

You Asked For It...Restoration!

Titus 3:3-8

August 11, 2019

Destination Restoration informally began 12 years ago today, on August 11, 2007, with a work day at the church. But instead of calling it a "work day" we called it "Restoration Day!" That was the day the Backporch was painted as well as my office. Over 60 people locally and from a couple other churches helped to accomplish many restoration projects in and around the church.

Out of that day came a special restoration project. This project almost went unnoticed. It wasn't on the original "to do" list. It was stuck back in a corner of one of the upstairs rooms. There were chairs and other odds and ends stacked on top of it. My wife was walking around the room with some friends when she spotted it. She has the eyes for great opportunities and deals. What she spotted is what is under this cover next to the pulpit.

(uncover the oak flip top desk)

This desk was painted with numerous coats of green/white paint. It was lost over in the corner of the room serving no useful purpose at all. My wife was able to see beyond the painted surfaces to its original design. Why would anyone want to cover up such original intended wood beauty with paint?

We took the desk home and after 4 cans of paint remover and hours of work the beautiful oak desk was RESTORED to it's original created beauty.

It no longer sits in a corner of a room hidden by other discarded furniture. This restored, beautiful, who knows how old, oak desk is now a part of my office. It is being used for what it was originally intended to be used for...a working desk. It is a desk with a new usefulness.

Each day I see this desk it is a reminder of the potential Destination Restoration God has for our church, community and more importantly the lives of individuals.

Today we want to uncover another amazing restoration project. This restoration project is what occurs in the lives of people who make a decision to come to know Jesus as their personal Restorer, Savior.

I want to allow the bible reading for today to be our can of pain and hurts of life stain remover. We want to apply this portion of God's Word to any life that has ever felt discarded and useless in a cluttered corner of life. We want to notice them and let them know they have a sense of purpose in life.

I want us to allow God's Word and the love of Jesus to begin to restore the lives of folks. Folks who have had years of hard life painted over and over until they no longer sense the beauty of who they were originally designed to be.

Notice again the description of that discarded life:

"It wasn't so long ago that we ourselves were stupid and stubborn, dupes of sin, ordered every which way by our glands, going around with a chip on our shoulder, hated and hating back." vs.3

Anyone see themselves or someone you know and care about in that description of a life lost in the corner of life? We have all done things in our lives or made decisions that when we look back on think, "Man was I ever stupid in making such a decision like that?"

There is a saying I have used often in my parenting years and even still today as I talk with folks thinking about making a bad decision in their lives. That word of wisdom is simply, *"If you are going to be stupid then you better be tough."*

In other words, if you are going to make decisions that are disobedient to the will of God or foolish in the values of life, then you should be prepared to accept the consequences of those kind of decisions.

Foolishness...stubbornness...self-centeredness...hatred...prejudices whether racial or economical or social...sinful lusts and desires...all layers of ugly paint over lives which God originally designed to be beautiful and useful.

As we apply another layer of stain remover to our lives we begin to see that one word that really begins the restoration of the individual. That one word begins to remove the layers of life that have hardened over the heart for years. The one word that starts the restoring of one's life from lost in a cluttered corner of life to being restored to the beautiful individual God had in mind when He created us.

That one word is "*BUT!!!*"

"BUT when God, our kind and loving Savior God, stepped in, he saved us from all that." vs. 4

God stepped in when He sent Jesus, His only Son, into our world. He walked into the room of our lives and brought hope. He stepped in and through his death and resurrection brought us the hope of restoration from our sin and death.

He was willing to take us just as we are. He was able to see in us what we couldn't even see in ourselves...His Image. He was able to speak words of peace and hope and love into our hearts even through all the hardened layers that our life experiences had put on us. Jesus saved us from "**all that.**" Whatever your "all that" is or might be, the blood of Jesus shed on the cross can remove all that pain and hurt layers of life.

"He gave us a good bath, and we came out of it new people, washed inside and out by the Holy Spirit. Our Savior Jesus poured out new life so generously."

Vss. 5,6

I would imagine we all can relate to that "good bath" feeling. You are hot and sweaty and grimy from working in the yard. You stink! Even your dog runs from your odor! Your muscles may be sore and aching from all the work you have done. You step into that hot shower or tub and "Ahhhh!" You scrub the layers of crud off your body and allow the hot water to massage your hurting muscles. You step out of the shower feeling like a new person!

No matter what the layers of crud life has covered you with, no matter how beaten up and sore you may be from life, Jesus, through the power of His Holy Spirit, can bring a newness to you. All that crud and bad odor of the past is washed away. You are a new person!

The Apostle Paul was a man who experienced this newness of life in Christ Jesus. He described his restoration with these words of life:

"...those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun!" II Corinthians 5:17

A restored relationship with someone you love is such a beautiful experience. Jesus talked about a restored relationship of a pig-slop covered son with his dad. (Luke 15:1ff) The son had let layers of bad decisions harden his heart. He returned to his dad and his dad restored the relationship with his unconditional love for his repentant son.

A restored relationship gives new hope, purpose and new meaning to one's life. The same is true when an individual who comes back to their Heavenly Father seeking forgiveness.

We were originally created in the image of God and Jesus.
(Genesis 1:26)

Salvation...accepting and believing and living for Jesus as our Restorer and Savior brings us back to what we were originally designed to be...Christ-like.

This restored relationship is not just for here and now. It is for forever! ***"And there's more life to come---an eternity of life! You can count on this!" vs. 7***

Over the past 12 years we have witnessed many of these restoration lives take place. People who came here seeking respect, love and hope found it. They found it in an Invitation to Restoration in Jesus. They found Jesus here at Destination Restoration...A Community of Faith!

Restoring individuals to Jesus' image in their hearts and lives is our calling. It is why we do what we do. We meet practical needs with love. We seek to see Jesus image in others, no matter how many layers of life they have covering their hearts. We show them Jesus' restoring love in us.

The final words of God's word for today give us our challenge: ***"Take a firm stand on these matters so that those who have put their trust in God will concentrate on the essentials that are good for everyone." vs.8***

As a Community of Faith...a Destination of Restoration we are here to let others know:

All who have not heard the **Good News of Jesus**, the Restorer of life, are welcome here at Destination Restoration.

All who have been **broken** by rejection, abuse and the pains of life...you are welcome here at Destination Restoration.

All who are staggering under the layers of life's **unbearable burdens**...you are welcome here at Destination Restoration.

All who are in **need of hope**...you are welcome here at Destination Restoration.

All who **feel useless** and without a purpose in your life...you are welcome here at Destination Restoration.

All who want to **be a part of a community** of faith where Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Restorer of Life...you are welcome here at Destination Restoration.

All who want to belong to a place where **everybody is somebody** and where you have a friend...you are welcome here at Destination Restoration.

All who want to be a part of a community of faith with a passionate vision to **build the kingdom of God** one life at a time...you are welcome here at Destination Restoration.

You are not unnoticed.

Jesus sees you as you are, covered in layers of life's crud.

He invites you to His love to be restored.

Restored to your original image of beauty and life with a purpose.

Come and seek His love, forgiving and restoring love.

Walk from here a restored individual!