

Titus 3:9-15
~ Healthy Church In Action ~

Introduction

You better watch out
You better not cry
You better not pout
I'm telling you why
Santa Claus is coming to town

Santa Claus is coming to town – and he's coming to punch heretics in the face...

Yes that's right kids...even old Santy loses his cool and punches people in the mouth, **but only when they deny the Gospel of God & the supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ!**

Now if you have no idea what I'm talking about, **give me a second** and allow me to explain...

It was the year 325 A.D...Emperor Constantine had **assembled** a council of Bishops from all over the Eastern world, and he did this in order to discuss a number of theological issues related to Church **governance & Church Theology**...

Arius

Now **one of the main concerns** – if not **the biggest concern really!** Was to determine **whether or not** a man by the name of Arius would be condemned as a Church heretic...

Arius **had been an elder** in a local Christian Church for many years up until this point...and **as far as we can tell** – he was actually a **really gifted preacher** – he spoke with **passion** – he spoke with **conviction** – & he spoke with **elegance**...

But unfortunately (as we have seen over the last few weeks) those things just **are not enough** to be a **faithful elder** in a local Christian Church....

Elders **need to know** Sound Doctrine!

And so throughout his ministry he began to teach that Jesus Christ (The **Second Person** of the Trinity) was **not equal** to that of God the Father...

He believed that Jesus Christ was created by God and **NOT eternally existent** with God, in eternity past!

BIG RED FLAGS!!!

And so over 300 bishops were in attendance at the council that year – and one of those bishops...was Saint Nicholas, the Bishop of Myra – (who later came to be known in Western Civilization as Santa Clause – he kind of morphed into our societies' idea of Santa)...

And so as legend has it, while, Arius was making his famous speech before the Bishops & laymen of the day, Saint Nicholas just **couldn't stand it any longer!**

He just **couldn't stand** to hear Arius blaspheming his only Lord & Saviour; Jesus Christ...

And so... as Arius was making his case **Saint Nick** stood up before the council of bishops, walked over to where Arius was standing, punched him in the face, and sat back down...

The bishops were horrified – Arius was condemned as a Church heretic – and **old St. Nick** was placed under severe church discipline & thrown into prison...

Kids don't punch people in the face... even if it is **literally** for the glory of God!

NOT Pro-Santa

Now I love this story – I think this is a great Christmas story... but I do need to clarify – Pastor Rhoi is **NOT** Pro-Santa! He is in favour of explaining Saint Nick (the historical Bishop of Myra), but **he is not** pro-Santa!

And in fact... **it's actually hard to verify** whether or not this event really took place...

Many have speculated that this falls into the area of **fiction** rather than **fact** – but **it's just one of those stories** where you think to yourself... the truth **has to be there** in the middle – it's just **too good** NOT to be true!!!

Titus 3

But **it does raise** an interesting question doesn't it?!?!

What should the followers of Jesus Christ do with those who clearly contradict the sound teaching of the Word?!?!

How should healthy Christian Churches deal with those who oppose the Gospel & stir up **division** in the Church?!?!

Well here in Titus chapter 3, Paul the Apostle is going to explain to us the process of administering **healthy Church discipline** for the sake **of the body** of Christ!

Paul here in Titus chapter 3, is going to demonstrate that **one of the marks** of a healthy Christian Church is to see that Sound Doctrine will **both rightly divide** the Church & unite the Church **for the sake of the Gospel & the glory of God!**

Main Point:

And that's really the main point we're going to see here today:

Sound doctrine corrects division & promotes unity

Outline

And we're gonna see this in 2 points:

Verses 9 to 11: *Sound Doctrine Corrects* (9-11)

And verses 12 to 15: *Sound Doctrine Unites* (12-15)

So if you have your bibles Titus chapter 3, beginning at verse 8 – here now the Word of God:

“This saying is trustworthy. I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed God might be careful to devote themselves to good works. These are good and profitable for everyone. ⁹ But avoid foolish debates, genealogies, quarrels, and disputes about the law, because they are unprofitable and worthless. ¹⁰ Reject a divisive person after a first and second warning. ¹¹ For you know that such a person has gone astray and is sinning; he is self-condemned...”

