

## Daily Bible Study

### *“Decisive Deeds & Dangerous Dialogue”*

#### *Titus 3:8-11*

*February 2 – February 8, 2014*

**MONDAY** – As we continue our study of **Titus**, we now take for our text, **Titus 3:8-11**. We have entitled this lesson “*Decisive Deeds & Dangerous Dialogue*”. The Apostle Paul explains at the beginning of our text that there is a lifestyle he wants believers to embrace; namely one that is not only gracious and kind but one that is characterized by all types of good works. He specifically mentions in **verse 8** what he calls a ‘trustworthy’ or ‘faithful’ saying in order to both remind us of our responsibility and to motivate us to do those good works. As usual the Apostle Paul was desirous for Christians back then and us today to be people marked out by godly living. There is an important principle that we see illustrated in various parts of the New Testament: that is that great blessings place us under great obligation. For example, **Romans 12:1**: “*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*” For eleven chapters Paul has been writing about God’s mercy to us in salvation. And now, at the beginning of **chapter 12**, he turns to the obligation this mercy has placed us under and urges us to offer ourselves to God. Also in **Philippians 2:1-2**, “*Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.*” Paul is reminding us of our blessings; union with Christ, the consolation from his love, our fellowship with the Spirit, our experience of God’s compassion and then he is showing us what our response to these blessings should be; like-minded, we should have the same love and be unified in spirit and purpose. Now our present passage. He has talked at length of the great things God has done for us in his love and kindness and then tells us that God’s mercy calls us to a lifestyle characterized by good works. We are obligated to do what is good and he is attempting to motivate us toward that end. Read our text: **Titus 3:8-11**: “<sup>8</sup> *This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.*<sup>9</sup> *But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless.*<sup>10</sup> *Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition,*<sup>11</sup> *knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.*”

*Suggestion for Prayer: God, teach me this week from Sacred Scripture why I should be careful to maintain good works and avoid foolish, fruitless and divisive ones.*

**TUESDAY – Titus 3:3**: “<sup>8</sup> *This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.*” Reflecting on the gospel-summary given in **verses 4–7** the apostle continues by calling that section a “*faithful saying*” (**1 Timothy 1:15**). This is a faithful saying because it is a reliable, important, and practically applicable one. The saying was about the kindness of the Father and his love toward us, the work of the Holy Spirit in regenerating and renewing us, the grace of Jesus which was the effective cause of our justification and the purpose was that we might become what we are, heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Paul wants Titus *to affirm constantly* or literally *speak with confidence* concerning these things. People speak with confidence about frivolous matters but Titus is to speak these things with which he has become convinced so that we who have our faith fixed on God (perfect participle which indicates both past action and present abiding results) *be careful to maintain good works*. We should concentrate on such deeds of gratitude with diligence. It is because the kindness of the Father, the work of the Holy Spirit, and grace of Jesus to justify us *are good and profitable to men*. These wonderful truths are both excellent in and of themselves as well as being of benefit and profitable. These truths are of benefit to us in that they bring life, light, joy, and peace where before there was death, darkness, sadness, and fear. If you will, these wonderful realities are the foundation of the building of a godly life that loves The Lord God wholeheartedly and loves our neighbors as ourselves.

*Suggestion for Prayer: God, help me to always meditate on, hear, receive, and believe the faithful sayings of Your Word and the message of good news that they proclaim.*

**WEDNESDAY – Titus 3:9**: “<sup>9</sup> *But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless.*” As we said earlier in our title of the lesson we are to have *Decisive Deeds* but also be aware and guard against *Dangerous Dialogue*. We all like to run our mouths about things we either know about or THINK we know about and this type of sinful and lack of self-controlled behavior comes into the church life as well. He says here that we are to *avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law*. The word for avoid is periistemi literally means “to stand around, to place around one, avoid, shun”. When it says to “stand around” it doesn’t mean to stand close to but rather keep away or around the dangerous thing. We need to avoid this type of discussion because it is *unprofitable and useless*. This is in strong contrast with what preceded it and in context he is speaking to Titus who is a leader and teacher and directing Him about what to discuss and tell God’s people. He must *do* the one, but *avoid* the other. The way this is written in the Greek language, the word order in the sentence (a compound object placed before the verb) and the absence of the definite article before any of the four (*disputes, genealogies, contentions, strivings about the law*) clearly prove the emphasis is placed on the quality and contents of the object. It is foolish (moros ~ nonsense,

