

SERMON OUTLINE

SERMON TITLE: The Dangers of Extremism

SERMON REFERENCE: Titus 2:14-15

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Grace is a wonderful attribute of God.
- b) We are saved by the grace of God.
- c) The grace of God affirms something, the grace of God tells us to avoid something, and the grace of God achieves something.
- d) Perfectionism and extremism are the enemies of grace.
 - i) 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.
- e) 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)

- a) Grace affirms that we are to be zealous of good works.
- b) What we need in churches today is zeal.
 - i) We need a burning, passionate, and emotional zeal for the Lord Jesus.
 - ii) 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.
- c) We ought to be zealous for the Word of God and for truth.
- d) There are certain things that are non-negotiable.
 - i) There are certain hills that are big enough to die on.
 - ii) 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.
 - iii) 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.
- e) We are not to be moderate about some things.
 - i) For example, if a man's house is on fire and his children are perishing in the flames, then he ought not to be moderate about the rescue.
 - ii) We are not to love the Lord Jesus moderately.
 - (1) We need to be zealous about our love for the Lord.
 - (a) The word "zealous" means "to be on fire."
 - (i) It means to be aflame with the love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

3) GRACE AVOIDS EXTREMISM (TITUS 3:9-10)

- a) There is a zeal that is divisive, destructive, and deadly.
 - i) It can divide homes, churches, and communities.
 - ii) 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.

- (a) A person can take a hammer and build a house with it, or they can use it to hurt someone.
 - (i) Anything taken to an extreme can become a bad thing.
- b) We need to learn the difference between zeal and moderation.
 - i) 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.
 - ii) Zeal and moderation go together if properly understood.
 - iii) Zeal and moderation are not enemies; they are friends.
- c) Extremism is the enemy of both zeal and moderation.
- d) Extremism is taking a principle and distorting it.
 - i) For example, amplification is good; but amplification overdone can cause distortion and pain.
- e) Extremism is the enemy of the Gospel of the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
 - i) 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.
 - (a) 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
 - ii) 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.
 - (a) This is not talking about compromise.
 - (2) We approach others like they are the enemy.
 - (a) Titus 3:3
 - (i) We may think of them as ungodly sinners, but Paul said that so we were before the grace of God found us.
 - (ii) They are living in sin because that's what sinners do.
 - (3) People need to see the grace of God in our lives.
 - iii) This doesn't mean that we compromise, but we need to learn to live by grace.
- f) The cause of Christ has been hurt by misguided zeal.
 - i) The Bible gives us some examples:
 - (1) Jesus was in Samaria, and the Samaritans were mistreating the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (a) James and John were there with Jesus, and they became very zealous for Jesus.
 - (i) Luke 9:54-56
 - 1. Their manner of spirit was of misguided zealots.

- (b) The cause of Christ is sometimes hurt far more in the house of friends than in the house of its enemies.
- (2) Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane praying before the crucifixion.
 - (a) Jesus had already told Simon Peter that He was going to the cross.
 - (i) Matthew 16:21-23
 - (b) Jesus took Peter, James, and John with Him to watch and pray.
 - (i) Matthew 26:36-38
 - (c) Jesus began to pray and intercede, and then the soldiers came to take Him.
 - (i) Peter awoke out of his sleep.
 - 1. He had been sleeping when he should have been praying.
 - (ii) Peter pulled his sword and cut off the ear of Malchus, the servant of the high priest.
 - 1. John 18:10
 - (d) Jesus rebuked Peter, and He healed the servant supernaturally and miraculously.
 - (i) Luke 22:51
 - (e) Peter was full of misguided zeal.
 - (i) He had the wrong enemy.
 - 1. Malchus was a servant of the high priest.
 - a. He was a slave.
 - 2. Many times, we are fighting those who are slaves of Satan.
 - a. Ephesians 6:12
 - (ii) He used the wrong weapon.
 - 1. He had a sword.
 - 2. 2 Corinthians 10:4
 - 3. 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.
 - a. Acts 2:1-41
 - i. Three thousand were not killed but were made alive with the Sword of the Spirit.
 - (iii) He used the wrong strength.
 - 1. He was in the flesh.
 - a. He was sleeping when he should have been praying.
 - b. When he awoke with carnal fleshly zeal, he messed things up.
 - (iv) He had the wrong attitude.
 - 1. He was angry.
 - 2. James 1:20
 - 3. What kind of testimony was this for the Lord Jesus Christ?
- ii) It is not that we are not to be zealous, but we are to be zealous of good works.

