

Worse than Worthless

Text : **Titus 1: 15-16**

INTRODUCTION :

A. As a servant of God, do you ever wonder how will God view you? I do.

1. By His parables, Jesus indicated that not all servants are viewed the same.
 - a. For example, the parable of the talents ... **Matt. 25: 14-30**
 - b. When God speaks to us, we all want to hear the words of approval :
His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' Vs. – 21, 23
 - c. What a horror it would be to hear those words directed at the unproductive servant :
**Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness;
in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Vs. – 30**
2. Salvation is by grace through faith, but we're rewarded individually for our works.
I Cor. 3: 6-8 I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. 7 So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.
3. We observe that :
 - a. In both of these texts reference is made to those who are servants of Christ, i.e., to those who are Christians.
 - b. Not all of them are given the same level of approval or reward.
 - c. **No one** outside Christ receives any reward ... They are lost, **cast out**.
 - d. The one who was a servant (i.e., *who was a Christian*) was cast out.

B. Today we will look at a text of scripture that describes something that will lead some unfortunate brethren to hear those frightening words.

1. Titus was a preacher who had been given a difficult assignment.
 - a. The Mediterranean Island of Crete was an ungodly place.
Vs. 12-13 ... liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons
 - b. The Jews in Crete were as ungodly as the pagans. (Vs. 10-11)
2. The Apostle is instructing him how to address the problem and encouraging him.
 - a. The Jews who were causing trouble had to be silenced. (Vs. 11)
(*There were Cretans in the audience on Pentecost.* ... Acts 2: 8-11)
 - b. Titus was to rebuke them for their wicked culture. (Vs. 13)

3. Those who come into the church must leave the world's culture and conform to the culture of Heaven.
 - a. Multiculturalism does not work even in the secular world.
(*Current problem in U.S. – compare – Muslim problem in Europe.*)
 - b. **Rom. 8: 29** – For those whom He foreknew, He also foreordained to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;
 - c. **Rom. 12: 2** – And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is,...
 - d. **Jude 4** – For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who
(cf. **Rom 6:1**) – turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master ...
12 – These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, ...

I. Godly elders are necessary to regulate the conduct of members of the congregation.

Verses 5-9

A. Men are chosen as elders based on their character and reputation.

1. They must be above reproach.
2. The elder's family must also be above reproach.
3. When elders correct the erring, the erring will respect them. (*not point to their sin*)

B. Men are chosen as elders because of their temperament.

1. They are not people who are prone to excesses. (*temperate ... act – not react*)
2. Troublemakers can try the patience of even godly men.
3. Dealing with longstanding issues that some will not let rest can be frustrating.

C. Men are chosen for elders who understand the doctrine enough to refute error.

1. False teachers know some scriptures and make textual arguments.
2. Erring teachers are often passionate about their errors and capable of persuasion.
3. It takes both knowledge and courage to stand face to face with charismatic teachers.

D. It was and is important to have elders in every city because :

1. By nature mankind is prone toward wanting his own way. (*We readily stray.*)
2. Satan will always seek a foothold in every congregation. (*every Christian's heart*)
- * 3. At this time the New Testament had not yet been written and compiled.

II. The heart that is not transformed is filled with evil.

A. Becoming a Christian requires a change from the inside out.

1. **Rom 12: 2** – And do not be conformed to this world,
but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,
2. The lifestyle in Christ is completely different from that in the world.
II Cor. 5: 17 – Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation;
old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

B. Without Christ in one's heart, the world totally corrupts his heart.

Jer. 17: 10 – The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick;
Who can understand it?

C. When one's heart is corrupted with evil, it affects the way he sees the world.

Vs. 15 – To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving,
nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.

D. When a person's heart is corrupted by evil it causes sin to be present in his life.

1. **Matt. 12 : 33-35** Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. **34** You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. **35** The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil.
2. The evil heart feels no guilt for the wickedness it produces.
I Tim. 4: 1-2 But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, **2** by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron,

III. Unconverted people in the church do great harm to the cause of Christ.

A. Congregations have some members who haven't become disciples of the Christ.

1. Those who have obeyed the gospel without faith are not “born again, regenerated.”
 - a. **Rom. 6: 17** – But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, **18** and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.
 - b. Many have been taught the gospel facts and have obeyed the gospel facts, but were just conforming (**obeying**) to that form of doctrine w/o their heart in it.
2. In the past, our emphasis on obedience caused many just to obey commands.

