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TEACHING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

Titus 3A

Chapter 3:1-8

814 Arion Parkway, #410
San Antonio, Texas 78216
210.319.5055

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- In our last teaching of Titus, we experienced Paul’s overwhelming emphasis on God’s grace.
 - He mentioned several things regarding God’s grace.
 - I would like to briefly recap them as this recognition of grace will bear weight to today’s teaching.
 - Paul mentioned in the previous five verses of Titus 2:11-15, that grace does the following things:
 - Grace makes known the great gift of salvation
 - Grace disciplines us and grace teaches us
 - Grace allows us to look back in humble adoration while looking forward with great anticipation.
 - Grace frees us and keeps us
 - Grace commissions us
 - On the heels of the power of God’s grace, Paul will implore Titus to remind the believers in Crete of what grace looks like applied in godly living.
 - If I were to put a tag on the text this morning, it would simply be “Remember These Things”
 - Pick me up in Titus 3:1-8

Titus 3:1 Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed,

Titus 3:2 to slander no one, not to be contentious, to be gentle, showing every consideration for all people.

Titus 3:3 For we too were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.

Titus 3:4 But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared,

Titus 3:5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we did in righteousness, but in accordance with His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,

Titus 3:6 whom He richly poured out upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior,

Titus 3:7 so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Titus 3:8 This statement is trustworthy; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and beneficial for people.

- Let’s Pray
- This 1994 Disney Classic film could be known as one of the most well-known movies of its time.
 - One of the most memorable scenes from this film, “The Lion King” is where Simba

hears the voice of his father as he stares at his reflection in the water.

- As Simba hears his father’s voice from above, he looks up into these forming clouds that are shaped in his father’s image.
- It’s at this moment where Mufasa reminds Simba that he has forgotten who he is, and before Mufasa fades away he repeats these words to his son:
 - “Remember who you are” Remember, Remember, Remember.
- Every once and again, we as believers in Jesus must be reminded of what Christ has done for us and who we are in Him.
 - We have this natural tendency to forget who we are in Christ due to our natural proclivity to sin.
- It is in Chapter 3 of Titus that the Apostle Paul will make evident in the text to Titus and us today that we too must be reminded.
 - Paul will mention to Titus that we must be reminded of “These Things” which will help us in living well in this present age.
 - And as we live well in this present age, live in such a way that brings attention to the person of Christ.
 - Pick me up in verse 1 of Chapter 3 as Paul starts out with what we as believers are reminded to do.

Titus 3:1 Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed,

- Right off the cusp of Paul’s emphatic focus on the grace of God, he begins the very next line with an emphatic command, “Remind them”.
 - This urgent command is what we oftentimes need as believers in Christ.
 - We need this consistent and constant reminder of how we are to live.
 - As we discussed in our recent teaching, we must not forget the weight of what Christ did and the price that was paid for our lives.
 - The phrase “Remind them” here in the Greek is written in the perfect tense.
 - It is the word *hypomimnēskō*. It is the act of causing someone else to remember.
 - This Greek word was used when someone in authority was reminding people to act properly.
 - It’s that reminder my mom would give my sister and I before we go into a store of fine taste.
 - Before our feet hit the floor of the store she would look us sternly in the eyes and say “ Don’t touch anything and don’t you break anything.”
 - We see Peter’s use of the same word in 2 Peter 1:10-12.

2 Peter 1:10 Therefore, brothers and sisters, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choice of you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;

2 Peter 1:11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

2 Peter 1:12 Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them and have been established in the truth which is present with you.

- We too, no matter how long we have believed, must be reminded to live well in the here and now.
 - Paul will inform Titus of what we are to be reminded of. He mentions:
 - “To be” subject to rulers, authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed.
 - Before we dive into the list of “to-be’s”, I want you to see how many times “to be” is found in this first sentence alone.
 - If we include verse two in our count you will see the grouping “to be” is listed four times.
 - At first glance it may not seem like a huge detail, however, it brings about a question.
 - What is Paul emphasizing with these repeated phrases?
 - “To be” is a command. It is imperative. It is not suggestive or to simply be considered.
 - Paul’s point here is simple: As believers who have been saved by this amazing grace, we **MUST** put on and do these things.
 - Paul’s focus here is on a Christian’s ethical obligations to governments and civic authority.
 - He says, *“to be subject to rulers and to authorities”*.
 - It was a common “household code” during the 1st century for people to be subject to their governing rulers.
 - It is clear in the text that the believer is to also remain subject to governing authority.
 - Paul states in Romans 13:1:

Romans 13:1 Every person is to be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

- Not only should the believer who lives in this present age live well as a citizen of this world, but their ultimate and supreme subjection is to the Lord, Himself.
 - And because God Himself has in fact established all authorities in the earth, our proper response is to submit ourselves to His work and will.
 - Might I suggest that regardless of our political bent, God is still in control regardless of who is voted in or out of any civic office?
 - Our biblical response must be to submit to God’s working and will.
 - The Apostle Peter would mention this regarding submitting to governing

authorities in 1 Peter 2:13-15.

