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Sermon: Titus 3  
“Remember These Things”  
Rose Hill Church  
3.17.24

Introduction:

So, this morning, we are taking a look at the Third Chapter of the Book of Titus. As you will recall if you have been with us the last few weeks, we have been taking a walk through several of the smaller, less well-known Epistles, including most recently, the Book of Titus. Titus is a letter the Apostle Paul wrote to one of his church leaders, Titus, who Paul assigned to oversee church development on the Island of Crete. The first chapter of Titus is about church leadership, the second on self-control, and Chapter 3 has the overarching theme of “The Mercy of God”, all with an eye toward God’s good order for living in community.

So let’s take this passage apart piece by piece to see what God’s Word is for us today;

**3 Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, <sup>2</sup> to slander no one,**

**to be peaceable and considerate, and always to be gentle toward everyone.**

So Paul jumps right into this passage by giving Titus a series of very important reminders to pass on to his flocks there on Crete.

**Reminder #1: that Christians should be submitted to the governing rulers and authorities, including being obedient to them. By the way, a side note here; never will God direct a believer to disobey His Word in order to obey people.**

Let me reiterate this, because it has very clear relevance to some of the political turmoil going on in the US of recent years;

Breaking laws to get your own way, to make money, or to support someone politically, is not God's will. Just like in Hitler's day, when it was not okay to follow Hitler and his demonic regime, but the excuse many German Christians gave was that the Bible says to obey the authorities. I say, "Enough of such nonsense!"

**Reminder #2: to be ready to do whatever is good, “be ready for every good work”; there is no room for passivity in the calling on each Christ follower.**

**Third, to slander no one; the ancient Greek says not to revile, defame, vilify; I think what God’s purpose is here is that we do not have the right to denigrate nor hate someone Jesus Christ gave His life for.**

You see, in our politically charged environment, especially with national elections on the horizon, I personally have heard and seen people who call Christ their King, yet talk of others, those they disagree with, as “less than”, subhuman, and so on. And truthfully, there have been times where out of my mouth I have said things that I ought not to say, about others I may disagree with. Folks, that is wrong. I own that, because doing so is not Biblical. Rather, the Holy Scriptures say elsewhere that we must speak truth as we believe it to be, and pray for those we disagree with, but not hate, nor slander, nor be unloving towards.

**Fourth, to be peaceable and considerate and kind**

**And, finally, the 5<sup>th</sup> reminder; to be gentle toward everyone.**

Keep in mind, Paul has already said in Titus 1:12 that some of the folks on that island were difficult to say the least. This may have raised some hackles for Titus and others sent to lead these people, but, nevertheless, here it is, and it stands.

And here is why our behavior as Christians is so vital to our witness to the world. Let's look at verse 3;

**<sup>3</sup> At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another.**

You might say, "Well, I wasn't that way! I grew up in a good home," and so forth. Folks, the Scriptures say that all our righteousness is as filthy rags.

There is no human in the universe, apart from Jesus Christ, who is righteous. So let us be reminded should we ever think that apart from Jesus Christ's atoning Blood we could be declared "good enough", let alone righteous. Nope. It don't happen that way.

**Paul is here reminding us that we are not so far from where we were, and really not far from those we may judge and look down on and sneer at. To remember where we once were, and to remember that anything we are able to do in God, is all by His Grace.** That is why Titus is to remind his people, lest they, and we Christians today, become puffed up as if we have done or accomplished anything on our own. Period.

You see, the Cretan folk were known to be a difficult people, wild and unruly. Paul said it himself in the first Chapter of Titus, as Pastor Brian pointed out two weeks ago! The Cretans from Paul's day were primarily a mix of Anatolian peoples (Indo-European to be specific), from modern day Turkey, as well as from mainland Greece. They historically found themselves living in the crossroads of cultures, and in first century times were under the control of the Roman Empire. Crete is an island in the eastern Mediterranean 3,263 square miles, long and running east and west, with towering mountains that can make aspects of the climate difficult. No wonder they were found to be a difficult people!

Yet Titus is to remind himself and other believers that any human can be reclaimed by the Blood of Jesus Christ. Amen!

