

Study 3: Titus Chapter 2

Introduction

Paul moves from organisational leadership and confronting false teaching to exhortations for right behaviour. Instructions for the various groups in the church are given explicitly. The instructions that Paul gives stand in direct contrast to the characteristics of the Cretans, who were “*always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons*”.

Body of the Study

Instructions to Titus

Instructions for older men

Instructions for older women

Instructions to younger men

Instructions to servants

The basis for Godly living

The task of Titus

Homework and preparation for next week:

- Read the notes as a review of the study,
- Read chapter 3 in preparation for next week.

- *Think through the qualities that Titus is to give to the Cretan Christians. Which group are you in? What are the specific qualities that apply to your life? Which one(s) do you need to improve in? How are you going to go about improving?*

- *Think about your own struggle with “worldly lusts” and “ungodliness”. How can you improve that situation? What specific instruction does Paul give here to help us with that struggle, and focus on our true objectives?*

Notes for study 3: Chapter 2

Introduction

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Body of the Study

Instructions to Titus

The first instructions are to Titus “...*you must speak the things which are in accordance with sound doctrine...*” (2:1). The instruction is given so that he would put the rest of the instructions – those to the specific groups mentioned – into place. There is an implied contrast here between the Judaisers who had done much to destroy the church with their *unsound doctrine*, and how Titus needed to build and strengthen the church. [The words used to describe the functions are first taken from the NIV, and then from the NKJV / RSV (in parentheses)].

Instructions for older men

The first group of people that Paul has in mind (2:2) are the *older men*. The term probably refers to those men who are old enough to have raised a family and seen their children begin to raise a family of their own. The Greek word that Paul uses is *presbutes* which has a similar derivation to the term used for the elders (*presbuteros*). However the elders are a specific class of *older men* – those appointed to the role of shepherding the church.

He is not specifically addressing the elders here, rather the older male members in general (although the exhortation applies equally well to the elders). They are to be:

- Temperate (sober)
- Worthy of respect (reverent / grave)
- Self-controlled (temperate / sensible)
- Sound in faith
- In love
- In endurance (patience / steadfastness)

The men were to be mature, of sound judgement, and well behaved.

Instructions for older women

The second group are the *older women* (2:2). These are women who are of a similar age and maturity as the *older men*. They were to be like the men – Paul says “...*the older women likewise...*” (2:3). They are to be:

- Reverent
- Not slanderers
- Not addicted to much wine
- Teaching what is good

The older women must not be gossipers (slanderers). The last instruction to the women – teaching what is good – is specifically given so that she might be an instructor to the younger women. “It seems obvious that Titus could have taught these things (Paul was doing so), but Paul (guided by

the Spirit) seemed to realize that certain type of teachers are best suited to certain students. A mature woman, well taught by study and experience may today be brought to a church to do what Paul said such a woman was able to do...”¹ “...that they train the younger women to...”:

- Love their husbands
- Love their children
- To be self controlled and pure (discreet and chaste)
- To be busy at home (home workers)
- To be kind (good)
- To be obedient to their own husbands (subject to their own husbands)

The result of the women exhibiting this behaviour is that “...the word of God might not be blasphemed...” (2:5 NKJV). We must not by our behaviour give cause for blasphemy (malign NIV) against God’s word. Our behaviour should always lead to the glory of the Father. We read into what Paul says here about the required behaviour of younger women, even although he does not specifically give the instruction himself. They were to receive it via the older women, who were to receive it from Titus, who received it from Paul (who received it from the Lord).

Instructions to younger men

The younger men are also to be exhorted, in the same way as the older men and older women:

- Be self-controlled (sober-minded)
- Showing an example (showing yourself to be a pattern of good works)
- Doing what is good (in doctrine showing integrity)
- Integrity in teaching (reverence, incorruptibility)
- Seriousness (reverence, incorruptibility)
- Sound speech (sound speech, cannot be condemned)

In the final instruction to young men, Paul hints at the Judaisers who were opposing them “...that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you...” (2:8 NKJV)

Instructions to servants

The next instruction applies to servants / slaves regardless of their age (older or younger) or sex, or whether their masters were christians or not. Slavery was extremely widespread in both Greek and Roman culture, and was protected by civil law. The NT does not condemn slavery, however it does not sanction it either, and it does demand a much higher regard for the slave / master relationship than what was generally exhibited by the culture at the time.

The servants are to be exhorted (taught NIV) to:

- Be obedient to their own masters
- Be well pleasing in all things
- Not answer back
- Not pilfering
- Showing good fidelity (can be fully trusted)
- Wear the teaching of God in all things

The first instruction is to tell them what they are already required to do anyway, and for which they should need no instruction. This suggests that they might be thinking that as a result of becoming christians they were absolved of some of their responsibility. Paul reminds them that this is not the case, and in fact they have a stronger responsibility to deliver their service as if it was service to God (Col 3:22-23).

¹ Turner, Robert F “Plain Talk Magazine” Vol 19, No 4, p 7.

The basis for Godly living

Paul has just given an outline of the behavioural requirements for a range of groups within the church. He now uses the conjunction “...For...” as he moves on to the next section and tells us why we need to behave that way.

“...For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men...” (2:11 NIV). There are some variations to the translation of this verse, around what it is that *all men* observe. Some translations have “bringing salvation to all men” (eg NASB), whilst the majority have “God’s grace...has appeared to all men”. The essence is that all men (and women too – “men” is generic!) have the opportunity of salvation because God’s grace has appeared (it was “hidden” in previous times – 1 Pet 1:12) and we can all take part in it.

However, as a result of knowing God comes responsibility. It “...teaches us...”, so it is not God’s grace that we have received in some mystical way, but what we have received through the gospel of Christ, from which *we learn about God*. It “...teaches us (to) deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, (and) live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age...” (2:12). The whole point of what Paul is saying is that our lives (the way we live) must be transformed by the gospel. We cannot accept God’s grace and continue to live a way of life that denies the transformation!

This world is not our home – we are just passing through (as the song says). We are “...looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ...” (2:13 NKJV). When we have our eyes and our minds fixed on heaven, the things of this world fade into insignificance.

Paul uses a precise description of Jesus here. In this passage, the construction of the Greek language is such that the terms “God” and “Saviour” both refer to Christ.

There is a rule in Greek grammar, known as the Granville Sharp Rule, which suggests that when a solitary definite article (rendered “the” in our English text) precedes compound nouns which are joined by “and” – in this case “God” and “Saviour,” the latter noun refers to the same person as the first noun. So, as grammarians H.E. Dana and J.R. Mantey have observed, Titus 2:13 “asserts that Jesus is the great God and Saviour” (A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament, p. 147)²

Jesus “...gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people...” (2:14 NKJV). Some translations have “a peculiar people”, and by the standards of the world (the point of the contrast in verses 12 and 13), we are peculiar. We do not behave in the same way that they do, and we have a different sense of values. The “values” contrast is stark here, as that is the point that Paul is making with the values of the Cretans who would sell anything to get gain. As Christians, we are not like that.

However, as Christians we are not “peculiar people” who sit around doing nothing, but we are “...zealous of good works...” (2:14).

The task of Titus

Paul reiterates the task he has given to Titus. This discussion carries over into the next chapter.

He is to carry out Paul’s instructions “...speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority...” (2:15 NKJV). Titus had the authority from God, which he had received through Paul. He was not to squirm in carry out the task, nor was he to let anyone “...despise you...”.

² Quoted from Jackson, Wayne “Notes from the Margin of My Bible” Courier Publications, Stockton CA, p. 137