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Titus – Making Things Right

Chapter 3 - (vs. 7)

We come to Titus, and I think one of the things that I want to convey tonight is how there is a culmination that begins to take us from one place to another. Ultimately, it brings us to a consummation of thought. Of course, Scripture lays this foundation, oftentimes in these Epistles. You start off, and you go, “Ok, I think I have an idea of what he’s talking about.” Then, by the time you get to the end, you realize that they are all interconnected and how they not only harmonize, but you come to a conclusion and a cure to the sins that you have. So, as we’ve been in Titus, we realize that the problem has already been defined in chapter 1. It’s a problem of disorder. The thought oftentimes is “Well, it’s just disorder. What’s so bad about chaos?” A lot of people go to work, and they feel like it’s organized chaos. There is a problem with it. One of the things that the book of Titus is wanting to convey to us is that it’s very destructive and it’s unsettling in and of itself. I mean, you hear the word “disorder” or disarray, of course, psychologists use the word to talk about somebody that’s “off;” they have a psychological disorder. You begin to realize “Ok, that’s a big problem.” Scripture is wanting you to know that because not only is our God a God of order, but order gives you a sense of security; it gives you a sense of stability. Once again, I think you use those words and you say, “I understand there are going to be times of volatility and times when I feel precarious.” Scripture will say, “You can’t live there. It will consume you.”

So, the interesting thing about Titus is he actually takes us through the journey. Not only does he show us things that will help in the cure, but he begins to show us the things that happen when disorder comes and when things are in disarray. I think one of the ultimate conclusions is this hateful hating. When you go through Scripture, you’d be hard pressed to find many passages that will focus on it this much. In many respects, what Titus is saying is that’s what disorder is going to lead you to. So, now it becomes really clear. I think sometimes we battle with things like hate, and we wonder “Where did that come from?” I love the book of Titus because it says, “This is where it comes from. It comes from disorder.”

To quote the psychologists, the “experts,” they say that hate really comes out of three things. I’ll just list them for you.

- 1) Instability. If a person’s life is insecure. We’ll use that particular word. If there’s insecurity, then hate will tend to come and rise out of that.
- 2) Fear.
- 3) Mistrust.

If there's mistrust, insecurity, or fear, it begins to stir up hate. The reason why is because people begin to feel in some way that they've been betrayed or wronged. So, things like mistrust, "I thought I could trust that person" stirs up a tremendous amount of hate.

It's interesting that as the book of Titus starts off, it tells us that on the island of Crete there are liars. Now, what is that telling you? You can't trust them. So, mistrust is certainly going to be one of the things to stir that up. If in fact there's a sense of insecurity, one of the statements that is made is that the households are being upset. It is an interesting study when you look in particular in chapter 2. It talks about "Tell the young ladies to love their husbands. While you're at it, tell them to love their kids." You won't see that as much in a Jewish text, but in the Gentile text you'll see it because the idea of the nation is not as loving. One of the statements that is made in chapter 1 is "without natural affection." So, the fact that you'd actually have to tell somebody, "You need to love your kid" seems almost bizarre. Yet, it shows that there's a sense of insecurity. If you're raised in a home where there's no love or care, then are you feeling comforted? Are you feeling secure? Are you feeling safe? Do you feel like there's somebody looking out for you? All these things begin to stir up resentment; begin to stir up hate and anger. If not towards the person, the circumstance or situation. The whole mistrust thing and of course, if in fact you're afraid, then the whole thing of fight or flight starts kicking in, right?

