

Current culture has led many to express distaste for any kind of negative or corrective preaching. People in droves have bowed the knee to the god of positivity. By all means, be balanced in your approach (1 Thessalonians 2:1-12; 2 Timothy 4:2), but don't be afraid to use the word to correct, warn, and rebuke (Titus 2:15). Do it "in love" and "in humility" (Ephesians 4:15; 2 Timothy 2:25); and do it "considering yourself" (Galatians 6:1); but please ask God for the boldness to do actually do it (Ephesians 6:19-20). You'll be in good company—with Old and New Testament prophets, with the apostles of Jesus, and even with Jesus Himself. Hard hearts will be offended, but poor and contrite hearts will be eternally grateful.

READ THE BIBLE, the only infallible source of religious truth (Psalms 119:160). Remember, Bible authors are inspired (2 Timothy 3:16-17); men and women who write books about the Bible are not. Quote Jesus and His apostles on salvation, on grace and faith, and any other subject, and you'll know you're teaching the truth. Fill your mind with the popular religious literature of the day, and there's a good chance you'll be teaching something that's not. It's happened to a number of people already; please don't let it happen to you.

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Marietta church of Christ

8150 Driggers St.
Jacksonville, FL 32220

Times of Worship

Sunday:

9 am - Bible Study / 10 am - Worship / 5 pm - Worship

Wednesday:

7 pm - Bible Study/Worship

Evangelist: Devin Barber

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Sober Living

Titus 2.11-3.2

One of the acronyms men have come up with for each letter that makes up the word Bible is Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth. This mnemonic serves as a good reminder for the role that God's word should play in our lives. The Biblical text is a roadmap for how to get from earth to heaven, where each disciple of Christ aspires to end their journey. In providing mankind with the necessary instructions God left no stone unturned, and gave us every detail necessary for this journey. If we get lost it falls on us, not God, for failing to follow the instructions given. Yet many don't view the Bible in the same manner, and instead look somewhere else for guidance. The guidance and wisdom of man alone, leaving God out, will not lead to a heavenly end. Titus 2.11-3.2 reveal how we are to live in the "present world" to help ensure the disciple of Christ is on the right path.

"For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men" (v. 11). The grace of God here is seen in sending Jesus that mankind might have salvation. If Jesus had not come to earth to die on the cross, then life would be meaningless. We could live however we want with no care of the consequences. In this scenario our life could solely be driven by what feels best in the moment, and we could give ourselves over to the most debase actions without a second thought. But that is not the case. The gift of Jesus changes everything, it gives mankind purpose and hope. God has given mankind the gift of His son (Titus 3.5-8), because He wants all people to be saved (1 Timothy 2.4).

Paul goes on to write because of the grace of God appeared we are instructed to live in a particular way. First *“denying ungodliness and worldly lusts.”* To deny as used here is to “forsake or renounce a thing” (Vines). Since we have been redeemed for salvation, we are to no longer engage in the things which are contrary to God’s nature. 1 John 2.16-17 mentions the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life, these as John says are *“not of the father, but is of the world.”* That is, none of these set our alignment toward God, in fact they move us further away from God.

With this is mind, Paul goes on to say we should *“live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world.”* To live soberly as used here “suggest the exercise of that self-restraint that governs all passions and desires, enabling the believer to be conformed to the mind of Christ” (Vines). Self-restraint or self-control are characteristics all disciples of Christ must possess. To not give into the desires of the flesh and fall back into the old life we were cleansed of takes effort and alertness. To keep ourselves away from the passions that war against us we must stay hyper-focused on the characteristics that make up God’s nature and pursue those instead (Colossians 3.1-17).

Our motivation to pursue sober, righteous, godly living in this present world is because the disciple of Christ is *“looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.”* Living a righteous and godly life is the only way to have confidence at the second coming of Christ. A life given over to sensuality, debasement, and fleshly living will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6.9-11). Paul gives a second motivation in verse 14, speaking of Christ, *“who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works.”* When one considers all that Christ has done for us so that we might have salvation, how can we not work for Him?

So, what do we need to do to make sure we are living soberly in the present world? Titus 3.2 is a good place to start, *“to speak evil of no man, not to be contentious, to be gentle, showing all meekness toward all men.”* The disciple of Christ is to speak in a manner uplifting, and to not use speech that tears down. We must not be contentious but peaceable and gentle. While meekness is the idea of humility. We are not to think of ourselves as greater than another, but as Philippians 2.3 says *“but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself.”*

Written by: Derek Steen

Plain Words for Preachers (Part 3, Conclusion)

Seek, pray for, and take advantage of every open door to teach the lost (1 Corinthians 16:9; 2 Corinthians 2:12; Colossians 4:3). Just make sure in your haste to convert people to the Lord you don’t compromise the truth. Concealing portions of it, watering it down, compromising it in any way will pad the numbers, but it won’t make true disciples. This ear tickling approach is actually an insult to people who want the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. With patient teaching (2 Timothy 4:2), good and honest hearts (Luke 8:15) will repent of anything contrary to the truth; they’ll be just as eager as the eunuch to be baptized into Christ (Acts 8:35-39); and following that, will be eager to do all the Lord has commanded (Matthew 28:18-20). “Buy the truth, and do not sell it...” (Proverbs 23:23).

“Be clothed with humility” (1 Peter 5:5), and be sure it’s real, because it will be tested in numerous ways, including how you handle correction and rebuke. You will likely make some mistakes, and someone will likely rebuke you or correct you (just like Aquila and Priscilla did Apollos—Acts 18:24-26). How you react to this correction will likely make you or break you. “The ear that hears the rebukes of life will abide among the wise. He who disdains instruction despises his own soul, but he who heeds rebuke gets understanding” (Proverbs 15:31-32). “Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid” (Proverbs 12:1).

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