

Presbyterian Church of Henderson

Worship Service 10:00 AM

September 27, 2020

Why Doing Good Matters

Ringing of the Bell

Welcome and Announcements Pastor Eric Hoey

Organ Prelude Kristin Jones, Director of Music

*Call to Worship

Praise the Lord who is our provider.

The Lord is our hope. Our trust is in God.

God brought us out of bondage and has made us free.

The Lord is our hope. Our trust is in God.

Glorious are the deeds of our God, and mighty are his acts.

The Lord is our hope. Our trust is in God.

*Hymn PH 469 "Morning Has Broken"

1 Morning has broken

Like the first morning,

Black bird has spoken

Like the first bird.

Praise the singing!

Praise for the morning!

Praise for them springing

Fresh from the Word!

Praise for the sweetness

Of the wet garden,

Sprung in completeness

Where His feet pass.

3 Mine is the sunlight!

Mine is the morning.

Born of the one light

Eden saw play!

Praise with elation,

Praise ev'ry morning,

God's recreation

Of the newday!

2 Sweet the rain's new fall

Sunlit from heaven,

Like the first dewfall

On the first grass.

*Call to Confession

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor, trusting in the promise of forgiveness.

*Prayer of Confession (unison)

Almighty God, we have been wandering in the wilderness of sin. We have complained in the face of your mercy. We have been selfish and conceited in the face of your sacrifice. We have not done your will.

Teach us humility. Teach us gratitude. Infuse your spirit into our beings so that we might be reconciled to you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

*Assurance of Pardon

People of God, our sins are forgiven. The Lord is loving, and we are reconciled to God. Therefore, let us humble and surrender ourselves to the will of God for the glory of the Lord.

*Passing the Peace

Please turn and bow to someone out of respect and love— “The peace of Christ be with you”

***Gloria Patri** (PH 579)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

Prayer for Illumination

O God, fill us with your Spirit and humble our hearts so that we can hear your Word. Amen.

First Reading Exodus 17:1-7

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarreled with Moses, and said, “Give us water to drink.” Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?” But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, “Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?” So Moses cried out to the LORD, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.” The LORD said to Moses, “Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.” Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the LORD, saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”

Special Music “The 23rd Psalm” by Carmichael
Betty Norment, soloist

Second Reading Titus 1:10-16

There are also many rebellious people, idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision; they must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for sordid gain what it is not right to teach. It was one of them, their very own prophet, who said, “Cretans are always liars, vicious brutes, lazy gluttons.” That testimony is true. For this reason rebuke them sharply, so that they may become sound in the faith, not paying attention to Jewish myths or to commandments of those who reject the truth. To the pure all things are pure, but to the corrupt and unbelieving nothing is pure. Their very minds and consciences are corrupted. They profess to know God, but they deny him by their actions. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.

Children’s Sermon Pastor Eric

SERMON “Doing Good in the Church, Part 2”

Titus 1:10-16

September 27, 2020

- In 1965 Jackie DeShannon recorded a well known song written by Hal David and Burt Bacharach: "What the World Needs Now is Love Sweet Love."
- Of course I was only three years old when the song became a hit.
- Since that time there have been numerous renditions to this timeless song that speaks to our world even today.
- Now if Apostle Paul were to be singing this song in the first century (before it was even written), I believe he would be singing "What the world needs now is good sweet good."
- You see, the cultural climate of the island of Crete was immoral, corrupt, and had the potential to have a deep influence upon the the young Christians in early house churches throughout the island.
- So, Paul writes a letter to Titus with the theme of doing good as Paul's the solution to the cultural norm of for the island of Crete.
- Titus' role was to "**put in order** what remained to be done."
- This basically means Titus had to correct or clean up what was happening in among new Christians in the island.
- What had prompted Paul to write in the first place, the rising tide of false teachers on the island of Crete, and how their influence was causing dissension, strife, and confusion among the small house churches.
- Titus was tasked to correct "what had remained undone" after Paul's missionary visit on the island of Crete and to find elders or pastors for every city on the island.
- Last week we talked about Paul's recommendations for the character, reputation, and the task of a leader who is committed to doing good, and we applied it to the church today where all Christians can have a direct influence of good in our own society.
- This week we will pick up where we left off on how to do good in the local church.

1. **Recognize Those Who Work Against Good** (corrupt and unbelieving)

- As Titus had the task to find pastors in every town of the island of Crete, Paul begins to spell out qualities of the false teachers in the young churches
- These are the personalities that hinder the work of good as characterized by the false teachers he encountered.

