

Things Proper for Sound Doctrine – Part 1

Titus 2:1-8

June 14th 2015

❖ Background

Paul had visited the Greek island of Crete and left Titus behind because the church there was in a bit of unrest. This disorder, at least in part, came about from the discord that was being taught by the false teachers, namely those of the circumcision group. These Jewish converts to Christianity were placing the burden of the former covenant upon the Greek Christians and teaching a different Gospel than that which was delivered by Christ through the Apostles.

Paul's letter to Titus is not primarily an epistle on doctrine, although there is a great number of primary doctrines articulated in the letter, rather Paul is more concerned for the health of the church and that Titus teach the Cretans how these primary truths impact the way they live. In addition, it also addresses each of us where we are today and teaches us how to live in a manner which glorifies Christ.

❖ Introduction

Titus 2:1 — ¹ But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine:

- ◆ In contrast to the false teachers, Paul exhorted Titus to teach *sound* doctrine. But this appears to go even further by saying “things which are proper for sound doctrine” which is to say those things that accompany or are fitting for sound doctrine. And here we see the beauty of sound doctrine...such doctrine affects the way we live. We are not people who believe in just a set of propositions but we embrace things that are true and we embrace the implications those truths have on our lives. What are we to believe? How are we to live? These go together in sequence and in Paul's mind are inseparable.
- ◆ Paul is encouraging Titus to be strong in his teaching and to correct those who are trying to propagate doctrines that are not true. Hard but truthful teaching produces soft hearts. Soft and deceptive teaching produces hardened hearts. Given the comments about the Cretans and their reputation, Paul's instruction gives us insight to the concerns he had for the manner of life conducted by all the Christians of Crete. The Scriptures always give instruction where instruction is necessary.

❖ Older Men

Titus 2:2 — ² that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience;

- ◆ Paul first begins with group called older men. These men are not the same group he refers to in the first chapter as “elders” but the word pertains specifically to men advanced in years.
- ◆ Paul instructs Titus to teach the older men to be sober. This has as its primary meaning to not be given to holding wine. And while there is good reason to exhort older men to stay away from excess drinking, it is likely that this word is more likely to mean that the older men should be clear-headed and able to think rightly.
- ◆ Next Paul teaches that these clear-headed men should be “weighty” or grave or worthy of respect. The older men, as natural leaders in the community, are men who by their character and their reverence are men who *command* respect...not men who have to *demand* respect. But the seriousness of their lives should not be confused with grumpiness or gloominess. The older men should teach how to conduct themselves with joy and self-control.
- ◆ Paul adds more...the older men are to be sound in faith. When a man has walked with the Lord faithfully for many years, his faith grows stronger and he is able to encourage and correct with gentleness and wisdom.
- ◆ The older men should be living examples of love and patience—and this tends to fly in the face of a natural tendency where growing older means growing crankier or critical of others. As an older man you have seen how God has been faithful through the millennia of years in your reading of the Word. But not only has He been faithful in history, He has been faithful in *your* history and those stories *need to be told*. The things you've learned have been taught to you that you might equip others through the example of your life.
- ◆ With all of this in mind, I would exhort the older men in this congregation (which I include myself) to invest yourself in teaching and guiding a younger man or men in our church. Find one to meet with on a regular basis and give away part of yourself to them without neglecting your family. The health of the church in many ways is driven by the commitment of the men in the church to set the pace in ministering to others.

Older Women

Titus 2:3 —³ the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—

- ◆ In the same way as the older men, the older women are to be characterized as reverent, but Paul uses some different Greek words here. He literally says, the women “conduct themselves as is fitting for sacred ones”. There is no second-class citizenship here in mind. Paul understands the tremendous helpful influence a godly woman can have over her husband and those around her. The role of these women is profound and of great benefit to the life of the church. As Paul says, these women are *sacred*.
- ◆ As fruit of that godly character, the first evidence is that they are not to be slanderers. These women are not to talk about others in a way that is harmful and they should have tremendous control over their tongue so that they are fountains of refreshing water. They should be the first ones to offer the kind and edifying words and are able to shut down talk that is gossip, unkind or destructive.
- ◆ Further, they should not be characterized as easily persuaded or seduced by a glass of wine. Even stronger, the words can mean the women are not to be enslaved by wine. Here Paul has in mind that these godly women are demonstrating self-control by having the wisdom to know what to say and what not to say. Their speech is motivated by love and informed by the wisdom that comes from decades of walking in the light with the Lord.
- ◆ And finally, notice that Paul specifically says women are to be teachers. Although Paul elsewhere excludes women from holding the office of Elder, he does understand how a godly older woman can be very effective in teaching and equipping others in the church and specifically, as Paul continues in the next verse, the younger women.

❖ Conclusion

If we believe in the Spirit’s inspiration of the Scriptures (and we do), then we can see that the mind of God is that the older men and older women are to be respected and looked to as examples of faithfulness and wisdom. This goes both ways...the older folks should live their lives as good examples in all areas of life for the others to be able to see. And, all the others, are to look and learn—as we will consider next week.

Preached by Brett Baker