

b. We must also avoid harmful people

- 1) Heretics hurt unsuspecting Christians (v.10).
- 2) The word “*heretic*” refers to one who is divisive. He causes divisions and forms factions. The heretic tries to divide the congregation and get people to side with his unbiblical view.
 - ✧ *Throughout history, unbiblical religions often called true Christians heretics because they tried to lead people away from their religion to true faith in Christ alone. That kind of heretic is good, but that is not what Paul had in mind in this verse.*
- 3) After the local church has confronted a heretic one or two times about his divisive ways, if he does not change, they are to reject him (stay away from). Divisive people are dangerous.
 - ✧ *If you know someone who is divisive, stay away from him (or her). If he continues to come around you, bluntly tell him that you do not agree with him and that you cannot fellowship with him anymore. Though that may seem harsh, God has commanded it for your spiritual good.*
- 4) Such heretics have three problems:
 - a) They are *subverted* or have been turned to the worse. Something has turned them from the truth. Many good Christians have been turned around doctrinally by listening to false preaching, by reading unsound commentaries or articles, or by listening to unbiblical friends.
 - b) They are *sinning* against God.
 - c) They are being *self-condemned*. God will judge them.

Conclusion: God’s safety precautions are for our good. We must constantly affirm God’s faithful Word – read it, study it, meditate on it, memorise key verses, share it with others, and most of all live it! Then we must avoid all distractions. Trifle arguments distract! Heretics mislead! Avoid them all! Focus on learning and living the Bible!

Song: Only One Life - 395

Safety Precautions

8 November 2020 AM – Titus 3:8-11 – Tit20 – Scott Childs

Introduction: During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been forced to take many safety precautions that we may have never considered before. We have had to practice social distancing, wash our hands more frequently and more thoroughly, and limit travel. We have been reminded that viruses can spread quickly, silently and globally, causing great sickness and even death.

Our text this morning reveals that God as safety precautions for us spiritually as well.

Transition: As Paul neared the end of his letter, he gave Titus two safety precautions that he must follow and which we too must follow.

The first safety precaution is to ...

1. Constantly affirm Bible Truths

The precaution here to “*affirm constantly*” means to affirm strongly or to assert confidently. Titus was to declare these things to be absolutely true and necessary. There is a sense of urgency in this command. It must be repeatedly fulfilled. Just as with COVID-19, if we let down our guard spiritually, the result can be devastating.

a. We must constantly affirm the faithful word.

- 1) The *faithful saying* is God’s trustworthy Word and doctrine that Paul presented in this book.
- 2) Without re preaching the entire book, let us briefly review the faithful word that Paul had outlined.
 - a) We have a hope of eternal life, Tit 1:2
 - b) Churches need qualified pastors, Tit 1:6-9
 - c) True Christians have changed lives, Tit 1:9-16
 - d) Sound (i.e., healthy) doctrine is to be lived by everyone, Tit 2:1-10
 - e) God’s gracious salvation is for everyone, Tit 2:11
 - f) Grace teaches us how to live godly, Tit 2:12-14
 - g) Christians are to be submissive citizens, Tit 3:1-2
 - h) Christ saves by grace not works, Tit 3:4-6
 - i) Christ justifies by grace and gives hope, Tit 3:7
- 3) These things we must constantly affirm. We must declare

the regularly as God's truth for Christian living. We must affirm that they are not options but necessities.

- 4) Every preacher must constantly affirm these things, but every Christian must also. We must regularly affirm them in our thoughts, in our songs, in our lives, and in our witness for the Lord. God is telling us here that it is very important that we not forget the miracle that God did in us at salvation. We must study and know the Bible!

✧ *Back in the 1800s, Charles Spurgeon said, "Old-fashioned believers could give you chapter and verse for what they believed; but how few of such remain!"*

I fear that is even truer today! We need to know the Bible far better than we do.

b. We must constantly affirm the spiritual benefit

- 1) Constantly affirming these things will enable us to maintain good works for God's glory. We focussed on this a couple of weeks ago, so I will just say that good works include every aspect of a Christian's speech and conduct.
 - 2) Fleshing out these faithful sayings or biblical doctrines is both good and profitable.
 - a) It is profitable to your personal life. God blesses those who obey Him. (Jeremiah 17:7) "*Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.*"
 - b) It is profitable to your public life. Living a godly Christian life will make you a better parent, better citizen, better neighbour, and better friend.
- ✧ *Dwight L. Moody — "Out of 100 men, one will read the Bible, the other 99 will read the Christian."*
- c) It is profitable to those who observe your godly life. If your light is shining, it will lead others to safety in Christ. It will point others to Christ. (Matthew 5:16) "*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*"

The second safety precaution is to ...

2. Avoid All Distractions

a. We must avoid harmful conversations

- 1) We are to avoid harmful conversations. The word "*avoid*" means, to turn yourself around and go the other way. This is God's **command** not His suggestion.
 - a) Avoid *foolish questions* – avoid unwise questions about disagreements. These questions stir up arguments. We are to turn from these rather than trying to answer them.
 - b) Avoid *genealogies* – avoid studying lists of ancestors to see who has a better heritage. That is prideful.
 - c) Avoid *contentions* – avoid debates and quarrels. We are to contend for the faith, but defeating a person in a debate will seldom bring him to saving faith in Christ.
 - d) Avoid *strivings about the law* – avoid fights and disputes about God's law or the Bible.
- ✧ *Did you notice that all of these argumentative conversations have one thing in common? They are all motivated by pride. They also are trying to persuade you to turn from biblical truth to "another's" opinion.*
- 2) Such conversations are *unprofitable and vain*. They do not benefit anyone and they are useless.

✧ *The principle is the same for church and home. Quarrelling and fighting to defend our personal ideas never leads to peace.*
 - 3) Consider these words from the Proverbs:
 - a) (Proverbs 15:18) "*A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.*"
 - b) (Proverbs 18:6) "*A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes.*"
 - c) (Proverbs 26:17) "*He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears.*"
 - d) (Proverbs 28:25) "*He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife: but he that putteth his trust in the LORD shall be made fat.*"