10 There are also many rebellious people, idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision;

- Before I describe the characteristics, look at the last phrase.
- It sounds like "the circumcision" is a subset of the larger whole
- Some of the newer scholarship emphasizes the fact that the word for "especially" could mean "in other words" or "that is" so the group who is called the circumcision are categorically rebellious, idle talkers, and deceivers.
- Who are the circumcision?
- *Acts 11:2 So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him,*
- Paul is talking about a man named Peter, *Gal. 2:12 for until certain people came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But after they came, he drew back and kept himself separate for fear of the circumcision faction.*

- In the Acts text, you see that they were critical in nature, and in the Galatians verse, they exerted influence in such a way that Peter ate with Gentile believers in fear of the circumcision faction.
 - Some theologians say that they were the Judaizers who legally demanded circumcision for all the Gentiles to have faith in Christ.
 - I think they were a certain group of Jewish believers who took pride that circumcision gave them certain privileges and deserved to be heard.
 - So the first quality is “**rebellious**” or could also be translated as “insubordinate.”
 - These are people who are unlike faithful elders who hold firmly to the trustworthy message that was passed on from the apostles, the false teachers refuse to submit to the teaching of Paul and the apostles.
 - Next, they were “**idle talkers**” where they were good at empty, fruitless talk.
 - Their speech achieved no purpose and lacked edification.
 - But they were also “**deceivers**” who actively led people astray from the teaching of the apostles.
 - The circumcision group was a major concern for Paul which was the reason for Titus to stay in Crete because of their hinderance to his cause of doing good.
- 12 It was one of them, their very own prophet, who said, "Cretans are always liars, vicious brutes, lazy gluttons." 13 That testimony is true*
- Paul later in verse 12 quotes from Epimenides, a poet from Crete and philosopher from the 6th century who was believed to be a prophet and miracle worker.
 - The stereotype of those from Crete was that they were liars, brutes, and lazy gluttons which Paul affirms.
 - Some scholars say that Paul said this sarcastically as kind of like a personal comic relief from the frustration that these people were causing.
 - Q: Did Paul really accept this generalization about Cretan character? If this were true, how would Titus ever find leaders for the local house churches?
 - There is a part of me that feels uncomfortable with these types of ethnic stereotypes.
 - Why would Paul even go to this island to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ?
 - Because the gospel has the power to change lives.
 - The gospel can change the worst of society into what we said last week, “Lovers of good.”
 - Paul’s warning to Titus continues:
- 15b Their very minds and consciences are corrupted. 16 They profess to know God, but they deny him by their actions. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.*
- Paul says those who work against good have **corrupt minds** and **conscience** because what they say about themselves is denied in their actions.
 - They are dual natured.
 - They speak out about what they believe, and in their actions are doing just the opposite.
 - This is really an intentional lack of integrity
 - The text says that they are **detestable, disobedient, unfit for any GOOD work**

- Paul is warning Titus, when you look for leaders in every city, these do not help in working a society for good.
- Notice that he does NOT say, "Stay away from them!" or "Avoid them at all costs because they are trouble"

2. Counteract Those Who Work Against Good

11 they must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for sordid gain what it is not right to teach. 13b For this reason rebuke them sharply,

- The word for "silenced" has the connotation of muzzling an animal.
- What Paul is doing is that these people cannot be tolerated or ignored, but something must be done because of their growing influence. WHY?
- [click] "upsetting whole families" — the word for "upset," (which sounds mild) actually means to overturn, corrupt, and word for "families" means households.
- They were corrupting whole family units.
- This is text demonstrates that the early Christians gathered in small house churches
- This circumcision group was undermining and damaging the fabric of the gospel that Paul had earlier proclaimed on the island.
- The vehicle of this corruption was through their improper teaching and greedy desire for money.
- So the way Titus was to address these people was by confronting them and rebuking them.
- Titus had to address this for the sake of the health of the future church on the island.
- The strategy had to be local, from one house church to another
- Titus was not to go onto Facebook and ridicule them nor write mean letters and chastise them by publishing in the Cretan newspaper, but in each city, he had to personally or train an elder to address the issue one person at a time.
- This is one of the worst jobs in the history of humanity!
- Can you imagine, "I my name is Titus, I am sent by the Apostle Paul to address the false teaching in this house church and to appoint leaders in this city."
- But Paul is saying that leaders often need to directly confront bad behavior.
- EX: When I was working at the national headquarters of the Presbyterian Church. I one time got a call from the police in some small city where we had done some work in the area. The police stated that they heard about one of my employees acting inappropriately toward a minor.
- In the same way, bad behavior needs to be quickly recognized, and addressed, and not ignored.