The professionals say that hatred actually begins to play with chemicals in your brain. I'm just talking from the medical sense. It starts releasing things like cortisol and adrenaline hormones which cause (if for no other reason, you might want to stop hating for this reason) weight gain. That's probably a really good reason to stop hating. It also causes insomnia, anxiety, and of course, depression is certainly a part of that. What begins to happen is, and just to put it in the description of the physical; hatred literally changes the chemistry of the brain. They say that it stimulates the part of the brain that is responsible for planning and execution of motion. So, it's saying that it's causing the person to respond. It's one of the reasons why you have people getting really tense or they start attacking. It creates this sense of not only defense, but oftentimes attack mode. The interesting thing is that hatred itself causes the chemical reaction. I think a lot of people will say, "I had a chemical reaction and that's why I'm hating." No, you started hating; you caused the chemical reaction. That's the way that it goes. The stress hormones that begin to come into play increase inflammation. As you get older, you understand that you don't want to eat a lot of sugar because that increases inflammation. What does inflammation do boys and girls? It makes more pain. So, you want to avoid pain, right? The interesting thing is that hatred actually causes more inflammation, which comes from stress hormones and increases the pain in your life. It causes restlessness, obsessive thinking, and a sense of paranoia. "Everybody's out to get me." Who's everybody? "Everybody. I know what they're thinking." What are they thinking? "They don't like me." So, you begin to think the worst. The problem is that in the midst of it, they say that it actually begins to inflate the ego. The reason is because part of the way of dealing with this sense of "I've been wronged" is "I'm going to make things right." So, then it puts the person on the pedestal. They begin to be self-

righteous and condemning, and that's where a lot of the hatred starts coming out. They're going to "fix" things.

To quote one of the experts, revenge comes from wanting to fix or repair a perceived wrong. "I'm going to fix it." "Somebody wronged you?" "Oh yeah, yeah. I'm going to fix it." It's sort of like that bumper sticker, "I don't get mad. I just get even." It's that inflated ego that begins to make the person feel superior. They feel self-righteous, and they feel self-righteous against the people that they feel wronged them. Then it begins to feed on itself.

It's interesting, if you look with me in Titus 3, "Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed."

I want to stop there because he's conveying within the text that submissiveness is one of the things that helps keep you in check or control. One of the things that we know according to Matthew 24 is if lawlessness exists, your love will grow cold. Why is that true? Because where you see no boundaries, ego takes over; when ego takes over, you begin to hate. You begin to think of only protecting yourself and obviously hurting others. So, lawfulness is that sense of holding yourself back or "pulling on the reins." Lawfulness pulls you back and puts you in boundaries; puts you in check. When you have to submit, it humbles you. So, it keeps you less into pride and more into the thought of "Ok, I'm going to do the right thing." You say, "Why do I have to teach my kids to be obedient?" You're really training them to love. You're setting a foundation for love. That's what the law does. It builds a sense of conscience, right and wrong, and it helps a person begin to live in the realm of humility rather than pride. So, the law is a tutor to lead us to Christ. It's not the ultimate fulfillment. The spirit of the person has to change, but what the law does is it sets this foundation, and it makes people more receptive. You show me a person that is used to being obedient and submissive, and I'll show you a person that's more receptive to the Gospel. That's why unless you humble yourself, you can't come into the kingdom of heaven. All these things have to take place.

So, what is he dealing with here in Titus? Well, he's dealing with the disorder and the things that come out of the disorder, and what has to be changed. You realize that there's a lot of anger because if you look in Titus 3:2, "to malign no one, to be peaceable..." The word "malign" means speaking against people, criticizing them and tearing them down.

"...to be peaceable" or "uncontentious" is another word for it. "Contentious" is a person who is looking for a fight.

"...gentle, showing every consideration for all men.

(Titus 3:3) For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient..."

It's interesting how it kind of starts off with that.

"... deceived, enslaved to various lusts..."

That's pursuing your own selfish desires. Where does that take you down the road? Well, we know that in Titus 1 that the Cretans are "lazy gluttons" and are just feeding their own desires. That's an obvious thing within the passage.

"... enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another."

That's where it leads us. Paul says, "You need to put things in order." You go, "Why?" Because that's where it leads.

I'm going to show you some passages that deal with this. We're going to do a little bit of hopping around, but maybe to get a little bit of clarity on how this whole thing of hatred works. Did you know that we're actually changing a law in the state of Florida because of road rage? So, it sounds like the law is that the fast lane can only be used for a passing lane, and the main reason is for road rage. So, they're taking out the people that are weaving in and out of traffic. I told Connie, "It'll be interesting to see how this one works." But you can actually not go into the fast lane unless you're passing. If you're not passing, you can get a \$150 fine for being in the fast lane. So, it's a pretty interesting law, but the point is that rage is prevalent, and people are angry. "Hate" is an interesting word because it brings us into the world of, as is described within the text here, not only extreme dislike of somebody, but disgust and repulsion. That's why he uses the two words "hateful, hating". The one is dealing with you seeing that person as repulsive to you. What makes hate different than you just being upset is that it endures, and that's what makes it so dangerous. Of course, ultimately it goes into the root of bitterness which we've oftentimes read in Hebrews 12, but that's what makes hateful. When you hate, you hold onto it and don't let go of it. So, it becomes destructive to not only your physical self or emotional self, but certainly to everybody around you. Especially, if the paranoia starts kicking in or the obsessions begin to kick in as we'll oftentimes see.

There's an interesting passage in Psalm 26. One of the reasons why we go to the Psalms is because the psalmist is working through his emotions. So, if you look with me in Psalm 26, you see in this particular Psalm, the psalmist is dealing with being angry about something, even to the degree of hating. Oftentimes when we read the Psalm, it's confusing to us that for the most part, the psalmist has legitimate reasons for being mad, right? For instance, you go back to Psalm 4, he has every reason to be upset over the fact that people are reproaching him, they're deceiving him. He's trying to do the right thing, and they're coming after him. So, what does God say? Well, "Go ahead and get mad, but don't sin." Go to bed and put your trust in God. That's basically where we get the text from Ephesians 4, "Be angry and sin not." The point of the matter is you have every good reason to be mad. In fact, obviously, Jonah had really good reason to be angry. "Do you have good reason to be angry?" "Yes!" I know that the tendency is to be hypercritical of Jonah, but he had a really good reason to be angry. His loved ones and country were being destroyed by terrorists. I don't know if you identify with that.

Psalm 26 starts off with "Vindicate me." In some way, what you're seeing is really a cry for some kind of maybe even revenge. Now, here again, you need to understand that for the most part, the psalmist is going to have really good reason to feel the way that he does. So, it starts off this way,

"Vindicate me, O LORD, for I have walked in my integrity..."

He's saying, "I've done the right thing. Of course, what do I get out of it? Heartache."

"... And I have trusted in the LORD without wavering."

"I've been steadfast." Of course, it's a Psalm of David. So, ok David, not really, but here again.

(Psalm 26:2) "Examine me, O LORD, and try me;
Test my mind and my heart."

At this particular juncture, he feels very intense about this. "I've done the right thing."

(Psalm 26:4) "I do not sit with deceitful men,
Nor will I go with pretenders."

Then he throws that word "hate" out. Do you see that in verse 5?

"I hate the assembly of evildoers..."

Now, is that a good hate? Yeah, I would say that's a good hate. If you're going to hate anybody, hate evildoers, right? It's a good thing.

(Psalm 26:6) "I shall wash my hands in innocence,
And I will go about Your altar, O LORD."

He realizes what has to take place is that his hate has to transform into praise because there's nothing productive in the world of hate. Just like James 1, "The anger of man does not accomplish the righteousness of God."

"In my anger, I'm going to do something wonderful." No, I don't think so.

He states in verse 8, "O LORD, I love the habitation of Your house
And the place where Your glory dwells."

Now, I just want to ask you something. When you think of God and walking around the throne of God, is there being a bunch of hate and anger? I don't see that. In His right hand are pleasures forevermore. You realize that God is love. Why is it that we love to be with the people of God? Hopefully it's not "I want to be with those people that hate." I hope the reason why you want to be with the people of God is because it's the place where you feel accepted and you feel the love of God, right? Now, the people that come into worship, they've probably had, in some cases, a pretty bad week, and they've been surrounded by people that have been hostile. That's not where they want to stay. They want to go into the house of God.

So, "I love the habitation." He shows the contrast in verse 9, "Do not take my soul away along with sinners."

(Psalm 26:10) "In whose hands is a wicked scheme,
And whose right hand is full of bribes."

(Psalm 26:11) But as for me, I shall walk in my integrity;
Redeem me, and be gracious to me."

Then he writes this in verse 12, "My foot stands on a level place;
In the congregations I shall bless the LORD."