1 Peter 2:13 Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority,

1 Peter 2:14 or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.

1 Peter 2:15 For such is the will of God, that by doing right you silence the ignorance of foolish people.

- The later part of verse 1 mentions that “believers must be obedient and ready for every good deed.”
 - In other words, our ability as Christians to live well should not only be reflected in that of the church regarding submission to Christ, but also in society.
 - Our lives as believers are not to be divorced from the very world that we live in.
 - There was a statement I used to hear the older generation say. They would say we can’t be so heavenly-minded that we are no earthly good.
 - What this means is that because we have our eyes set on eternal things, we must live, serve, and love now with that eternal mindset fully realized.
 - Eternal perspective is never to be divorced from current issues that demand biblical truth to be heard and seen in the present age.
 - In the same sentence, Paul continues with what the believer MUST be reminded of.
 - Check out verse 2.

Titus 3:2 to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.

- Paul moves from discussing the way in which we should deal with governing authorities to how we should deal with secular society.
 - And as he shifts the focus from governing authorities to the secular society,
 - He mentions the believer should malign no one.
 - The word “malign” here in the text comes from the Greek word *blasphēmeō* where we get the English word, blaspheme.
 - This word sometimes can refer to reviling a human being, but in most references, it means blaspheming God.
 - In this particular context, it refers to individuals slandering one another rather than being kind to one another.
 - Paul also mentions that the believer is to avoid quarreling.
 - What is interesting is that Paul mentions total opposite characteristics of who Cretans are according to Titus 1:12.
 - If the Cretan is known as being liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons, then the

believer in Crete should be the complete opposite.

- Paul’s application in this part of the text deals specifically with how believers deal with all people in a horizontal fashion and how they should live with all people.
 - It is without question that the believer in Christ will have to deal with non-believers in the workplace, governing institutions, and communities.
- Paul’s primary point regarding people is that every believer in Christ on that island should reflect the kindness and love of Christ.
 - That regardless of how we feel about someone based upon what we see from their life, that each person is created in the *Imago Dei*.
- This is confirmed in the latter half of verse 2 where Paul says to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for “all men”.
 - This is what Paul is urgently informing Titus about in regards to reminding the believer on how to live well.
 - But the implications of this truth go beyond just the life of believers themselves.
- If the world looks at the church and they can not see the difference between us and them, does the Gospel message become attractive?
 - When the church is not the church in the sense of being the church, we begin to lack the effectiveness that Christ has called us to.
- If gossip, maligning, evil intent, and the like fester in the believer who makes up the church...
 - How are we to be the salt of the earth, if we have in fact become tasteless?
- I love what John Calvin once said regarding doctrine and living:

“The Gospel is not a doctrine of the tongue, but of life. It cannot be grasped by reason and memory only, but it is fully understood when it possesses the whole soul and penetrates to the inner recesses of the heart.”

- ◦ Check out what Matthew 5:16 says:

Matthew 5:16 Your light must shine before people in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

- What we are capturing from the text here is how Jesus takes jacked up people and brings them to a new life in Him apart from who they used to be?
 - This is something that Paul addresses in Romans 14 regarding the formation of the church with both Jews and Gentiles, alike.
 - Within the first century church, bringing into the family Jewish believers and Gentile believers under one roof was difficult to say the least.
 - Each group brings in their own traditions, cultural backgrounds, and the like.
 - Paul’s emphasis in Romans 14 is to bring these 2 groups together as one people under Christ, the One in Who has called them all.

- We see this cultural clash in Acts 10:1-48 with Peter at Cornelius' house.
- Peter has this dream regarding what he deemed as “unclean foods”, coming down from the ceiling like a great sheet.
- Peter then hears this voice from Heaven saying “Rise, Peter, Kill and Eat”, and Peter, who is a Jew, responds to the voice of the Lord.
 - Check out Peter's response in Acts 10:14:

Acts 10:14 But Peter said, “By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean.”

