

AUGUST 18, 2019

LIVING TO DO

Titus 3:1-11

Paul has called Titus to remind the believers at Crete of their gracious salvation (Titus 2:11-14). He has grounded their eternal hope in the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ which brought grace to bear upon their rebellion (Titus 2:11-14). This grace is not static or lifeless, but dynamic, full of power enabling believers to live lives of godliness in a godless world (Titus 2:11-12). Therefore, because of what Christ has accomplished and the Spirit of the Lord empowers, believers at Crete are to understand that all of life is worship. Worship is not simply the isolated praise one gives to the Lord. Worship is the active and intentional living for God in every area of our lives. Living to do is living life *coram deo*: in the presence, under the authority and for the glory of God.

GOOD DEEDS (Titus 3:1-2)

In our day of polarizing politics this word of Paul to Titus is crucial. The mention of the need to submit to governing authorities clearly evidences that some Cretan's assumed that their freedom in Christ permitted their freedom to reject the government. This is not so. We know that grace enables and empowers our righteousness and therefore, the ability to be submissive to governing officials, even those whose behavior is harsh, is a Christian *good deed* – actions that reflect the glory and honor of the Lord (Titus 3:1, See also Romans 13:1-7). Only when the government establishes laws that clearly contradict and undermine the gospel and the advancement of the Kingdom of God can a believer honorably disobey (See Acts 5:29). Our purpose in the world is to transform it by the love of God revealed in the message of the gospel of grace. Martin Luther King Jr. once stated that "we can disagree without being disagreeable." Thus, our disposition before the world must not be one of contention rather a desire to reflect the Person of Christ in peace and humility (Titus 2:3). If this is to be our way among those outside the church how much more should we reflect this disposition towards one another, in all things – political and otherwise?

BASED ON HIS MERCY (Titus 3:3-7)

The command to deal with outsiders kindly is underscored with the reminder of where we were and how we behaved before Jesus invaded our lives. Don't forget to remember (Titus 3:3)! A significant way to ensure that we are relating to the world as a reflection of Christ is to never forget that we struggled in the same ways with the same sin. Paul uses words that are as descriptive as they are damning (Titus 3:3). The only difference between us and the unbeliever is not being sinless, but Christ and His disposition towards us. We are saved by His kindness (Titus 3:4), the same kindness we are commanded to show to the world (Titus 3:2). It was not because of anything in us or from us that prompted God to act kindly towards us. It was pure and unadulterated kindness poured into us by the Spirit from the reservoir of His mercy that has taken away the eternal dirt and stain of sin (Titus 3:5). It is because of Him and Him alone that we have been transformed, changed and given a hope that transcends this life. (Titus 3:5). It was not anything I did or could do. He loved us in spite of us and now remembering this truth, we are enabled to love people in spite of the way they act or treat us.

DONE ON PURPOSE (Titus 3:8-11)

Paul tells Timothy that the Cretan believers should *be careful to devote themselves to good works* (Titus 3:8). To be careful is to *ponder* and to *keep thinking about something*. There is to be a consistent and

empowering intentionality in our living each day for the honor of the Lord. Just as a person gains muscle by sticking to a plan, so too must a Christian be as purposeful in our plan for growing in the Lord. A plan promotes good practices and habits, as well as guards against hindrances. Paul calls the Cretans to be careful in this way so that they are aware of the conversations and issues they need to reject (Titus 3:9). Nothing and no one should be allowed to hinder the work of the Lord in the church. So adamant is the Lord about this that Paul provides specific instructions as it pertains to divisive people. If a person continues to cause division they should be warned and called to repentance no more than twice. After the second time, they should be rejected since their lack of repentance and change shows the true and spiritual nature of their heart (Titus 3:10).