

Foundation of the sermon

Purpose

To show how the spiritual overseers of the flocks must represent a godly lifestyle

Principle Idea:

The New Testament churches in Crete/and today need godly undershepherds to watch over the flock of God

Type of Outline

Exposition of Titus 1: 5-9

Introduction

The isle of Crete during the first century had 100 cities according to some commentators. These were equivalent for the most part with the small villages that dot the countryside in Rhode Island, where I visited recently. Near Ashaway RI there are three active churches. Until recently there was a fourth one that was having services every Sabbath. These churches prospered in these areas and actually at one time there were even more in that small area. There were churches in every little berg.

In the passage we are going to explore today Paul commands Titus to appoint “elders” in every city all 100 of them. The churches were growing and planting more churches, as these churches came into being they needed someone to act as the Lord’s undershepherd to care for the flock. I find it amazing that some churches even some of the larger ones by SDB standards will go several years without a pastor. Paul knew that the churches (every one of them) in Crete needed direction and ordained people to give guidance to the people of God and to carry out God’s mission. He wanted them in every community. I believe God wants godly stewards over His flocks, every one of them, even today.

II. Body

A. Put things In Order – Ordain pastors

5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

1. Paul found trouble – commands Titus to “Set things in Order”

Paul found things in Crete were a mess. Anytime that a church or group of churches grow there is a danger that things can get out of hand. Here in Crete it was so. Paul in this epistle outlines the troubles he saw currently and things that needed to be fixed before they got out of hand. He left Titus behind to straighten things out.

A wise philosopher friend of mine once said: “If your alive, your in trouble, but it is better than the alternative.” He went on to say: “When you take an action to solve a problem, make sure your solution doesn’t cause greater trouble than you are solving.”

Man lives in a world surrounded by bad situations. In Job 14:1 ‘it says “Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.” The Bible acknowledges this fact and admonishes us to carefully proceed

down life's road accessing the situation. In Luke 14: 28-30 Christ tells the multitudes: "28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? 29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, 30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish." And in Luke 9:62 he warns a potential disciple: "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

Paul wanted Titus to set it straight – get it right – proceed in an orderly fashion.

2. Paul secondly commands Titus: "Ordain elders in every City"

The word here for "ordain" means basically to appoint or set in place – put in charge. Here Paul was not asking Titus to dominate the selection process of pastors in the church. In Acts 6 the Apostles gave the church direction on how to select "deacons." They are told to "look" among themselves and find people with certain characteristics. It was after this that the Apostles took those selected by the church – and further investigated them and prayed over them – the Lord picked the people – and the Apostles then presented them to the church – Paul is telling Titus to set the God-ordained people selected for their faithfulness over the church.

As we go about our business in life – and find trouble – we need to assess the situation – and use the right tools – the right plan – the right people to solve the problem.

Paul further wanted this done in "every" City. The church was expanding – Titus needed to take control of the problem – take it by the horns – he could not do it all himself. Jethro the father-in-law of Moses when he found that the number of people were too great for Moses to judge alone – advised Moses to select out men who "feared" God, men of "truth" to assist him in the task – you can find this in Exodus 18. Paul is not telling Titus to do it all himself but to select men who "feared" God, men of "truth" to take on the tasks of the under-shepherd for the flock of God.

When we see that problems are too great for us to handle – when we have assessed the situation – we sometimes need the right people to take care of the problem –

B. Elders with the right stuff.

6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. 7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; ... 8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; 9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

Paul lays down the criteria for the godly "pastor." Each of these characteristics show that the person selected must be a "man" of God who is respected in the community that he is living and ministering in. They must be blameless – not susceptible to accusation. These people weren't supposed to be shady characters.

Just as in Acts the people were told to look out among themselves for people with the right stuff. Here that's what Paul tells Titus. He tells him that people need to look at a potential pastor's family. The families were to be orderly, and proper. In I Timothy 3 in another passage that speaks of selecting pastors Paul gives a reason why the family of a person is so important in assessing their character. He says in verse 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?).

The person selected for the pastoral role must be a good “steward.” The King James Version when describing the role spoken of here uses the word “bishop” of this office. The term “bishop” has become associated with “high church” and the “episcopal” form of church government. The term in the Greek is closely related to the household and its management. When someone has a large estate, they might place someone over that estate to “oversee” the affairs associated with the property and its needs. The pastor must be an “overseer” and a “good steward” over the affairs put in his purview.

The pastor should be someone who is “holy” not associated with the seedier side of the world – someone whose life is an open book – the admonition to be hospitable is really found in someone who doesn’t have something to hide – This person brings people into his circle – it is not a role of dominance so much as it is a role of living an honest and open life.

a) Elders with the without the wrong stuff.

7 ... not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

Again these characteristics speak of someone respected in their community. I have translated this section as:

“not [arrongantly] stubborn, not quick-tempered, not (a) drunkard, not (a) bully, not greedy (for money); “

This is what “blameless” is all about – not a “man’s man” according to worldly standards – but someone who doesn’t go through life like a bull in a china shop.

C. Elders familiar with the Word of God – to stop those in opposition

9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

Sound in doctrine – well schooled in the word of God – able to convince and convict the unruly. As Paul says in 1 Tim 3 “6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.”

III. Conclusion

Life is full of trouble – we should assess the situation – we should “set in order” the things that need to be put in place. We should select godly people in place to help us “fix” the problems.

Date: 12/12/09

Title: Trouble demands godly people to serve.

