

The Kindness And Love Of God, Our Saviour, In The Birth Of Christ.

Text: Titus 3:4-7
Suggested Hymns:
625, 744, 34, 26, 33

- 1) How Gloriously God Our Saviour's Kindness And Love Appeared In The Birth Of Christ
- 2) The Means by which We Experience God Our Saviour's Kindness And Love.

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 3:4–7, 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.* (NKJV)

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

Dear friends in Christ,

Our text tells of God our Saviour's kindness and love to man — not of God the Creator's, but of God the Saviour's kindness and love.

The Creator's kindness and love may be seen in the works of nature. All people, even the most degenerated heathen, can perceive by the works of nature that there is a God, and that He is good and kind, providing for all His creatures.

But God the Saviour's kindness and love is something which we neither find in the works of nature, nor does our own heart and conscience tell us thereof. On the contrary, if we inquire into our own hearts and ask what we may rightly expect of God, who so bountifully provides for us, our own conscience will tell us that we may expect nothing good.

Our own conscience tells us that we are sinners and that God is holy. Our own conscience tells us that the holy God will and must punish our sins. Why does a person feel so uneasy when he has done wrong? Why do people try to make amends in some way for the sins which they have committed? Why do the

heathen bring offerings to their gods and inflict punishments upon themselves that they might avert the anger and wrath of the deity? It is because the human heart is aware of the fact that God will not let sin go unpunished.

But if a man has brought ever so many sacrifices, if he has done ever so much good to offset his evil deeds, if he endures ever so severe a self-inflicted punishment, can he be sure that his sins are forgiven and that God is reconciled? No; the Saviour-God is hid before him; he does not taste of God the Saviour's kindness and love, and always will remain in a state of doubt and uncertainty.

But praised be the Lord! The veil has been lifted from our eyes. We can all be made sure of the forgiveness of our sins. We can all see God our Saviour's kindness and love. For "*the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,*" says the Apostle.

Appeared? When and where? At Bethlehem, on the night when Christ the Saviour was born. Let us consider, then, with the help of God's Holy Spirit, *The Kindness And Love Of God, Our Saviour, In The Birth Of Christ*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. How Gloriously God Our Saviour's Kindness And Love Appeared In The Birth Of Christ

Our text begins, ⁴ *But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared*. Is not this a strange saying? Kindness and love are qualities, and qualities are invisible things. How can they appear? How can they be seen? If a person does good to others and speaks kindly to others, we may know by his words and actions that he is loving and kind, but the love itself and the kindness itself we surely cannot see.

And here the Apostle says that God our Saviour's kindness and love to man appeared. It assumed a visible and tangible form so that it can be seen and observed by the children of men. This was done in the birth of Christ. In Bethlehem, on the night when the Saviour was born, the kindness and love of God our Saviour to man literally appeared on this earth.

It no longer remained secluded in the bosom of the Father, but it came forth from the heart of God, and appeared in the form of a new-born child. For who is the Child of Bethlehem? He is the eternal, the only-begotten Son of God, who had been with the Father from eternity, before the foundation of the world was

laid, the same with the Father and the Holy Spirit in essence, equal in glory, power, and majesty.

Now if God is identical with His own qualities, if God is love,¹ as the Apostle says, love itself, is it not literally true that the love and kindness of God our Saviour itself, and not merely a proof or an indication of His love and kindness, appeared upon this earth when God became man ?

And how gloriously God our Saviour's kindness and love to man appeared in the birth of Christ! There we see God in the flesh; the Almighty, whom the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain, is born into this present world, a true son of the Virgin Mary; He became our true brother, flesh of our flesh and blood of our blood.²

Could God have shown in any better way that He is kind to man, that He truly loves the world, the whole human family, than by giving us His only-begotten Son? Has He ever shown such kindness and love to other creatures that came forth from His hands?

He has shown to us even greater kindness and love than to the holy angels in heaven, those blessed creatures whom He has confirmed in their blessedness. The Apostle glories in this preference as written in Hebrews 2:16, ***16 For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.*** See how gloriously God our Saviour's kindness and love appeared in the birth of Christ! There we behold God as a child, of poor parents, born in a stable, in the greatest poverty and lowliness.

Could God do more to show us how good and kind He is to us poor mortals, to subdue the fear which dreads God's holiness, and does not venture near to Him because we are sinners, to draw us to Him so that with all boldness and confidence we might approach Him and address Him without fear?

