

Living In This World But Not For This World

Titus 3:1-8

August 25th, 2019

Big idea: Live as citizens of this world because God has saved us

Intro:

The first two words in Titus 3 are “Remind them.”

Titus will be told to remind them how they are to live as good citizens in this world even as they don’t live for this world.

He is to remind them that the reason they are to live this way is the gospel itself. And he once again lays out a clear, detailed explanation of the gospel.

Much of our teaching on Sundays will not be brand new. It will be reminding us of what we know. Because we need to be reminded. We are forgetful people!

KP last week leading worship pointing out that as we sing the gospel to each other in songs like “In Christ Alone” we are reminding one another of our justification.

Daniel preaching on one of the most known and beloved passages in the Bible – Prov 3:5-6. I recall “discovering” those verses as a new Christian in college and sitting down with another student who was raised in a Christian home to show him what I had “found.” I read the passage with excitement and he said, “Yeah, my grandma used to quote that a lot.” Don’t we need to be reminded to trust God though?

The people of Israel got in trouble when they failed to remember

Psalm 106:7b They did not remember Your abundant kindnesses, But rebelled by the sea, at the Red Sea.

Psalm 106:13a They quickly forgot His works

Jesus gently reprimanded his disciples when they didn’t remember a key lesson he taught them through a miracles

Matthew 16:9 "Do you not yet understand or remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets *full* you picked up?"

Peter wrote to his audience that he was ready to remind them of what they knew

2 Pet. 1:12-13 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*. ¹³ I consider it right, as long as I am in this *earthly* dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder,

John Stott: So all conscientious Christian teachers, once they have been delivered from the unhealthy lust for originality, take pains to make old truths new and stale truths fresh.

But remember that what is a reminder for you was once brand new for you and might be brand new for someone else sitting here.

1. How should we live as good citizens? (3:1-2)
 - a. The book of Titus has already told us how the gospel shapes our churches in chapter 1 and our homes in chapter 2. Now the instruction turns to how the gospel shapes the way we live as citizens in an earthly nation.
 - i. Christians are also Americans, Canadians, Mexicans, Russian, Indian, Thai, Lebanese, Chilean, Brazilian, Cameroonian or citizens of one of the other 187 nations of the world.
 - b. The Cretans needed this badly.

- i. Polybius, a 2nd century BC Greek historian, wrote that Cretans were constantly involved in insurrections, murders, and destructive internal wars.
 - ii. In Titus 1, Paul quoted a Cretan poet who described Cretans as liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.
 - iii. That was the environment the people grew up within.
 - iv. Probably none of you have a history of insurrection against the government in your pre-Christian days.
 - v. However, we all have culturally shaped ways of relating to government and other people that need to be biblically shaped. We need to be reminded of how to live as good citizens.
- c. We are to be subject to rulers and authorities and obedient.
- i. It's at this point that we want to break out our American flags and yell "Freedom" like William Wallace from Braveheart.
 - ii. Yet even in a country founded on freedom, it isn't founded on anarchy. There are laws, and there are authorities, and as Christians we should obey them as long as they don't require something God forbids or forbid something that God requires.
 - 1. Peter and the apostles told the leaders they must obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29)
 - 2. Daniel 3:13-27 – Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego commanded to worship the golden statue but they refused
 - 3. Exodus 1:17-21 – Hebrew midwives
 - 4. But those are the exceptions. In most cases, we don't have to decide between obeying the government and obeying God.
 - iii. Submit and obey are both listed because obedience is the visible demonstration of our willingness to submit to the demands of government.
 - iv. **1 Peter 2:13-14** Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, ¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.
 - v. **Romans 13:1** Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.
 - vi. Matthew 22:15-22 – give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's.
 - 1. Pay taxes
 - 2. Trying to trap him between the Jewish loyalists and the Herodians loyal to Caesar – seemingly in a trap that would anger one side no matter what He said.
 - vii. Individual Christians may have different political views on individual policy positions, but that does not give license to disobey. It's easy to obey when it's what you want to do anyways. This command begins applicable when you don't want to do what the government is telling you to do – you think the speed limit is too restrictive, you think the fishing limit is ridiculous, you think the taxes are way too high, the building codes unnecessary, etc.
 - viii. Thankfully, we live in a country where we have a voice. So if you disagree on policy issues, vote, lobby, educate, petition, run... but obey while the laws are in place.
- d. Even more than just being obedient, we are to be ready to do whatever is good.

- i. Governments have often been suspicious of Christians.
 - 1. Examples:
 - a. Rome
 - b. Soviet Union
 - c. North Korea
 - 2. Christians bow their knee to a higher authority than the state.
 - 3. Christian morality might contradict state morality.
 - ii. We need to demonstrate, as much as possible, that Christians are a force for good in society.
 - 1. We care about the poor, we work to build strong families, we are good stewards.
 - 2. They may still reject the message of the gospel, but it removes unnecessary obstacles to the gospel.
- e. The remaining commands have to do with not just how we interact with the government, but with all people.
- i. Not maligning – speaking evil of, slandering, reviling, defaming someone’s reputation
 - 1. Tempting if we feel a sense of competition in the workplace
 - 2. Tempting if we see other gospel preaching, Bible teaching churches in the community as *in competition* with us rather than *in cooperation* with us to reach the community.
 - 3. We must be careful not to speak untrue things that misrepresent people or their positions.
 - a. Interesting that we see guard rails throughout Titus that keep us from error as we emphasize sound doctrine and sound living. We can emphasize those things and be tempted to malign others who disagree, even misrepresenting their positions in a way that isn’t charitable, or we can fail to be peaceable and gentle, or fail to show consideration.
 - ii. Instead, we are to be peaceable, gentle, and show consideration for all men
 - 1. Peaceable and gentle are terms we understand
 - 2. “Showing every consideration” – means to demonstrate a gentle friendliness and courtesy
 - 3. This is not the direction our society is going. We might be frustrated by that but what an opportunity! We can show consideration by listening to the opposition, asking clear questions that further understanding, refusing to call names or attack people but to interact with arguments. Light shines brighter in darkness.
 - 4. Examples
 - a. William Wilberforce converted but encouraged by John Newton to remain in politics to work against the slave trade, devoted his life to this task as well as “the reformation of manners” because of a coarseness he saw in English society.
 - b. Israelites in exile told by Jeremiah to
 - i. **Jeremiah 29:7** 'Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare.'
 - 5. How does the command to “show every consideration” apply to tricky situations?

- a. How does it apply to someone who wants to be known by a different name and pronoun than their biological sex?
- b. We should not be compelled to speak words that are untrue, but we should be wise and considerate when and how we speak, keeping in mind the context of the conversation and the relationship with the person.

2. Why should we live as good citizens? Answer: **The Gospel** (3:3-8)

This is the pattern hopefully you have come to expect from the book of Titus – our behavior and beliefs are linked. Both are important and are mutually dependent. What we *do* should be based on what we *believe*. What we truly *believe* should affect what we *do*.

The household instructions in chapter 2 were loaded with this as we were told that our lives should fit right doctrine and adorn the gospel, and then it works through the gospel again.

The same thing happens here in chapter 3 – the conduct is explained and then the gospel is reviewed because it is the foundation for why we are to live this way and we can't forget it.

John Stott, paraphrased - What you'll find here is clear and compact summary of six essential ingredients of salvation.

Six essential ingredients of salvation (John Stott)

- a. Its **need** is our sin, guilt, and slavery (v. 3)
 - i. Why is it necessary for us to be saved?
 - ii. You might read these words and see your past clearly. Or you might not resonate with each of them.
 - iii. Every believer needs to see that this was their past, or would be if God hadn't intervened in their life when they were young. I say that because you might have come to Christ when you were a child and apart from throwing sand in somebody's eyes when you were four, you can't really remember being hateful prior to your conversion. However, you can still see honestly the sin that lurks under the surface, like subtle selfishness or pride. You can also consider how things would be different if the Lord did not work in your life when you were young.
 - iv. Chapell – we were once wrongly ruled and we were once wrongly relating.
 - v. Notice that the antithesis is NOT between what other bad people are like and what Christians are like. That stokes pride and can lead to disillusionment. The message of Christianity is not, "Christians are better than other people." If you think that's the message and then you meet nice, caring people who aren't Christians you'll be confused.
 - vi. Tim Keller's emphasis on Christians not being better than others but being better than they would be without the work of grace in their lives
 - 1. Comparing an unsaved person who grew up in a stable, two parent home, in a good school district with consistent encouragement to a saved person who grew up in chaos, multiple drastic family changes, little support or education in life skills but she came to Christ in her 20's and the Lord has been transforming her. If you compare her post-conversion snapshot with her pre-conversion snapshot, the change is drastic. But if you compare her post conversion snapshot to the snapshot of the unsaved but stable person, she may still seem more unstable or appear to be struggling. But she's changing! And her life transformation is adorning the gospel.
- b. Its **source** is God's gracious loving-kindness (v. 4)
 - i. Where does our salvation originate?