godless, impious) *disputes* and so forth that must be avoided. It is *striving* (*mache* ~ a word which means to quarrel and fight and was used of physical struggle and intensive clashing in combat and sport) *about the law* that must be “stood around” or avoided (see this illustrated in **1 Timothy 1:3–7, 19-20, 1 Timothy 6:3–5**). Titus is to shun all the Jewish legends and the stipulations, the endless inquiries and the wrangling. When he sees them coming he is to stand around and avoid. He is to see these things for what they really are; *unprofitable and useless*. What a contrast between all this *useless* nonsense and the very *useful* things which Paul has just said in **verses 4–7**. As ministers, we need to be speaking of the things from **verse 4-7** and avoiding the things from **verse 9**. Let me end with a wonderful excerpt from a lesson by William Barclay; “The second part of the passage warns against useless discussions. The Greek philosophers spent their time on their oversubtle problems. The Jewish Rabbis spent their time building up imaginary genealogies for the characters of the Old Testament. The Jewish scribes spent endless hours discussing what could and could not be done on the Sabbath, and what was and was not unclean. It has been said that there is a danger that people might think themselves religious because they discuss religious questions. It is much easier to discuss theological questions than to be kind and considerate and helpful at home, or efficient and conscientious and honest at work. There is no virtue in sitting discussing deep theological questions when the simple tasks of the Christian life are waiting to be done. Such discussion can be nothing other than avoidance of Christian duties. Paul was certain that the real task for Christians lay in Christian action. That is not to say that there is no place for Christian discussion; but the discussion which does not end in action is very largely wasted time.”

*Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help us to be careful to avoid foolish and useless discussions and be about the business of proclaiming the facts of the gospel and by believing them let us be truly living out in action the greatest commandments of loving You and our neighbor.*

**THURSDAY – Titus 3:10-11:** <sup>10</sup>“Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, <sup>11</sup>knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.” Now Paul informs Titus and leaders today in His church what the attitude and action toward those church-members who are engaged and wrapped up in this craziness of ***Dangerous Dialogue*** is to be. The KJV begins **verse 10** like this; “A man that is an heretick...” The word in the Greek used here is *hairetikos* which means, “fitted or able to take or choose a thing, schismatic, factious, a follower of a false doctrine, heretic”. We speak of a heresy or heretical person at times and we need to understand that originally, the word “heresy” (αἵρεσις) meant “that which one chooses for himself,” “an opinion.” The related verb *hairein* means *to choose* and *hairesis* means a party, or a school or a sect for example, the “party of the Sadducees” (**Acts 5:17**), and “the party of the Pharisees” (**Acts 15:5, 26:5**), or dare I go here “the republican or democratic party”? So the term began to be used in an unfavorable sense. Compare to our English word *faction*. There are good factions but also bad ones. There were *factions* in Corinth (“I am of Paul,” “I am of Apollos,” etc.). When people are referred to as

leaders of a *faction* (or *sect*) most times it is said in an unfavorable way. For example, we read in **Acts 24:14** where Paul says, “after the Way which *they* call a *faction* (or *sect*).” So here we have in the NKJV the translation *divisive man* which can be translated *a factious* man and the meaning is a person who without justification creates division. It is The Holy Spirit’s advice through the pen of the Apostle Paul, that contentious and self-opinionated people should be avoided. The problem is people set private opinion against the truth of Scripture and the teaching of Jesus and the Apostles. Heretics are simply people who have decided that they are right and everybody else is wrong. Paul’s warning is against those who have made their own ideas the test of all truth. We should always be very careful of any opinion which separates us from the fellowship of our fellow believers. True faith does not divide people; it unites them.

*Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me to be careful not to elevate my opinion over and against Your Word. You have revealed the truth in the life and teaching of Jesus and have left us with it in the words of the Apostles and prophet’s from Sacred Scripture. May I strive to be a truth loving, humble, unifying Christian rather than a factious, divisive heretic.*

**FRIDAY – Titus 3:10-11:** <sup>10</sup>“Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, <sup>11</sup>knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.” Finally, we see that the apostle Paul demands that we *Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition*. The idea here is to refuse or reject which can also be seen in **1 Timothy 5:11, 2 Timothy 2:23**. Scholars also point out that there seems to be a reference here to **Matthew 18:15–17** and it seems that official excommunication and exclusion from church-membership is probably indicated. This is not surprising, for Titus will know *that such an individual* (**Romans 16:18**), one who creates division and after repeated warnings persists in this practice, *is warped and sinning*. The word *warped* is very descriptive. Such a person is not living and seeing *straight*. He is *mentally and morally turned* or *twisted*. He is worse than the man who has earned the moniker, “a screw-ball.” This man is actually living in sin. What makes his sin very bad is the fact that he knows that he is sinning. If his conscience has not already spoken plainly to him and he has not felt the conviction of The Holy Spirit he has at least been warned, and not merely once but twice. Therefore, he is “*sinning being self-condemned*.” The qualifier *after the first and second admonition* is important and teaches us a principle. This Greek word form (*to admonish, to warn, to put in mind*) is used elsewhere by Paul (**1 Corinthians 10:11, Ephesians 6:4, Acts 20:31**). The qualification indicates that discipline must spring from love, from a desire to heal, never from a desire to get rid of an individual and much patience must be shown. But having been lovingly warned, if there is refusal to repent the church must follow Jesus and the apostles command and put him out of the church (**Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Corinthians 5:5**). The glory of God and health of the body must never be lost sight of.

*Suggestion for Prayer: Father, may we be a people that listen and respond to Your word.*