

Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut

Biblical, Traditional, Congregational

Lord's Day Worship for
March 3, 2024

"But give that which is within as charity, and then all things are clean for you."
- Luke 11:41



“*” = Please stand if you are able.

Welcome, Greeting & Announcements

Call to Worship – Colossians 2:6-12

Leader: Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord,

People: So walk in Him,

Leader: Having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith,

People: Just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.

Leader: See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

People: For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,

Leader: And in Him you have been made complete,

People: And He is the head over all rule and authority;

Leader: And in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands,

People: In the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;

Leader: Having been buried with Him in baptism,

People: In which you were also raised up with Him

Leader: Through faith in the working of God,

People: Who raised Him from the dead.

Prayer of Invocation and Confession

Gospel Absolution Text – Colossians 2:13-14

***Hymn #424** (red hymnal) – *“Shepherd of Souls, Refresh and Bless”*

Scripture Reading – Acts 15:1-35

Ancient Creedal Reading – Nicene Creed (pg#846 in the red hymnal)

Offerings Presented

[Please put your tithe/offering in the plates before or after the service – Thank you!]

***Doxology #731** (red hymnal)

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host: Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

***Prayer of Dedication**

***Sung Psalm #23c** (see insert below) – “The Lord’s My Shepherd”

Prayers of the Church & Lord’s Prayer (sins)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Reformation Creedal Reading – Larger Catechism (1647 AD), Q#35

Leader: *How is the covenant of grace administered under the New Testament?*

People: **Under the New Testament, when Christ the substance was exhibited,**

Leader: *The same covenant of grace was and still is to be administered*

People: **In the preaching of the word,**

Leader: *And the administration of the Sacraments of baptism*

People: **And the Lord’s Supper;**

Leader: *In which grace and salvation are held forth in more fullness, evidence, and efficacy,*

People: **To all nations.**

Ministry of the Word – Preaching

Prayer of Illumination

***Sermon Text** – Titus 1:14-2:1

***Gloria Patri #735** (red hymnal)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

Sermon – “Legalism”

A Sermon Series from the Letter of Paul to Titus

Ministry of the Word – The Lord’s Supper

Invitation & Warning

Spoken Word – Psalm 119:103

Prayer

Partaking of the Bread and then the Cup

Prayer of Thanksgiving

***Hymn #521**(red hymnal) – “*My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less*”

***Benediction** – Numbers 6:24-26

[After service, until 12:30 PM, there is coffee hour fellowship downstairs – Everyone is welcome!]

Upcoming Special Events

- **Movie Night** will be held on Friday, March 8th at 6:30 P.M at the Decker-Gabelmanns' Pool House. The address is 101 Wallens Street, Winsted, CT. Pizza and Beverages will be provided. Snacks and/or desserts to share would be welcomed and appreciated! RSVP to Sheryl would be helpful for the pizza order. The movie is about a medieval English Christian king and his struggles to be a godly ruler. The movie is PG-13 for violence.
- On **Easter** (March 31st) new members will be joining the church. There will be no Coffee Hour on Easter.
- Pastor Doug will be starting a new Adult Sunday School Study on April 7th going through the great Creeds of Congregationalism.

Normal Weekly Schedule

Sunday

9:00-10:15 AM

Sunday School for All Ages

- Younger Children's Class (Vika Winters)
- Older Children's Class (Mason Goodell)
- Women's Study (Verna Aldrich)
Taking Hold of God: Reformed & Puritan Perspectives
on Prayer edited by Joel R. Beeke & Brian G. Najapfour
- Adult Study (Pastor Jon Haulenbeek)
Introduction to the Psalm for March 3rd - 24th.
- New Member's Class (Pastor Doug Aldrich)
For March 3rd - 24th.

10:30 AM

LORD'S DAY WORSHIP

(Lord's Supper on the 1st Sunday)

c.11:40 AM

Coffee Hour

Tuesday

10:30 AM – Noon

Christian Classic Study (Pastor Doug's house)
Augustine's City of God

Wednesday

6:30 – 8:00 PM

Wednesday Bible Study (Pastor Doug's house)
Book of Genesis

Friday

6:30 PM

YADG – Young Adult Discussion Group (Pastor Doug's house)
1st & 3rd Fridays

Saturday

[morning]

Prayer Group – Meets at the Decker-Gabelmann house.
If you are interested please contact Sheryl Gabelmann.

