



Wednesday Night Service

June 16, 2021 ~

“Study on the Book of Titus – Zealous for Good Works – Session 7”

Introduction: In last weeks session, our word of focus was on readings. As believers, we need to be ready to do good works. Today, we key in on another word: focus. We are to be ready for every good work, but we must focus on the right priorities that encourage good works. (Read: Titus 3:8-11)

To be focused in a critical discipline and practice. So, how do we stay focused? There are three disciplines that will help us stay focused and we are going to talk about these today. These disciples are found in the passage we just read:

- 1.) Hammer on the great truths of the gospel. (Vs. 8)
- 2.) Steer clear of the quarrels that add nothing and go nowhere. (Vs. 9)
- 3.) Deal with those who stir up division. (Vs. 10-11)

1. HAMMER ON THE GREAT TRUTHS OF THE GOSPEL (VS. 8)

Paul begins in vs. 8 by saying “This is a faithful or trustworthy saying.” In other words, what he is about to say is rock solid and reliable. Paul says “I want you to affirm constantly or to insist on these things.” We are to hammer away on these truths.

So, what truths we are hammer away on? Our salvation is all of grace. Paul wants each believer who knows the God of grace to let their knowledge be active and not idle. This is what we talked about last week. Paul then goes on to say, “we are to be careful to maintain good works.” In other words, we are to devote ourselves to doing good works.

The great gospel truths we read about in Titus 3:4-7 are like a nail. Our responsibility as a church is to hammer on these truths. To stay focused is to insist on hammering these truths into people’s hearts.

2. STEER CLEAR OF QUARRELS THAT ADD NOTHING AND GO NOWHERE (VS. 9)

The first discipline reminds us that we are to insist on preaching and teaching the gospel. But the second discipline focuses on something we need to avoid. We need to stay away from quarrels and controversies. As we spoke about in Titus 1:10-18, there were influential leaders in Crete teaching ideas and philosophies they shouldn’t be teachings and were acting in ways they shouldn’t be acting. These leaders were from a Jewish background that put great stock in legal matters related to the Jewish law. Because of these things, it was stirring up quarrels and controversies. So why do we steer clear of foolish quarrels? They are unprofitable and useless.” These things are counterproductive to doing good works. It hurts our efforts to do good works. (Read: II Timothy 2:14-16)

But let me make something clear: not all controversies are foolish and not all debates are pointless. Sometimes controversies are necessary and can be helpful for the church. In Jude 3, we are told to “contend earnestly for the faith.” At times, we much contend for the truth of the gospel and this may bring about disputes. There are times we will need to take a stand for what is right and that might involve some disputes.

So, how do we tell the difference between a fruitful dispute and a foolish dispute? There are few principles to help here:

- 1) You know it is a foolish dispute when you find yourself quarreling over a minor doctrinal point as it were a major truth of the faith. Examples of an important truth are things such as: The Trinity, the Deity of Christ, etc. Examples of a minor truths may be things like the timing of the rapture, styles of worship, etc.
- 2) You know it is a foolish controversy when you engage in a debate or dispute in the wrong way or wrong methods. Do not attack a person’s character while disagreement with them about something.

- 3) You know it is a foolish controversy when you debate for the wrong reasons or with wrong goals in mind. It is never about winning an argument to make ourselves look good and to make another person look bad.

(Key) A fruitful controversy or dispute is one that is entered into with the right intentions.

3. DEAL WITH THOSE WHO STIR UP DIVISION (TITUS 3:10-11)

In vs. 10 Paul says, “reject a divisive man.” Who is a divisive man? It is one who stirs up division. This person’s primary interest is power. Paul says the divisive man is “warped and sinning, being self-condemned.” In other words, they are skilled in the art of deception. These kinds of people attempt to accumulate power through the manipulation of relationships for their own personal gain. These kinds of people split churches and are counterproductive to churches being zealous for good works. They hurt the witness of the church.

So how do we handle those who stir up division? You respond to them with discipline.

There is a procedure:

- 1) Approach the issue at hand. Talk to them in love about the issues at hand. But love means we are to be firm about the issue. Make sure they know what the problem is and why it needs to be dealt with. (Read: II Timothy 2:25)
- 2) The goal is to get them to repent and then to help restore them back into right fellowship within the church. The process is to be pursued in gentleness, grace and patience.
- 3) But, if the person is unwilling to renounce their ways, then the leadership will then be forced to “reject or avoid or have nothing to do with this person.” (vs. 10)

Jesus spoke about how to deal with those who are disruptive or those who are in a dispute with: (Read: Matthew 18:15-17) Always remember that we deal with people in a firm but loving manner. Do it prayerfully and humbly. So let us stay focused.