

Sunday, August 1, 2010—Titus: The Practice of Grace—Titus 1:9-10a: Holding Fast the Faithful Word

Introduction/Review

- Since we are half way through Titus Chapter One and it has been two weeks since I was with you I thought a brief review was in order.
- We started this study through Titus, I presented the following outline for the book:
 - Chapter One: the church is to be an orderly organization (Titus 1:5)
 - Saved by Grace
 - Chapter Two: the church is to teach and preach the word of God (Titus 2:1)
 - Live by Grace
 - Chapter Three: the church is supposed to produce good works (Titus 3:1)
 - Grace motivates believers to produce good works
- As we pick up the passage this morning at verse 9, we are now half way through Paul's discussion of the church as an orderly organization.
- In our previous two studies we observed the following truths:
 - The reason Paul left Titus on Crete was to “set in order the things that are wanting” (Titus 1:5).
 - The way order is going to be established is by ordaining elders in every city (Titus 1:5).
 - The words elder and bishop are used interchangeably to refer to the same office (Titus 1:5, 8, I Timothy 3:1, Acts 20:17, 28).
 - There was supposed to be a multiplicity of elders in every church and city (Titus 1:5, Acts 14:23).
 - Elders/Bishops **are to be** men and they **are allowed** to be married (Titus 1:6, I Timothy 3:2).
 - Elders/Bishops **are to** rule well their own house (Titus 1:6, I Timothy 3:4)
 - Elders/Bishops **are not** to possess the negative traits outlined in Titus 1:7 and I Timothy 3:1-7.
 - Elders/Bishops **are to** possess the positive traits outlined in Titus 1:8 and I Timothy 3:1-7.
 - Elders/Bishops **are not** supposed to be covetous but content with what they have (I Timothy 3:3).
 - Elders/Bishops **is not** supposed to be a new believer lest pride get a hold of him (I Timothy 3:6).
 - Elders/Bishops **should be** known by their positive traits outside the local church (I Timothy 3:7).
 - Elders/Bishops **should be** apt to teach (or skillful in teaching) the Scriptures (I Timothy 3:2).
 - Elders/Bishops who labor in word and doctrine **are to be** compensated for their efforts (I Timothy 5:17-18).

- Elders/Bishops **do not need** to possess a spiritual gift to function in the office of a Bishop.
- This morning as we come to Titus 1:9 we see the elders in action as they contend for the faith and protect their flocks from doctrinal perversion.

Titus 1:9

- ***“Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught”***
- It is important to observe that verse 9 is continuing Paul’s thought regarding the responsibilities and qualifications of elders.
- Holding fast—1) to hold before or against, hold back, withstand, endure, 2) to keep one's self directly opposite to any one, hold to him firmly, cleave to, paying heed to him (*Strong’s Concordance*). In practical terms to hold fast, means to unswervingly adhere or cling to something.
- Holding fast—notice that his phrase is in the present tense, which means the elder/bishop must always be actively engaged in “holding fast.”
- What are elders/bishops supposed to hold fast? “The faithful word as they hath been taught.” There is supposed to be a present holding fast of doctrine they had been taught in the past.
- II Timothy 2:1-2—Paul wanted the doctrines for the current dispensation of Grace to be passed on unchanged and unaltered. In the context faithful men are those who are not going to change the doctrine but pass on the exact same truths that Paul had taught them.
- ***“that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.”***
- That—tells you the purpose and intent of why elders are to hold fast the faithful word.
- By sound doctrine—sound doctrine is going to be the active agent that the elder/bishop uses to exhort and convince the gainsayers. Therefore the faithful word in the first half of the verse is sound doctrine in the second half of the verse.
 - I Timothy 1:3, 10, 4:6, 13, 16, 17
 - II Timothy 3:10, 16, 4:2-3
- Exhort—1) To incite by words or advice; to animate or urge by arguments to a good deed or to any laudable conduct or course of action, 2) To advise; to warn; to caution, 3) To incite or stimulate to exertion (*Webster’s 1828*).

- Convince— To persuade or satisfy the mind by evidence; to subdue the opposition of the mind to truth, or to what is alledged, and compel it to yield its assent; as, to convince a man of his errors; or to convince him of the truth (*Webster's 1828*).
- Gainsayers—to speak against, to contradict
- It is only through the teaching of the truth that gainsaying can be answered. This is why elders must hold fast to the truth.
- Herein lies one of the primary jobs of the elders/bishops, to protect the saints in a local church from doctrinal error through the skillful use of sound doctrine.
- Acts 20:28-31—there are both internal and external threats to any local church but both of them center on the teaching of unsound doctrine.
 - External—“shall grievous wolves enter in among you”
 - Internal—“also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things”
- This is where heresy comes from. The desire for a personal following motives men to teach things which they ought not.

Titus 1:10

- ***“For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision:”***
- Paul identifies three different types of gainsayers in verse 10.
- Unruly—1) Disregarding restraint; licentious; disposed to violate laws; turbulent; ungovernable; as an unruly youth, 2) Accustomed to break over fences and escape from inclosures; apt to break or leap fences; as an unruly ox (*Webster's 1828*).
 - I Timothy 1:9—disobedient
 - Titus 1:6—insubordinate
- Vain talkers—the Greek word translated “vain talkers” means “an idle talker, one who utters empty senseless things,” according to *Strong's Concordance*.
- Deceivers—are those who know they are wrong and a purposely attempting to mislead and/or seduce the minds of their hearers.
 - Ephesians 4:14
 - I Timothy 6:3-5
 - II Timothy 3:13, 4:4.