3. Nurture Those Who Work Against Good

so that they may become sound in the faith, 15 To the pure all things are pure, but to the corrupt and unbelieving nothing is pure.

- When a person is rebuked sharply, the goal is not to separate them from the whole.
- Paul never seems to suggest that Titus was to be the "hatchet man" to confront, and kick out the circumcision group.
- EX: I remember every two years at the national office of the Presbyterian church, the budgets were cut, approved by a board meeting, and my

colleagues, and I had to execute the terminations as directed by the board. Everyone was to sit in their office, and we were to go around the building and inform people that they had been terminated. Security guards had to watch over each termination making sure they took their personal belongings and left the building. I was a hatchet man working for the church to divide and separate.

- But Paul here seems to suggest to work with the circumcision group so that “they may become sound in their faith.”
- This was not confront and let them leave, but to work with them so that they understood and personally became sound in their faith.
- Only in the Christian church is where you will find love and nurture when bad teaching exists.

14 not paying attention to Jewish myths or to commandments of those who reject the truth.

- Some of the false teaching that Titus was to help them understand included:
 - Jewish myths - These myths were seemingly speculative and fanciful inventions drawn from the OT records, such as are found in the apocryphal and pseudepigraphical writings of Judaism.
 - Commands of those who reject the truth - These commands were evidently Jewish-Gnostic ritual observances that the false teachers sought to make binding on Christians.

15 To the pure all things are pure, but to the corrupt and unbelieving nothing is pure.

- One of the last issues of these false teachers is that they had a false understanding of purity.
- These Cretan teachers apparently were engrossed in perpetuating ceremonial distinctions between the pure and the impure.
- Like the Pharisees, they prized themselves on external and ritual purity that was over and above true purity which is internal and moral.
- Nothing outside can corrupt one who is internally pure; but someone who is internally impure corrupts all they touch.
- Jesus said it himself, *Mark 7:15 there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.*”
- In the beatitudes, Jesus says, “Blessed are the pure in heart.”
- So Paul was asking Titus a tall order, to not only confront, but to nurture the person in such a way, that these wayward leaders are nurtured so that ultimately have a pure heart.
- We know that only out of a pure heart can good begin to penetrate our society.

Doing Good in Church, Part 2

1. Recognize Those Who Work Against Good
2. Counteract Those Who Work Against Good
3. Nurture Those Who Work Against Good

- Next week in chapter 2, Paul picks up his theme of doing good in various segments of our society.

Offering

The works of the Lord are wondrous indeed. Let us offer back to God a portion of what has been given to us, for the glory of God's name.

In light of the pandemic, we will not pass offering plates and ask you to place your offering in the plate when you exit the building

***Doxology**

Praise God from whom all blessing flow.

Praise Him all creatures here below.

Praise him above the heavenly host.

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

***Prayer of Dedication**

O God, use these gifts to do your will in the world and prepare us for your coming kingdom. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

***Affirmation of Faith** (Apostle's Creed)

Minister:

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, what do you believe?

All:

I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Let us pray for the needs of the world, saying, Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer. O God, who is ever present, you hear our cries and are ever faithful in your mercy. We come to you with our concerns for ourselves, our community, and the world.

For our church and its leaders— fill them with the spirit and mind of Christ so that they would serve you and others. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For our country and global community— enable our leaders to make decisions for the sake of people and not profits, to serve others and not themselves. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For our local community— [local concerns may be named]. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those who suffer with sickness, sadness, bereavement, anxiety, or abuse— envelop them in your love and help us to be their community. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For the other intentions we hold in our hearts. [A time of silence is kept.] Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Loving God, we know that you walk with us, and you answer when we call. With gratitude and trust, we pray in Jesus' name, and now, with confidence as children of God, let us pray:

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory forever. Amen.

***Hymn** PH 447 "Lead On, O King Eternal"

1 Lead on, O King eternal, The day of march has come; Henceforth in fields of conquest Thy tents shall be our home: Through days of preparation Thy grace has made us strong, And now, O King eternal, We lift our battle song.	For not with swords' loud clashing, Nor roll of stirring drums; With deeds of love and mercy The heavenly kingdom comes.
--	---

2 Lead on, O King eternal, Till sin's fierce war shall cease, And holiness shall whisper The sweet amen of peace;	3 Lead on, O King eternal: We follow, not with fears, For gladness breaks like morning Where'er Thy face appears; Thy cross is lifted over us; We journey in its light: The crown awaits the conquest; Lead on, O God of might.
--	--

***Benediction**

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace both now and evermore.

***Organ Postlude** (please be seated for the postlude)