

Lent Devotional March 9, 2019

SCRIPTURE

Titus 3:1-15

¹Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, ²to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show every courtesy to everyone. ³For 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. ⁴But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵he 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. ⁶This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. ⁸The 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. ⁹But avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. ¹⁰After a first and second admonition, have nothing more to do with anyone who causes divisions, ¹¹since you know that such a person is perverted and sinful, being self-condemned. ¹²When 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. ¹³Make every effort to send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way, and see that they lack nothing. ¹⁴And let people learn to devote themselves to good works in order to meet urgent needs, so that they may not be unproductive. ¹⁵All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with all of you.

DEVOTIONAL

Christopher M. Graham Jr., M.Div. '18 / Emlenton, Pa.

“For we ourselves were . . . passing our days in malice and envy, despicable, hating one another.” Such is our modus operandi, our standard operating procedure, our way of living in the world. In our fallen world, we do not come pre-programmed with the way of love for other people. This place of malice is where we start and where we stand. Yet “according to his mercy” we need not stand, sit, or stay there. For the Spirit of God is poured out on the world through Jesus to enable our doing of good works. Speaking a bad word about our companions in the fellowship of humanity is at best stupid, Paul reminds us, while at worst such speech is a death-dealing false witness. So let us work on this flaw. Not that anything we do merits the kindness of our savior, but let us act as the heirs we are—heirs who are productive even though our inheritance is assured. Let us learn the new way of our Lord and Master: the way of subjection, obedience, benediction, genteelness, tenderness, and consideration to the taking on of our full humanity in him until we know no other way than his.

PRAYER

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, we acknowledge you as the one God who made humanity of one blood for your own inheritance. Might we be made good and kind to our fellow creatures, indeed to your whole creation, even as you have shown us goodness and kindness in the appearance of your Son. Have mercy upon us and forgive us according to your goodness and loving kindness. Renew us by your Spirit that we might be justified by your grace, leading us to the one hope of eternal life in your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ.