

A Pattern of Sound Speech

“Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.” (Titus 2:6-8)

Introduction

1. Paul’s letter to Titus emphasizes the need for sound doctrine among the churches on the island of Crete.
2. The sound doctrine described in Titus chapter 2 includes property behavior for older men, older women, younger women and younger men.
3. For the younger men, Paul instructs them to be sober minded, then proceeds to instruct Titus in the pattern he himself was to leave for the younger men to follow: Showing yourself to be a pattern of...
 - a. Good works.
 - b. In doctrine, showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility
 - c. Sound speech that cannot be condemned.
4. This pattern that Titus was to be, we must aspire to follow in our own lives.

Discussion

I. Sound Speech

- A. Sound = GK *hygies*. “Sound, to make whole, restore to health. Meph. Teaching that does not deviate from the truth.” (Strong’s)
 1. As a sound body is free of disease or injury (whole, well), speech that is sound is free of corruption but full of truth.
 2. Mark 12:17-34: Jesus “answered well” when asked, “what is the greatest commandment.”
 3. 1 Timothy 6:3: “The words of our Lord Jesus Christ” are described by Paul as “wholesome words” to which the faithful ought to consent to and teach.
- B. Titus was to be a pattern of “sound doctrine” and “sound speech.”
 1. That is, the substance of the doctrine or teaching itself was to be according to truth, pure, free of corruption (Eph. 4:29) or twisting of words (2 Pet. 3:16).
 2. Likewise, the *manner* and *substance* of his conversation in presenting that sound doctrine to his hearers was to be equally sound.
 3. The audience in consideration included both disciples and opponents of Christ looking for a reason to accuse (see Titus 1:14-16).

II. “That Cannot Be Condemned.”

- A. Paul seems to have in mind the whole person in speech and behavior.
 1. One may speak words of truth but do so in a way that is crass or irreverent.
 2. Opponents may be opposed to the name of Jesus or even to the idea that salvation is found in Jesus alone, but one thing they ought not be able to oppose is the integrity and uprightness of our words and behavior.

3. Phil. 2:15: “that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.”
4. 1 Peter 2:12, 15: “that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world... For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.” (See also 1 Peter 3:8-17).

III. Sound Speech Ought to be Expressed through Behavior

- A. A subtle but profound point is the correlation between his speech and his behavior.
 1. Our speech is described as expression of the heart.
 2. Sound speech ought to also agree with one’s manner of life.
 3. We cannot dissociate our speech from what is in our hearts, likewise there should not be inconsistencies between our speech and our behavior. That is hypocrisy.
- B. “God knows my heart.”
 1. An expression used by some to justify less than reverent behavior or speech, this is a misapplication of “the Lord looks at the heart” and not the appearance of a man (1 Sam. 16:7).
 2. Paul affirms the correct teaching of Jesus, “*For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks*” (Matt 12:34; cf. Matt. 15:17-20).
 3. And again, “*These people honor Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me*” (Matt. 15:8).
 4. Yes, God looks at the heart and not appearance in terms of strength and stature, but He affirms that speech and behavior are the ultimate expression of the substance of our hearts.
- C. The “Pattern” we pursue blends soundness of speech with soundness of life.
 1. Titus 2:7: Good works, reverence, incorruptibility.
 2. 1 Timothy 4:12: Word, conduct, love, spirit, faith and purity.
 3. As we explore God’s Grace for Sound Speech, we cannot separate our speech from our behavior.
 4. As a minister of the word, Titus’ purpose among the churches was not personal gain or status.
 5. Rather, to, by his teaching and example, bring the believers into the way of life that reflects the very nature and character of Jesus Christ who redeemed us by His own blood (Titus 2:11-14; 3:7-8).

Conclusion

1. Ministers of Christ do more than preach from the pulpit. They teach by their very way of life.
2. As we seek to embrace God’s grace for sound speech, we likewise recognize that this is not limited to our words.
3. As we teach our heart to speak, sound speech must also instruct our behavior.
4. That both, we express the character and behavior of Jesus Christ.