Contact Information

Worship: Every Sunday at 10:30 AM at the Winchester Grange
100 Newfield Rd, Winchester Center, CT 06098

Church's Mailing Address: Trinity Reformed Church; P.O. Box 343; Riverton, CT 06065

Pastor Doug: (860) 379-1147; douglas_aldrich@sbcglobal.net

Online Resources

Church's Facebook Page: facebook.com/people/Trinity-Reformed-Church/61554974150922/

Church's Webpage: TrinityReformedCT.org

Church Youtube Channel: youtube.com/@TrinityReformedCT

Pastor Doug's Youtube Channels:

Simply Reformed: youtube.com/simplyreformed

Pilgrims of Plunder: youtube.com/@PilgrimsofPlunder

*Liking, Commenting, Sharing
facebook posts and Subscribing,
Liking, Commenting on youtube
helps boost TRC's online
outreach.*

Leadership

Teaching & Preaching Elder: Pastor Doug Aldrich
(860-379-1147; douglas_aldrich@sbcglobal.net)

Ruling Elders: Bob Ensminger
(860-485-8738; robert.ensminger@arthurgrussell.com)
Rich Gabelmann
(860-605-7852; rgabelmann0415@gmail.com)

Deacons: David Mattson (*chair*), Carl Bierce, Caleb Goodell,
Mason Goodell, Dean Winters

Music Coordinator & Treasurer: Cindy Rines

Clerk: Sheryl Gabelmann

Sunday School: Verna Aldrich, Mason Goodell

Sermon Notes

Titus 1:14-2:1 – “*Jewish Myths*”

A Sermon Series on Titus

March 3, 2024

Introduction

- 1) For our first sermon series we have been going through Titus to better understand the church.
- 2) So far we have read:
 - a) Titus 1:1-4 Greeting & exhortation by the Apostle Paul to the Pastor Titus.
 - b) Titus 1:5 Paul commands Titus to appoint elders in the churches in Crete.
 - c) Titus 1:6 Elders are to be judged by how they manage their families.
 - d) Titus 1:7-8 Paul then lists some critical moral characteristics for elders.
- 3) In Titus 1:9-2:1 Paul lists qualifications for an elder which are directly tied to their main job: Teaching, supporting, and defending correct doctrine, i.e. orthodoxy.
 - a) Titus 1:9 – “*holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.*”
 - b) Note how the English phrase “*sound doctrine*” frames this discussion in Titus 1:9 and Titus 2:1. (Remember, the chapter and verse divisions are not in the original Bible.)
 - c) Paul commands that the heretics be “*silenced*” and “*reproved . . .*” Titus 1:11
“*severely so that they may be sound in the faith.*” Titus 1:13
 - i) This is both a general command and dealing with a particular problem in Crete.
 - ii) Last week, I ignored this particular problem, which is mentioned in verse 10:
“*especially those of the circumcision.*”
 - iii) Let’s deal with this particular heresy today.

- 4) There were two broad heretical groups that plagued the early New Testament church:
- a) **Gnostics** - Those who loved supposedly secret esoteric philosophy about the world while believing in extreme dualism (e.g. God vs. Satan, good vs. evil, spiritual vs. earthly, New Testament vs. Old Testament, etc.)
 - i) Though the Bible gets close to dualism, it in the end always rejects it.
 - ii) For example, technically God and the devil are not opposites. God is Creator, Satan is just a mere creation.
 - b) **Judaizers** - The group Titus is talking about that will we deal with today.

The Heresy of the Judaizers

- 1) "Judaizers" were Christian Jews who wanted to impose the Jewish laws on gentile (i.e. non-Jewish) Christians, especially as a means to earn righteousness.
 - a) Remember, to be a heretic you have to claim to be a Christian but reject some core teaching of the faith and most heretics mean well.
 - b) This is not antisemitism. Error is error. Besides, most of the church was Jewish. Though the church has fallen into the sin of antisemitism at times in her history.
- 2) Titus is clearly dealing with Judaizers. Note the language:
 - a) Titus 1:10 = "*especially those of the circumcision*"
 - b) Titus 1:14 = "*Jewish myths*"
 - c) Titus 1:15 = "*defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure*" (i.e. OT purity Laws).
 - d) Titus 3:9 = "*avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless*"
 - b) In the last chapter (Titus 3:3-8) Paul gives one of the clearest descriptions of justification by grace alone, through faith alone, on account of Christ alone.¹
- 2) The big issue was circumcision: The sign of being under the Old Covenant.
 - a) Let alone going through the ritual as an adult.
 - b) The Judaizers thought that in order to be a Christian one would first have to become Jewish, receive circumcision and be bound to all of the Old Testament Law.
- 3) This error affected many churches in the New Testament.
- 4) To give the Judaizers their due, it wasn't obvious at first whether the Gospel was for the gentiles.
 - a) The Book of Acts answers this question by the direct miraculous revelation of the Holy Spirit.
 - b) The very first international Christian Council, in Jerusalem, met to deal with this issue in Acts 15.
 - c) The whole Book of Galatians is written against this problem.
- 5) Though one could of course be a Jewish Christian, the real danger is thinking that keeping the Law could earn one's correct standing with God, i.e. to be justified. This is a denial of Christ.

¹ Gen 15:6; Hab 2:4; Matt 16:16-17; Mark 10:52; 16:16; John 1:12-13; 3:16-18; 5:24; 6:28-29; 8:24; Acts 10:43; 13:39; 15:11; 16:31; Rom 1:17; 3:20-28; 4:3-5; 5:1; 10:4-6,9; 11:6; Gal 2:16,21; 3:5-6,11,14,22-25; 5:4; Eph 1:5-8,13; 2:8-9; Phil 3:9; 1Tim 1:16; 2Tim 1:9; Titus 3:5-7; Heb 11:7,38; 12:2; 1Pet 1:5; 1John 5:1,13.

- a) The Lord Jesus is the true High Priest, the one true Lamb of God, and the once for all perfect sacrifice. John 1:29,36; Heb 7:27; 9:12,26
- b) To turn back to OT rituals, or even any good work, to earn one's justification is a rejection of Christ. Gal 5:1-4
- c) Christ frees us from the condemnation of the Law and allows us to live by the Spirit, as witnessed by those supreme virtues of Faith, Hope and Love - in Christ. Rom 5:1ff; 8:1ff; Gal 3:13,23-26; 1Cor 13:13; 1Pet 4:8
- e) Galatians 5:2-6 - "*Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision (as a means of justification), that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.*"
- 6) Thus Paul commands the church not to pay any "attention to Jewish myths." - Titus 1:14

Titus 1:14a – "Jewish Myths"

- 1) What Paul exactly means by "Jewish myths" we are not fully sure, though we can offer a guess.
- 2) To help us with our sanctification, however, let's ponder the broad possibilities of various myths that have plagued the church.
- 3) While always remembering, however, that there is probably a log in our own eye to be removed before we can remove the speck in our brothers. Matt 7:1-6
- 4) **Myth Possibility #1** – Mixing together OT legal teachings with Gnostic philosophy.
 - a) Again, Gnostic philosophy is heretical itself, which is bad.
 - b) Trying to combine and/or amalgamate different ways of thinking into one theology/philosophy is the error of **syncretism**.
 - c) This is common in the pagan world, whether ancient or modern.
 - i) For example: Ancient Greco-Roman religions, most Asian religions, new age philosophies and modern secular thinking.
 - ii) Like those who claim to be both a Christian and a Buddhist, even though those things don't go together.
 - d) As Christians we know and profess there is only one true faith that should not be defiled.
 - i) Just think of the first four of the Ten Commandments. Ex 20:3-11; Deut 5:7-21
 - ii) Think of the dangers of offering "strange fire" unto the Lord in worship. Lev 10:1ff; Num 3:4ff; 26:61
 - iii) Remember the clear words of the Lord Jesus, "*I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.*" - John 14:6b
 - iv) Christians are to "*contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.*" - Jude 3b
 - e) Historically, Congregationalism has frequently fallen into the trap of syncretism.
 - i) Theological Liberalism has taken over 99.9% of Congregationalism.
 - Theological Liberalism dogmatically believes the faith has to be updated to get with the modern world and that the individual is the final authority.
 - This is blind syncretism and it is a heresy.