- ii. Although humanity is characterized to some degree by v. 3, God acted.
- iii. He wasn't motivated by how awesome we are but by His kindness and His love for mankind.
- iv. God's broad kindness is seen in other passages
 - 1. **Luke 6:35** "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil *men*."
 - 2. **Ephesians 2:7** so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.
 - a. He's kind to all and his love for all mankind is described in Titus, but His particular kindness in Christ for those who believe and respond to the gospel will be displayed "in the ages to come" – forever.
- v. "Love for mankind" is the translation of a word you probably know – philanthropy. We think of philanthropy as a kind and generous act by a wealthy person to give out of their wealth in a way that benefits society – they might fund a museum or a hospital, or provide scholarships for people to attend college.
 - 1. Robert Smith, Commencement speaker and alumni at Morehouse College who announced he was paying off the college debt of every graduate that year, estimated at over \$40 million.
- vi. I love this description – God's kindness and love for mankind APPEARED in an event and in a person. It appeared in Jesus' life and substitutionary death.
 - 1. Christianity is unique among world religions in that the key event was public.
 - 2. In most religions a single person claims to have a private experience – a dream, a revelation, an appearance – and then they go and tell others.
 - 3. Jesus had a public ministry and was publicly killed. He rose from a public tomb and appeared publicly to crowds of up to 500. Then the public went and told others.
- c. Its **ground** is not our merit but God's mercy in the cross (v. 5a)
 - i. What does our salvation rest on?
 - ii. Our need made salvation necessary, but God provided the solution. HE saved us not that we recognized we were making a mess of our lives and decided to change our conduct.
 - iii. We are saved "not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness."
- d. Its **means** is the regenerating and renewing work of the Holy Spirit (v. 5b-6)
 - i. How does salvation come to us? Jesus' death was almost 2,000 years ago. We're living today. What does God do in us today as He saves us?
 - ii. Two works of the Spirit are emphasized
 - 1. He regenerates us
 - a. "Born again"
 - b. New spiritual life
 - 2. He renews us
- e. Its **goal** is our final inheritance of eternal life (v. 7)
 - i. What does salvation lead to?
 - ii. When we are saved, we are justified.

- iii. But we still look ahead to eternal life – it’s our hope, not that it is uncertain but it is faith with a future orientation.
 - iv. The goal is not merely life change now (although we get that through the regenerating and renewing work of the Spirit), or legal forgiveness and righteousness imputed to us (although we get that in our justification), but it’s life with God after this life is over.
 - v. That’s why this message is titled, Living in this world but not for this world. We are living in a particular country at a particular time around particular people, but we aren’t living FOR this world now. We are living with our future hope in mind.
- f. Its evidence is our diligent practice of good works (v. 8)
- i. How does salvation prove itself?
 - ii. Circles to what we are to DO now, engage in good deeds, being peaceable, gentle, helpful, non-maligning citizens. That doesn’t save us, but it’s an evidence that God has been at work within us. It’s another way we adorn the gospel.

3. Conclusion

- a. The gospel motivates our response to those outside of Christ.
 - i. MacArthur, “Paul obviously was consumed with the divine mandate to evangelize when he wrote this letter to Titus. It was not his desire for Christians living in the pagan culture of Crete to turn on the unbelievers and try to force changes in cultural standards and personal behavior in order to be less offended by their society.”



1

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