

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

This evening we are going to be continuing our study through Paul's epistle to Titus.

We are going to be covering chapter three – which means we will also be concluding our study in Titus.

And in this final chapter, we are going to see Paul exhort Titus, the church in Crete and us as well on how we are to live this life of grace in a secular society.

One of the recurring thing that we see in this epistle is the emphasis on good works – and Paul is going to bring it all together at the end of his letter to Titus.

Let's pray...

[Tit 3:1-15 NKJV] 1 **Remind them** to be **subject to rulers and authorities**, to obey, to be ready for every good work,

The phrase remind them – is in the present tense – “to bring to remembrance again and again“

Titus was to constantly remind the Christians under his care to show proper respect and humility towards all people, particularly those in a position of authority.

In other words, a Christian who is living a life of grace is to submit himself or herself to the authority of our elected officials.

For us, this includes our elected officials in Washington DC, our elected officials at the state level and our elected officials at the local level.

It even includes the elected officials that belong to other political parties.

It doesn't say we are to obey human authorities, as long as we like or we agree with whatever they're telling us to do.

It doesn't say that at all!

It says, obey governing authorities, submit to them; this carries with this connotation of not just brute or reluctant obedience, but total obedience and even respect for human authorities.

Why?

[Rom 13:1-2 NKJV] 1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.

One of the things that we must always remember is that all government has been put in place or allowed to rise to power by God who is sovereign.

Now, there is an obvious reason that we may disobey human authorities, and that is when they require us to do something that God has clearly commanded against in His Word.

A few months ago we saw an example in the Old Testament in the book of Daniel – we saw that Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego disobeyed the decree to worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up -

We see an example of this in Acts 4, when the Sadducees and the captain of the temple command Peter and John not to speak anymore in Jesus' name.

[Act 4:18-20 NKJV] 18 So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. 20 "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

So we do see that we obey God over men.

But, unless there is clear biblical warrant that what the authorities are telling us to do God doesn't want us to do, we are to obey and respect our God-given leaders and authorities.

We don't have to like everything about them, but we must NOT, as Christ-followers, get to the point where we feel contempt for these people over us.

One of the ways we can test ourselves is by answering the following question, “Do we pray for them more than we complain about our them?”

Church, we are called to be good citizens.

2 to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.

Paul now moves from talking about those that have authority over us to the average nonbeliever –

This is how we are supposed to act toward those that do not know the Lord.

We are to respond in kindness.

We don't talk bad about them – we don't go looking for fights or argue for the sake of arguing – we show kindness.

The world teaches us to be strong and assertive, pushing our way in life.

Jesus teaches us to step back from the argument and be kind.

When able, we're to avoid quarreling for the sake of the Gospel.

We're to be un-contentious.

That doesn't mean we're weak.

It simply means that we have something in mind that is far greater than righting our own wrongs, or complaining about whatever human authorities are over us.

We have the Gospel in mind.

Our calling is to pursue holiness and spread this Good News that is the Gospel: Jesus died for our sins, bearing the wrath that you and I deserved, and rose again defeating death.

That if we repent, turn from our sins and to Christ, placing our faith in Him, we are given eternal life.

Christ is the only Savior there is; our calling is to follow Him and share Him with others, no matter the cultural climate.

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.

Back in chapter one, Paul had reminded Titus that the Cretans were pretty bad people. But here in verse three, he clarifies to say that we all used to be pretty bad too.

We were all Cretans – before the Lord opened our eyes.

Sometimes as believers, we get angry over the wickedness that goes on in the world today.

We look at how people behave or some of the things that are posted on social media and we just become so angry and filled with contempt.

And we ask ourselves, “What is wrong with these people???”

One of the things we have to remind ourselves in how Jesus looked at those that were lost.

He didn't show anger or hatred toward them, He was compassionate toward them, He desired for them to repent and believe.

So how do we show compassion toward those that are lost instead of contempt?

By remembering that we were lost ourselves.

And now we're found.

Did I find myself? No.

God found me; He drew me to Himself.

We must realize how different we would be without Christ.

That's one of the most gripping things about being a Christian, is remembering that I was lost in the dark, couldn't find my own way out of the darkness.

Then what happened?

[Col 1:13 NKJV] 13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed [us] into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

One of the errors we make as believers is to forget that we were once lost.

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.

Paul reminded the believers of what had happened to them to change them.

God had intervened in their lives!

This is described in terms of God's past, present, and future plan for mankind.

Verse four speaks of the past... Titus 3:4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,

The verse implies that God had long promised to show "kindness" and "love" toward lost mankind.

From eternity past, to the Garden of Eden, and throughout God's revelation of Himself through the Old Testament, He promised to show kindness and love towards all mankind by providing a way of salvation.

That way is really a Person, "God our Savior," Jesus Christ, Who "appeared." God became man in Jesus Christ!

This is the Christmas story!!!

Not in the gospels – but in Paul's letter to Titus.

He "appeared" in His incarnation, His sinless life, His substitutionary death on the Cross, His resurrection from the dead, and His ascension into heaven.

Jesus is "the kindness and love of God our Savior toward" the whole human race!

Verse 5 and 6 speak of the present –

Now I want you to notice that statement again in verse 5, "He saved us."