Opening Gambit – Kinds of People

Ever since the fall of Adam in Genesis chapter 3 – All of humanity has been divided into **2 kinds** of people:

*Those who obey the Word of God...& those who do **NOT!***

If you open up your bible & search through Holy Scripture this **seems to be** the continual pattern you & I witness all throughout its pages!

Noah obeyed the Word of God

The people of the land did **NOT**

Moses obeyed the Word of God

The Pharaoh in Egypt did **NOT**

David obeyed the Word of God

Most of His sons did **NOT**

Jesus Obeyed the Word of God
The Pharisees of the day, did **NOT**

And on and on we could go!

Athanasius obeyed the Word of God
Arius of Alexandria did **NOT**

Luther obeyed the Word of God
The Church in Rome did **NOT**

Machen obeyed the Word of God
Harry Emerson Fosdick did **NOT**

So according to the bible & according to Church history, what **fundamentally separates** the people of God & those who love Jesus Christ – from those imposters, unbelievers, & destroyers of the faith – is that the people of God obey His Word – everyone else...**DOES NOT!**

Titus 3 closing

And **this is what we see here in the closing verses** of Titus chapter 3!

Paul has just come down from **one of the best** Gospel presentations seen in Holy Scripture... he has just proclaimed the glorious doctrine of salvation by **grace** alone, through **faith** alone, in **Christ alone** – and **that this saving Gospel WILL PRODUCE** Good works for the **glory of God!!!**

And then in verse 8 Paul tells Titus that he is to insist on these things – that he is to:

Insist on the Gospel! Insist on knowing God! Insist on preaching grace! Insist on sound doctrine!

Now...you may remember back to chapter 2 verse 15, where Paul said something very similar!

After speaking about the appearing of grace **that has come** in the Person & work of Christ – Paul then ends that section of Scripture (in chapter 2) with these words:

*Titus **declare** these things! **Exhort** these things! **Rebuke with** these things!
Love these things!*

Paul's message is clear!

Titus is to ensure that the preaching of the Gospel **will remain the focus** of his ministry for all the days of his life!!!

All those under the ministry of his care & the teaching of his word, **MUST BE drenched** in the truths of the Gospel!

Immersed in the joy of the Gospel!

Drowned in the message of the Gospel!

Preach this again & again & again & again!

Titus insist on these things!!!

Verse 9 – Contrast

And **then!** In verse 9 – we see a **glaring contrast**:

*“**But you** (Titus) **are to avoid** foolish debates, genealogies, quarrels and disputes about the law...”*

So verse **8** is what he is to **insist** – verse **9** is what he is to **avoid!**

Verse **8** is what is **good** – verse 9 is what is **Bad!**

Verse **8** are things that **build up** – verse **9** are things that **tear down!**

Verse **8** is **profitable** – verse **9** is **un-profitable!**

Paul **couldn't** be any clearer!

Souls are as stake!

When men and women refuse to obey the sound teaching of the word of God – then there **WILL BE** foolish debates, pointless squabbles, irrational thoughts, and sinful actions!

You **WILL BECOME** worthless & unprofitable when you abandon the Gospel to focus on **other** things – **secondary** things!!!

Foolish debates

And then in verse 9 **Paul tells Titus** what those things are!

What are the things that seek to draw us away from the hope of Christ & the glory of God?!?!

Well he tells us there:

Foolish debates!

The Greek word for *foolish* here is the Greek word *Moraynos* – it's where we get the word Moron from!

You don't hear that word very often today...moron... "*You're a moron mate!*"

But it's actually a very fitting word!

It actually describes perfectly **the kind of debates** these men were beginning to have!

They were having moronic debates that **did NOT promote** the health of the Church – or the hope of the Gospel!

Secondary matters that were beginning to become **primary** for the sake of pride!
Foolish debates that did not conform hearts & minds to the glory of God!

They may have been peppered with language of the bible – they may have **even used Scripture** to back-up their arguments!

But **they did not promote** the health of the Church or the hope of the Gospel!

They were fruitless discussions...

Paul's day

Fruitless discussions about **secondary** things...

Now **this is seemed to be a common** theme for Paul in his letters...

Many of the Pastoral Epistles speak about these things!

The Jewish believers **loved** to talk about their heritage... & their lineage... & the parts of Scripture that determined their status, & significance, & wealth among the people of God!

