

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Titus Chapter 3

9/16/15

Saved in Order to Do Good - Verses 1-2

¹Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, ²to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and always to be gentle toward everyone.

3:1 As Christians, our first allegiance is to Jesus as Lord, but we must obey our government and its leaders as well. Christians are not above the law. Obeying the civil law is only the beginning of our Christian responsibility; we must do what we can to be good citizens. (See Acts 5:29 and Romans 13:1-14 for more on the Christian's attitude toward government.)

3:2 How does one show gentleness? Gentleness, or true humility, is a very elusive character trait, yet the Bible regards it as a highly important quality. Jesus referred to himself as "gentle and humble in heart" (Matthew 11:29). In Romans 12:3, Paul wrote the clearest definition of humility apart from Jesus' own example: "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you."

Humility, then, boils down to having an honest estimate of ourselves before God. We show false humility when we project negative worth on our abilities and efforts. We show pride when we inflate the value of our efforts or look down on others. True humility seeks to view our character and accomplishments honestly. Recognizing that we have succeeded in an effort need not be pride.

Verses 3-8

³ At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. ⁴ But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. ⁸ 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.

3:3 Following a life of pleasure and giving in to every sensual desire leads to slavery. Many think freedom consists of doing anything they want. But this path leads to a slavish addiction to sensual gratification. A person is no longer free but is a slave to what his or her body dictates (2 Peter 2:19). Christ frees us from the desires and control of sin. Have you been released?

3:4-8 Paul summarizes what Christ does for us when he saves us. We move from a life full of sin to one where we are led by God's Holy Spirit. All our sins, not merely some, are washed away. Washing refers to the water of baptism, which is a sign of salvation. In becoming a Christian, the believer acknowledges Christ as Lord and recognizes Christ's saving work. We gain eternal life with all its treasures. We have renewal by the Holy Spirit, and he continually renews our hearts. None of this occurs because we earned or deserved it; it is all God's gift.

3:4-6 All three persons of the Trinity are mentioned in these verses because all three participate in the work of salvation. Based upon the redemptive work of his Son, the Father forgives us and sends the Holy Spirit to wash away our sins and continually renew us.

3:8 In this chapter, Paul stressed that believers must devote themselves to doing good. Paul understood good works as faithful service, acts of charity, and involvement in civil affairs. While good works can't save us or even increase God's love for us, they are true indications of our faith and love for Christ. Paul did not make this aspect of discipleship optional. Service to others is a requirement. Everyone who is a Christian should be involved. Does your church encourage everyone's involvement and service? What can your church do to help every member identify the good works he or she should be doing?

Verses 9-11

⁹ But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. ¹⁰ Warn a divisive person once, and then warn them a second time. After that, have nothing to do with them. ¹¹ You may be sure that such people are warped and sinful; they are self-condemned.

3:9 Paul warns Titus, as he warned Timothy, not to get involved in foolish and unprofitable arguments (2 Timothy 2:14). This does not mean we should refuse to study, discuss, and examine different interpretations of difficult Bible passages. Paul is warning against petty quarrels, not honest discussion that leads to wisdom. If foolish arguments develop, it is best to turn the discussion back to a helpful direction or politely excuse yourself.

3:9 The false teachers were basing their heresies on spiritual pedigrees and speculations about the Jewish laws (see 1 Timothy 1:3-4). Similar to the methods used by false teachers in Ephesus and Colossae, they were building their case on

genealogies of angels. We should avoid false teachers, not even bothering to get involved in their foolish discussions. Overreaction sometimes gives more attention to their points of view.

3:10-11 A person must be warned when he or she is causing division that threatens the unity of the church. This should not be a heavy-handed action but a warning to correct the individual's divisive nature and restore him or her to fellowship. A person who refuses to be corrected should be put outside the fellowship. As Paul said, that person is "self-condemned"—he or she is sinning and knows it. (See also Matthew 18:15-18 and 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15 for help in handling such problems in the church.)

Final Remarks - Verses 12-15

¹² As soon as I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, because I have decided to winter there. ¹³ Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need. ¹⁴ Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order to provide for urgent needs and not live unproductive lives. ¹⁵ Everyone with me sends you greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.

3:12 The city of Nicopolis was on the western coast of Greece. Artemas or Tychicus would take over Titus's work on the island of Crete so Titus could meet Paul in Nicopolis. Tychicus was another of Paul's trusted companions (Acts 20:4; Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7). Titus would have to leave soon because sea travel was dangerous in the winter months.

3:13 Apollos was a famous Christian preacher. A native of Alexandria in North Africa, he became a Christian in Ephesus and was trained by Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:24-28; 1 Corinthians 1:12).

3:15 The letters of Paul to Titus and Timothy are his last writings and mark the end of his life and ministry. These letters are rich treasures for us today because they give vital information for church leadership. They provide a strong model for elders, pastors, and other Christian leaders as they develop younger leaders to carry on the work, following Paul's example of preparing Timothy and Titus to carry on his ministry. For practical guidelines on church leadership and problem solving, carefully study the principles found in these letters.