Now, the passage starts off with the psalmist saying, "You've got to vindicate me. You've got to make things right. Things are unfair in this world that I live in, and I hate..." God is saying that you don't want to stand there. Interesting phrase, "My foot stands on a level place." "A level place" is a place that is upright, stable, and safe. If you stand on hate, it's very unstable, unsafe, and it won't bring you to upright. It will actually bring you to disorder and disarray. In fact, it will put you in a very vulnerable and precarious place. He realizes that his foot would easily go there if in fact he stands with sinners. If he stands in hate, he knows that's precarious, volatility, but in a congregation where he can bless God, that's safe.

We wrestle with these things, and we see the psalmist wrestling with these things. The interesting thing about Psalm 26 is you see you see a little bit of the grandiosity of somebody that's dealing with this hatred, don't you? "I'm the good guy." Verse 2, "Examine me, go ahead." It kind of reminds you of Peter, "Everybody else is going to leave You, not me. They're going to leave You, but I'm a rock." Did you hear some sort of rooster crowing there? Job will feel the same way.

If you look with me in Job 7, you'll see somebody that's having to deal with anger and hate. Job actually deals with hate; he deals with bitterness of soul. I guess we can put it that way. Job takes platform, and he basically says, "I guess I'm not going to say anything." When he closes his mouth, he doesn't say anything. Of course, like the psalmist says, "I've said I'm not going to say anything, and I didn't, and things got worse. My body started wasting away."

(Job 7:11) "Therefore I will not restrain my mouth..."

"Now, I'm going to say something. I'm going to let it out." Some people think "If I don't say anything, it will go away." That doesn't work. "Well, maybe if I just let it all out. That will make it better." That's not going to work either.

"I will speak in the anguish of my spirit,
I will complain in the bitterness..."

"Bitterness" is the same word as "poison."

"...of my soul."

Then he begins to talk about, "If I went and I said, 'I need to lay down. I need to get some rest. I need to get some sleep. Maybe if I go to sleep, I won't feel pain.'" Have you ever felt pain and you think, "Knock me out" type thing.

(Job 7:13) "If I say, 'My bed will comfort me, My couch will ease my complaint,'

(Job 7:14) Then You frighten me with dreams..."

Let me just say this, this is not a man with good vibrations or good expectations. This is not a guy going, "Something good is going to happen to me if I go to bed." Instead, he's going, "No, if I go to bed, I'm going to have nightmares." So, no matter what happens.

If you look in Job 9, you can see the same thing. You begin to see how he sees God. Remember, we talked about that whole concept of paranoia starts coming in? Now, you begin to think God's against you. That's real paranoia, isn't it? You can begin to look around thinking, "They're talking about me" and all these thoughts are really coming out of hatred. Now, you begin to turn and think, "God's against me."

It's pretty interesting the way that he puts it in Job 9:13, "God will not turn back His anger; Beneath Him crouch the helpers of Rahab."

Rahab is actually a picture; it's not the harlot in the book of Joshua. It's a different word, but the picture is of a mythical beast. More specifically, it represents the storms of pride. He's conveying that he feels God using the storms of pride against him, and that God is not going to turn back his anger. There's a sense of, "He's not going to be merciful; He's going to keep up with us."

He goes on and says, "How then can I answer Him..." (Job 9:14)

"It doesn't matter what I say, God's not going to do anything nice."

"...And choose my words before Him?"

(Job 9:15) For though I were right, I could not answer; I would have to implore the mercy of my judge.

(Job 9:16) If I called and He answered me, I could not believe that He was listening to my voice."

What an interesting picture. He's virtually saying, "I believe God to be unapproachable." Not only unapproachable, but inattentive. "If I cried to Him and He answered, I'd go, 'I can't believe it. Are You sure that You're talking to me?'"

Look at how cruel he perceives God to be.

"If I called and He answered me,
I could not believe that He was listening to my voice.

(Job 9:17) For He bruises me with a tempest
And multiplies my wounds without cause."

That's a pretty cruel God, when you think about it.

(Job 9:18) "He will not allow me to get my breath..."

I mean, that's tyrannical.

It is interesting in verse 18, "He will not allow me to get my breath,
But saturates me with bitterness."

Once again, that phrase is an interesting picture of brackish water that is poisonous. Oftentimes, it was actually called "black water" which gives the interesting picture of darkness as well as poison that comes in and the anger and the hatred that is really being portrayed in that passage.

