

Foundation of the sermon

Purpose

Remind the people to have good behavior based on who they were before salvation

Principle Idea:

We were disobedient before salvation -- act like someone saved - be obedient.

Type of Outline

Exposition of Titus 3:1-7

I. Introduction

As you know during the last week we have passed from one calendar year to the next. It is this time of year many people look at their past lives and through reflection decide what commitments they will make for the next year. That's exactly what Paul tells Titus to "remind" the people of Crete -- He says this is the way you have been in the past -- be different.

Before we became Christians we lived a lost life style. We followed the winds of our own fallen nature. The passage we are looking at today uses this fact that we were disobedient to God, in rebellion to note that our Christian live should be based in obedience, with the peaceable character that God gave us by Grace.

We are looking at the first seven verses of Titus chapter 3, they state:

- 1 Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,
- 2 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.
- 3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.
- 4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

II. Body

A. Remind them to be obedient

Paul tells Titus the importance of reminding the people of certain things with regard to their fallen nature and how they obtained their new nature. He does this first by telling them what they should and should not do to demonstrate their new nature to society.

1. Obey civil authorities: (verse 1)

a) Principalities and powers are not specific titles but represent the internal rankings given in governments. Clarke in his commentary likens these titles to the Emperor and his deputies in his description of this word. The human governments under which we live often receive our ire and distrust. The term magistrate however is a specific title of a civil authority. The people in Crete before their salvation may well have looked on the governmental officials with skepticism and may have often rebelled against the authorities. This is a human tendency. Paul says later that in our "unsaved condition we were "disobedient." The implication here is that saved people are in submission to civil authority, unlike their days before salvation.

1) Subjection -- "enslaved" to authorities

2) Obey -- the Gk. word for obey in this passage is only used one other time in the NT. This is in Acts 27:21 where it is translated "harken" -- the command is not only to keep the letter of civil law -- but to listen to the words of the civil authority as a good citizen of the community.

I knew a group of people in Arkansas who would not even get a drivers license because that would be submitting to a civil authority, and they claimed to be Christians -- that attitude is

exactly what Paul is preaching against -- Christians who were at one time disobedient to authorities in should now be good models of civil obedience.

2. Be prepared to do good work

The point here is to live a good life always willing and able to do good things for others -- in I Timothy 5:10 the term "good work" is used to describe a woman who brings up her children, shows forth hospitality, relived the suffering of others and has washed the disciples feet. Not many of these could be described as a "religious" act. They are the conduct of a person living life, doing what is right and one who is looking out for the needs of others.

B. Remind them to treat others well

There are two parts to the commandments of God to Love God Himself and to Love your fellow man. As we know these are the two are the great commandments. It ought to be obvious that we who want to be treated well ought to treat others well, but it seems we need to be reminded.

We forget what we have been forgiven of; We forget why we came to Jesus in the first place. We no matter how "good" we might have been were sinners and were to a greater or lesser extent hateful of other people.

I knew a group of people who wanted to believe that when it says to love your neighbor that their love only needed to extend to the fellow members of that group. Their only neighbors were their friends. This is not what the Gospel is about.

Here Paul tells Titus to remind them that God wants them to love all people. This again is a reminder to be a good member of society. He approaches this topic negatively in the first part of verse 2 and positively in the last part of the same verse.

1. Things we as Christians must not do to be good neighbors.

a) We are reminded to speak evil of no man.

This word in the Greek is the word Blasphemy according to Albert Barnes Commentary. We have a natural tendency to talk about others in a negative way -- Expositor's Commentary says the Cretetians were reminded to : "... abstain from the common practice of hurling curses and vicious epithets at those offending or injuring them." (11:15).

b) We are further reminded to not be brawlers

The word could be translated "not pugnacious" or "non-fighters" or be "peaceable." Anyway you look at it we are not to be looking for a fight. There are people who go around looking to start an argument. They want you to mis-step so they can pounce on you. They look for opportunities to create discord. They are itching for a fight. Here the people were reminded that good neighbors are interested in the best for their neighbors not looking to attack them.

1. Things we must do to be good neighbors:

a) We must be gentile toward other people

Albert Barnes makes the following comment concerning the Greek word for "gentile" here, he says it is: "... rendered moderation in Phil. 4:5; patient in I Tim. 3:3, and elsewhere as gentle ... (Barnes).

