

Signs for our Time 5: Do Good always

Titus 3:1-11

INTRODUCTION

Today I am concluding the series 'signs for our time' we have spoken about dysfunctional families, deceitful teachings, don't quit, fight the good fight, remain faithful and today, do good always. I want to thank God for the helpers He gave me and the way He has used John and Ugo to drive this series home.

The Writer: Paul the Apostle, was the writer of this letter and it can be described as a short version of 1 Timothy.

The Addressee: Titus like Timothy was a young man but much stronger in health than Timothy and he was not a timid person. It is believed that Titus' both parents are Greek unlike Timothy who was half Greek and half Jew. Titus was a convert to Christianity through Paul's ministry. He had served Paul very well in the Church at Corinth hence Paul wrote about him 'he is my partner and fellow worker among you (2 Cor. 8:23).

The Place: Titus served in the Island of Crete in the Mediterranean Sea. (Titus 3:1-8). It is believed that Titus ministered and was martyred in the famous City of Gortyna and the Basilica of St. Titus (*Agios Titos*) in Gortyna marks the traditional site of his martyrdom.

Gortyn (Gortyna) was the capital of a Roman province and the seat of the first Christian bishop of Crete. During the Roman period it was the chief city of Crete—its population may have reached 100,000 people. The site is huge—its city walls are about 6 mi. [10 km.] long! (Show map)

The Basilica of St. Titus represents the best remaining example of an early Christian basilica in Greece. The 6th- and 7th-century basilica was destroyed by the Arabs in 824 and now lies in ruins, but some of the apse and transept remain.

Just like today, Christians were often looked on with suspicion in the Roman Empire because their conduct was so different and they met in private meetings for worship (see 1 Peter 2:11-25; 3:13-4:5).

Usually the large part of any Pastor's ministry is to remind people of what they already know hence Paul encouraged Titus to remind the Christians in Crete to be good citizens without compromising their faith. The same truth I am reminding you today.

HOW CHRISTIANS SHOULD BEHAVE

In other to do this Paul listed seven qualities expected of Christian citizens:

- (1) to be subject to rulers and authorities;
- (2) to be obedient (Rom 13:1-7);
- (3) to be ready to do whatever is good (Eph 2:10; 2 Tim 3:17);

- (4) to slander no one;
- (5) to be peaceable and
- (6) considerate; and
- (7) to show true humility toward all men.

People of the world might disobey the law but Christians must submit to the authority of the state (see Rom 13) and be influence for good in the community in every way demonstrating the loveliness of Christ to all through courteous and gracious behaviour. "Ready to do every good work" (Titus 3:1) means "cooperating in those matters that involve the whole community." Our heavenly citizenship (Phil 3:20) does not absolve us from responsibilities as citizens on earth.

The believer should not have a bad attitude toward the government and show it by slanderous accusations and pugnacious actions. The word *gentle* (Titus 3:2) means "an attitude of moderation, a sweet reasonableness." Christians with this quality do not insist on the letter of the law, but are willing to compromise where no moral issue is at stake.

Again, Paul linked duty to doctrine. "Don't be too critical of your pagan neighbours," he wrote. "Just remember what you were before God saved you!" Titus 3:3 needs little explanation; we know what it means from our own experience.

HOW THE WORLD PEOPLE BEHAVE

Paul listed another 7 behaviours that the ungodly exhibit and even the believers before they were saved by the blood of Jesus

1. Foolish (unwise)
2. Disobedient
3. Deceived
4. Serving various lusts and pleasures
5. Living in malice
6. Living in envy
7. Hateful and hating one another

BUT CHRIST MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

What a difference "the kindness and love of God" (Titus 3:4) made in the live of unbelievers! If you want a beautiful illustration of "the kindness of God," read 2 Samuel and note David's treatment of Mephibosheth, a little lame prince. Because Mephibosheth was a part of Saul's family, he expected to be slain. But David, in kindness, spared him and treated him as one of his own sons at the palace table.

We were saved not only because of God's kindness and love, but also because of His mercy (Titus 3:5) by withholding the punishment (death) we deserve.

We were saved not because of our righteousness or good deeds but He saved us through the miracle of the new birth, the work of the Holy Spirit of God when we put our faith in what Jesus Christ did on the Cross.

