

Study 4: Titus Chapter 3

Introduction

Paul concludes the instructions to Titus, of setting order in the church, and now moves to the right behaviour and motivation.

Body of the Study

Instructions to Titus

Our change of state

Practical instructions to Titus

Travel plans and conclusion

Homework and preparation for next week:

- Read the notes as a review of the study,
- Read the whole book again in a single sitting,
- Read 1st Timothy in preparation for next week.

- *Paul used the example of foolish, unprofitable, and useless things in 3:8. What are some of the things that some Christians attempt to bind on others today that might fall into this category? How should we deal with these things?*

- *Paul says that before they became Christians, he and Titus were both as bad as the Cretans. Given what we know about the Cretans, how does such a condition describe our lives before we became Christians? How do we apply what Paul says to our own personal situation?*

Notes for study 4: Chapter 3

Introduction

Paul concludes the instructions to Titus, of setting order in the church, and now moves to the right behaviour and motivation.

Body of the Study

Instructions to Titus

Titus “...*must speak the things which are in accordance with sound doctrine...*” (2:1). 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...*”.

His task was to “...*remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities...*” (3:1 NKJV). This is in direct contrast to the culture of the Cretans who “...*are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons...*” (1:12) and would *sell their own mother* if they thought they could get anything out of it! It does not seem strange that they might lie to and reject the government authorities – nor for this to carry over to the authorities (apostles, prophets, and elders) in the church.

The action that is required of faithful christians is in direct contrast to the rebellious nature of those in the world (especially the world in Crete), “...*to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing true humility to all men...*” (3:1-2).

However, in enforcing the instruction on the Cretans, it must be done in love, and certainly not out of a sense of *I’m holier than you* attitude! Paul reminds Titus of the past that he and Titus had both lived in (and where all christians have come from in one way or another). He uses the conjunction “...*For...*” as he connects the instruction that is to be given (vs 1&2) to the way it is to be dealt with (vs 3). He reminds Titus of the fact that we are not blameless before God, and just as the Cretans have some issues in their lives that need resolving, they are no different than what we were in the past, and therefore they need our understanding. “...*For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another...*” (3:3 NKJV).

Our change of state

In contrast to the former state he has just described, we have been redeemed by God’s grace. “...*But...*” (in contrast) “...*when the kindness and the love of God our Saviour towards man appeared...*” (3:4 NKJV). Once again Paul connects God and Jesus together – both of them as *our Saviour*. “...*not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us...*” (3:5 NKJV). We are only saved by God’s grace – there is nothing that we can do to earn it, and we do not deserve it. Paul contrasts mercy (in this verse) with grace (3:7). Mercy can be described as God not bringing the punishment that we do deserve, and grace can be described as God giving us a gift that we don’t deserve.

We receive the change of state when we are saved “...*according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit...*” (3:5 NKJV). This is an exact parallel to what Peter said in Acts 2:38 and 3:19.

Acts 2:38	repent	be baptised	for the forgiveness of your sins	receive gift of the Holy Spirit
Tit 3:5		through washing of regeneration	He saved us	and renewing of the Holy Spirit
Acts 3:19	repent		be converted	times of refreshing may come

The Holy Spirit is described as a person here –not an object that was given “...*renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour...*” (3:6 NKJV). Paul says here that it was God who poured out the Spirit (just as God had prophesied that He would in Joel 2:28, and fulfilled in Acts 2:17). However, it was Jesus who said both that the Father would send Him (Jn 14:26) that He himself was going to send Him (Jn 16:7) – confirming Jesus’ deity as God.

Having received the change of state “...*having been justified ... (made right) ... by His grace...*” we receive a change of blessing “...*we become heirs according to the hope of eternal life...*” (3:7 NKJV).

Practical instructions to Titus

Titus is reminded to “...*affirm (these things) constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works...*” (3:8). Paul looks back to the previous statement in 3:7 (having been justified by His grace we become heirs according to the hope of eternal life). It is this fact which is to be constantly proclaimed. The NIV makes it clear “...*This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone...*” (3:8 NIV).

However, Titus is also to “...*avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless...*” (3:9 KNJV). It is clear that Paul has in mind here the Judaisers, who are bound to bring about the requirements of lineage (and hence the genealogies) as well as attempting to bind the law of Moses onto the Gentiles. Paul says that these things are *foolish, unprofitable, and useless*.

There were some who were trying to create division in the church (perhaps the Judaisers, but perhaps equally some Cretans who were seeking self gain). The brethren were not to tolerate such action, but were to nip it in the bud very quickly “...*Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned...*” (3:10-11 NKJV).

Travel plans and conclusion

Paul had plans to later send Artemas, or perhaps Tychicus to Crete to pick up the work that Titus was doing. Titus would then be relieved, and Paul wanted him to join him in Achaia “...*be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there...*” (3:12 NKJV). Nicopolis was on the western side of Achaia, close to the heel of Italy. It was a Roman Colony, and as a Roman Citizen Paul would be safe there from the persecution of the Jews, however he was not safe from the effects of the Emperor, and was to be arrested there during his stay. Paul’s future tense description in his travel plans show that he was not at Nicopolis when he wrote the letter [despite a later subscription in the Codex Sinaiticus to that effect which is given as a subscript to the letter in the King James and some other translations].

Zenas the lawyer and Apollos must have brought the letter to Titus, since Paul knew what their travel plans were, and instructs Titus to “...*send (them) on their journey with haste, that they may lack nothing...*” (3:13 NKJV).

As a final instruction, Paul insists that the christians “...*our people...also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they might not be unfruitful...*” (3:14 NKJV). This clearly sums up the burning concern that Paul has for the christians on Crete, that they undertake the transformation that is required as being a part of the body of Christ. They cannot continue with a life of ill-gotten gain (and probably extortion), but rather they needed to be *doing* good works to others. Rather than takers, they were to be *givers*, just as Christ *gave* Himself for us (3:4-5).