

TRUTH WHICH IS AFTER GODLINESS
Titus 1:1; 2:12

This subject has been discussed before, but I feel there is a point which I left out concerning godliness. It has to do with the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness (Titus 1:1). We are admonished to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts" (Titus 2:12). The first is what we believe, i.e. doctrine, the second is what we do, i.e. experience.

A. According to the faith of God's elect.

There are many who claim to have faith, but is it the faith of God's elect? No one except the elect of God have true saving faith. Faith is the gift of God and only the chosen of God are given this gift (Ephesians 1:4; 2:8). I claimed to have faith once, but it was not the faith that I have now since sovereign grace redeemed me. Those who say they have faith, and that faith is not the faith of God's elect, usually depart from it (1 Timothy 4:1), or substitute morality. Believers are not the elect because they have faith, but they have faith because they are the elect.

B. The truth which is after godliness, i.e. doctrine.

Those who have true saving faith acknowledge the truth which is after godliness. They believe acknowledging the doctrine which is after godliness fits them for holiness.

What is godliness? It can be any of these:

- (1) God-likeness.
- (2) The truth concerning God.
- (3) Believing the truth concerning God.
- (4) Freedom from religion.

Religion is man's effort to establish a righteousness with his god. Righteousness is freedom from the old nature. Holiness is freedom from the flesh. Godliness is freedom from religion.

We are to deny ungodliness in our experience, but we also are to deny the ungodliness of any teaching which is not the truth of God. By this I mean we are to deny any teaching which is not Biblical concerning God, i.e. it is ungodly. Note the words in the instructions to Titus in this epistle, truth (vs.1), his word (vs.3), faithful word, sound doctrine (vs.9), sound doctrine (2:1), and in doctrine uncorruptness (2:7).

There was erroneous teaching in Crete (1:10-16; 3:9). All this teaching was to be denied because it was not truth which is after godliness. There is a major emphasis on the Deity of Christ (1:4; 2:10,13; 3:4,6), so I believe this was a real problem in Crete. What is the teaching today that we must deny as not being after godliness? or not after God, or Christ, or the Spirit, or the Word of God, or the Gospel, or of salvation?

I think you will agree with me that most of the teaching we hear from preachers and teachers on these subjects is not after godliness.

(1) They teach from a Bible which is not the Word of God. For them any translation is good even though it omits the truths which are fundamental to the faith.

(2) They teach a God who is not the God of the Bible. He is not sovereign in the world or in salvation.

(3) They teach a Christ who is not the Christ of the Bible.

- (4) They teach a Spirit who is not the Holy Spirit of the Bible.
- (5) They teach a Gospel which is not the Gospel of the Grace of God.
- (6) They teach a salvation which is not the salvation of the Bible.

All these are not "the truth which is after godliness," and which we must deny if we are to be faithful to God.

The faithful Word and sound doctrine (vs.9) are set against the errors of false teachers (1:10-16; 3:9). There are the commandments of men (1:14). What harm do they do to the truth? (See Mark 7:7-9,13; Colossians 2:20-22). Sound doctrine must be believed and used to restrain the lie. These teachers in their teaching, and those who do not deny their ungodly teaching, fulfill Paul's warning to Timothy. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned into fables" (2 Timothy 4:3,4). They will seek instruction conformable to their wishes and what makes them feel good.

Many of these teachers teach such doctrines that make them popular and gain the confidence of the people. They do so under false pretences to gain money from the people. They disguise it under the need to help the poor, or the persecuted, or the support of the "gospel," i.e. the one they preach. The true believer denies any teaching which is not according to the truth, i.e. that which is anti-God, and anti-Christ.

Titus by holding fast the faithful Word and sound doctrine was to exhort and convince. He was to oppose all false teachers and false systems of philosophy by teaching the truth. These false teachers were called "vain talkers and deceivers" (1:7). He was to exhort those who knew the truth, and who were denying the lies, and needed encouragement to follow in the truth. He was to convince those who were ignorant and opposed to the truth by teaching sound doctrine.

C. Believer's experience in denying ungodliness.

To those who acknowledged the truth which is after godliness belong a life which reveals it. It is not possible to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts if we do not hold sound doctrine and Biblical truth. A person may be moral, but without sound doctrine will eventually fall. The perverted Bibles do not lead to holiness because there is no power in them.

To deny ungodliness and believe the truth is to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (2:10). We deny ungodliness when we adorn the truth and sound doctrine. This adorning is to be inward (of the heart), and not outward (1 Timothy 2:9; 1 Peter 3:1-5). To adorn is to prove the faith and truth of the elect of God. To walk holy and humbly, and prove that there is a reality in Christ and the gospel (Ephesians 4-6; Colossians 3).

D. Good works. i.e. works of faith.

Good works of faith follow those who acknowledge the truth which is after godliness (2:14; 3:1,8,14). The opposite is found in 1:16. Good works are connected to faith and sound doctrine. I believe Paul emphasizes good works of faith because of the influence of the Judaizing teachers who put the works of the law above sound doctrine, and were in unbelief as to Paul's teaching. Titus was to "hold fast the faithful word as he had been taught," i.e. by Paul (1:9).

Most of the teaching of today concerning good works consists of singing in the choir, being an usher, teaching a S.S. class, going out on visitation, driving a bus, helping in Awana, etc., but is this what Paul means by good works? The Body of Christ is a spiritual Body. The good works which we are to do have been foreordained that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10). Christ our Head directs us to do them, and they are of faith if we would please Him.

What are the good works of faith?

- (1) Study to shew thyself approved unto God (2 Timothy 2:15).
- (2) Pray without ceasing (Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:17).
- (3) Put on the whole armour of God (Ephesians 6:12).
- (4) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly (Colossians 3:16).
- (5) Fight the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6:12).
- (6) Present your bodies a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1,2).
- (7) Offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually (Hebrews 13:15).
- (8) Meditate upon these things (1 Timothy 4:15).
- (9) Work out your own salvation (Philippians 2:12).
- (10) Be content in whatever state you are in (Philippians 2:14; 4:11).
- (11) Love one another (Ephesians 4:32-5:2; 1 Thessalonians 3:12).
- (12) Endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3).
- (13) Walk worthy of your calling (Ephesians 4:1; Colossians 1:10).
- (14) Rejoice in the Lord (Philippians 4:4).
- (15) Let this mind be in you (Philippians 2:5).
- (16) Set your affections on things above (Colossians 3:1,2).
- (17) Let the peace of God rule in your hearts (Colossians 3:15).
- (18) Reckon yourself dead to sin (Romans 6:11; Colossians 3:3).
- (19) Whatsoever you do do it unto the Lord (Colossians 3:17,23).

This list is not complete by any means, but should keep us on the right track, and allow us to see what pleases God in our life. These may not be visible to man, but they are to God who looks on the heart. May we be filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:11).