

Date: November 10, 2009

Reading: Titus

Paul told Titus to “speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine” (Titus 2:1). He further described those “things” as they applied to four different groups of people: the older men, the older women, the young women and the young men (2:2-8).

Even bondservants (slaves) were to be taught according to sound (“healthy”) doctrine. They were to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, not stealing, but showing all honesty (2:9-10). The second half of verse 10 supplies motivation for slaves to behave in this way – “that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.”

In English, the verb *adorn* can mean to clothe. There are several words in the Greek language which mean to put on clothing or to clothe oneself, but none of them appear in verse 10. The Greek word translated *adorn* in verse 10 has the basal meaning “to put in order or arrange.” It can have the applied meaning of “to ornament or decorate” (see Matthew 23:29; Luke 21:5). Clearly Paul was using the word in a figurative sense in Titus 2:10.

The idea behind the word is more than just clothing someone. It has to do with making something attractive. It is the word used by the apostle Peter in his first epistle to describe the way that “holy women who trusted in God” made themselves attractive – not by arranging their hair or putting on fine clothing, but through the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit (3:3-5).

When slaves, near (if not AT) the bottom of the social ladder, behaved as instructed in 2:9-10, they made the teaching (“doctrine”) of God attractive to others. If the gospel could produce such character in the lives of this depreciated group of people, those in the world might sit up and take notice.

Is the “doctrine of God” adorned by our behavior? Do non-Christians find the gospel “attractive” because of the kind of behavior it produces in our lives?

Go out, therefore, into the world and “decorate” the gospel with a life that can be characterized by self-control, righteousness and godliness (2:12)!

Happy reading,
Allen