The eternal Son of God could as well have assumed the form of a full-grown man when He came into this world. But to manifest His kindness and love to man so much the more, He became a helpless child.

Can we doubt that God means well with us, that He dearly loves us, that He does not mean to punish us for our sins, that He desires to save us and to make us truly happy, both here in time and hereafter in eternity, when we see Him coming

to us, coming into our flesh, coming, not in His serene majesty escorted by myriads of angels, but as a dear little child?

2. The Means By Which We Experience God Our Saviour's Kindness And Love.

Let us consider, then, in the second place, by what means we experience God our Saviour's kindness and love.

The Apostle says, ⁵ *not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration.* By what means do we experience God our Saviour's kindness and love? By what means does God communicate to us His mercy which He showed to us in giving us His only-begotten Son, and apply to us the salvation which His dear Son procured for us by His sinless life and by His painful suffering and bitter death on the cross?

Are the works of righteousness which we perform the means whereby we experience God's kindness and love, and whereby we are ultimately saved? Is God moved and induced by our good deeds to be good and kind to us and to give us eternal life?

No; this is the great and serious mistake of us all, as we are by nature, that by being good and doing good we expect to please God and to make Him favourably disposed toward us so that He will overlook our sins and finally receive us into heaven when we die.

But if this was the case, if by this means, by works of righteousness which we have done, we could experience God our Saviour's kindness and love, then what would Christ be for?

What need would there have been of God's own Son coming into this world, suffering and dying? Might not Christ as well have stayed at home, with the Father, upon the divine throne, if of ourselves, by our own deeds, we could induce God to give us eternal life?

No; the means whereby God extends to us His mercy and communicates to us His love and kindness is "*the washing of regeneration,*" as the Apostle says. And what is the washing of regeneration? Christ said to Nicodemus, as written in

John 3:5, ***“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.***

Likewise we read in 1 Peter 3:21, ²¹ ***There is also an antitype which now saves us — baptism.*** The washing of regeneration is holy Baptism. Baptism is the means by which we experience God our Saviour’s kindness and love. Christ solemnly instituted the holy Sacrament of Baptism and said in 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.***

And we read in Mark 16:16, ¹⁶ ***He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.*** O how great is God our Saviour’s kindness and love to man! Seeing that we would not and could not come to Him because we are born sinners, seeing that by nature we neither care for, nor even believe in, His kindness and love, He Himself comes to us, comes to us in Baptism and therein presents to us all the treasures of His grace, forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation.

For in Baptism we are regenerated, that is, born again; we are made God’s children and heirs of eternal life through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. O what great things has God done for you in Baptism, my friends! All your sins, the sins of your whole life, He forgave, and eternal life He promises you, so that this blessed Sacrament should be a source of comfort to you as long as you live.

Another means by which we experience God’s kindness and love is the Holy Spirit, as the Apostle says, ***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.***

One of the greatest gifts of God to poor sinful man is His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit enters into every true believer’s heart. St. Paul says to the Corinthian Christians, as we read in 1 Corinthians 3:16, ¹⁶ ***Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?***

It is through the Saviour’s great redemptive work for us that God’s Holy Spirit has chosen our poor human hearts for a habitation. See the kindness and love of God, our Saviour, which we experience through the Holy Spirit dwelling

in our hearts, whom, as the Apostle says, *He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.*³

It is the Spirit of God who guides us into all truth⁴ so that we grow in the knowledge of divine things, who glorifies the Lord Jesus in us so that in our dear Saviour we find the greatest pleasure, who fills our hearts with that peace and rest which the world cannot give.

It is the Spirit of God who comforts us in our distress, who enables us to taste of the good Word of God and of the powers of the world to come, and who brings us to the faith and keeps us in the faith.

It is the Spirit of God who sanctifies us, who urges us continually to abound in good works of every description, and to find pleasure and joy in doing good.

It is the Spirit of God who upholds us even in the stern hour of death, and strengthens us so that without fear we can meet our last enemy and pass through death's door into life everlasting.

Let us be careful, then, that by wilful sinning we do not drive away from us God's Holy Spirit, and thus be deprived of the means whereby we so abundantly experience God our Saviour's kindness and love.

Let us live in the Spirit and walk in the Spirit! Then the glorious message of our Saviour's birth will not have been proclaimed to us in vain, and as Christmas-tide passes away, there shall be an eternal Christmas in our hearts here in time and hereafter in eternity. Amen.

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

¹ 1 John 4:16

² Heb 2:14

³ Titus 3:6

⁴ John 16:13