

## Navigating a New Year

Now that the holidays are over and we are in a new year, I wanted to try to put together some biblical text that might help in our current situations. My mind kept going to the book of Titus. These passages in particular. So, presented here, is the scripture and my thoughts. Perhaps they will help you navigate the un-still waters of this new year.

In this portion of a letter to Titus in Crete from Paul, he is instructing Titus to remind the Christians of their responsibilities, what their attitudes should be toward others and that through “*the kindness and love of God*” they (we) are all saved.

*Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Titus 3:1-7*

In this day, in our world, this is very poignant. Our country, nae the world, is being torn apart by malice so intense it has created chasms between the peoples of our population near and far. From political oppositions to religious differences, our daily lives are being presented with challenges that can cause those strongest in their faith to take pause.

Paul tells Titus “*to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates*”. He uses the word “obey”. He doesn’t say that you must agree with them, but you are instructed to obey or follow. As Christians, sometimes these officials’ directives differ from our own moral beliefs. We are not to judge, but “*be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.*”. This imperative is one not easily met. But something we must strive for daily.

This was written close to two thousand years ago (approx. 62 – 64 AD) long before social media, 24-hour news, internet, even TV, telephone or radio. When only word of mouth and the written word were means of communication. How much more important is this today in our world of instant communication? Where everything we say and do can be broadcast to hundreds, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of people in an instant. How much more do we need to guard our words and actions than at any other time in history? Remembering Paul’s statement “*For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.*” is a reminder that we ALL have had our shortcomings.

Speaking and acting in malice in response to our differences, unfortunately, is part of our makeup as humans. We feel like we need to defend our position on this or that. The good news is that those traits can be overcome. As Paul writes to the church at Philippi, “*I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.*” (Philippians 4:13)

Please know, I do not mean this as a lecture as I am guilty of having put my mouth in motion without my brain being in gear on numerous occasions. Sarcasm, to me, is an art-form. Many a time I have prayed for God to put His hand over my mouth when facing a touchy situation. Or literally biting my tongue to keep an opinion to myself. Taking the “high road” as it were. Believe me, it gets old!

What we do need to remember is that even when we are at our worst, our Savior is with us, “*But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us,...*” (Vs 4&5). Our “works” do not condemn us or save us, it is only through the mercy shown us that “*we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*”.

The most recent threat around the globe is of war. But, take heart as Jesus tells us to not be troubled in Matthew 24:6, [Mark 13:7](#) and [Luke 21:9](#)

*And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.*

Our world... our country... our own lives are being tossed hither and thus, even so; we can be at peace within ourselves by clasping to the truth of Jesus...

*Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. John 14:27(NKJV)*

Regardless of the state of the “world” your heart can be at peace. Open your heart to that peace. Let that peace rule you. Think of that peace throughout your day as you navigate the difficulties of life.

May His grace bring you peace today.



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