This goes against the grain of our natural self -- this is the exact opposite of that "pugnacious" nature we had in the previous section of the verse. You want to show your Christianity in action -- here's how to do it -- be gentile to others, even those you disagree with.

b) We must be meek in nature

Isn't this the opposite of how to get ahead in the world. Man feels he must kick and scratch his way to the top in any situation. We are taught in school to be have a "good self-esteem." We are taught to be "self-confident" and "self-assured." We think that we must "win" in everything -- and we should show no weakness. Here we are told to get ahead in the Kingdom of God we must be meek.

C. Reasons we are reminded to be being Good citizens and neighbors (verses 3-6)

1. Reason 1 - Before salvation we were disobedient (3)

In this passages Paul uses 9 descriptive phrases to show how our lives were a mess before salvation. Because we were this way we weren't very good people and good to others. Therefore as Christians we must now be the opposite of these traits.

- a) Foolish
- b) Disobedient
- c) Deceived
- d) Serving diverse lusts
- e) Serving diverse pleasures
- f) Living in malice
- g) Living in envy
- h) Hateful
- i) Hating one another

I would like to comment on just two of these terms. First Paul says we -- including himself in the statement -- were foolish before salvation. By this term he means we were ignorant -- without understanding of God and His ways.

Second I want to comment on the "hateful" word. Every now and then I find a nugget when i look up these words -- there is a difference here between just being "hateful" a general term and the specific idea of hating one another. The term used for "hateful" is found no where else in the NT.

Adam Clarke says the following concerning this term: "The word comes from $\sigma\tau\upsilon\chi$, *Styx*, the infernal river by which the gods were wont to swear; and he who (according to the mythology of the heathens) violated this oath, was expelled from the assembly of the gods, and was deprived of his nectar and ambrosia for a year; hence the river was hateful to them beyond all things, and the verb $\sigma\tau\upsilon\gamma\epsilon\omega$, formed from this, signifies to shiver with horror. (Clarke)

Before Christ came into our lives we "hateful ... beyond all things" we were against God and man -- we were deprived of eternal life -- deprived of the Kingdom and we were responding out of nature against this condition.

2. Reason 2 - Before salvation God has manifest his love (4)

The term for "love" here is the word we get the English word Philanthropy from. It goes beyond "love." It is a specific outgoing love doing good acts toward men.

He gave us this love out of His own kindness

3. Reason 3 - We were lost and could not save ourselves (5)

We were in a lost condition therefore we should act differently now -- because frankly there was nothing -- no good thing -- we could do to remedy the fact that we were destined to die, and be denied the Kingdom. Without God we had no hope.

4. Reason 4 - We are saved out of God's mercy (5)

Since we had no hope -- God had to do something -- he did it out of his "kindness" in verse 4, but he also did it out of his mercy. We had done things that meant we deserved whatever punishment He could meet out upon us. Yet, God set aside His righteous penalty -- we are not getting what we deserve.

5. Reason 5 - Our nature has been changed by the actions of God's Spirit. (5 and 6)

It is only because of the work of the Holy Spirit that we are saved. The Holy Spirit in us changes our nature and we must therefore manifest that change in our outward actions. The method for this change is the "washing of regeneration." By this we do not mean Baptismal regeneration. Let's look at what this verse means and does not mean. Note there are two phrases in these verses we must consider in this salvation process.

- a) Method of salvation - washing of regeneration (new birth)

- (1) Some would take as an illusion to Baptism
- (2) Others would tie it to baptism loosely as a symbol of what the next phrase renders - only when the HS is present.
- (3) The idea of pouring is in the next few verses therefore I don't find a connection to Baptism (immersion) whatsoever
- (4) The word translated and in Greek can be used to tie the two phrases together so can be substituted by the translation "even" making the second statement a clarification or restatement of the first idea ... by the washing of regeneration, even renewing of the Holy Ghost;
- (5) The word for regeneration could be rendered - rendered "new birth" also the two words for regeneration and renewal carry the sense of "renewal" -- therefore there seems to be parallels between the two thoughts (common in Jewish wisdom literature)

b) Method of salvation - renewal through Holy Spirit

6. The most important reason we ought to be good people and neighbors (7)

We are justified by grace -- something we don't deserve and made heirs of eternal life. As citizens of the Kingdom which is to come we need to be good citizens now --

III. Conclusion

When we were lost we weren't very good people. God tells Titus to remind them and us that we must be good citizens and neighbors in this world because we are citizens of a coming Kingdom.

We must act rightly because we have been saved. We didn't deserve it but God did it anyway. There was no way we could do it ourselves. We deserved misery and death, we were given grace, mercy, kindness, and eternal life instead.

Because of the great work God has done through Christ, and the Holy Spirit we have a changed nature therefore we must act like it.

Title: Be a good Citizen