

WE BETTER MAKE A DIFFERENCE

August 21, 2016

When the apostle Paul wrote Titus, he encouraged him to recall at least two things. He wanted to remind him of his purpose for being in Crete, which was to "... set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city" (Titus 1:5), and to "... speak the things which become sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1).

In chapter one, Paul addressed the first matter by setting forth the qualifications that one had to meet in order to hold the office of elder in the church. One thing we should notice is the great detail he recorded regarding the eldership and who can hold the position of elder. God has always been very detailed when it comes to fulfilling His requirements.

In chapter two of his letter, Paul addressed the second issue which was to "speak the things which become sound doctrine." Again, he went into great detail describing those things that "become sound doctrine" or that which is "fitting" for sound doctrine. As he presented his message, five classes of people were given commands which spoke to the conduct of their lives as it related to sound doctrine: aged men, aged women, young married women, young men, and slaves.

One of the primary lessons to be gleaned from this passage is that no matter what our position in life, we must be obedient to the "sound doctrine" that is found in the Bible. It makes no difference to God if we are wealthy or poor, intelligent or not, informed or ignorant, black or white, young or old, or any other difference of which we can think. The bottom line is that we are to live as God wants us to live, no matter what our situation or circumstance is!

As Paul finished this line of thought, he reminded the reader why it is so important to realize the goals set forth, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good work" (Titus 2:13-14). We are to live our lives in the correct manner because Christ gave up His life for us.

The word "peculiar" that Paul used to describe the Christian means "*being beyond* usual, that is, *special*" (Strong). In other words, we are to be different. We understand that, as Christians, we are to be different, but do we understand **how** and from whom we are to be different? First, we are to be different from those in the world or those that have not obeyed Christ by putting Him on in baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27). Second, we are to be different from the world in our actions and our attitudes.

How are we to be different in our actions? We begin by avoiding the things associated with those outside of Christ. Paul told Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12). He didn't tell him to be an example **to** the believers, which he would be, but **of** the believers. He was saying that when people saw the actions of Timothy they should have been able to identify him as a Christian.

If we talk like the world, dress like the world, and act like the world, we are no different from the world. If our shorts are too short, our shirts are too low, our pants are too tight, or we use language

that is obscene, then we are like the world. While in our homes, if we watch programs that use sinful language or images, we are just like the world.

How is one to be different in attitude? If we think like the world, then there is nothing peculiar or different about us. If we consider missing the services of the Lord on Sunday nights and Wednesday nights, we aren't being different, we are being the same as the world. If we are living however we want to outside the "church building," then we have the mindset of the world. Satan wants us to conclude that a worldly pattern of thought is pleasing to God and to behave in accordance with that faulty thinking. Paul told the Corinthians to be aware of Satan's techniques, "For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:13-14). He also said to the Philippians, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things" (Phi. 4:8).

The Devil and his workers want us to "fall" for the idea that it is ok to be a "little" like the world as long as we do not embrace it fully. There could be nothing further from the truth. This is why Paul told Titus to teach those things concerning "sound doctrine," meaning, God's people are to be different. Do people recognize us as different as we go about our daily lives?