

ADORNING THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

(Part 2)

By Brent Hunter, Evangelist: Johnson Ave church of Christ

In part one of this article I discussed the important of “Adorning the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect” (Titus 2:10). In this article we will discuss two additional ways that the doctrine of Christ can be “adorned.”

The doctrine of Christ is adorned when the truth is taught with the right attitude (Eph 4:2; 15)

Churches must teach the “whole truth and nothing but the truth,” and do so with the right spirit and attitude (II Tim 2:23-25). Sadly, some churches that have “stood for the truth” have done so in a way that doesn’t present the doctrine of Christ in a good light. While churches can be “doctrinally accurate,” like the church at Ephesus, their attitude can show they have “lost their first love” and need “to repent” (Rev 2:5). God’s church must realize we must not only “contend earnestly for the faith” (Jude 3), but we must stand for truth in a way that is not contentious. Yes, we must teach the love of truth with conviction (Prov 23:23) while remembering the truth of love (I Cor 13: 4-8). Paul says the church of Christ is to “sound out the word of the Lord” (I Thess 1: 8). The church must do so with an attitude of a faithful bondservant that is “well-pleasing, not argumentative . . . but showing all good faith”(Titus 2:10a). Only then will the church “adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect” (Titus 2:10b). Do Christians, by their life and actions, do everything possible to adorn Christ’s teaching? To do so, one must be mindful of the admonition Paul gave Christians to “Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of every opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person” (Col 4:5-6).

The church is adorned when it has the proper understanding and emphasis on God’s grace

The context of Titus 2:1-10 tells us that focusing in on God’s grace and reacting to it properly is the key to presenting God’s truth to the world in a way that will help outsiders appreciate the doctrine of Christ. I fear churches today are afraid to teach much on God’s grace because they think it might be taken too far. Obviously, churches do not want to appear Calvinistic or give any comfort to those who teach one is saved by grace and or faith only, but there must be the proper balance. I preached a sermon on God’s grace once and an audience member responded, “That is the first sermon I’ve ever heard on grace that was not a ‘grace BUT’ sermon.” She said it was refreshing to hear an entire lesson on how we should appreciate grace without at least half of the lesson warning about the abuses of grace. Brethren, the church is called to respond to truth, and adorn it, not just react to error. We must be careful as we teach not to simply go from one extreme to the other. The apostle Paul, who majored in the grace of God, could not wait to tell others about it. God forbid that the church should ever teach a cheap grace (Rm 6:1). Similarly, God forbid that we leave the impression that our part (the five steps) in responding to the gospel is more important than God’s part in taking the initiative and making salvation possible. It is in the very next verse following the admonition to “adorn the doctrine of Christ,” that Paul reminds Titus, “For the grace of God hath appeared bringing salvation to all men” (Titus 2:11).