If you look with me in Job 10:1, you begin to see that he "loathes." Again, that's all part of hatred as well; the bitterness and loathing.

"I loathe my own life;
I will give full vent to my complaint;
I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.

(Job 10:2) I will say to God, 'Do not condemn me..."

In verse 4, he begins to ask some interesting questions. When you read these questions, I don't think we initially get the point, but it becomes extremely clear as you go on. He starts off saying, "Have You eyes of flesh?
Or do You see as a man sees?"

(Job 10:5) 'Are Your days as the days of a mortal,
Or Your years as man's years?"

Why is he asking these questions? It becomes extremely obvious that he's asking, "Can You even feel the pain that I'm going through? You don't see the things that I see. You don't feel the things that I feel. You can't. You're not like me." That's just one of the interesting pictures of Christ coming to earth. "I do feel like you do."

(Job 10:6) "That You should seek for my guilt
And search after my sin?"

"You're just looking to find fault with me."

Have you ever felt that way? “Yeah, search hard enough and you’re going to find something wrong with me, alright? You couldn’t possibly know what I’m going through.”

(Job 10:7) “According to Your knowledge I am indeed not guilty...”

“You know I’m not guilty of what You’re doing to me.”

“... Yet there is no deliverance from Your hand.”

What is he saying? “You know I’m not guilty, but you’re unfair. You’re not going to save me; You’re not going to be there for me.”

Of course, as you go onto verses 18, 19, and 20, he’s fundamentally saying, “I wish I was never born.” Not unlike Jeremiah. That’s the way we oftentimes feel when things are overwhelming in our life and things are going so wrong.

Titus is telling us that hatred is coming out of this disorder. Ok. So, let’s just think through

what’s going on. People are being lied to. So, they can’t trust anybody. Homes are being

divided. So, there’s no sense of security or stability in their lives. How are they reacting?

“Hateful, hating one another.” Why? Because “What’s happening to me is wrong, and I’ve got to repay or fix the problem.” That’s where the hate is coming from according to the text.

So, what is he telling us within the passage? How do you get out of this hate? That’s the whole

thing, isn’t it? The wonderful thing in verse 4 is that everything begins to change in verses 5, 6,

and 7. You begin to realize, “Ok, he’s actually giving us the cure for this.” The “experts” have

their own ideas of what the ultimate cure for these things in our life is. Some of it sometimes

has to do with the medication. I was reading all the things, “Well, you’ve just got to sit, and not

let this bother you.” Well, it does bother you and you can’t let it go. So, something Divine has to happen.

The passage reads this way in verse 4, “But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared,

(Titus 3:5) He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness...”

Now, why do you think he throws that in at this particular point? Why are you hateful? Why are

you feeling vengeful? You’re feeling self-righteous and thinking that you’re going to make

things right. That’s where your hatred comes from. “This person wronged me; I’m coming after

them.” There’s that root of bitterness, once again, that’s spoken of with Esau in chapter 12.

“He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy...”

So, not for one moment is Scripture going to let you sit in the realm of “You know what, you

deserve to be angry.” The wonderful thing about our Gospel is it takes us out of the realm of

our self-righteousness that actually holds us back from getting cured because it won’t let us

repent and find forgiveness and release. We hold onto the very things that are literally destroying our lives and the lives of people around us.

“He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,

(Titus 3:6) whom He poured out upon us richly...”

I love the phrase here. So, He’s not holding back anything. Here again, you have people living in a community where things are being held back. The wife is holding back the love for her husband; the children are not being loved the way that they should. Why are the people so frustrated? Why are people so upset? Why are homes being destroyed? People are promising them things and not delivering. Well, that’s very frustrating. So, all of these things are happening, and he goes, “Ok, but there’s a way out of this.”

“He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done...” (Titus 3:5)

(Titus 3:7) “so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs...”

Here again, one of the fears is that because somebody has taken advantage of us or wronged us, we’ll suffer great loss. So, what is he wanting to convey? You are heirs with Christ; you have everything.

Let me give you another example. In Psalm 38 there is a great concern that God forgive him of his iniquities. You also have to understand that in this particular passage, he’s dealing with people that have hated him wrongfully. So, he’s in a world of hate. In Psalm 38, he starts off by going, “Don’t rebuke me in Your wrath.” So, obviously, we know that he has a problem that he’s bringing before God. He’s crying for mercy according to the passage.

He says in verse 4, “For my iniquities are gone over my head;
As a heavy burden they weigh too much for me.

(Psalm 38:5) My wounds grow foul and fester
Because of my folly.

(Psalm 38:6) I am bent over and greatly bowed down;
I go mourning all day long.”

Well, there’s depression.

(Psalm 38:7) “For my loins are filled with burning,
And there is no soundness in my flesh.

(Psalm 38:8) I am benumbed and badly crushed;
I groan because of the agitation of my heart.

(Psalm 38:9) Lord, all my desire is before You;
And my sighing is not hidden from You.

(Psalm 38:10) My heart throbs, my strength fails me;
And the light of my eyes, even that has gone from me.”

If you look for loved ones to come alongside you, they're not there. (Psalm 38:11)

“My loved ones and my friends stand aloof from my plague;
And my kinsmen stand afar off.”

There comes a point when your friends don't even know what to do anymore. I mean, you're so miserable that they don't know what to do. Quite frankly, they might be some of the ones that help make you miserable.

(Psalm 38:12) “Those who seek my life lay snares for me;
And those who seek to injure me have threatened destruction,
And they devise treachery all day long.

(Psalm 38:13) But I, like a deaf man...”

This is pretty interesting how he begins to word this in verse 13.

“But I, like a deaf man, do not hear;
And I am like a mute man who does not open his mouth.”

In that particular phrase, he's closing himself off. Then, it's like he turns, and he goes, “That's it. I just won't listen anymore.”

Then he says, (Psalm 38:14) “Yes, I am like a man who does not hear,
And in whose mouth are no arguments.”

“I need to be quiet and hope in God; I need to put my trust in God.”

He says this, if you drop in verse 17, “For I am ready to fall...”

Ok. So, he feels himself, and he feels the sorrow that is continually before him.

(Psalm 38:18) “For I confess my iniquity;
I am full of anxiety because of my sin.”

So, he hasn't told us what his sin is. This is what's so interesting about the text. He's not telling us the sin, but if you read the text, you understand what the sin is. He's falling into the same hatred of the people that have been hating him.

In fact, the way that it reads in verse 19, “But my enemies are vigorous and strong,
And many are those who hate me wrongfully.”

What is he dealing with? Well, obviously, he's upset about this. He can't get rid of it. Just to let you know the sovereignty of God, this Psalm 38 follows Psalm 37. There's a reason for that. If you look at the beginning of Psalm 37, how does it start off?

(Psalm 37:1) "Do not fret because of evildoers,
Be not envious toward wrongdoers."

As it ends in Psalm 37:35, "I have seen a wicked, violent man
Spreading himself like a luxuriant tree in its native soil."

Then, he comes to the conclusion, "But they pass away." (Psalm 37:36)

We know that Scripture is setting the stage that hatred is easily caught. Those that are around you, as they begin to hate you without cause, it's really easy for this to become a part of your life.

The request at the end of Psalm 38:21 is,

"Do not forsake me, O LORD;
O my God, do not be far from me!

(Psalm 38:22) Make haste to help me,
O Lord, my salvation!"

You remember back in Titus,

(Titus 3:3) "For we also once were... hateful, hating one another.

(Titus 3:4) But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared,

(Titus 3:5) He saved us..."

Scripture is not just talking about the fact that you were saved from hell. There is a hell on earth as well, and that is you were hateful, hating one another, but His kindness saved me.

Psalm 139 is another good example of this, if you look there with me. It's one of our favorite Psalms, isn't it? God knows everything about me. This Psalm starts off, "You've searched me. You've scrutinized everything about me. You know me better than I know me. So, You're the expert." So, he's going to the expert counselor.

"You formed my inward parts..." (Psalm 139:13)

When you read a Psalm like this, you go, "Why is he telling me all this?" You can come up with the conclusion, "Well, he's telling us this to show us how great God is. He wants to show us that God is intimately acquainted with all our ways, and he wants to show us that God really cares for us. That's true, but the main reason why he writes this is because he knows that he has sin in his life that he can't see. So, he's appealing to a God that knows him better than anybody

else. In the text, what you have is self-righteousness, and self-righteousness comes at the end of the text.

