**SERMON OUTLINE**

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| **SERMON TITLE:** | The Dangers of Extremism |
| **SERMON REFERENCE:** | Titus 2:14-15 |
| **LWF SERMON NUMBER:** | #1772 |
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1. INTRODUCTION
   1. Grace is a wonderful attribute of God.
   2. We are saved by the grace of God.
   3. The grace of God affirms something, the grace of God tells us to avoid something, and the grace of God achieves something.
   4. Perfectionism and extremism are the enemies of grace.
      1. The cause of Christ has been deeply hurt by extremists with misguided zeal.
         1. These are those who need to understand more about the grace of our Lord.
   5. In today’s message, we will look at the grace of God and the dangers of extremism.
2. grace affirms zeal (titus 2:14-15)
   1. Grace affirms that we are to be zealous of good works.
   2. What we need in churches today is zeal.
      1. We need a burning, passionate, and emotional zeal for the Lord Jesus.
      2. Our Lord would rather have us out and out against Him than to have us lukewarm and pretending to be for Him.
         1. The middle of the road is a bad place to drive and a bad place to live.
         2. We ought to be all out, one hundred percent for the Lord Jesus Christ.
   3. We ought to be zealous for the Word of God and for truth.
   4. There are certain things that are non-negotiable.
      1. There are certain hills that are big enough to die on.
      2. There are certain things that we ought to be willing to let bring division.
         1. It is better to be divided by truth than to be united in error.
      3. Jesus did not come to make all of us jettison truth in order to get along.
         1. Matthew 10:34
         2. One of the most divisive things that has come along is truth.
   5. We are not to be moderate about some things.
      1. For example, if a man’s house in on fire and his children are perishing in the flames, then he ought not to be moderate about the rescue.
      2. We are not to love the Lord Jesus moderately.
         1. We need to be zealous about our love for the Lord.
            1. The word “zealous” means “to be on fire.”

It means to be aflame with the love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. grace avoids extremism (titus 3:9-10)
   1. There is a zeal that is divisive, destructive, and deadly.
      1. It can divide homes, churches, and communities.
      2. Misguided zeal is to find an error and try to perpetuate it or to find a principle and overdo it, even if it is a good principle.
         1. Principles are like tools.
            1. A person can take a hammer and build a house with it, or they can use it to hurt someone.

Anything taken to an extreme can become a bad thing.

* 1. We need to learn the difference between zeal and moderation.
     1. Philippians 4:5
        1. This passage does not mean to let our lukewarmness be known unto all men.
        2. We are to let our moderation, our reasonableness, be known to all men.
     2. Zeal and moderation go together if properly understood.
     3. Zeal and moderation are not enemies; they are friends.
  2. Extremism is the enemy of both zeal and moderation.
  3. Extremism is taking a principle and distorting it.
     1. For example, amplification is good; but amplification overdone can cause distortion and pain.
  4. Extremism is the enemy of the Gospel of the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
     1. It is part of our fallen nature to want to be extreme, and it is very counterproductive.
        1. For example, in Titus 2, Paul tells us to be zealous.
           1. But in Titus 3:1, Paul tells Timothy to teach the saints to be good citizens and to honor the king and the government.
        2. Titus 3:2
     2. Some of our Christian causes are lost because of the extremism of the people who stand for those causes.
        1. We hurt our cause by extremism.
           1. This is not talking about compromise.
        2. We approach others like they are the enemy.
           1. Titus 3:3

We may think of them as ungodly sinners, but Paul said that so we were before the grace of God found us.

They are living in sin because that’s what sinners do.

* + - 1. People need to see the grace of God in our lives.
    1. This doesn’t mean that we compromise, but we need to learn to live by grace.
  1. The cause of Christ has been hurt by misguided zeal.
     1. The Bible gives us some examples:
        1. Jesus was in Samaria, and the Samaritans were mistreating the Lord Jesus Christ.
           1. James and John were there with Jesus, and they became very zealous for Jesus.

Luke 9:54-56

Their manner of spirit was of misguided zealots.

* + - * 1. The cause of Christ is sometimes hurt far more in the house of friends than in the house of its enemies.
      1. Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane praying before the crucifixion.
         1. Jesus had already told Simon Peter that He was going to the cross.

Matthew 16:21-23

* + - * 1. Jesus took Peter, James, and John with Him to watch and pray.

Matthew 26:36-38

* + - * 1. Jesus began to pray and intercede, and then the soldiers came to take Him.

Peter awoke out of his sleep.

He had been sleeping when he should have been praying.

Peter pulled his sword and cut off the ear of Malchus, the servant of the high priest.

John 18:10

* + - * 1. Jesus rebuked Peter, and He healed the servant supernaturally and miraculously.

Luke 22:51

* + - * 1. Peter was full of misguided zeal.

He had the wrong enemy.

Malchus was a servant of the high priest.

He was a slave.

Many times, we are fighting those who are slaves of Satan.

Ephesians 6:12

He used the wrong weapon.

He had a sword.

2 Corinthians 10:4

Later on, on the day of Pentecost, Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit when he used the two-edged sword of God’s Word.

Acts 2:1-41

Three thousand were not killed but were made alive with the Sword of the Spirit.

He used the wrong strength.

He was in the flesh.

He was sleeping when he should have been praying.

When he awoke with carnal fleshly zeal, he messed things up.

