“Be Ready unto Every Good Work”

TEXT: “Put them in mind to be in subjection to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready unto every good work” (Titus 3:1).

INTRODUCTION

The people of Crete had a reputation for laziness (1:12, 13). Evidently, they had gained such a reputation because they deserved it. Paul told Titus to “reprove them sharply” for such. Maybe it was that reputation in the back of Paul’s mind that caused him in this letter to Titus to place so much emphasis on “good works.” They were to “be ready unto every good work” in 3:1. They were to “maintain good works” in 3:8 and in 3:14.

I. “BE READY”

This attitude of readiness is the most important aspect of this passage. Too often the case is that no matter what the need, we just are not ready to serve. Paul’s whole ministry seemed to be built on the attitude of readiness. He was ready to preach anywhere (Romans 1:14-16). He was ready for his bonds (Acts 21:13). He was even ready to die (2 Timothy 4:6-8). Peter challenges us to be ready with an answer to everyone who asks a reason for our hope (1 Peter 3:15).

Here is the real key to congregational development: For churches to grow, members must be ready to serve. If members are committed to the Lord, they will be ready and willing to do anything He wants.

II. “UNTO EVERY”

This state of readiness is unlimited in its scope of action. Needs are not always in the area we prefer to work. Paul’s preference for service was not in a jail in Caesarea. But he served there in order to preach to Felix, Festus, and Agrippa. He certainly would not have chosen to serve on a boat in a storm headed toward Rome as a prisoner. But he used the opportunity to teach God’s Word and to heal sick people on the island of Miletus when the ship wrecked. He would not have chosen to serve in a Roman prison, chained between two guards. But he taught those guards the way of truth and some were converted.

Exclusive servants, ready only to serve in their chosen area, are seldom usable by God. Philip is an example of one ready to go as the Lord led. He could serve as a deacon to serve tables, as an evangelist to Samaria, as a personal worker in the desert to the Ethiopian eunuch, or as a located preacher and family man in Caesarea. Our prayer needs to be this: “Lord, where can You use me? I am ready to be used anywhere You want me.” Does the church need physical labor? Does it need someone to help the needy? Does it need someone to teach the lost? Does it need someone to work with children? “Be ready unto every good work.”

III. “GOOD WORK”

Christians are to be ready for every good work as the opportunity arises (Galatians 6:10). We were created in Christ for that purpose (Ephesians 2:10). The widow in deed in 1 Timothy 5:10 was to have a reputation for good works. The greatest key may well be in Titus 3:14: “And let our people also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.” The good to be done is tied indelibly to needs. The result of good works is fruit born in God’s service.

CONCLUSION

Are you ready? For every good work? If not, you need to make some changes now. The Christian is created for good works.

—Leon Barnes

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