The Facts of the Christian Life

Lesson for Sunday, August 8 (Titus 3)

INTRODUCTION:

* The television series, Dragnet, transitioned from a radio drama to a T.V. show in 1951 and became an instant hit. The series spawned several movies and newly created series in 1989.
* Sergeant Joe Friday’s famous line captured pop culture everywhere and is still embedded in our collective sub-conscience, “Just the facts ma’am.”
* In Titus 3, Paul is wrapping up his final thoughts to Titus on the Christian life. He could theologize about many things. However, Paul is concerned to summarize the Christian life.
* In essence, he wants Titus to know the spiritual facts and just the spiritual facts.

BIBLE STUDY:

1. The Facts of our Past Life (vs. 1-3)
   1. Paul opens the chapter with what could be considered a “Christian citizenship manual.” Christians must be model citizens by being subject to the powers (that is, the authority of civil law) by obedience (vs. 1-2).
   2. Paul then moves on, exhorting believers to examine our past lives (vs. 3). The emphasis concerns our former life before we were saved. We must recall what sin does to us in every dimension of our lives.
   3. First, sin affects us intellectually.
      1. Paul refers to our past as being foolish. He is referring to a fundamental lack of understanding. In the past, we were ignorant of spiritual things.
      2. Cf. Eph. 4:18 and Rom. 1:21-22
      3. Our foolishness drove us to disobedience. Jesus Himself said we loved darkness rather than light (John 3:19). The end of disobedience is deception.
   4. Second, sin affects us morally.
      1. We were stuck serving our own selfish lusts and pleasures.
      2. People without Christ desperately attempt to fill the hole in their lives with every conceivable substitute. They thrive on malice and envy, developing negative attitudes of ill-will toward others.
   5. Third, sin affects us socially.
      1. Paul’s point is simple: personal, intellectual and moral corruption inevitably lead to social corruption.
      2. We become hateful toward others. In short, there is just no getting along.
   6. IDEA: Have someone prepared to share what their life was like before they were saved. They need to keep it at 1-2 minutes and we want to be sure not to glorify sin. You may want to ask them to write it down and send it to you ahead of Sunday’s lesson. Or, have them take a few minutes and write down their personal story.
2. The Facts of our Present Life (vs. 4-6)
   1. Now Paul moves to our present lives as Christians.
   2. The amazing, infinite love of God cannot be missed in this passage. The whole Gospel is on display here.
   3. First, God the Father thought the Gospel.
      1. In four short words, God’s true thoughts about us are summarized. His kindness, mercy, love, and grace are fully expressed.
      2. Our salvation originates with God. C.S. Lewis once said, no one would have ‘thought up’ Christianity.
      3. What kind of a God who hates sin with all His being would become the very thing He hates just to rescue those who love doing what He hates?
      4. The Gospel at root is God’s Gospel. The thought of our salvation was in His heart before sin was performed by our hands.
   4. Second, God the Holy Spirit wrought the Gospel.
      1. The Holy Spirit regenerates us, renews us, and refreshes us. In Paul’s words, the Holy Spirit is responsible for the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.
      2. In Scripture, sin is seen as filth (cp. Eph. 5:26; John 13:10; Zech. 13:1). When we come to Christ, the Spirit washes us (1 Cor. 6:11). And, the instrument by which we are washed is the blood of Jesus Christ (1 John 1:7; Rev. 1:5; 7:14).
      3. In addition, the Spirit renews us. Salvation is an instantaneous change. However, it is also a daily change, a moment-by-moment relationship with the Lord Jesus.
   5. Third, God the Son brought the Gospel.
      1. Paul says the Gospel came through Jesus Christ our Savior.
      2. While the Father is the source of Gospel grace, and the Holy Spirit is the force of Gospel grace, the Son is the course of Gospel grace. He is the path to salvation.
   6. IDEA: Have someone prepared to share what happened in their life when they came to the point of salvation. Again, have them write it down! Or, you can now have them add to their personal written story.
3. The Facts of our Prospective Life (vs. 7-15)
   1. Finally, we move to what our lives are now. Jesus saved us from our past in order to give us a satisfying life in the present.
   2. We live with exciting hope and fruitful prospect for the future (v. 7a).
   3. First, our heir-ship is real.
      1. An heir is one who receives a possession by right of sonship. According to Scripture, Christ is the heir of all things (Heb. 1:2).
      2. Moreover, He secured an inheritance for us (Heb. 9:15). When did we become heirs? The moment we trusted Christ!
   4. Second, our heir-ship is reserved.
      1. Jesus said it like this, “In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also (John 14:2-3).
      2. Jesus is building for us a city, an eternal dwelling abode in the heavens. He reserves our place—our mansion—and nothing can rob us of the glory of our inheritance with Him.
   5. Third, our heir-ship is redemptive.
      1. Paul closes out his correspondence to Titus with a focus on the redemptive nature of our salvation in Christ (vs. 8).
      2. The Bible balances out faith and works. In short, faith is the root of salvation and works are the fruit. Hence, Paul exhorts believers to maintain good works.
      3. Paul then encourages us to beware of false teaching (vs. 9-11). Foolish questions about insignificant matters lead disciples astray.
   6. Paul ends his letter with a final salute to Titus. He encourages him to reach the lost (vv. 12-13), build the church, and to carry on living for Jesus (vv. 14-15).
   7. IDEA: Have someone share what their life has been like since they received Christ. Or, have them finish their personal story.

APPLICATION:

* Are you saved?
* What difference has your salvation made in your life?
* How can we be more mindful of these three facts throughout the week?
* If you had them write down their personal story, challenge them to share it with one person this coming week.