- Peter is then told a significant thing and I don't want you to miss it.
 - Check out the very next verse, verse 15:

Acts 10:15 Again a voice came to him a second time, “What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy.”

- Peter is, in essence, checked by God regarding who Peter deems as clean or unclean.
 - God is showing Peter that His choosing of those in whom He will save goes beyond Jewish prospects.
 - That salvation is provided to both the Jew and the Gentile, the slave and the free, the rich and the poor.
 - What I pray you see in the text this morning regarding Paul's blunt dealings with Titus, is we too, in the 21st century tend to develop spiritual amnesia.
 - As believers, we can forget that we are called by God not to be His salvation police, but we are in fact recipients of His grace, too.
 - We tend to forget that it is God's grace that saved us and it was the Father that chose us.
 - The reality is that like others who come to the church and come to faith, they will need the patience of people and grace to be shown too.
 - Paul says it this way in Romans 2:4

Romans 2:4 Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and restraint and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

- We are to be kind, gentle and show perfect courtesy towards all people because God in His goodness has shown us the same measure of kindness.
 - Paul says at the end of verse 2, “showing every consideration for all men”.
 - We can't miss what Paul is showing us here.
 - This word consideration in the Greek is *prautēs*. It means gentleness or humility.
 - The gentleness that the believer is to show comes from a place of humility.
 - They too realize it is God who is at work in them that has brought them to this newness in Christ.

- It is what we know as sanctification. That the Spirit of God is moving us from spiritual infancy to spiritual maturity.
 - Friends, this is not a work we can stake a claim for ourselves, but rather a work that the Father has chosen to do in us for His glory.
 - When we recognize that this life we have in Christ doesn't stem from what we have done, but who God is, it changes everything.
- It changes how we see people who may be less spiritually mature or even non-believers who haven't heard the Gospel message.
 - It allows us to respond with compassion and gentleness because we have been shown compassion by Christ as well.
 - As Paul mentions in Colossians 3:12

Colossians 3:12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience;

- As we show consideration and humility to all men that we come across, may we be cautious not to stick our theological noses in the air and forget we were once lost.
 - Check out the reminder that Paul gives to Titus as the Pastor/leader of these home churches.
 - And might I add this same message is for us as believers, today.

Titus 3:3 For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.

- Paul hits Titus with this gut-punching reality. He states “For we also were once foolish ourselves”
 - Why must we show compassion, kindness, humility, and gentleness and patience to others – because Christ did the same for us.
 - Paul yet again reminds Titus that these things must be consistently repeated into the hearing and hearts of the believer.
 - We must remember what has been graciously given to us and shown to us.
 - The moment that we forget how foolish we once were, is the moment that pride begins to settle in our hearts.
 - Not only were we once foolish, but the text shows us that these were things that we relished in.
 - Paul mentions this very truth in Colossians 3:7 regarding the foolish things we once walked in:

Colossians 3:6 For it is because of these things that the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience,
Colossians 3:7 and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them.

- We see further along in verse 3, this exhaustive list of foolish things we did before Christ called us. Paul states we were:
 - Disobedient
 - Deceived
 - Enslaved to various lusts and pleasures
 - Spending our life in malice (the intention or desire to do evil) and envy
 - Hateful
 - Hating one another
 - For some of us now, even hearing this list probably shocks you to the point that you clutch your pearls.
 - But if we are brutally honest with ourselves, with a humble heart we can accurately say, “Yes, this was me”
 - May I suggest this morning that it is biblically healthy to be reminded that we once were these things and at times still struggle with these things?
 - Why? Because this reality within the life of believers produces a few things:
 - It produces humility in recognizing God chose us and brought us out of darkness and into His marvelous light to escape foolish behavior.
 - It produces gratitude in that we are saved from the wrath of God, knowing that Christ took the hit for us and satisfied the very wrath of God.
 - It provides us with peace knowing that we are no longer enemies of God and helplessly foolish but have been made alive in Jesus.
 - Titus is reminded to stir the believers to remember for themselves what their lives looked like without Christ.
 - Friends, I urge you today...remember where Christ found you and met you.
 - I love these next 4 verses. They are packed with theological richness while in the same breath should leave us in awestruck wonder.
 - Paul moves from reminding the believer to live well to providing a theological basis for proper living.
 - Check out the text in verses 4-7

Titus 3:4 But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared,

Titus 3:5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,

Titus 3:6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,

Titus 3:7 so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

- As a student of the text we know that whatever we see after the word “But” is greater than what comes before it.
 - We just read that we at one point prior to Christ calling us by name were sinking

deep into sin, incapable of knowing God and His goodness.

