

ADVICE FOR A GOSPEL PREACHER

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Titus 1:1-5**. From Roy H. Enoch (04-16-1993).
- B. Titus is one of the most puzzling characters of the NT.
 - 1. He is first mentioned in Galatians; possibly the first epistle Paul wrote (Gal. 2:1).
 - a. It seems that Paul went from Antioch in Syria.
 - b. Titus was a Gentile and not compelled to be circumcised (Gal. 2:3).
 - c. He seems to have been converted by Paul (1:4).
 - 2. The next mention, is on Paul's third missionary journey when Paul hears of difficulty at Corinth.
 - a. He had written two letters and made one visit to Corinth before sending Titus with a third letter.
 - b. Paul was impatient to hear from Titus and went on into Macedonia looking for him.
 - c. When he finally found Titus in Macedonia, he learned that the church at Corinth had repented and submitted to his authority.
 - d. He then wrote a third letter sent via Titus before he came to spend the winter with them.
 - e. Titus was to also assist them in gathering their collection for the saints in Judea.
 - 3. With all of this assistance from Titus, it is remarkable that Luke never mentions him in Acts.
- B. Titus seems to be the assistant that Paul could count on for difficult tasks.
 - 1. Titus was a man for the tough tasks. According to Paul, he was dependable (2Cor. 8:17), reliable (2Cor. 7:6), and diligent (2Cor. 8:17); and he had a great capacity for human affection (2Cor. 7:13-15).
 - 2. Possessing both strength and tact, Titus calmed a desperate situation on more than one occasion. He is a good model for Xians who are called to live out their witness in trying circumstances (from *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*).
- C. This letter to Titus describes Paul's directions to him in another difficult situation.
 - 1. Paul had left him behind in Crete to perform two tasks:
 - a. "That you should set in order the things that are lacking,"
 - b. "And appoint elders in every city as I commanded you."
 - 2. Paul begins w/directions for the second task first.

I. **QUALIFIED MEN NEED TO BE APPOINTED TO LEAD THE CHURCH IN DIFFICULT TIMES.**

- A. Those qualifications include:
 - 1. Men who are blameless.
"not merely acquittal, but the absence of even a charge or accusation against a person. This is to be the case with elders" (from *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*).
 - 2. He must have a family to show ability to lead.
 - a. "the husband of one wife."
 - b. "having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination."
 - 3. "A steward of God" Strong's "steward" a commissioner, i.e. a domestic manager, guardian: KJV-- steward, tutor.
 - 4. "not self-willed" *Strongs*: self pleasing, arrogant.
 - 5. "not quick-tempered."
 - 6. "not given to wine," (ASV) "no brawler", (NIV) "not given to drunkenness."
 - 7. "not violent."
 - 8. "not greedy for money."
 - 9. "but hospitable," *Strongs*: "entertain strangers" *Vines* "love of strangers."
 - 10. "a lover of what is good."
 - 11. "sober-minded," "self-controlled," (NIV).
 - 12. "just" "upright" (NIV).

13. "holy."
 14. "self-controlled, disciplined," (NIV) Strongs: to exercise self-restraint (in diet/chastity).
 15. "holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict." Able to refute error.
- B. These qualifications are needed because; Titus 1:10,11.
1. This seems to have been true in Crete more than in other places.
 - a. He quotes "One of them, a prophet of their own" who described them as "liars, evil beasts and lazy gluttons."
 - b. Paul says that the description fits and is true.
 2. There is still a great need for leaders w/the education and love of the truth to refute error and silence false teachers.
 3. These teachers may have been Jews or more specifically Cretans who had mixed some Jewish teachings with Gnostic tendencies.
 4. Today there are many who attempt to corrupt Xian doctrine with cultures or science or human philosophy.
 5. The need for knowledgeable elders has not decreased.
 6. We still have false teachers teaching the Jewish traditions and commandments of men (1:14).
 7. We still have people professing to "know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work" (1:16).