They would say things like:

*Well I'm from the seed of Abraham, or I'm from the seed of Benjamin, or David, or Moses; or this famous Rabbi over here – & therefore **my heritage** suggests royalty & prominence!*

Boasting about useless things!

The law

And **still others** were trying to show-off their ability & wisdom to interpret the law; & apply the law; & study the law – **to the point** where they were drifting **back into** chapter 1 verse 14:

“Jewish myths...and the commands of men...”

They were becoming contentious, quarrelsome, unprofitable people, causing pain & disunity within the body of Christ!

One commentator says it like this – I thought this was very helpful – he says:

*“The opponents [of Paul view their debates] as teaching drawn from the genealogies of the Old Testament, **but Paul views it as Jewish myths!** [Jewish myths] that **produce** strife & quarrels about the law... they comprised of fables, silly stories, and arguments about words... these arguments were harmful & useless...”*

None of that produces verse 8

So although the nature of these debates **isn't fully known** – the result of them is!

And the result of these debates was:

Foolish thinking – quarreled hearts – & debates about the law!

They **were unbiblical absolutes** about secondary issues that did **NOT** matter!

None of that produces verse 8!

That's Paul's point!

None of that produces verse 8!

And so I think Paul is very clear here:

Stay away from moronic debates about pointless things with a factious person!

Don't let people drag you into foolish thinking – mere speculation – or quarrels about God that **don't promote holiness!!!**

Talking about things outside of the Gospel is fine – and sometimes fun to do!

But when that discussion turns into **biblical absolutes** on secondary matters – & you begin to dissent – Paul says you are to avoid those people!

Don't entertain those people...

Those people are only looking for a fight – they're only looking to stir division – only looking to quarrel about the law...

Don't entertain them!

Genuine

Now we're **not** talking about people who **genuinely seek** such answers because they are struggling in their faith... that's different to those who are just wanting to be contentious!

Paul **isn't** talking about genuine questions that are genuinely seeking guidance on hard things... Paul is talking about people who lust for an answer to knowledge!

People who want to know the answer to impress other people!!!

They are craving knowledge for their own self-gain rather than pursuing knowledge for the sake of holiness!!!

So don't dismiss a person who genuinely seeks out answers – dismiss a person who clearly cares if people are listening to them!

What is a foolish controversy?

But how do we know the difference?!?!

How do we know **if we here at Grace** are falling prey to foolish myths?!?!

How do we know if we are beginning to engage in theological nonsense, mere speculation, or quarrels about the law?!?!

What are the tell-tale sings of a foolish debate?

1. No real answer

Well I think one characteristic we can see is that a foolish myth has **no real answer to it!**

You **can't finally come** to a satisfying conclusion at the end of it...

Can God lift a rock?

Can God **create a rock** so big that even He can't lift? – No probably NOT...

I mean... does it matter?

He's all-powerful – So I don't think He can create something more powerful than Himself!

Am I gonna argue about it?

No...that's a foolish myth – it's a dumb idea!

It doesn't help me to grow **in the Gospel I love**...

A tree falls in the woods

Well if a tree falls in the woods and no one is around to hear; does it make a sound?!?!

Probably... yeah I think it does...

Sound appears to be independent of us...

So yes it makes a sound...

Do I care...? No not really – It's a foolish myth!

It doesn't help me grow in my love for God...

Satan in the fall

How did Satan enter the garden if there was no sin & no death before Genesis 3?

I don't know – & I don't need to know... God is sovereign & He allowed it!

He has a morally sufficient reason for allowing such things!

Am I gonna argue about it?

No... It's a foolish thought!

It **doesn't** help me to grow in God!

A foolish controversy has **no real answer to it!**

2. No real point

But secondly – a foolish controversy has **no real point to it!**

They're just speaking to sound impressive – they're just seeking to use their words – just wanting to puff their chest!!!

Now we know these people... they're the kinds of people who manage **to turn every text** into their own particular hobbyhorse!

Well John 3:16 clearly talks about the end times & the president being the antichrist!

Well last night when I was reading the Greek Septuagint I found a textual variant in manuscript p52 and now I really do believe that hymns are the only allowable songs in Church...

Good for you – you were reading Greek!