- And then Paul hits us with this beautiful conjunction “But”
- Paul mentions that it was the kindness of God our Savior that appeared. This glorious grace of God entered into human history.
 - He wraps Himself in flesh and blood as we are and comes in the form of a baby.
 - If this isn’t humility in and of itself I don’t know what is.
 - He lived a sinless life, died a perfect death, yet was raised in perfect power.
- Friends, it is this kindness that appeared.
 - But not only did He appear and make Himself known. The bible says that He came (grace and truth) with a purpose.
 - Luke documents in Luke 19:10 these words from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

- What Paul shows us within these 4 verses is that the way in which salvation came was not only a divine manner, but the way in which we have come to faith is divine.
 - This presupposes that you and I had absolutely nothing to do with coming to faith in Jesus.
 - This reality eliminates the idea that saying the sinner’s prayer saved you, or
 - You telling Jesus He can come into your heart or
 - That you went to Jesus on your own to somehow initiate salvation
 - The text makes explicitly clear that it is God who saved US!
 - Not our merit, not our feeble attempts to look perfect or do good deeds.
 - It was God alone that initiated this relationship because only He alone could take a jacked-up person like us and make us whole.
 - In John 6:65 Jesus, the Messiah, our Lord said this:

John 6:65 And He was saying, “For this reason, I have told you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father.”

- If no one can come to Jesus unless it has been granted by the Father, that means that the Father had to choose whom the Son would receive.
 - The beauty of the Doctrine of Election is this: You didn’t do anything to get God’s attention.
 - This work of salvation is initiated by God, accomplished in God, completed by God, giving all glory to God.
 - This gracious gift of salvation was accomplished, as Paul mentions in verse 5, “according to God’s mercy.”

- His mercy is evident by His divine compassion towards us.
- Paul paints for us a beautiful picture of how this mercy is executed within the life of the one in who God has called His own.
 - He mentions in v6 it is “By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit”.
 - This phrase “washing of regeneration” for many people has been connected to baptism, especially those in the Catholic faith.
- However, this is not the case. Baptism does not save. It is simply an outward sign of an inward change.
 - This inward change is what the bible indicates as the “New Birth”.
 - We often do not discuss much of this reality, however it is essential to understanding our faith in Jesus.
- The rebirth is recognizing that God himself by the Holy Spirit has brought us from Spiritual Death to Spiritual Life.
 - Jesus places emphasis on the “New Birth” with Nicodemus in John 3:3, check it out:

John 3:3 Jesus responded and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless someone is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

- Nicodemus had a hard time understanding this New Birth because He asked Jesus how can someone be born again when they are old?
 - He continues by saying that no one can enter back into their mother’s womb.
 - Then Jesus hits him with a similar statement that Paul makes to Titus regarding this “New Birth”
 - Jesus says in John 3:5-6:

John 3:5 Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

John 3:6 That which has been born of the flesh is flesh, and that which has been born of the Spirit is spirit.

- Ultimately, Nicodemus was coming from a pharisaical understanding of being born again in a sense of accomplishing certain work in Jewish tradition.
 - However, Jesus’ emphasis on this “New Birth” required water (spiritual washing and cleansing) and the Spirit (spiritual transformation).
 - In this same way, Paul lets Titus know this regeneration and rebirth is accomplished not by works of righteousness but by God Himself.
 - And Paul wraps up this fact in verse 6, that this gracious gift of salvation and this washing and renewal is all accomplished through the work of Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection.
- It is here in verse 7 that we see who is in charge of willing this work of grace to be

possible for broken humanity.

