:13; 14:17

¹⁶ Eph. 3:16, 4:23

¹⁷ 2 Cor. 3:18

¹⁸ 1 Pet. 1:23; Jam. 1:18

¹⁹ Isa. 55:1

²⁰ Titus 2: 14