- ii) Congregationalism has also fallen into the trap of American Civil Religion.
 - They believe Christianity's main use is to service of the state.
 - So generic morality is emphasized to keep the state together, while worship and doctrine are de-emphasized.
 - Think of the phrase "*In God We Trust*" on the dollar bill. That god is never to be named or explained.
 - This is a direct violation of the first four of Commandments and the Gospel.

4) **Myth Possibility #2** – Literally adding Jewish folklore stories.

- a) All cultures have their own folk-stories, including the ancient Jews.
- b) Paul seems to mention this problem when he commands Pastor Timothy, "*In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following. But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women.*"
- 1Timothy 4:6-7a
- c) Think of superstitions.
 - i) To give an example: To rub your infant children with salt which will protect them from the evil witch call Lilith, who was Adam's first wife, who might come after you and give you the evil eye.
 - ii) Every part of the above example is from ancient Jewish folklore and is against what Scripture teaches.
 - iii) Though they are probably based in a twisting of, or reading into, Scripture. Lev 2:13; Num 18:19; 2Chr 13:5; Prov 28:22; Is34:14; Ezek 16:4
 - iv) Many of these superstitions made it into New England folklore (salt is used for luck, either for good luck by casting it over your shoulder, or bad when spilling it; Or the eye evil.)
- d) Do you have any superstitions in your life?
 - i) Things you believe, or do, that you think will bring good or bad luck?
 - ii) Belief in luck is directly contrary to faith/trust in God.
 - iii) God is sovereign "*and we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*"
- Romans 8:28

5) **Myth Possibility #3** – Elevating (Jewish) man-made traditions to the level of Scripture. 1Tim 1:4

- a) As the Lord Jesus condemned the Pharisees for doing this in Mark 7:1-13.
 - i) They created a non-biblical tradition (the Corban rule) and elevated it to the authority of Scripture so they could avoid a clear teaching of Scripture.
 - ii) The Pharisees were declaring part of their wealth as "Corban", i.e. dedicated to God, to avoid helping their parents, thus violating the 5th Commandment.
- b) This is part of a larger false teaching of the Pharisees that there was a supposed oral law passed down from the time of Moses that had equal authority with written Scripture.
 - i) We see this same error in the Roman Catholic and Mormon churches.
 - ii) Once you put your traditions on equal level with Scripture those traditions soon will have more authority than Scripture.