As Kevin DeYoung likes to say:

*These foolish debates are less about the truth of God's Word, & **more about** you being proved right and thought impressive!*

A foolish controversy has **no real point to it!**

It **doesn't actually lead them** to know God better – or to love Christ deeper – **the only result** is that you feel better about yourself compared to others!

That is a foolish debate!

Left Foot Baptist Church

In fact I heard a funny story this week about foolish debates...

I found this story in another guy's sermon – and I thought, **this was just** too good not to share!

It's a true story about a little church in Tennessee called **The Left Foot Baptist Church**

Let me tell you the story behind left foot Baptist Church...

There was a time in America where the life of Baptists Churches became really involved in the idea of foot washing it's members...

Churches would practice the act of foot washing to emulate Jesus in John chapter 13... & I think **it may still be a thing** in some churches of America today...

Now **some of these churches** wanted to suggest that foot washing **wasn't just** something Jesus did for His disciples – but that foot washing **was to be an actual part of the worship service** along with baptism & Communion!

And this church did that...

As part of their worship to God, they believed that foot washing was an ordinance that Christ had commanded...

But what ended up happening was... a dispute arose among some of the members, regarding which foot you are to begin with first?!?!?

Do you start with the left foot – or do you start with the right foot?!?!?

And they couldn't make up their minds – they couldn't agree on which foot was first & which foot was second – and do you know what happened?!?!?

There was a Church split; where half of the members said left – half of the members said right; and so a bunch of members left, started their own church, & guess what they called it:

Left Foot Baptist Church...

Stupid stupid debates!

Heart breaking stuff!

And this is what Paul is warning us about here in Titus...

Don't get caught into foolish thinking – mere speculation – & quarrels that don't promote **holiness** or the **unity** of the Gospel!!!

Insist on verse 8...NOT ON verse 9!

Talking about things **outside** of the Gospel is **fine** – and **fun** to do!

But when that discussion turns into foolish controversy & debates about the law – then you & I as **Christians** are called to avoid such things!

3 Strikes and you're out

Because I want you to notice what happens **when we don't avoid such things!**

What happens when we don't deal with someone who is promoting mere speculation & foolish debates?!?!?

We'll have a look at verse 10:

“Reject a divisive person after a first and second warning. For you know that such a person has gone astray and is sinning; he is self-condemned...”

In verse 9 we are told to avoid certain issues and individuals **because** they are foolish...moronic... **not worth our time...**

In verse 10 **these issues** have become unavoidable...they're **now beginning** to cause division in the Church...

The divisive person is **not content** to simply let **sleeping-dogs** lie... **but instead** they **have to** continue – they **have to** argue – they **have to** quarrel!

They cannot let it go!

And so Paul, graciously informs Titus of the **2 step-process** for healthy Church discipline in restoring such a person...

Step 1

Step 1 was seen in verse 9 – avoid him – shun him – literally *to go around him* in the Greek...

And what I think Paul means is – **tell him to stop** & move beyond the debate!

Don't keep arguing the point – Don't answer a fool according to his folly!

Let him know his sin and say nothing more...

But now in verse 10 things have become worse...

The foolish man in verse 9 has become divisive – he's become arrogant – contentious; & now he's beginning to stir up division within the body of Christ...

And so step 2 **then** is warning him – cautioning him – **telling him his fault** (perhaps with a brother or 2) – going to him and telling him about his **divisive nature!**

The damage that he's doing!

Tell him that he is beginning to stir division in the body, and he needs to stop!!!

That's step 2...

Step 3

And then step 3 is the **last stage of the process** – step 3 is a second warning!

Tell him **one last time** about the **seriousness** of his disunity!

And **the assumption here** is that a **second warning** comes with **more force!**

There is a lot **more weight** behind this one! There is **more riding** on this warning!

There is a seriousness to this final stage!

There is an urgency to this last step!

Imaging Matthew 18

Because this does seem to appear; to be (**in some part**) a recapitulation of Jesus' words given to the Church in Matthew chapter 18...

*“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.¹⁷ But if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen **even to the church**, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector...”*

So it does seem to be some sort of a **condensed version** of Matthew 18 here...

And Paul also talks about this kind of Church discipline in Romans chapter 16:

*“I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; **avoid them**.¹⁸ For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites...they deceive the hearts of the naive...”*

So if a person refuses to listen to the first, second, & third warning seen in Scripture – have nothing more to do with him!

Reject him!