He had the wrong attitude.

He was angry.

James 1:20

What kind of testimony was this for the Lord Jesus Christ?

* + 1. It is not that we are not to be zealous, but we are to be zealous of good works.
    2. The extremism that has come into the church of the Lord Jesus Christ does more damage than it does good.
  1. Someone has described a zealot (a fanatic) as someone who having lost sight of their goal, doubles their speed.
     1. These things are foolish.
        1. Titus 3:9
           1. “Foolish questions” here means things that are light and vapid.
     2. They are profitless.
        1. Titus 3:9
        2. They do not amount to anything.
        3. There are those who can debate a theological question or issue, but they are not growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
     3. They are fruitless.
        1. Titus 3:9
           1. They do not produce any fruit.
        2. Some of the greatest extremists in the Bible were the Pharisees.
           1. Jesus said of the Pharisees that they traversed land and sea to make a proselyte.

Matthew 23:15

They were zealous to make converts.

* + - * 1. They had taken the Ten Commandments and made 613 laws out of them.
        2. The Lord Jesus said that once they had made a convert, that convert was “twice-fold the child of Hell.”

Matthew 23:15

* + - * 1. Matthew 23:23

The Pharisees would take nine leaves from a mint plant for themselves and give the tenth leaf to God.

But they omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, justice, mercy and faith.

* + - * 1. Matthew 23:24
        2. They took small idiosyncrasies and made them their whole world.
    1. They are divisive.
       1. Titus 3:10
          1. Reject them.

It is their problem, and we cannot make ourselves sick in order to try and make them well.

* + - * 1. The word “heretic” means a “divider,” “one that brings division.”
      1. They are self-willed people.
      2. They want to bicker, judge, and criticize.
  1. Extremism can do a person damage by taking a good thing and distorting it.
     1. For example, we ought to have a quiet time, but some people can become slaves to their quiet time.
        1. If they do not have a quiet time, then they are under a burden of guilt.
        2. The Bible does not give any instructions about a quiet time.
           1. There are some general principles, but there are no laws about a quiet time.
        3. Some can even be under a burden of guilt about needing sleep.
           1. Mark 6:31
        4. This is not speaking against a quiet time, but against getting under a legalistic burden.
     2. We can do the same about Bible study.
        1. We ought to read the Bible and love the Bible.
           1. But we can get under such a burden about studying the Bible that it becomes legalistic.
        2. Some believe that if they read so many chapters, then they have done their duty, and they don’t read anything else.
           1. The Apostle Paul read other things.

When he was in prison he asked for his parchments, the scroll, and books.

He wanted to be a well-rounded individual.

* + - 1. Read and study the Bible, but do not become a fanatic in the wrong sense of the word.
    1. Separation is a godly thing.
       1. We are to be separate.
       2. Jesus was holy, undefiled, and separate from sin; but He was not separate from sinners.
       3. There is in Bible-believing churches today a thing called secondary separation.
          1. They say that we are not to have fellowship with unbelievers and compromisers.

They believe we are to come out from among them and be separate.

* + - * 1. This is extremism.
      1. Jesus was crucified because He was a friend of sinners.
         1. Matthew 9:12
      2. Biblical separation is not isolation.
         1. It is not dividing and torturing the body of the Lord Jesus Christ.
    1. There is the principle of submission.
       1. A wife should be submissive to her husband, but this is not subjugation.
       2. If the husband tells the wife to do something that is wrong, then she should not do it.
          1. There is a higher authority than the husband.
       3. There are men who have used the principle of submission, rather than as a hammer to build their house, as a weapon to hurt their wife.
       4. Jesus is the head of the church.
          1. He never forces us to do anything.
          2. He leads by love.
       5. Children ought to be submissive to their parents.
          1. But some parents are so over-zealous in the matter of making children comply that they are raising rebels.

They have not learned the grace of God in the home.

This does not negate the principle of children obeying their parents.

But we need to put the grace of God in what we do and how we live.

* + 1. There are people telling others that they ought to have as many children as they biologically can.
       1. Some people have been put under a tremendous burden about this.
       2. There are always people who push a principle to an extreme, putting others under bondage.
    2. People can go to extremes about what type of music to listen to.
       1. There is to be sweet reasonableness.
    3. Some people disagree on applauding in church and the lifting of hands.
       1. Psalm 47:1
       2. 1 Timothy 2:8
  1. A principle can be used to destroy other people, and we can get into arguments about things that really do not make that much difference.
     1. This is not talking about abandoning great Biblical principles or compromising truth.
     2. We should avoid extremism.

1. grace achieves victory (titus 3:15)
   1. Grace is not an excuse to sin.
   2. Grace is not an encouragement to laziness.
      1. We are to serve God with all of our heart.
      2. We ought to study to show ourselves approved unto God.
         1. 2 Timothy 2:15
      3. All to Jesus we surrender.
2. CONCLUSION
   1. Today’s message is not against zeal, and it’s not in favor of compromise.
   2. But there are two things that are enemies of grace:
      1. Perfectionism
      2. Extremism.
   3. People will not always agree with each other on everything.
      1. We need to keep the main thing, the main thing.
      2. And the main thing is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
   4. Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
   5. Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
      1. Romans 3:23
      2. Romans 10:9-10
      3. Romans 10:13
      4. Acts 16:31
      5. John 3:16