If you read with me in verse 19, “O that You would slay the wicked, O God; Depart from me, therefore, men of bloodshed.”

Here again, it’s all legitimate. He’s right.

(Psalm 139:20) “For they speak against You wickedly, And Your enemies take Your name in vain.”

(Psalm 139:21) “Do I not hate those who hate You, O LORD? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You?”

Ok, now we’re really getting into the depth of hatred here. That’s the word for detesting, remember? Hating, but then you detest, and you loathe.

“Do I not loathe those who rise up against You?”

(Psalm 139:22) I hate them with the utmost hatred...”

“I couldn’t hate any more than I hate.” What a wonderful place to stay. That’s an unlevel ground. It’s very precarious. You have good reason to be angry. You may have even had good reason to hate, but you shouldn’t hang onto it because that’s what makes hate so dangerous. What makes hate hate is when you hold onto it, and you won’t let it go.

The passage reads in verse 23, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts;

(Psalm 139:24) And see if there be any...”

“Ra,” evil, “hurtful...,” malevolent “...way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.”

Now, it is interesting that he’ll talk about in Psalm 35:19 and Psalm 38 that there are those people that are hateful. I think one of the things that oftentimes people can’t understand is hateful people hate without a cause. They don’t need a cause. People will go, “They were so mad at me. Why were they so mad at me?” Probably because they’re just hateful people. You got in the way of their hate, and they just hated you because you were there. The problem is that their hatred can consume us, and the psalmist is all too clear about that. He realizes that in his place of self-righteousness, he’s going to fall into the same trap. It’s going to start consuming him. In fact, I think this is one of the main points of Matthew 18 which once again, is another familiar passage that we oftentimes look at. Remember, Jesus is warning you that you don’t want to put a stumbling block in one of these little one’s way. It would be better if a millstone were hung around your neck and dropped in the depths of the sea than you cause one of these little ones to stumble. Don’t do that. If you see somebody in sin, go talk to them.

Take it to the point in which you correct them, but you can't hate them. "They're doing wrong!" Ok, let's try to make this right. Let's correct them. Let's take a stand and do the right thing, but you can't hate them. How easily that consumes us.

That's why the text flows into Peter going, "So, how many times do I need to forgive?" Remember? So, seven times? As it goes on, of course, Jesus tells a story. There was a man that went up to this guy that he owed so much too, and he says, "Please forgive me. Please forgive me." The guy had mercy on him and forgave him. Then, somebody owes the one a small amount compared to what he owed, and he begins to strangle the guy.

If you look at the passage as it goes on,

(Psalm 139:32) "Then summoning him, his lord said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me.'

(Matthew 18:33) Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?'

(Matthew 18:34) "And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him."

(Matthew 18:35) "My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."

What is He talking about? He's talking about how easy it is for us to hold on, and to then begin to hate. He says, "You know what's going to happen? Torturers are going to come into your life. You want to know why people have problems with insomnia, anxiety, depression? These are torturers that have been sent by God. These are things that you have invited into your life by virtue of holding onto that malignant thing called hatred that you just won't let go. You think things are going to get better? No, no. If He forgave you of everything, you need to forgive others. What sin would you want Christ to hold onto? "All the burdens of my heart rolled away."

When I look at Scripture, I begin to read all of the wonderful promises of God and His saving power. For instance, we live in a world that is unjust. So, we know that people are going to get away with stuff, but Romans 12 says, "I'll take care of that. Vengeance is Mine; I'll take care of that. What, do you think I'm unjust? You think I'm going to let the little guy get stepped on? No, I love you. Let Me reassure you (Romans 8:28) that I'm going to cause all things to work together for good." Now, that's a saving power because like Joseph being wrongfully mistreated by his brothers, he realized that God could turn it out for good. He saw that, even as he names his kids Ephraim and Manasseh, "God has caused me to forget; He's given me blessing instead." He realized that God could do that. Well, that's the saving power of God, and it saves me from things like fear and insecurity. Why is it we get so mad and hold onto hatred? "Because that person robbed me of something!" No, they didn't rob you of anything that God didn't ordain in your life, and that God can't cause to work together for good. Once you begin

to limit God's saving power, then yeah, you're going to be angry and hate, but God saved you from that. He's telling us, "I've got this. Didn't I say I would never leave you or forsake you? Didn't I say that?" "If God is for us, who is against us?" (Romans 8:31)

Look at Romans 8 again because I want you to see that one verse, in particular, verse 32. Did I say it's one of my all-time favorites?

