

Preserving & Promoting Gospel Unity

Titus 3.9-15

Main Idea

After encouraging us to insist on the Gospel, Paul calls us to avoid those things that are outside of that Gospel and engage in the mission of promoting the Gospel all around the world.

Overview

Avoid Unnecessary Divisions (Preserve Unity)

- Avoid:
 - Foolish Controversies: A ‘foolish’ controversy would be anything someone insists upon that is outside of what Paul says to insist upon in vs. 8 (reflecting on vss. 4-7)
 - This could include something as benign as a musical style to something as serious as a doctrinal error
 - For Restoration Church, we would quantify this in terms of our Statement of Beliefs and Church Covenant:
 - The matters beyond these things we would ask the church to submit to the elders understanding of how we think it best to lead the church
 - Genealogies: Man made ideas about how things should go based off of one’s lineage or possibly something like astrology, etc.:
 - These should be avoided as they have nothing to do with the Gospel, but they take their authority from somewhere else
 - Dissensions: See below...in short, God hates division, therefore dissensions over things outside of the ‘matters of first importance’ (1 Cor. 15.3-4) should be avoided
 - Quarrels about the Law:
 - The ‘quarrels’ referenced here must indicate tangential aspects since the occasion of this letter was to bring organization under sound doctrine
 - We shouldn’t fight over more tangential aspects of doctrine since we have more important things in common
 - The reason why these things should be promoted is because they are “unprofitable and worthless”
- For those who persist in their bringing division Paul instructs us in three steps:
 - Warn them once: “Stop your promotion of this since you are causing division in the church”
 - Warn them a Second time: “I’ve told you before, I’m telling you again, cease from your promotion of this!”
 - If they persist, Paul says to “have nothing more to do with them”:
 - We are left to walk away from this person since their persistence reveals they are “warped and sinful” and “self condemned”

Promote Gospel Unity

- This post-script serves as a highlight for the ways that the church works together for not only bringing about the gospel inside of one local church, but how it serves to promote the gospel in churches all around the world:
 - Sending of Artemas or Tychicus show that Paul still wants faithful Pastors shepherding the flock:
 - Also, it shows the importance of continued discipleship in Titus (Pastor in Crete)
 - Sending Zenas and Apollos and making sure they lack nothing:

- If this is the same Apollos of 1 Cor. 1 we see that Paul wants the best to be sent from the midst of a congregation
- Not only that, local churches should not be focused on themselves, but about helping promote the Gospel in churches all over the globe by their sending people
- Those who remain should 'learn' to 'devote themselves to good works' and not be 'unfruitful':
 - The church that remains must be picturing the light of their doctrine their good works
 - In doing so they image the fruit of the Spirit

Questions

Discussion Starter: *How have you seen divisions come up in the church? How have they served to damage the witness of Christ in that community and in the lives of those families?*

1. Read Titus 1-3. Have the group discuss a few things that have stood out during our study over the past two months.
2. Focusing on chapter 3. What are the 'these things' in vs. 8 talking about and why should we insist on them? How does that help us understand the things to avoid in vs. 9?
3. Give some examples of 'foolish controversies' that we see in the Bible should be avoided. What are some 'foolish controversies' tempting to us?
4. Why should they be avoided? (vs. 9) What is the implication here? How could we say this positively? (1 Thess. 5.11, Ephesians 4.29, Hebrews 10.25)
5. What should be done to someone that is causing division? Why should we view divisiveness so seriously? (see Matthew 18.15-20)
6. What's taking place in verses 12-15? Why is this activity important?
7. How have you seen Restoration Church emulating what we see in these final verses? How has this encouraged you in your own personal walk with Christ?
8. How are you helped/convicted by this passage? How does this passage encourage you in Christ?

Accountability Question: *Is there anything that you can receive prayer for that sometimes moves into the categories listed out in vs. 9-10?*

Identify evidence of Gods grace in others in keeping with vss. 12-15.