

“Good Neighbors”  
Titus 3:1-3  
(Preached at Trinity, May 14, 2023)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citation will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we began **Chapter 3** Paul’s focus remained unchanged. Titus was to place his priority upon promoting sound doctrine. The last verse of **Chapter 2** read:  
**Titus 2:15 NAU** - "These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you."  
These things, these truths – the things that are fitting for sound doctrine. Speak and exhort them with all authority.
2. **Chapter 3** continues with the things fitting for sound doctrine. Paul continues to press that right doctrine results in right living.  
Paul charges Titus to remind the churches in Crete to be good citizens – to obey those who rule over them. Sound doctrine covers every aspect of our lives.  
**Verse 1** ends, "to be ready for every good deed,"  
This serves as a bridge between our duty to the government and our duty to our neighbor.
  - a. Christian conversion is transforming. We are translated from darkness to light.  
In **Verse 5** Paul describes it as a washing and renewing.
  - b. We should be model citizens as well as good neighbors.  
We should be submissive to those in authority. We should be good citizens in submission and humility.  
We should also be "ready for every good deed." This is true of our role as citizens, but it also applies to how we treat others. "To malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men."
2. Christians should be loving, compassionate, generous, patient, forgiving. We should seek to be blessings in the lives of others.  
It reminds us of Paul’s charge to the Galatians:  
**Galatians 6:9-10 NAU** - "Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. <sup>10</sup> So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith."
3. As Richard Phillips puts it, “Christians are to act so graciously that people are glad for them to move onto the block or join the company.”<sup>1</sup>  
Sadly, this is not always the case. Would you say this is true of you? Do people see you as a blessing to have in their lives?
4. Paul divides his charge into four admonitions.
  - To malign no one
  - To be peaceable
  - To be gentle
  - To show every consideration for all men

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel M. Doriani and Richard D. Phillips, *2 Timothy & Titus*, ed. Richard D. Phillips, Philip Graham Ryken, and Daniel M. Doriani, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2020), 242.

5. Paul's charge is to be received as universal. In other words, we treat our fellow Christians as well as unbelievers with love and graciousness. But that is far easier to love Christians than to love those who are consumed by their blindness and unbelief. But that is the chief focus here. How do we interact with lost people?
- a. The Cretan Christians were surrounded by those who were difficult to treat with graciousness.  
**Titus 1:12 NAU** - "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."
  - b. Paul is calling upon them and us to remember that apart from God's grace we would still be in our unbelief.  
**Titus 3:3 NAU** - "For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another."
- I. Paul's first charge: we are to malign no one. This involves the use of our tongue.
- A. The word is βλασφημέω from which the word blaspheme is derived.
    1. It refers to slander or insult. To speak evil of someone.
    2. Our natural inclination is to be critical of others. To think the worst and say the worst about people. Sinful humanity is censorious by nature.
    3. Our heart has to be carefully guarded. Jesus spoke of the heart in the Gospel of Matthew.  
**Matthew 15:19 NAU** - "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders."  
βλασφημία
    4. This is one of the sins Paul reminds us we must put away, to cast out of our lives.  
**Ephesians 4:31 NAU** - "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice."
  - B. In **Chapter 2** Paul warned about older women becoming malicious gossips  
**Titus 2:3 NAU** - "Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good,"
    1. διάβολος – the word refers to malicious slander. It is a word often attributed to Satan. It's his name – devil.
    2. All of us need to guard our tongues. It is far better to be softspoken than to be loud and brash.
  - C. Most Christians fail to realize how detrimental our slanderous words can be to the spread of the Gospel.
    1. We find it far too easy to speak against our leaders and politicians. We may disagree with their policies but it does not excuse our slanderous words.
    2. Instead, we should pray for them.  
**1 Timothy 2:1-4 NAU** - "First of all, then, I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men,<sup>2</sup> for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. <sup>3</sup> This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

## II. To be peaceable

- A. The NASB states it as a positive word – to be peaceable  
The word is actually a negative admonishment.
1. It comes from the word μάχη which means “a fight, conflicts, disputes, quarrels” with the Greek alpha as a prefix which make it negative.
  2. It means to abstain from fighting. To avoid aggressive behavior.  
The earlier version of NAS translated it - "to be uncontentious"  
**CSV** - "to avoid fighting"  
**ESV** - "to avoid quarreling"
  3. It speaks of peace as the absence of conflict.
  4. It is the same word in the pastoral qualifications stated in 1 Tim. 3 -  
Not quarrelsome or pugnacious.
- B. It carries the idea of being forbearing
1. We live in a world of hostility.  
Jesus described the condition of this world  
**Matthew 24:6 NAU** - "You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for *those things* must take place, but *that* is not yet the end."  
The end of time is not yet. Wars and strife are to be expected until the end of time – as long as lost men rule upon the earth there will be wars and strife.
  2. Paul states that this was exactly the condition of our hearts before God saved us.  
**Titus 3:3 NAU** - "For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another."
  3. Rather than being quarrelsome we should be peacemakers.  
We must not be easily offended. 1 Cor. 13:5  
Love "is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*,"
  4. Love desires good for others. Anger desires their destruction. Jesus compares it to murder.

## III. To be gentle – NIV: considerate

- A. The word refers to a disposition of graciousness -  
**Philippians 4:5 CSV** - "Let your graciousness be known to everyone."
1. It is most often translated “gentle”
  2. Gentleness refers to treating others with a spirit of tenderness and loving care, giving regard to how our actions impact others.
  3. Christians should be compassionate, tender hearted.  
Gentle is the opposite of harsh.
- B. Too often Christians look upon unbelievers as the enemy
1. If they are of a different political party; if they don't hold our position on abortion of same-sex marriage or the social agenda they are the enemy.
  2. Can we share the Gospel with them when we don't value them? If they are the enemy we will avoid them. We need to be gracious towards them, compassionate and tender hearted.

IV. To show every consideration for all men

- A. This refers to meekness which is how the KJV translates it.  
It is the word used describing the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5  
**Galatians 5:22-23 KJV** - "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, <sup>23</sup> Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."
1. The word carries the idea of humility  
It is often demonstrated by a willingness to give up your rights for others.
  2. It is the opposite of a censorious spirit. It is to refrain from anger even when we may feel justified. One commentator described it as "strength under control"
  3. Peter describes this attitude:  
**1 Peter 3:9 NAU** - "not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing."
- B. There is a universal quality to this statement
1. Paul is saying here that we owe all meekness to all men.
  2. This is true of how we treat people outside the faith.  
It is particularly true of how we must treat one another within the faith. How sad it is when we attack our fellow believers. Our response to one another must always be a response of love.  
**1 Corinthians 13:4-7 NAU** - "Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, <sup>5</sup> does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*, <sup>6</sup> does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; <sup>7</sup> bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."  
**John 13:34-35 NAU** - "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. <sup>35</sup> "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."  
**1 Thessalonians 4:9 NAU** - "Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for *anyone* to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another"  
**1 John 4:11 NAU** - "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."
  4. And how shall we express such love among those like us who are unlovely? By showing all meekness towards all men.

Conclusion:

1. We are of a different sort. Paul wrote to the Ephesian church:  
**Ephesians 5:8 NAU** - "for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light"
2. In other words, if you are of the light, walk as children of light.  
May we be gentle, gracious, and considerate of all.  
**Titus 3:1 NAU** - "to be ready for every good deed"