

Today we're finishing our series in Titus – *Invasion*. In this letter Paul has been concerned w/ the war being waged b/w Spirit and flesh, the church and the world. And he concluded – *if the world invades the church, the world will invade you; but if Christ invades you, you will invade the world.*

Refresh – Titus was a Gentile convert in Paul's ministry who took to the faith like a duck to water. His flourished under Paul's tutelage so Paul installed him as pastor at the church on Crete. To help Titus, Paul wrote this letter to authenticate his ministry before the people and to give his protégé (5) primary directives for pastoring/overseeing the church.

- Base all you do on the Gospel – *cross changed everything*
- Straighten out the bad doctrines/practices in the church
- Surround yourself w/ Godly, disciple-making leaders
- Last week – Personally invest Jesus in you into others

Today we're going to come full circle by returning to where we started. Imbedded ever so discreetly in ch. 3 we find the 5th directive. Having concluded that if Christ is in you then you should invade the world, Paul says – **Together engage the world in Jesus' name by living on mission w/ God.**

Don't just stand there, do something that's going to make a difference and bring attention to the grace of God.

I Be a Responsible CITIZEN

I often wonder if we realize the responsibility we have as believers to be good citizens. We haven't been called to live disengaged from society but on mission in society. We're called to participate, even when our beliefs/convictions are unwanted; but we're to do so as Christ would engage.

*Remind the people to be **subject** to rulers and authorities, to be **obedient**, to be **ready** to do whatever is good, to **slander** no one, to be **peaceable** and **considerate**, and always to be **gentle** toward everyone.* Titus 3:1-2

As most of us are aware, having credibility for Christ in a Christ-less world requires not that we **avoid** the world but that we **engage** the world as good citizens. So even though the world might be hostile to our faith, this doesn't entitle us to respond in kind. Instead, Paul tells us to not forget that we'll catch more flies w/ honey than w/ vinegar. This does not mean we're called to be wimpy believers instead we're called to live respectfully knowing that how we live matters b/c of who we're representing.

subject (*hupotasso*) to align/arrange in an orderly manner – it was a military term referring to troops to be arranged in a military fashion under the command of the leader. In non-military use it describes a voluntary attitude of cooperating, assuming responsibility, or carrying a burden.

obedient – in this case, believers have a responsibility under God to live in alignment to the rule of law in their land – unless the gov't asks you to violate God's rule and sin.

ready to every good work – to cooperate and participate in those matters involving the whole community.

Then Paul tells us **HOW** to live as responsible citizens.

slander no one (*blasphemeo*) we get blasphemy. It means no to malign another but to speak well – including those who make an assault on your Biblical standards.

peaceable and considerate – to be uncontentious – don't be quarrelsome and belligerent instead easy to work w/.

gentle – a sweet attitude of reasonable moderation – it refers to being open and willing to negotiate on issues of law when no moral issue is at stake.

This means we're called to be law abiding citizens no matter who is our leader. We're to work peaceable w/in the system to represent the Gospel. And lest we forget, when Paul shared this truth to Titus, they were living under the reign of Nero (not a nice guy). So even while we're a people of dual citizenship w/ our home is heaven while our address is earth – we're not absolved us from living as responsible citizens.

II Be a Respectful CHRIST-FOLLOWER

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. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not b/c of righteous things we had done, but b/c of his mercy. He saved us, not b/c of righteous things we had done, but b/c of his mercy.

Paul reminds us to never forget who we were before the cross – for if we forget, we will become so critical of our lost neighbors we will refuse to share God’s love w/ them. But they can’t help being the way they are b/c they’ve not had their lives transformed by the Gospel as we have. Lest we forget, we used to be just like them (possibly even worse) – yet b/c of God’s grace to us, we’ve been transformed. So we can’t forget that if God’s grace can change a wretched, sinful, pagan like us – then there’s hope for everyone.

Paul reminds us that before the cross, all of us **by birth** and **by choice** were sinners in need of a Savior. At one time, we were all foolish, disobedient, deceived, and enslaved to sin – depraved enemies of God – w/ no ability to save ourselves.

foolish (*anoetos*) not having a mind – it refers to one who’s totally ignorant, lacking clarity/understanding. In the context – it’s referring to one who is oblivious to their sinful ways.

disobedient (*apeithes*) defiant and stiff-necked, unwilling to abide by or even acknowledge the rule of God – one who's determined to go in the opposite direction of God.

deceived (*planao*). Referring to a person who doesn't mind being led astray – even enjoying the journey into depravity.

enslaved (*douleuo*) a state of bondage conditioned to sin. The *present tense* signifies this is a lifestyle while the *active voice* indicates this is a willful choice to submit to the corrupt desires of our fallen nature inherited from Adam.

The result is an insatiable bent towards any hedonistic desire whereby one can find some sense of gratification.

Here's the kicker – every person ever born was born into this condition – *a state of depravity* – incarcerated to sin – lost and hostile to God's love and resistant to His grace.

- Never forget who you once were – a lost enemy of God
- Never forget what God did to rescue you from condemnation
- Never forget if grace can change you; it can change anyone
- Never forget God wants to use your life to change others
- Never forget how you live will testify of God in you
- Never forget you're a part of God's plan to share His love
- Never forget it is God in you working through your life submitted – it is not you

We can never forget who we once were b/c if we do forget – then we will never tell. We will have lost our very purpose for living – it is to be the hands, feet, and voice of grace to a world in need of the love of God found in Jesus alone.

III Be a Reasonable CHURCHMAN

But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, b/c these are unprofitable and useless. Warn a divisive person once, and then warn them a second time. After that, have nothing to do w/ them. You may be sure that such people are warped and sinful; they are self-condemned.

Did you know one of the biggest deterrents to people coming to Christ is the internal condition of the church and the behavior of professing Christians? When we show the world how petty and selfish we can be w/ one another – it turns people away from grace. When they see us fighting one another it doesn't cause them to desire what we have.

I think Paul was warning us about the slippery slope of standing for the faith and missing the point of our faith. Sometimes, maybe more times than not, the best way to contend for the faith is too walk away – it is to agree to disagree. This doesn't mean that you don't stand your ground; rather it means that it is useless to argue w/ a fool.

avoid (*periistemi*) to purposefully turn oneself around from someone or something.

In this instance, Paul told Titus to teach his congregation to turn away and have nothing to do people who were trying to create controversy through false teaching.

Personally, I had to laugh when I studied the verse here. Paul basically says don't get in an argument w/ a moron.

foolish (*moros*) moron **controversy** (*zetesis*) contentious debate – in other words, don't waste your time arguing w/ a fool over ideas contrary to the truth of God. Don't get lured into meaningless debates.

Paul also warns Titus and the Cretan church to not waste their time engaged in any conversations/disputes that might lead them away from the truth, but only to engage in conversations to focus on the truth.

Reminder – *Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.*

We have but one charge and that's to follow Jesus – not men or anything else. And when we follow Him, he will make us into whatever He needs us to be so that our lives can be useful in drawing people to Him.