II. TITUS WAS TO "SET IN ORDER THE THINGS THAT ARE LACKING" IN XIAN CONDUCT.

- A. See Chapters 2,3.
- B. Paul first lists several groups that need specific instruction (2:1-10).
1. The older men and women were to be encouraged, instructed and directed in appropriate work.
 - a. We often focus on the youth, but the older people have a large part of the knowledge and experience of the church.
 - b. They often give a large part of the budget, more in accord w/their abilities than others.
 - c. Yet they are often forgotten when the work of the church is planned.
 - d. They are often ignored or taken for granted when work is assigned.
 - e. Remember the older members: help them and use them.
 2. The younger are to be instructed and encouraged rather than entertained (2:4-6).
 3. Titus is reminded to pay attention to his own conduct. 2:7,8.
 - a. Set an example of good works that could be a pattern.
 - b. Be honest and faithful in your teaching.
 - c. Show reverence and respect to God and man.
 - d. Let your speech be serious and sound to avoid condemnation.
 - e. Preachers need to follow these instructions.
 4. Slaves were to be respectful, obedient and honest that they might glorify God (2:9,10).
- C. Xian morality is based on salvation by grace (2:11-14).
The "grace of God that brings salvation" seems to refer to the gospel as in Rom. 1:16.
1. By this time it had been preached in every nation (Col. 1:23).
 2. Preachers must be sure to preach the same message.
 3. Glorify God rather than men in view of the coming of the Lord.
- D. He gives a charge to Titus (2:15); "These, then, are the things you should teach."
1. What we teach is more important than how we teach.
 2. It is not enough to believe them ourselves: teach them.
 3. But how we teach is also important: "Encourage and rebuke w/all authority." (NIV)
 - a. The encouragement should come first and abundantly.

- b. "rebuke with all authority" has been widely interpreted.
 - 1) Those who taught "evangelistic oversight" claimed that this gives the preacher authority over congregations without elders, and some even claimed that the "evangelist" was over elders.
 - 2) Earl D. Edwards gives an excellent review of the work and authority of evangelists in two issues of *Alternative*, Vol. VIII, Summer and Fall, 1982. He calls attention to the preposition "meta" with the genitive which would indicate the manner of speaking rather than the authority of the speaker.
(*Richard F. Weymouth New Testament* of 1903 translates the passage, "encourage and rebuke with all impressiveness.")
 - 3) The preacher should preach God's word authoritatively as from God and not from men. and make sure that what he says is from God's word.
- 4. "Let no one despise you."
 - a. When we present God's word we should not be ashamed, nor let it be ridiculed.
 - b. Emphasize that it is God's word and focus on that.
- E. "Remind them" of seven rules for all (3:1,2).
- F. He then reminds them of seven aspects of their behavior before they were saved by God's goodness (3:3,4).
- G. He tells Titus to remind them that good deeds are an obedient response of one who has believed the goodness and love of God (3:5-8).
 - 1. The entire letter has focused on teaching that which is good and maintaining good works.
 - a. An elder must be "a lover of what is good" (1:8).
 - b. Young women are to be taught to be "good" (2:5).
 - c. Titus was to show himself "a pattern of good works" (2:7).
 - d. Slaves were to show "all good fidelity" or that they could be trusted (2:10).
 - e. God's own special people were to be "zealous for good works" (2:14).
 - f. Everyone was to be reminded "to be ready for every good work" (3:1).
 - g. "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" (3:8).
 - h. "And let our people also learn to maintain good works to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful" (3:14).
 - 2. It should be our emphasis today, but we must be careful that we do not give the impression that these "good works" earn salvation.
- H. Evil things and evil people were to be avoided. 3:9-11.
 - 1. We must be ready to defend the truth, but make sure that the issues are scriptural and not useless quibbles.
 - 2. Reject one who tries to cause divisions after the second warning.
 - 3. We can be too accommodating to false teachers by giving them a forum for their false doctrines.
- I. Paul concludes the letter w/two instructions to Titus about his travels and a final greeting and benediction (3:12-15).

CONCLUSION.

- A. All of the general instructions about preaching are applicable today except the personal instructions about his travels in the conclusion.
- B. I have heard it said that preachers should read the letters of Paul to Timothy and Titus once a week. I believe our study today would confirm that advice.
- C. Let us try to practice these practical instructions.