Excommunicate him!

Do NOT allow this man to continue fellowship with the saints because of his sinful & wicked heart!

Self-condemned

Verse 11:

*For you know that such a person has gone astray and is sinning; he is **self-condemned**...*

The word *self-condemned* here can also be translated as *warped* or **curved in on itself!**

In other words – this divisive person is **NOT** like normal people who disagree... & then move on... they let it go...

No no no – the **divisive person** thrives on discord – he thrives on quarrels – he thrives on disputes!

They will disagree and continue to disagree – they will continue to argue the point... they will continue to stir division!!!

Why?!?! – because verse 11:

They are self-condemned – they are warped – they are always coming back to themselves!

Always coming back to the same conclusion!

You've ignored this guy in verse 9 – You've now warned him twice in verse 10 – and **he still doesn't listen** to the Church!!

So Paul says:

“Reject him! – Get rid of him – have nothing more to do with him!”

He is self-condemned!

Always curving back on himself!

He **JUST** wants to argue! & he just wants to fight!

Qualifier

Now **let me say** something important...

These verses **do not imply** that **ALL** theological controversy is to be avoided...

They do **NOT** imply that all theological debate should be dismissed!

Sometimes people will use these verses to suggest that **simply caring** about Doctrine or **Sound Theology** is a bad thing!

It's **NOT**... it's a good thing!

It is good to explore & consider the hard truths of Scripture!

God likes it when we think!

God likes it when we consider!

God likes it when you & I use our minds to the glory of God!

God's likes us to wrestle with the text!

This **is not** saying, that **ALL** theological debates & queries should be avoided...

Rather **we are to avoid**:

Foolish theological controversy!

Moronic theological controversy!

Senseless theological questions!

Controversy that seeks to stir up division & disunity in the body – and show off our theological skills!

That is what we are to avoid!

Don't engage with moronic questions!

Serious controversy

But also! Let me say this...

There are some theological controversies that we **should NOT** avoid!

Some theological controversies that we **CANNOT** avoid!

And those controversies are the ones that attack the very heart & nature of the Gospel itself!

Things like:

The nature of the atonement!

Or the nature of Christ!

Or salvation by Christ alone!

Or denying the very nature & character of God!

Or **affirming** the innate goodness of man!

Or **affirming** that we are the solution to our sin!

Those are issues that the Church has lived & died for because those truths are worth going to the stake over!

All of these things are Gospel centred issues that **MUST BE ADRESSED** & soundly rebuked by the elders of the Church!

And throughout church history friends! – faithful men & women have been **rightly involved in contending for the faith** that was once for all delivered to the saints!

So clearly this is **not saying** to avoid **ALL** theological controversy – **especially those** that attack the very heart and soul of the Gospel itself!

Arius in 325 A.D. was **NOT seeking** moronic theological speculations!

He was attacking the very nature & heart of the Gospel itself!

He was leading people into the paths of hell

And **that!!!** CANNOT be avoided!!!

That calls for Titus chapter 1 verse 9:

*Encourage the flock with sound teaching and **refute those** who contradict it!*

There are some theological controversies that cannot & **should NOT** be avoided when they impede the very heart of the Gospel & **the nature of our faith!**

Warn a divisive person once – and then twice – after that have nothing more to do with him – for you know that such a person is sinning; he is self-condemned!

If you mess round with a divisive person – you get division in the Church!

And the unity of the Church is **so precious** to the heart of God – **He will NOT tolerate** a divisive person!

He will NOT allow His body to be destroyed by these things!

Titus rebuke such men!

Doctrine that Unites

And this leads us into our second point here this morning:

Sound Doctrine that unites...

Have a look at verse 12:

“When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, make every effort to come to me in Nicopolis, because I have decided to spend the winter there. ¹³ Diligently help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey, so that they will lack nothing.¹⁴ Let our people learn to devote themselves to good works for pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful. ¹⁵ All those who are with me send you greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with all of you...”

Side By Side

So here at the end of Titus we have some practical implications of sound doctrine...

Practical implications uniting the Christians on the island of Crete; for the purpose of Works & the glory of God!

In a letter that has been constantly saturated (from start to finish) with **rich theological truth**:

Election – Predestination – The Nature of God – The Character of God – Church Polity – False Teaching – Greek History – Greek Literature – Old Testament **Law** – New Testament **Ethics** – Roman Law – Regeneration – Justification – Sanctification – Glorification...