- iii) The extremism that has come into the church of the Lord Jesus Christ does more damage than it does good.
- g) Someone has described a zealot (a fanatic) as someone who having lost sight of their goal, doubles their speed.
 - i) These things are foolish.
 - (1) Titus 3:9
 - (a) “Foolish questions” here means things that are light and vapid.
 - ii) 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.
 - iii) They are fruitless.
 - (1) Titus 3:9
 - (a) They do not produce any fruit.
 - (2) Some of the greatest extremists in the Bible were the Pharisees.
 - (a) Jesus said of the Pharisees that they traversed land and sea to make a proselyte.
 - (i) Matthew 23:15
 - (ii) They were zealous to make converts.
 - (b) They had taken the Ten Commandments and made 613 laws out of them.
 - (c) The Lord Jesus said that once they had made a convert, that convert was “twice-fold the child of Hell.”
 - (i) Matthew 23:15
 - (d) Matthew 23:23
 - (i) The Pharisees would take nine leaves from a mint plant for themselves and give the tenth leaf to God.
 - 1. But they omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, justice, mercy and faith.
 - (e) Matthew 23:24
 - (f) They took small idiosyncrasies and made them their whole world.
 - iv) They are divisive.
 - (1) Titus 3:10
 - (a) Reject them.
 - (i) It is their problem, and we cannot make ourselves sick in order to try and make them well.
 - (b) The word “heretic” means a “divider,” “one that brings division.”
 - (2) They are self-willed people.
 - (3) They want to bicker, judge, and criticize.
 - h) Extremism can do a person damage by taking a good thing and distorting it.
 - i) 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.
 - (a) 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.
 - (a) Mark 6:31
 - (4) This is not speaking against a quiet time, but against getting under a legalistic burden.
- ii) We can do the same about Bible study.
- (1) We ought to read the Bible and love the Bible.
 - (a) 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.
 - (a) The Apostle Paul read other things.
 - (i) When he was in prison he asked for his parchments, the scroll, and books.
 - (ii) He wanted to be a well-rounded individual.
 - (3) Read and study the Bible, but do not become a fanatic in the wrong sense of the word.
- iii) 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.
 - (a) They say that we are not to have fellowship with unbelievers and compromisers.
 - (i) They believe we are to come out from among them and be separate.
 - (b) This is extremism.
 - (4) Jesus was crucified because He was a friend of sinners.
 - (a) Matthew 9:12
 - (5) Biblical separation is not isolation.
 - (a) It is not dividing and torturing the body of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- iv) 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.
 - (a) 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.

- (a) He never forces us to do anything.
- (b) He leads by love.
- (5) Children ought to be submissive to their parents.
 - (a) But some parents are so over-zealous in the matter of making children comply that they are raising rebels.
 - (i) They have not learned the grace of God in the home.
 - (ii) This does not negate the principle of children obeying their parents.
 - 1. But we need to put the grace of God in what we do and how we live.
 - v) 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.
 - vi) People can go to extremes about what type of music to listen to.
 - (1) There is to be sweet reasonableness.
 - vii) Some people disagree on applauding in church and the lifting of hands.
 - (1) Psalm 47:1
 - (2) 1 Timothy 2:8
 - i) 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.
 - i) This is not talking about abandoning great Biblical principles or compromising truth.
 - ii) We should avoid extremism.
- 4) GRACE ACHIEVES VICTORY (TITUS 3:15)
 - a) Grace is not an excuse to sin.
 - b) Grace is not an encouragement to laziness.
 - i) We are to serve God with all of our heart.
 - ii) We ought to study to show ourselves approved unto God.
 - (1) 2 Timothy 2:15
 - iii) All to Jesus we surrender.
- 5) CONCLUSION
 - a) Today's message is not against zeal, and it's not in favor of compromise.
 - b) But there are two things that are enemies of grace:
 - i) Perfectionism
 - ii) Extremism.
 - c) People will not always agree with each other on everything.
 - i) We need to keep the main thing, the main thing.
 - ii) And the main thing is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
 - d) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.

- e) 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.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16