- Check out what Paul says:

Titus 3:7 so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

- Paul informs Titus and this congregation that this gift of grace has been accomplished through the will of the Father and that we are justified because of Christ’s atoning work.
 - We see Paul uses the two words “so that” at the beginning of verse 7.
 - “So that” is used to conclude everything that has been previously stated in verses 4-6.
 - You can say that Paul is wrapping up this theological mystery of the workings of salvation.
 - I love what Paul says in Romans 8:29-30. He expresses this logical flow by which the workings of God’s grace is accomplished in the lives of those He chooses.
 - Check it out:

Romans 8:29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters;

Romans 8:30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

- Here is a graphic to explain how this work has been accomplished. [Slide 1A]
 - God the Father in eternity past foreknew us and predestined us to be conformed to the image of Jesus.
 - Prior to faith in Christ, we all were enemies of God and spiritually dead.
 - At the appointed time God by His Spirit illuminated our hearts to know Him and Christ crucified (Regeneration, Salvation, Justification)
 - At that moment we are eternally kept and in the hands of Jesus and will have eternal life which is the hope that we have with a promise.
 - Do you see the work that God accomplished to bring those in who He has called to Himself?
 - And may I say that this plan is by no means a plan “b” or “c”.
 - This plan was intentional and planned in eternity’s past.
 - I love what Paul says in Ephesians 2:8-10

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

Ephesians 2:9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good

works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

- This friends is the point that Paul is making to Titus to remind those who are in these home churches in Crete.
 - And this is what Paul is reminding us in the church today as well.
 - Remember what has been done for us so that we may grow in our affections for Christ and serve Him well.
 - God in His grace gives us the opportunity to participate in helping reach lost souls for Christ.
 - We must also remember what has been mercifully promised to us – eternal life through Christ!
 - This is what Titus is to remind the men and women in these churches in Crete.
 - Regardless of the wickedness that was around them and amongst them in Crete, the Gospel was strong enough to meet the most broken person.
 - And it is strong enough to pierce the darkest and most broken hearts today.
 - Why do we have confidence in this? Because we are the evidence of the very power of the Gospel at work!
- Here is the reality of what you and I must wrestle with as believers: Because we don't know who God has chosen and has foreknown, what must we do?
 - Clearly, the work of bringing people to salvation is not resting upon our shoulders...thank God!
 - However, God gives us the opportunity to participate in this glorious work of ministry.
 - God has given us the opportunity to walk in these good works.
 - The question I have for you this morning church is, are you walking in these good works or as my wife would ask are you simply sitting on your blessed assurance?
 - May we all be participators in this work and obey Jesus because we understand the weight of what He did!
 - Lastly, check out what Paul tells young Titus in verse 8 as we wrap up this morning.

Titus 3:8 This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.

- Paul drops the mic here for the reader and the hearer of this letter. He summarizes by saying this truth is a trustworthy statement.
 - This statement is trustworthy and true beyond the reality of what Epemenides shared regarding the truthful reality of his own people (Titus 1:13).
 - This statement that Paul makes is trustworthy because it was a divine message that was made manifest in the flesh.
 - This statement that Paul makes is trustworthy because it is sealed with a

promise.

- Paul mentions what this trustworthy statement is in 1 Timothy 1:15:
 - Here is what he says:

1 Timothy 1:15 It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost.

- And because this statement is trustworthy, Paul reminds Titus to speak confidently about these things to the churches.
- I love watching news commentators debate certain issues of the day.
 - The way you know that the debate is going to be a good one is when they begin to discuss the facts of the matter.
 - Facts can be debated, but they can never be dismissed.
 - The Apostle Paul presents to the church the facts. He presents to them the whole truth and nothing but the truth.
 - And he then provides evidence to his facts with proven data.
 - He reminds them to think about the very faith that they have and possess.
 - He provides the data that points them to the reality that they could not experience the joys of this faith and newness of life apart from God.
 - That our ability to even engage in this faith is solely predicated on God's sovereign doing.
 - Paul makes it certain that this life we have in Christ must be lived with regards to the reality of what it cost Christ on the cross.
 - When you think about what was done for you, it should change your behaviors and responses.
 - When you have that temptation to give in to your sin nature, remember the cross.
 - When you have the desire to slip back into your old way of life, remember the cross.
 - When you want to respond in an evil way towards someone you know, remember the cross.
 - And even when you fall into sin, remember the cross because His kindness will ALWAYS lead us to repentance.
 - Remembering what was done on calvary is not a guilt trip, it's a grace gift!
- Wallis Wilber, a New Testament professor who wrote a commentary on "The Epistle to Titus" said this:

“The inculcation of Gospel truth requires patient repetition.”

- May each of us remember these things as Paul implores Titus to teach the Cretan home churches to do the same.
 - For remembering these things and living out the truth of the Gospel in humility,

kindness, and love produces good fruit!

- And that fruitfulness will be shown in and through your life, but only if you remember, remember, remember.
- Let's Pray.