"He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?"

Are you going to be deprived of something because somebody took something from you? According to that verse, is it possible that you'll lose on this deal? It's not possible. That's His salvation in our lives. God's going to do good in my life. The power of God is going to work good in my life. Romans 12 says, "I'll take care of any injustice, and I'm never going to desert you." In fact, doesn't Philippians 4 say that He will supply all of our needs according to His riches and glory? Doesn't Matthew 6 say that if you seek first His kingdom, He will take care of everything? Is it just talking about momentary things, or is it talking about anything? Does He not love you? You could really rest in that, can't you? You don't have to be angry anymore. However, Titus goes beyond that.

I want you to go back to Titus because I want you to see how he ends this.

"He saved us..." (Titus 3:5)

Obviously, it's nothing that we did. If I could just summarize verse 5, it's his mercy that washed me.

It then says this in verse 6, "whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, (Titus 3:7) so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

You can just see people being envious, maligning; talking badly about people because they wronged them. "My mother was never there for me." Like Isaiah 49 says, "Even your mother might forget you, but I will not." Everybody has wrongs against them. Join the club, but we know that God saved us. In God's salvation, there is a keeping and staying power of blessing that nobody can take away; a peace and a joy that they can't take away.

If you want to parallel this, in Romans 5, Paul will say in verse 3, "And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;

(Romans 5:4) and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;

(Romans 5:5) and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

I want to clarify this point. I mean, really, up to this point, we've given you a clear Scripture about why you don't have to be upset. It's not enough. The Holy Spirit has to be poured out in your heart. This is why the receiving of the Gospel is so necessary because you can give all of the proof and evidence, but it's still not going to change. It will change when the Spirit of God is poured out in your heart. That person, in that moment that they receive Jesus Christ, they go, "You know what, He does love me; I'm good with that. That's all I need. Who do I have on earth but You, and who do I need but You?" That's what the psalmist concludes.

There's an interesting passage that talks about bitterness in Matthew 27. We come to the foot of the cross of Christ. I've oftentimes thought about this and the things that are happening are really giving us magnificent stories.

(Matthew 27:33) "And when they came to a place called Golgotha, which means Place of a Skull,

(Matthew 27:34) they gave Him wine to drink mixed with gall..."

You see that? "Gall" is actually the same word as bitter. It's also the same word in the Old Testament for Job saying, "I'm bitter in spirit."

The way that it reads, "and after tasting it, He was unwilling to drink."

That's a great picture. If there's anybody that had a right to be bitter, it was Christ. Clearly, He was mistreated and clearly wrongfully so. In fact, He should have hated me; He should have detested me. In fact, we invited Him to taste the bitterness. We invited Him to take of the poison because quite frankly, by taking the poison and the bitterness, there is some relief. I mean, getting even for a moment has a buzz, but wow, it's just going to bring death. I've often thought about this. He was not willing to partake of that. While being reviled, He didn't revile in return, but He gave a blessing instead. It's the heart of Christ. When you and I receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, He changes our spirit, and it's like we can't hate anymore, and that's the point of Titus. He poured out His love, kindness and mercy upon you; you can't hate anymore. What a wonderful Gospel we have, isn't it? So, although he's talking to the young girls and saying, "You've got to love your kids, put things in order, and submit to your husband." In fact, he'll ultimately end by saying, "You've got to pursue good things." He knows that all those pursuits are going to keep them on the right track. All these things are part of what they need to do, but the only thing that will really save them is the lovingkindness of God that was revealed in the midst of my anger, hate and bitterness. I partook of that, and He just changed my heart.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for the power of Christ. Lord, we thank You for taking us out of our hatred that we just for some strange reason love to hold onto. Lord, we come to You, and we ask You to free us from this; pour Your loving Spirit in us that we might love as You love. We

pray this in Your name. Amen.