Simply it reflects the fact that salvation is totally the work of God.

That's what it's saying...He saved us.

Paul is emphasizing the independent, uninfluenced sovereignty with which God saves, totally outside of us, He saved us.

The point being that we couldn't do anything about our condition. We were hopeless, dead in trespasses and sins. We could do nothing, He saved us.

What God had promised in the past, becomes ours in the present when we trust Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

We also see the work of the Holy Spirit as He had been with us, drawing us to Jesus, Then He came in us and upon us.

And Paul uses four metaphors to describe our new relationship with God through the Holy Spirit.

Regeneration means that we were brought from spiritual death to spiritual life.

We were dead in trespasses and sins, but were made alive by God the Holy Spirit.

We were born of God, born-again.

That was the message that Jesus told Nichodemus in John 3.

Renewing speaks of the new nature we are given by the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit.

We become a new creation in Jesus; old things pass away and all things become new.

Justified (justification) is the gracious act of God whereby He declares a believing sinner righteous because of the finished work of Jesus on the Cross.

God puts to your account the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Poured-out speaks of the power and presence of God the Holy Spirit that is available to us as we walk with the Lord.

Life in the Spirit begins at conversion when He is poured-out upon us.

Also in verse seven, we see it speaks of the future as we look forward to its final consummation in the future.

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.

This is a faithful saying - Paul uses this Greek phrase six times in his letters to Timothy and Titus.

The early church didn't have the New Testament as we know it, some of the books hadn't been written yet, and others hadn't been circulated to the entire church.

They did have certain things that helped them lock into what is most important.

These "faithful sayings" were among the things intended to be taught, memorized, perhaps sung, and repeated over and over again to help the believers grow in Christ.

Let's look at what Paul thought was important.

(1 Timothy 1:15 NKJV) This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

What's the "faithful saying"?

Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

(1 Timothy 3:1 NKJV) This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.

What's the "faithful saying"?

It's a good thing to mature and be a leader in the church.

(1 Timothy 4:8–9 NKJV) —8 For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. 9 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.

What's the "faithful saying"?

Godliness is profitable for all things.

(2 Timothy 2:11–13 NKJV) —11 This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. 12 If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. 13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.

What's the "faithful saying"?

The entire section is Paul quoting an early church hymn that speaks of God's faithfulness

(Titus 1:9 NKJV) holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

This is an exhortation to the elders, that they need to learn these "faithful sayings", and be able to teach and correct others.

And then we get to our verse...

(Titus 3:8 NKJV) This is a faithful saying...

The “faithful saying” is the previous four verses.

This is a grand painting of the gospel itself – that Jesus came to save us and give us eternal life.

When we understand the “faithful saying” of how we are saved, through the kindness, mercy, and grace of God, then we need to be careful about how this truth affects our life.

We ought to respond to God’s grace by being careful to live lives that are examples of good works.

One of the things that I must stress is that we do not do good works to somehow try to earn God’s favor –

That is legalism.

We do good works as a result of having God’s favor by way of Jesus Christ.

9 But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless.

Paul exhorts Titus to avoid foolish disputes.

One of the problems that had Titus was told to clean up in Crete was that of false teachers that were infiltrating the church – some of them were described by Paul as Idle talkers.

They blabbed and blabbed – but there was no substance to what they were teaching.

Or they started preaching a different gospel.

So Paul tells Titus not to waste his time and the time of his elders arguing against these guys and simply preach the gospel instead.

And the reason was that arguing was unprofitable and useless –

You see, there were people on Crete who needed to hear the Gospel and be saved!

The believers needed to be edifying one another rather than tearing down one another, so that each would be strengthened to minister God's grace to unbelievers.

10 Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, 11 knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.

The idea here is Paul is exhorting Titus how to deal with divisive individuals.

The person described in verse nine was a problem because of his or her beliefs; the person described in verses ten and eleven was a problem because of his or her behavior.

These persons simply wanted to cause division within the church.

So the person is warned twice and if they continue to be divisive, these individuals must be shunned for the wellbeing of the church.

12 When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. 13 Send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey with haste, that they may lack nothing.

Paul named four men, five if you include Titus, whom he could count on to be available to minister to God's saints.

They were men who had been called by God into ministries that would edify and build-up the various fellowships they were sent to.

They had no problem submitting to Paul's authority as an apostle, and Paul had no problem submitting to God's will for them - waiting for direction through prayer and the study of the Scriptures.

Church always remember that - God gives men to build-up His Church:

Ephesians 4:11-12 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

Gifted men are to equip and edify God's saints as they maintain their good works.

14 And let our [people] also learn to maintain good works, to [meet] urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful. 15 All who [are] with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace [be] with you all. Amen.

Good works do not save you.

We saw that in our text this evening -

"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..." (Titus 3:5).

But church, Good works should characterize our life:

Titus was to be a model of good works:

Titus 2:7 in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works...

The people were to manifest good works:

Titus 2:14 [Jesus] 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.

Together they were to maintain good works:

Titus 3:8 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...

Titus 3:14 ...And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful

Together we are to maintain good works.

Hebrews 10:24 says, "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works..."

Let us maintain good works, so that we might better edify the believers in our Church, and so that we might better evangelize the unbelievers in our communities.

Amen.

Let's pray...