In a letter that has been constantly saturated (from start to finish) with **rich theological truths** – you & I **are now introduced** to the simplest part of the letter:

Gospel-centred friendships grounded in the truth of doctrine!

Make every effort (says Paul) to come to me in Nicopolis, because I have decided to spend the winter there.

Just show up

What is Paul doing...?

What is he doing?

He is telling Titus to leave Crete, because Paul wanted the encouragement of a brother – and the company of a friend...

Church sometimes the most **meaningful thing** we can do for **someone in need**, is to simply...show...up!

Isn't that **just so basic!**

Sometimes the most meaningful thing **we can do** for a brother or sister in Christ, is **NOT** throw Scripture at them – **NOT** throw logic at them – **NOT** throw emotion at them!!!

BUT to simply JUST BE THERE!

In the pain – in the hurt – in the struggle – in the mess...

Listen! People **will rarely remember** the words that we say – the Scriptures that we read – or the prayers that we pray in those times – even though **we should** do those things – & **we must** do those things!

We are called to do those things!

But I think **the most effective thing** that we can **do to a** friend in need – is to simply show up & be by their side...

Are you struggling in your faith...? Are you wrestling with doubt?!?!

Perhaps a **simple friend**... is all that you need!

Perhaps just sitting with them – and reminding them that you’re there for them – is all they really need!

Ed Welch

Ed Welch in his book titled “*Side by Side*” – I think sums this up well:

*“God is pleased to use ordinary people, ordinary conversations, and extraordinary wise love to do most of the heavy lifting in His kingdom. The basic idea is that **those who help best** are the ones who both **need help** and **give help**...Anything that reminds us that we are dependent on God and others is a good thing...We spend too much time concealing our neediness. We need to stop. Being needy is our basic condition... [and] it will make you **a better helper**...”*

Paul needed a friend... Paul wanted a friend... he asked for a friend...

We are all **needy** people... & **needed** by others! X2

That is the basic condition of our hearts!

Even Paul was needy! & So he asked for Titus to be by his side in a time of need...

Sometimes the most meaningful thing we can do for someone... is **to simply show up!**

What a profound truth that so often easily forget...

Do Good, Teach Good, Love Good

And then secondly notice what he says there in verse 14:

*“Let our people learn to devote themselves to **good works** for pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful...”*

This is something we have seen **all throughout** the letter of Titus – good works are **an obvious sign of grace** and **reflect the very nature & character of God Him-self!**

This is something that Paul has **continually reminded Titus** about!

Titus is to **do good**, to **teach good**, & to **love what is good!**

Goodness is defined by God Himself & Titus is to reflect God!

Again **it's such a simple truth** – but it's the simple truths **are MOST RADICAL!**

And **so Paul once again** reminds Titus of doing good works!

Because:

Good works emulate God & image His Son!

- Titus Chapter 1 verse 8 (**have a look**)... You'll see that Paul tells Titus that elders should be ones who **love what is good!**
- On the contrary, in verse 16 of chapter 1 – those who **reject God** and **deny** Him by their works are people who are *“unfit for any good work!”*
- In chapter 2 verse 3 – the older women should devote themselves to **teaching what is good!**
- In chapter 2 verse 5 – the older women are to teach younger women **to be kind**; or really that's **the same word used for good!**
- In verse 7 – Paul tells Titus **to set** the young men an example **by doing what is good!**

- In chapter 2 verse 14 – Paul reminds Titus that the people of God are marked off & ***eager to do good works*** – Or ***zealous for good works!!!***
- In chapter 3 verse 1 – he tells Titus to remind all people to be ready **for every good work!**
- In chapter 3 verse 8 – he says “***such devotion to good doing***” is a mark of those who trust God!
- And so **even now!!!** In his farewell closing to Titus in chapter 3 & verse 14 Paul writes to Titus and what does he say:

*“Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing **what is good!**”*

Do you think Paul is trying to tell us something?!?!

Do you think Paul wants us to see something?!?!

*At the heart of every genuine believer is a desire to know God & to make God known **by doing what is good!***

That is a distinctly **Christian desire!** to know God!