- iii) A sure sign you have a worldly tradition is when you have to read it back into Scripture. (E.g. the worship of Mary or the belief in libertarian free will.)
 - c) Liberal Protestants fall into this error, which again so bedevils Congregationalism.
 - i) They will argue there is not one source of final authority (i.e. Scripture, the correct answer) but four: Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience.
 - ii) What happens in the end is Scripture is rejected.
 - d) How many times do we put our man-made traditions above Scripture?
 - i) Remember my “*yeah, but . . .*” rule for reading Scripture.
 - ii) If you read a verse and your first reaction isn’t “*amen!*” but “*yeah, but . . .*” followed by you making a list of exceptions to deal with a text, you probably have a tradition of man.
- 6) **Myth Possibility #4** – Not rightly dividing the different parts of the Old Testament Law.
 - a) Classical Protestantism divides the OT Law into three sections:
 - i) **Civil Law** – Judicial/Political laws that deal with the nation (of Israel).
 - ii) **Ceremonial Law** – Religious Laws about OT worship and the priestly sacrificial system.
 - iii) **Moral Law** – Laws that govern universal morality. (Especially the Ten Commandments.)
 - b) As a means of earning one’s justification, all parts of the Law have been abrogated (repealed/annulled by an act of authority) and fulfilled in Christ and His imputed righteousness which we receive by faith alone.
 - Matt 19:9; Acts 10:1-23; Rom 4:16-25; Gal 2:21-3:29; 5:1-2; Col 2:16-17; Heb 8-10
 - i) As a means of a guide for sanctification, the Moral Law still very much applies.
 - Mark 10:19; Rom 13:9; James 2:10-13
 - ii) As a means of knowing God, driving us to the Gospel, and for general equity, all the OT Law is still very useful.
 - Rom 7:12,16; Gal 3:24; 1Tim 1:8
 - c) Putting more authority on the Civil and Ceremonial Law, instead of the Moral Law is a mistake.
 - Matt 19:3-8; Rom 14:1ff,17; Gal 4:3; Col 2:8-23; 1Tim 1:8
 - i) This was a particular problem for many early Jewish Christians.
 - ii) It is not a big problem, narrowly defined, for us today, where we have very little zeal for God’s Law, which is a huge problem for us.
- 7) All these errors are merely “*commandments of men.*” – Titus 1:14
 - a) And they “*turn*” us “*away from the truth.*” - Titus 1:14
 - b) All of these errors are adding worldly false thinking to the orthodox faith. 2Tim 4:3-5
 - c) They are not rightly handling Scripture, correctly dividing Law and Gospel. 2Tim 2:15
- 8) If we have to guess which problem Titus is speaking about, however, then problem #4, wrongly dividing the Law which leads to legalism, is probably what Paul is so concerned about.
- 9) This problem, of legalism, is very common, and a very dangerous false teaching.

Titus 1:15-16 – The Heresy of Legalism

- 1) Paul writes, “*To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.*” - Titus 1:15

- 2) This sounds like the Kosher/dietary laws of the OT where certain foods are forbidden. Lev 11; 17;
Deut 14
- a) The New Testament clearly abrogates the dietary laws. Matt 15:11; Mark 7:19; Acts 10:9-15;
Rom 14:14; 1Cor 10:25ff; 1Tim 4:4ff
- b) As we just read: *“To the pure (those in Christ), all things (food) are pure.”* - Titus 1:14
- c) The problem in Titus is not that Jewish Christians are forbidden from going Kosher. Paul, in Romans 14, allows Christians to eat kosher if they want, though one should never be legalistic about it. Both sides should act with charity to each other. Rom 14:1,20
- 3) Paul gets so aggressive in Titus because the Judaizers are probably demanding that the kosher laws must be kept as a means of justification, which makes them defiled and unbelieving.
- a) Why such strong language? Because the Gospel is at stake!
- b) Paul continues, *“They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.”* - Titus 1:16
- c) To think one can add works to Christ’s perfect work means all your good works are worthless!
- d) Again, the problem is not the dietary laws *per-se* but twisting the doctrine of justification by faith alone, the very heart of the Gospel.
- e) In Romans, though Paul allows the kosher laws, he still is concerned that they might miss use the Law and goes as far as to call those Christians who practice such things as *“weak in faith.”* - Romans 14:1
- i) This is not to make fun of Jewish Christians. Paul is a Jewish Christian!
- ii) This is about the Apostle’s concern that the full doctrine of the Gospel must be protected at all cost. (See Galatians!)

Conclusion – Titus 2:1

- 1) It is so easy to fall into legalism – Thinking your works make you right with God instead of Christ.
- a) Whether ultra fundamentalists who think their zeal for keeping a particular part of the law justifies them.
- b) Or squishy evangelicals who define the Gospel so broadly it’s just about having a feeling that Jesus is my Savior and that one should try to be nice to people.
- c) Or theological liberals who think everyone goes to heaven.
- d) All these are guilty of the sin legalism, of being a Pharisee. They are adding works to justification.
- 2) What is particularly dangerous is twisting the Gospel, the very power of God. Rom 1:15-17
- a) This requires a lot of maturity to avoid these errors.
- b) That is why the church needs strong well educated leaders.
- c) As Paul concludes this section, *“But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine.”* - Titus 2:1
- 3) What is the Gospel?
- a) Let’s skip to the end of this book and read Paul’s great brief, yet profound, definition of it.
- b) Titus 3:3-8