B. Baptizing the unconverted has caused great harm within the church.

1. Baptism without faith is just legalistic obedience and it does not remove sin.
 - a. It produces “members” who are incapable of spiritual thinking.
 - b. Unconverted “members” tend to bring their culture into the church with them.
2. When secular minded people become leaders, :
 - a. They take the spirituality out of the church.
 - b. Secular minded leaders are most often legalistic. (*Run the church like a business*)
 - c. They do not aggressively pursue the mission of the church.

C. Unconverted church members often live like people of the world.

1. Vs. 16 – They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.
2. The proof of the tree is in the fruit it bears. Remember : **Matt. 12: 33-35**
3. Only those who have surrendered in obedience to Christ are IN Him.
 - a. **I John 2: 4-5** The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; **5** but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him:
 - b. **I John 5: 2-4** By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. **3** For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. **4** For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith.

IV. Those unconverted church members who live like the devil hurt God’s church.**A. Christians who practice sin provide cover for the weak to hide behind.**

1. “*There are too many hypocrites in the church.*”

III. - Deacon cursed loudly at referee during basket ball game on Saturday night and then officiated at the Lord’s table on Sunday. Visitor never returned.
2. The truth is : ... One must be smaller than a hypocrite to hide behind one, but the weak are easily offended.

B. Christians who practice sin discredit the message of the church.

1. When a Christian causes offense he discredits the message of the church, the gospel.

II Cor. 6: 3 – giving no cause for offense in anything, so that the ministry will not be discredited,

2. When the women of the church do not behave themselves properly, the gospel is dishonored.

Titus 2: 4-5 so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵ to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.

- a. Family problems not only hurt your family, they hurt the church.
 - b. When a Christian quarrels with the neighbors they are alienated from the church.
3. The way a Christian acts in the workplace affects the church.
 - a. **I Tim. 6: 1** – All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine will not be spoken against.
 - b. *“And you call yourself a Christian.”*

V. Those Christians who live like people of the world are not acceptable to God.

A. What a horrible thing to have God view a person as “detestable.”

1. This same word is also translated as “**abominable**.”
2. It means abhorrent, disgusting, foul, ...
3. Those who are detestable will NOT be saved.

Rev. 21: 8 – But for the cowardly and untrustworthy and abominable (detestable) and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

B. God considers those Christians who live like people in the world as “worthless.”

1. Strong defines “**worthless**” as : “not passing the test, not approved”
 - a. He says the word is “properly used of coins.”
 - b. Thus, indicating it’s a word descriptive of counterfeit money, money of no value.
2. We’ve seen God’s attitude toward the worthless servant in the parable of the talents.

Matt. 25: 30 – Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

CONCLUSION :

- A. God gave us this text to admonish us to avoid a very dangerous pitfall. The draw of the world, the pressure of the culture in which we live.

B. Preachers have a responsibility to admonish us to strengthen our weaknesses.

1. **Titus 1: 13** – This testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith,

2. Preachers must sound out the warning and call brethren to repentance, even when they don't want to hear it.

II Tim. 4: 1-2 I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: **2** preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

C. We have a responsibility to admonish each other on a daily basis.

1. **Eph. 6** ... Satan is making war against our souls on a daily basis.

2. In response, we are instructed to have each other's back on a daily basis.

Heb. 3: 13 – But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

D. The pull of the world is strong.

1. We have elders to keep us on the true path. ... **FOLLOW THEM !**

a. They are not just secular administrators of the church.

b. They are accountable to God for your souls.

2. Both Individually and collectively, we must keep working to build our faith stronger and stronger.

a. Feed it.

b. Exercise it.

3. Keep active in the work of the Lord. (*never go astray while plowing straight furrow*)

INVITATION :

*** May none of our lives ever deny our blessed Lord who died for us.**

*** May we never be worthless or detestable in God's eyes.**

If you have strayed or become inactive ... now it the time to renew your commitment.

If you are not in Christ, you stand before Him without hope.

He stands inviting you into His arms of safety.

Lesson Text :**Titus 1: 5-16**

5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, **6** *namely*, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. **7** For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, **8** but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, **9** holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

10 For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, **11** who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not *teach* for the sake of sordid gain. **12** One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." **13** This testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith, **14** not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth. **15** To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. **16** They profess to know God, but by *their* deeds they deny *Him*, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.