

Titus 2:7–14

A Ministry in the Word

Scripture Reading

In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Titus as Pattern — Uncorruptedness, Gravity, Sound Speech

Verse 7 turns from what Titus is to say to what Titus is to be: *in all things showing thyself a pattern of good works*. The saints watch those who speak to them. They notice whether the life is in conformity with the word that is ministered. What is spoken without a life behind it loses its moral weight — even if the truth itself is unimpeachable, the vessel undermines it. Titus was not to insist that he himself was a pattern, but the pattern in him was to have its own natural effect in the lives of the saints as they saw a godly example.

In teaching, three things are to characterise him: uncorruptedness, gravity, and a sound word that cannot be condemned. Uncorrupted teaching runs against the tide of a world where corruption is the normal course — as the parable of the leaven shows, corruption works until the whole is leavened. Gravity means weight and substance in the teaching — the opposite of the froth and shallowness and entertainment that people have come to expect. The prophets were not liked; smooth things were wanted. And a sound word — a healthy word — is what builds up and strengthens, as distinct from what may tickle but leaves the soul no stronger. These three belong together. They are what preaching and ministry ought to be characterised by.

Bondmen — Adorning the Doctrine of God Our Saviour

The exhortation to bondmen (verses 9–10) sets before those in the lowest social position the highest possible calling: *that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things*. To adorn the doctrine is to cause it to be admired — to live in such a way that the teaching which is of the Saviour God is set in a beautiful light before all who observe. This is not embellishing the doctrine with additions that appeal to the flesh. It is a Christian life that speaks so well of what God has done that the doctrine itself is commended.

The conditions under which these bondmen served were the opposite of easy. Chapter 1 had described the Cretans: always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons. Christian bondmen were serving masters of this character. Not answering again — not replying in kind to what was provoking. Not purloining — not taking what is not one's own. Showing all good fidelity — showing a character exactly the reverse of what surrounded them. Paul does not tell these bondmen to instigate against slavery. He builds into the exhortation things which, if they worked upon conscience throughout the household, would themselves undermine the institution: not robbing, not the stealing of persons which lay at the base of slavery. The word of God works from within, not by external compulsion.

The Grace of God — Teaching Us

Verse 11 brings the great foundational motive: *for the grace of God which carries with it salvation for all men has appeared, teaching us*. The grace of God has an educative function. Darby notes that the word rendered teaching carries with it the sense of discipline, and always perhaps the thought of setting right. In a whole epistle devoted to the setting right of what was disordered, this is fitting: the grace of God teaches us, and its teaching sets us right.

The common notion — that the law is needed for sanctification, because without law one is lawless and antinomian — is directly contradicted by these verses. It is not the law that teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. It is the grace of God that does that. The law did not and cannot produce the holy walk that is described here. Grace does. And the pattern of the teaching is precisely what we have seen throughout this chapter: negative first, then positive. *Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts* — and then — *soberly, righteously, and piously in this present course of things*. Cease to do evil; learn to do well. The negative clears the ground; the positive builds upon it.

Looking for That Blessed Hope — and the Glorious Appearing

The present walk is set between two great realities: the grace that has appeared (verse 11) and the glory that is yet to appear (verse 13). We live between them. The hope set before us is not vague — it is the *blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ*. Titus 2:13 joins the two aspects of the one coming in a single verse: the blessed hope (the rapture, the coming for His saints) and the glorious appearing (the coming with His saints in display). The word *great* qualifies God and Saviour together — this is a clear statement of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our great God and Saviour.

He gave Himself for us: redemption and purification are the two great purposes. *That he might redeem us from all iniquity* — purchased out from under the power of evil at infinite cost. *And purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works* — a people for His own possession, characterised by zeal for what is good. Good works are not the means of salvation; they are its fruit. And the people who are the fruit of His redeeming and purifying work are a zealous people — not passive, not merely avoiding evil, but actively engaged in what is good, for the sake of the one who gave Himself for them.

— *Study ends* —