

Sunday, August 15, 2010—Titus: The Practice of Grace—Titus 1:14-16: The Proper Place of Good Works

### Introduction/Review

- The majority of Titus 1 has been dominated by Paul’s instructions to Titus to ordain elders in every city.
- We have studied the qualifications for elders/bishops (Titus 1: 6-8) as well as their primary function in protecting the saints under their charge from false teachers (Titus 1:9-13).
- This morning we are going to see Paul’s final statement about false teachers as well as his transition to the second major topic found in Titus, the good works that the doctrine is supposed to produce.

### Titus 1:14

- ***“Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.”***
- Technically, verse 14 is a continuation of the thoughts Paul is expressing in verse 13.
- Remember that in verse 10, Paul identified the circumcision as one of the groups of gainsayers (verse 9) whose mouths needed to be stopped because they were subverting entire households of believers for the profit of filthy lucre (verse 11).
- Paul instructs Titus to sharply rebuke these false teachers that they might be sound in the faith (verse 13).
- We learn in verse 14 that those who are sound in the faith are not going to give heed to Jewish fables or the commandments of men.
- Jewish Fables—*Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* offers five primary definitions for the English word fable.
  - A feigned story or tale, intended to instruct or amuse; a fictitious narration intended to enforce some useful truth or precept.
  - Fiction in general; as, the story is all a fable.
  - An idle story; vicious or vulgar fictions.
  - The plot, or connected series of events, in an epic or dramatic poem.
  - Falsehood; a softer term for a lie.
- The Scriptures are very clear about which definitions are applicable when speaking about “fables.”
  - I Timothy 1:4, 4:7

- II Timothy 4:4
- II Peter 1:16
- I Timothy 1:5-7—as we saw last week Paul is very clear that those who desire to teach the Law don't know what they are doing.
- Commandments of Men—is speaking about religious rules and regulations that are invented and enforced by men, i.e. they are nowhere found in or required by Scripture.
  - Isaiah 29:13—“the precept of men”
  - Matthew 15:6, 9—“the commandments of men”
  - Mark 7:7, 13—“the commandments of men”
  - Colossians 2:20-23
- The end result of listening to fables and following the commandments of men is a turning away from the truth.
- To turn away from the truth in verse 14, is the exact opposite of “holding fast the faithful word” in verse 9.
- Two things turn people away from the truth: 1) stories, 2) religious tradition

### **Titus 1:15**

- ***Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.***
- In the context it seems that the pure are those who maintained their doctrinal integrity and remained in the truth.
- One of the definitions of the Greek word translated “pure” is “free from every admixture of what is false, sincere genuine (*Strong's Concordance*). Therefore, the pure in verse 15 are believers who have held fast the faithful word or remained in the truth.
- Defiled— means: to dye with another colour, to stain, 2) to defile, pollute, sully, contaminate, soil (*Strong's Concordance*).
- In the context, those who are defiled and unbelieving have turned from the truth (Grace Truth) by giving heed to Jewish fables and the commandments of men. In other words, they have sullied the pure truth by desiring to add something to it.
- Some of these people may be believers but they have defiled the truth through the adding human tradition and or performance to the Gospel of the Grace of God.

- This is like placing one piece of colored laundry into a load of whites.
  - Galatians 5:9
- Paul goes on to say that even the mind and conscience of these folks is defiled.
  - I Timothy 4:2

### **Titus 1:16**

- ***“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.”***
- Verse 16 gives us further insight into defiled mind and conscience of those mentioned in verse 15. With their mouths they profess to know God but then deny him by the actions.
- Abominable—1) Very hateful; detestable; litesome, 2) This word is applicable to whatever is odious to the mind or offensive to the senses. 3) Unclean (*Webster’s 1828*)
- Not only are they abominable but they are also disobedient concerning the truth (Galatians 3:1).
- In addition, Paul says that these people are “reprobate” concerning good works. The Greek work translated “reprobate” means: 1) not standing the test, not approved, 2) that which does not prove itself such as it ought (*Strong’s Concordance*).
  - Romans 1:28
  - I Corinthians 9:27
  - II Corinthians 13:5-7
  - II Timothy 3:8
- II Timothy 2:15—being approved of God is the opposite of being reprobate.
- The reason the people described in the passage are reprobate concerning God works is because they have denied the only truth that is capable of producing good works that God will accept.
- Good works are the result of the belief and application of sound doctrine in the details of our lives. Paul’s entire point in Titus One is the good works steam from belief of the truth. The truth working in a believer’s life ought to spur them to love and good works.
- Ephesians 2:8-9—our works cannot save us. Salvation is a free gift not of works.
- Ephesians 2:10—now that we are saved by the grace of God, believers are the workmanship of Jesus Christ unto good works. In our natural state we are not capable of doing anything to please God and earn our own salvation (Romans 3:9-12). But now as believers through the process of spiritual identification Jesus Christ lives his life out through us (Galatians 2:20) and works in our inner man (Ephesians 3:20, Philippians 2:13) when we believe God’s word to us (I Thessalonians 2:13).

- Romans 12:1-2—to live Godly in Christ Jesus is the reasonable response of Grace. As believers we ought to want to do the right thing not because we fear the punishment of the Law but because we are moved and motivated by our gratitude of what Christ has done for us.
- In Titus good works find their source in the sound doctrines of God's word rightly divided. This is going to be the dominate subject as we turn our attention next week to Chapter Two.