Not just know **about God** – but to **know God** and to make **God known** through **doing good, teaching good, & loving what is good!**

This is the nature & purpose of the Church!

The nature & character **of the Church** is to reflect **the nature & character of God!**

This is why God has saved us – to glorify God & enjoy Him forever!

That is the nature & purpose of life!

Enjoyment of God through enjoyment of His glory!

At the heart of every genuine believer is a desire to know God & to make God known!

Grace will lead us safely home

And then in verse 15...Paul ends with a benediction – a benediction that appropriately draws our attention to grace:

*All those who are with me send you greetings. Greet those who love us in **the faith**. **Grace!** be with all of you.*

So **NOT only** is there **THE** faith – the definite article implying a particular body of belief that is soundly laid forth **in & through** this small little letter – greet those who love us in **THE faith!**

The faith that was once for all delivered to the saints!

But secondly notice this:

The **grace of God** be with you all! X2

Grace is the **unmerited favour** of God that was kindly extended to us but certainly **NOT** because of us – based upon the goodness & kindness of God **alone** – as summarised in chapter 3 verse 5:

HE SAVED US!

It is **Christ alone** – it is **grace alone** that saves sinners & sanctifies the people of God all to the glory of **God alone!**

And so Paul prays for God's grace to **once again** be realized & recognized in & through the heart of these Christians living on the island of Crete – because it is only by grace that we are saved & grace that we are sanctified!

Because it is **this grace & this faith** that is the **determining factor** in our relationship with God & where you & I will spend eternal life!

*Twas **grace** that brought us safe **thus far** & **it is grace** that leads us home!*

It's all grace! It's all grace & the amazing grace of a sovereign God given to us by God because of the mercy & kindness of God:

*For the grace of God has appeared!!! It has appeared bringing salvation for all people; training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live sensible, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³ waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are **zealous for good works**.*

May **this grace** be with you all!

*Twas **grace** that brought us **safe thus far** & **grace** will lead us safely home!*

Do you know **this grace**...?

You are a sinner – God is a Saviour – & grace is our only hope!

Friends – May **this grace** be...with...you...all...

Let's pray...

Titus 3:9-15

Discussion Questions

[Read Titus 3:9-11]

Main Point: *Sound doctrine corrects division & promotes unity*

Q1. What are the things Titus is to insist upon in Titus chapter 3? – What was is he to avoid?

Q2. How do you determine whether or not a debate is foolish or worth engaging in? – What are the telltale signs of a foolish debate?

Q3. What do foolish debates produce according to verse 9?

Q4. What were the nature of the debates happening in Crete? (Read verse 9) – How would we contextualize them today – i.e. what are some foolish debates you have been sucked into? – What was the result? – What should you have done according to verse 9?

Q5. What happens when we let foolish debates persist in the Church?
(Read verse 10)

Q6. Why does the divisive person persist in their division? (Read verse 11)

Q7. [Read Matthew 18:15-20] – Do you think Church discipline is a good thing? – What is Church discipline designed to do?

[Read verses 12-15]

Q8. What did Paul want in verse 12? – What does this tell us about the nature of our hearts? – How is being needy a good thing?

Q9. In Verse 14 Paul reminds Titus about the necessity of good works in the Christian life. What part do good works play in the Christian life and how is this consistent with salvation by grace alone? (Read Titus 3:3-8)

Q10. Why would Paul end his letter with grace? – What does grace accomplish in our lives? (Read Titus 2:11-14)

Application Questions

Q1. Do you find it easy to discuss controversy instead of the Gospel? – How can we be sure to focus on the Gospel in situations of foolish debate?

Q2. Have you been apart of any foolish debates about secondary issues this past week? – Were you the instigator of the debate or the receiver? – How did you handle it? – Should you/could you have handled it any differently?

Q3. Have you ever seen a case of Church discipline carried out to its full effect, i.e. excommunication? – Do you know where the person is today and whether they are walking with the Lord?

Q4. How seriously do you/should you view divisiveness? – Why is divisiveness such a serious thing in God's eyes?

Q5. How has the Gospel this past week helped you to remember a friend in need? – How did you help that friend? – How has someone else's company in the past helped you in your time of need?

Q6. Why does God love His people doing good works? – How can we at Grace be better at engaging in Good works in our community?

Q7. How has God freshly reminded you of His grace this past week?