

Lenten Devotional February 25, 2023

Scripture

Titus 3:1-15

1 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, 2 to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show every courtesy to everyone. 3 For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, despicable, hating one another. 4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. 6 This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. 8 The saying is sure.

I desire that you insist on these things, so that those who have come to believe in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works; these things are excellent and profitable to everyone. 9 But avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. 10 After a first and second admonition, have nothing more to do with anyone who causes divisions, 11 since you know that such a person is perverted and sinful, being self-condemned.

12 When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. 13 Make every effort to send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way, and see that they lack nothing. 14 And let people learn to devote themselves to good works in order to meet urgent needs, so that they may not be unproductive.

15 All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with all of you.

Devotional

Stephanie Backus, M.Div. student

My family lost my grandfather this year. He was an incredibly pious man—the one who I looked up to in my own walk with faith. As I was gathering memories from all of the grandchildren for my eulogy for grandpa, I heard this theme over and over again: my grandfather was slow to anger. He was slow to tell someone they were wrong; whether he disagreed with their opinion or not. He valued different opinions and if we didn't have an opinion, he was quick to give us a middle of the road view on the topic so we could form our own thoughts. As I grew older I learned that theologically, we had very different beliefs, but they largely came from the same place: our faith in Christ.

As I read this passage for today, it reminds me of my relationship with my grandfather. Paul was clear: we may not agree with our political leaders, and we may not agree with one another. But because we put our faith in God, we have to devote ourselves to doing good. We have to focus on that instead of on what divides us. If we surround ourselves with those who share our love in Christ, no matter the differences we may have in our political beliefs or even in how we interpret the Bible, we can recognize that we aren't of this world—we are of God's kingdom. Together.

Prayer

God of creation, we pray today that you will continue to remind us that we live in your creation. We pray that you will remind us that we are your children and are to continue living the life Christ taught us to in his ministry—the life where all are welcome in your kingdom. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.