**To remember that we also were “that”; meaning that we were broken, living in the dark, misled, lost, hateful and hated; To remember where we came from builds four things into each of us; so listen closely here, because this is hugely important in our 21<sup>st</sup> Century mess we Christians live in;**

**First, remembering builds gratitude in us towards God for what He has done in and for us!**

**Second, remembering builds a humble spirit, as we come to see that what we have become is all His work**

**Third, remembering builds kindness toward the other, toward those who may be in the place we were**

**And finally, Fourth, remembering where we came from builds a faith in us that causes us to believe Jesus Christ can change those who remain in that same place; in that dark corner, in deep**

**addiction, in wicked lifestyles, in self-centeredness or anywhere else where Jesus Christ has been locked out of a person's life;**

**Verses 4-8**

**<sup>4</sup> But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, <sup>5</sup> he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup> whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup> so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. <sup>8</sup> This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.**

First off, when we ourselves were in that place that Titus 3:3 describes, we rescued ourselves right? Let me ask this again; when you were in the dark, when you did not know Jesus Christ, did you rescue

yourself? I did not. I could not. I was desperately empty and lost and hopeless and confused and overwhelmed. No, it was absolutely the kindness and love of God who reached out to me, to you, to Titus, to Paul...and He is still doing that today. And folks, if you do not know this Light, this Life, this Love, that is okay. You're listening to this message, and that is a start, and your listening to this message is not by chance, or accident. Our Great God and Savior is still reaching out to you...and He knows you...knows everything about you...every thought you think, every word you have ever spoken, every dark deed done in secret. And what is amazing...is that just like He rescued me...just like He said, "Come to me, Rob, bring every dark and lost piece of your life to Me, for I love you right where you are." He is saying that to you...right now, whether you feel Him or not, whether you believe me or not. It does not matter. I am not the arbiter of truth. But Jesus Himself holds that place, for He said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." And He loves you beyond your wildest dreams.



## 9-11

**<sup>9</sup> But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. <sup>10</sup> Warn a divisive person once, and then warn them a second time. After that, have nothing to do with them. <sup>11</sup> You may be sure that such people are warped and sinful; they are self-condemned.**

**Verse 9;** avoid controversies and arguments and quarrels; folks, we can get so caught up in the nit-picking minutiae around us. See photo of woman picking nits from a child's hair; LICE. This verse reminds me of what nit-picking really is;

And that is what I think Paul is talking about; stop it! We must stop pecking our brothers and sisters! We must stop criticizing other human beings, who are each made in the image of God Almighty, born into the human race by the grace and mercy and love of the Triune God! Rather, we must live in peace and with love and patience.

**10-11 here Paul is talking about divisive people in the church; all of this is about how we, as Christ-followers, are to live and act and treat others; this is not a treatise on the ungodly. Truthfully, they are held to a different standard. Paul is talking clearly to the church itself; to you, to me, to us! And it is about how we are directed and commanded to live! Seriously, I am quite concerned about American Christianity today. We have more hatefulness, judgementalism and misbehavior in the greater Body of Christ than I think I have ever seen in my lifetime.**

**Final Remarks: Verses 12-15:**

**<sup>12</sup> As soon as I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, because I have decided to winter there. <sup>13</sup> Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need. <sup>14</sup> Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is**

**good, in order to provide for urgent needs and not live unproductive lives.**

**<sup>15</sup> Everyone with me sends you greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith.**

**Grace be with you all.**

Paul often closed his letters with thoughtful admonitions and personal mention of those he worked alongside. I think it shows how dear to him his fellow workers were;

It also illustrates how the body of Christ is to care for each other; he is asking that the body there care for the men who brought the letter to Titus, to provide for them, and to remember to care for others who have urgent, significant needs, rather than be unproductive. You see, there is this balance; love, give, restrain oneself, and particularly care for the body of Christ.

In wrapping up this morning, what I think our brother Paul wanted Titus to take away from his letter, was this; walking out our faith in Jesus is

not simply about knowing the truth, but rather to be true Christ-followers, it is about living out the life Jesus has given us, with all humility, grace, peace and love, allowing Jesus to so transform us into His image for all eternity, that we cannot help but turn around to others in this world and reach out, comfort, encourage, uplift, pray for, and extend forgiveness.

Let us Pray: