

3. Qualities of a sound church

9/14/2006

In the first chapter we found that the elders whom Titus was to ordain were to be able to do two things: to exhort the congregation and to rebuke the heretics. In this second chapter Paul's emphasis will be upon the teaching of the Word of God and guiding the congregation to the right path. We are going to find a beautiful blending of doctrinal teaching and practical admonition from the aging apostle Paul's letter to his spiritual son Titus.

When we started to study this Book of Titus, I mentioned to you that this little Book contains many jewels for church leaders. In my opinion, few portions of the New Testament excel this chapter. It gives such clear instructions that it can be considered as a text book for every Christian preacher. If there is any man inquire what is the duty of a Gospel minister? He should read the second chapter of the Book of Titus for a complete answer.

A. SOUND DOCTRINE FOR THE CHURCH

Titus 2:1 But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: The church must teach sound doctrine and practice what it is teaching or it is not a church. The idea behind this phrase has to do with right living, not just right thinking. The Bible is a book that tells us how to live. We don't always like it, but we always need to hear how God expects us to live.

B. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE OLDER MEN

Titus 2:2 that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience:

There is a dignity to old age that produces respect, and this respect gives an older saint authority. Of course, some people come to know the Lord Jesus at the old age. This verse is not talking about them. Those people should be considered as new babes in Christ and they need to be fed with spiritual food and care.

The older men should know what they believe, and their doctrinal convictions should be aligned with God's Word. Knowledge of Bible doctrine is no substitute for love for the fellow believers and patience in the trials of life.

However, as we get older, we tend to 'harden' in our ways. This is a good thing if we 'harden' in the ways of faith, love, and patience.

Patience is the great ancient Greek word 'hupomone'. It means a steadfast and active endurance, not a passive waiting. Older men are not to just patiently wait around until they pass on to the next world. They are to actively endure the challenges of life even the challenges of old age.

C. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE OLDER WOMEN

Titus 2:3-5 the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things-- 4 that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

Just as Titus had to give special consideration to the older men, also must he keep in mind how to approach the older women. They have their own set of temptations and opportunities.

The behavior of these older women must always reflect holiness. They must not be 'slanderers' which means 'false accusers'. The Greek word for 'slanderer' is "diabolos" and it is the same word used for 'the devil'. It means "slanderers" – picking up gossip and spreading it on behalf of the devil.

The older women should not be "given to much wine, teachers of good things". Remember what the Cretans said about their own people in Titus 1:12?

Titus 1:12 "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."

Apostle Paul knew the the contemporary Cretan environment, so he was emphasizing to Titus about what to teach to the older women. The Christian home was a totally new thing, and young women saved out of paganism would have to get accustomed to a whole new set of priorities and privileges.

The godly older women have the responsibility of teaching the younger women how to be successful wives, mothers and housekeepers. In turn, the younger women have the responsibility of listening and obeying. This is why our Women's Bible Studies can be so helpful to younger and older generations.

Obedient to their own husbands is another way of expressing the wife's duty of submission in the marriage relationship.

The ultimate goal of all these instructions is that God may get the glory. When Christians don't live in a Biblical, godly manner it means that the word of God may be blasphemed among the ungodly.

D. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE YOUNG MEN

Titus 2:6-8 Likewise exhort the young men to be sober-minded, 7 in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, 8 sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.

The Greek word 'tupos' is used for 'pattern'. The word originally meant "an impression made by a die." Titus was to live so that his life would be like a "spiritual die" that would impress itself on others. This involved good works, sound doctrine, a seriousness of attitude and sound speech that no one – not even the enemy – could condemn. Whether we like it or not, there are people who are always looking for a fight against Christianity.

Titus was to be an example to the younger men with whom he would easily identify. Exhortation and example were to be his tools for building them up in the faith. He was to exhort them to be self-controlled, because there were many temptations to sin.

But Paul wrote more about Titus the example than he did about Titus the exhorter. I agree with apostle Paul that a pastor preaches best by his life. He must constantly be a good example in all things. Whatever the pastor wants his church to be, he must first be himself. "For they say, and do not" was our Lord's indictment against the Pharisees in Matt. 23:3. This is hypocrisy.

It is not easy to pastor a church. The pastor does not punch a clock, because he is always on duty 24/7. He must be careful to practice he preaches. He must be the

same man in and out of the pulpit. Hypocrisy in speech or conduct will ruin a man's ministry. No pastor is perfect, just as nobody in the congregation is perfect. But he must strive to be the best example possible. A church will never rise any higher than its leadership.

In short, whatever the good things happen in our church is God's work and whatever bad things happen is because of my shortcomings. Please forgive me.

E. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SERVANTS

Titus 2:9-10 Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, 10 not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.

Titus was to teach bondservants about their specific duties as Christians. In the ancient world, the majority of Christians were slaves. They evangelized the Good News to their masters that some of them got saved. This meant that a slave might go to church and be an elder over his own master.

Paul warned these Christian slaves about three common sins they must avoid:

1) Disobedience

They were to obey their masters and seek to please them, which meant going the extra mile whether the master was a Christian or not. It is possible to obey, but not from the heart. It is possible to do a job grudgingly.

2) Talking back

While a slave would not carry this too far because of fear of his master, he could argue with his master since the master probably knew less about the job than the slave did. The slave could also "gripe" about his master to others on the job. This would certainly be a poor testimony for a Christian slave.

3) Stealing

Christian slaves were also to avoid the sin of stealing – pilfering. This was the sin Onesimus probably committed against his master Philemon.

There are no slaves in our society today, but there are employees. Christian workers must obey orders and not talk back. They must not steal from their employers. Millions of dollars are lost each year by employers whose workers steal from them, everything from paper clips and pencils to office machines and vehicles to enormous amount of money. "They owe it to me!" is no excuse. Neither is, "Well, I've earned it!" The security personnel in the retail stores are there mostly against their own employees' theft more than actual shoplifting by general public.

When we serve faithfully, we can make the Christian message attractive to unbelievers.

F. SAVED BY GRACE

Titus 2:11-15 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 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. 15 Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.

Mercy is the compassion of God that prompted Him to send a Savior to mankind. It wouldn't have been necessary for Christ to die, the cross would have been circumvented.

God loved men, but He didn't save us by His love. Love is the divine motive, but God is not only love, He is righteous and holy and just. The holy demands of God, His just claims and His righteous standard had to be met. The love of God may long to save us, but the immutable law of justice makes love powerless to do so. Therefore, the atoning sacrifice of Jesus for our sins met the holy demands of God's justice, and He can now save us by grace.

Grace is not complicated or implicated with human effort. God doesn't ask our cooperation. He doesn't ask for our good conduct or our strong character in order to save us. God only asks men to believe Him, to trust Him and to accept Christ. God's way is the best way, and it is the only way.

The Gospel does not appeal to Christ-rejecting men to do better. When a person says, "I am going to try to do better without Christ," he is a liar. If he has rejected Jesus Christ, he might as well try to get all he can out of this life, because this life is all that he is going to get. God is not trying to reform this world. He is redeeming men who accept Christ.

Grace teaches us to expect and prepare for our blessed hope. That hope is not heaven or glory, but Jesus Himself, face to face, closer than ever.

Think with me:

- Jesus came the first time to a crucifixion. But He will come a second time to a coronation.
- Jesus came the first time to a tree. But He will come a second time to a throne.
- Jesus came the first time in humility as a baby in a manger. But He will come a second time in glory as the King of kings.
- Jesus came the first time and was judged by men. But He will come a second time to judge all men.
- Jesus came the first time and stood before Pilate. But He will come a second time and Pilate will stand before Jesus.

Here again in v13 plainly and clearly apostle Paul through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit declares that Jesus Christ is not only the Savior of the world, but also He is God.

God's messengers are to remember that they are messengers from the King of kings, holding the word that brings life and turns back hell. We need to declare with all the authority from heaven and confidence.

To speak God's message with all authority, we have to back it up with our lives.

G. APPLICATIONS

- 1) The Bible is a book that tells us how to live. We don't always like it, but we always need to hear how God expects us to live.
- 2) Knowledge of Bible doctrine is no substitute for love for the fellow believers and patience in the trials of life.
- 3) When Christians don't live in a Biblical, godly manner it means that the word of God may be blasphemed among the ungodly.
- 4) Our blessed hope is not heaven or glory, but Jesus Himself.