I do not think that "washing" here refers to baptism because, in New Testament times, people were baptized *after* they were saved, and not in order to be saved (see Acts 10:43-48). "Washing" here means "bathed all over." When a sinner trusts Christ, he is cleansed from all his sins, and he is made "a new person (2 Cor. 5:17)" by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Not only have we who are Christians been washed and made new in Christ, but we have also been *justified* (Titus 3:7). This wonderful doctrine is discussed in detail in Rom 3:21-8:39. Justification is the gracious act of God whereby He declares a believing sinner righteous because of the finished work of Christ on the cross. God puts to our account the righteousness of His Son, so that we can be condemned no more. Not only does He forget our sins, but He forgets that we were even sinners!

His kindness, love, mercy, and grace give us hope. We are heirs of God! This means that today we can draw on His riches; and when He comes, we will share His wealth and His kingdom forever. This hope ties in with Titus 2:13: "Looking for that blessed hope."

But there is something more involved: We should live godly lives and be "careful to maintain good works" (Titus 3:8). The only evidence the unsaved world has that we belong to God is our godly lives.

"Good works" do not necessarily mean religious works or church work. It is fine to work at church, sing in the choir, and hold an office; but it is also good to serve our unsaved neighbours, to be helpful in the community, and to have a reputation for assisting those in need. Baby-sitting to relieve a harassed young mother is just as much a spiritual work as passing out a Gospel tract. The best way a local church has to witness to the lost is through the sacrificial service of its community.

Thank God that we have mission that serves our community, the gateway youth club, the tea party for the elderly, the safer neighbourhood with the Police and community leaders and if I may mention affordable counselling to community people through changes Counselling service. Praise God.

We can do more, but we need not wear the ones that do these out hence we must pray that God will bring more people to work in His vineyard to serve His community.

Problem People (Titus 3:9-11)

Contrary to expectation "problem people" are in our churches because wherever there are people, there will always be problems. In this case, Paul warned Titus to avoid people who like to engage in foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions and strivings about the law. They argue about unimportant things of the faith. The way things are done becomes an issue rather than experiencing the presence of God, process becomes more important than the goal, the grammar or tense becomes important than the principle. They do not build up but tear down, no thank you or well done but criticisms. They have forgotten that they are under grace and not under the law.

I remember when I started in Tower Hamlets, one of the staff told me that he didn't want the position and that's why I got it. I did not respond to his statement this

time I took counsel of Proverbs 26:4. He was always antagonising everything I stand for. He also said to me at another time, 'you are our team leader, only when we want you'. I responded this time, I said thank God that there are times when you allow me to be your team leader, but can you go to a team leaders' meeting without me asking you, can you insert team leader after your name without getting into trouble? Immediately his face grew pale. That is the people in the world, but I must tell you that it is in the Church as well, no pastor is ever good to some people, they always have contention, unnecessary disputes and they look at the rules rather administering grace. The way they treat the pastors is the way they treat other brothers and sisters. Paul is saying this is useless and unprofitable.

Looking at genealogies, I wonder what does that want in this list, but I realise that this is when people hang on to who and what their parents were rather than seeing themselves as new creation but they live in the past glory of their ancestors.

But there is another kind of problem person we should deal with: the "heretic." This word means "one who makes a choice, a person who causes divisions." This is a self-willed person who thinks he is right, and who goes from person to person in the church, forcing people to make a choice. "Are you for me or for the pastor?" This is a work of the flesh (see Gal 5:20). Such a person should be admonished at least twice, and then rejected.

To conclude: We are saved not by our works or righteousness, but by the kindness, love, grace and mercy of God through Jesus Christ and his finished work on the Cross. We are saved to do good works, not only to the people in the Church but into our community.

We must concern ourselves with the peace and safety of our community, global warming, human trafficking and issues that are pertinent to our community if not contrary to the will and Word of God. We must be obedient to authorities wherever we are and at every level.

What can help is Pauls advice in Philippians 4:8 "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy — meditate on these things. NKJV

If you think or meditate on good things, you will speak good things and you will do good things. May God help all of us to keep doing good.