

New Morning Magical

Good as new!

Today, we're going to be exploring the Apostle Paul's letter to another young protégé, Titus, whom Paul sent to the island of Crete, to build up and guide the ecclesias there.

Titus 1 is mostly directions to Titus about what to do and what to look for in men he places in leadership positions. Toward the end of Titus 1, Paul warns him about a particular group that is causing real trouble.

Let's begin in verse 10:

10 For many are insubordinate, vain praters and imposters, especially those of the Circumcision,
11 who must be gagged, who are subverting whole households, teaching what they must not, on behalf of sordid gain.

It couldn't have been pretty in the 1st century, to find mercenaries with such self-serving and ruthless motives, most of whom were Jews. They must have created serious havoc to earn Paul's description to Titus, who probably saw some of these people on Crete. I'd be concerned for us today too, because Lord knows, these same kinds of people are out there right now, *"subverting whole households, teaching what they must not, on behalf of sordid gain."* I would be concerned, but I'm not, because you and I aren't ignorant or foolish; knowing what you know today, you'd be able to spot one of these mercenary imposters even before they opened their mouths, or at least within the first few words out of their mouths. It'd be like Eve hearing the serpent in the garden, and it ought to send chills down your spine. But, if you follow Paul's instructions that we've explored throughout his writings, you won't even run into these kinds of people, let alone be snookered by them.

Jump down to verse 15:

15 All, indeed, is clean to the clean, yet to the defiled and unbelieving nothing is clean, but their mind as well as conscience is defiled.
16 They are avowing an acquaintance with God, yet by their acts are denying it, being abominable and stubborn, and disqualified for every good act.

You can sure see this in the world today. You see what is good, or "clean," as Paul writes, but you can also see how others seem to view everything as defiled as their own mentality. Some

may even profess to know Christ and to be saved, but, as Paul says, everything they do demonstrates the opposite. Paul says that these people are “*abominable and stubborn, and disqualified for every good act.*” Some people are past being open to reason and change. Repentance won’t be likely for them before the Lord returns. For me, my sanity is in the certainty of the Father’s sovereignty; that none of the evil around us escapes Him, and that His eonian purpose is progressing on schedule. What a marvelous expectation we have in Christ, while much of the rest of the world seems to be hell-bent on its own destruction.

Chapter 2

1 Now you be speaking what is becoming to sound teaching.

Paul is making sure that Titus represents the evangel always, especially in everything he says and in every way he teaches others. That’s a good reminder for us today to, don’t you think? This thought is reinforced in verses 7-8:

7 tendering yourself a model of ideal acts, in teaching with uncorruptness, gravity,
8 with words sound, uncensurable, that the contrary one [*that is, someone who opposes*]
may be abashed, having nothing bad to say concerning us.

In other words, behave and teach soundly, accurately, so that no one can say any ill about all of us who are likewise engaged in presenting the evangel of Christ.

11 For the saving grace of God made its advent to all humanity, [*Isn’t that a unique way of saying that when Yeshua was born, grace showed up with Him?*]
12 training us that, disowning irreverence and worldly desires, we should be living sanely and justly and devoutly in the current eon, [*Just like Yeshua*]
13 anticipating that **happy expectation**, even the advent of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ,
14 Who gives Himself for us, that He should be redeeming us from all lawlessness and be cleansing for Himself a people to be about Him, zealous for ideal acts.

Don’t you love that phrase, “*anticipating that **happy expectation**, even the advent of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*” Doesn’t the “*happy expectation*” sound more lively to you, more interesting, and draws you toward it more than “*blessed hope*” you see in other versions?

You’re in for a real treat pretty early in Chapter 3. Let’s begin in verse 3:

3 For we also were once foolish, stubborn, deceived, slaves of various desires and gratifications, leading a life in malice and envy, detestable, hating one another.

When Paul says “we,” he’s including himself in this list of faults, some of which I find hard to swallow, especially *“hating one another.”* Before you reject any part of Paul’s list in verse 3, remember that you probably never thought of yourself as an enemy of God until we read Romans 5:10: *“Being enemies, we were conciliated to God through the death of His Son.”* Also, consider that, compared to the life you live in Christ, your old life might look at least somewhat like Paul’s list by comparison. In any case, here’s the best part:

4 Yet when the kindness and fondness for humanity of our Saviour, God, made its advent,
5 not for works which are wrought in righteousness which we do, but according to His mercy, He saves us, through the bath of renascence and renewal of holy spirit,
6 which He pours out on us richly through Jesus Christ, our Saviour,
7 that, being justified in that One's grace, we may be becoming enjoyers, in expectation, of the allotment of life eonian.

This is one of my all time favorite passages in the Scriptures. It paints such a sweet picture of the Father’s attitude toward us, when Paul writes: *“the kindness and fondness for humanity of our Saviour, God.”*

We also see a little-known and even less-used word that has such a rich meaning. See if you can spot it:

He saves us, through the bath of renascence and renewal of holy spirit, which He pours out on us richly through Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

Renewal, of course, means “Making new again,” but the word, *“renascence,”* in Greek means, “Moral renovation, regeneration, the production of a new life consecrated to God, a radical change of mind for the better. Commonly: the restoration of a thing to its pristine state, its renovation, as the renewal or restoration of life after death.” All this out of one word: *renascence*. Great word, huh?

Now Paul makes a sharp right turn into more instructions:

9 Yet stand aloof from stupid questioning and genealogies and strifes and fightings about law, for they are without benefit and vain.

I can't tell you how many times I've had to catch myself in "stupid questioning" when Barbara and I are talking with one another; and if not questioning, then in making statements, usually in the form of opinions, that are entirely unnecessary. Somehow, I developed a habit of inserting my knowledge – or, rather, the appearance of it – into conversations, as if to assert my own importance. It's really annoying. The good news, though, is that I've become aware when this happens over the past 6 months or so, and I have no trouble calling myself out when it happens. It's funny to me now, more than it used to be horrifying; neither Barbara nor I take it seriously anymore anyway, but I can still hear my wheels turning on the inside.

10 A sectarian man, after one and a second admonition, refuse,
11 being aware that such a one has turned himself out, and is sinning, being self-condemned.

This is comforting in the sense that Paul does not waste time on people who aren't teachable. He gives them 2 chances to get it right, and that's it. After all, as he says, these people have, *"turned [themselves] out, and [are] sinning, being self-condemned."*

Paul's letter to Titus is a short one, obviously, because we're at its end already, so until next time,

May Yahweh bless you and keep you;
May Yahweh light up His face toward you
and be gracious to you;
May Yahweh lift His face to you
and appoint peace for you.

AMEN