

Mid Week • Titus 2-3

INTRODUCTION

Let's do a little recap so we set the scene and context for our study tonight.

Titus was a Gentile believer who'd been a long-time companion of the Apostle Paul.

We find his name mentioned frequently in the NT.

Though we don't read an account of his conversion, Paul calls him a *son*, so he was probably one of Paul's converts during his *second* missionary journey, because it's *after that* we start hearing about him.

[SHOW MAP]

Paul had left Titus on the island of Crete, which is located in the Mediterranean Sea, SW of Turkey and SE of Greece.

The church there was in disarray and needed serious help.

Paul saw in Titus the kind of man needed to get the job done and left him there to set things in order.

The Book of Titus is the last of the three *Pastoral Epistles* – letters written to men who were *pastoring* churches.

The other two of course, are 1st & 2nd Timothy.

While Paul addressed these letters specifically to Titus and Timothy, he knew they would be read by a wider audience – so while he gives specific instruction to these two men, he also intends them to be an affirmation of their role as leaders in the church.

The people on Crete regarded Paul as an apostle.

If *he* commissioned Titus as overseer of the churches there, this would go a long way toward their recognition of him as their pastor, or really, in this case, because there were several small house churches, as their bishop.

From what Paul says in this letter, it's obvious that the same problems Timothy was experiencing in Ephesus had spread to Crete as well. Paul's old opponents, the Judaizers, continued to follow on his heels to "correct" Paul's converts.

The Judaizers were a sect of false teachers who told Gentile

converts to Christianity that they had to adopt the Law of Moses and become Jews as well.

This mixing of grace and law was a death blow to the Faith and Paul knew it so throughout his ministry he opposed it in the strongest terms.

Read his letter to the Galatians if you want to see what he really thought of the Judaizers and their damnable heresy.

Shortly after leaving Titus on Crete, Paul wrote this letter of support and encouragement, knowing it would lend weight and authority to Titus as he sought to carry out the work of trouble-shooting the Christian community there.

As we saw in our last study, Chapter 1 focuses on the quality of church *leadership*.

Tonight, in Chapters 2 & 3 we take a look at the character and conduct of church members among ourselves and before the unbelieving world in which we lived.

TITUS 2

¹But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: ²that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; ³the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—⁴that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

Chapter 1 ends with a sound thrashing of the Judaizers – the false teachers who were so badly distorting the gospel of grace.

Paul describes their corrupt character and how they twist the scriptures.

Against that backdrop of ugliness, he turns to speak of the kind of man Titus is to be, and what he is to do.

He's to **speak the things that are proper for sound doctrine.**

Note that friends – Titus was to teach them what – DOCTRINE!
This is a word many shy away from today.

It sounds so stuffy – so religious!

And as a result, as churches become more and more seduced by the culture in which we live, a culture which is almost wholly given over to the pursuit of pleasure and entertainment, they forsake their task of teaching and preaching good, solid Bible Doctrine, and they go more for the *fluff*, for messages that *entertain* rather than inform.

A major Christian magazine published an article a few years ago by a well-known charismatic leader.

He mused for a full page about the futility of both preaching and listening to sermons that go beyond mere entertainment.

His conclusion? People don't remember what you say anyway, so most preaching is a waste of time.

He wrote, “I'm going to try to do better next year; that means wasting less time listening to long sermons and spending much more time preparing short ones. People, I've discovered, will forgive even poor theology as long as they get out before noon.”

Paul told Titus to **speak the things that are proper for sound doctrine.**

He was to consistently use his office as a teacher to lay out for the people the truths that would develop within them a comprehensive understanding of what God says about every area of life.

Our behavior, our actions, flow from the choices we make, from our will.

But our will is informed by our minds.

If our minds have not been properly renewed by the Truth of God, then they don't have the raw material to form the basis of our actions.

When Paul tells Titus to **speak the things that are proper for sound doctrine**, he means that Titus is to give himself to the steady and consistent instruction of God's whole counsel.

He needs to work his way through the Word of God in his ministry on Crete.

Hit and miss topical messages will not allow people to see the

continuity there is to the Word of God.
Messages prepared out of current events will not be rooted in anything solid.
A pulpit that is reactionary to whatever is taking place right now will end up being unstable.
By teaching *through* the Bible, people not only have an opportunity to hear all of it, in its proper context, but they also have a chance to see what God says about everything.

Having told Titus to **speak the things that are proper for sound doctrine**, he then tells him some of the things he is to highlight. In vs. 2-5, Paul speaks to those men and women who are older in years.

While our modern age tends to give more honor to youth, the ancient world treasured the aged as those whose years had brought more wisdom.

Seniors were leaders by default – they were looked to as examples of successful living.

So here Paul tells Titus to remind the older men and women in the church to take advantage of their position and provide a godly example to the younger believers.

The older men must be **sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience**.

These words picture a person who's clear-headed, moderate in his lifestyle, respectful of authority and worthy of respect in his behavior.

His faith in Christ is solid and his devotion to the Body of Christ is consistent and determined.

The older women are to have be the same way; teaching **reverence** for the God ordained authorities, whether it's in their home or the world.

I want to take special note of the role assigned to the older ladies of the church that Paul gives here.

He says they are to **admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed**.

As Paul wrote this, something was taking place in the Roman

world and on the island of Crete that was deeply disturbing. The prosperity that marked many areas of the Roman Empire had led to the loosening of the traditional values that marked the early years of Roman civilization and allowed Rome to rise to be the world power it was.

The early years of Rome saw a very high morality and extremely tight family unit.

The discipline and austere nature of early Rome resulted in a civil unity that permitted their armies to conquer the world.

But their victories resulted in vast wealth flooding back to Rome, and from Rome, to her friends.

This wealth led to a rich class that had far more wealth than it needed.

With more leisure time, the wealthy began to fill it with immoral pursuits.

And as they spent more and more money to acquire more and more things, a middle class started to develop.

Eventually, this middle class also gained enough wealth that they too had more leisure time than was healthy and they began to follow in the moral corruptions of the rich.

Liberty turned to license – and the traditional values that had made Rome great began to unravel.

One of the main evidences of this was that women began to forsake their traditional roles as wives and mothers.

They opted for careers as courtesans and made merchandise of themselves as a commodity to be rented.

While most women never went so far as to enter the lifestyle of a prostitute, many of them neglected their role as a wife and mother as they pursued some level of recognition by other women and the world.

Paul exhorts Titus to teach the older women to constantly admonish the younger women to *not* be seduced by the world-spirit.

The word “admonish” is interesting; it means to restore to a right state of mind.

Paul knows that most of the young women who come to faith in Christ have already been taught to reject the classic role of wife and mother in favor of some worldly idea of success.

The older women are to make it their aim of calling the young

women back to God's plan.

Now – let me stop right there – because I realize that most of you are making connections between Paul's day and what we read here and our own day.

The parallels are obvious.

Paul is not saying here that women ought not have careers and interests outside the home.

That is not at all what he is saying!

What' he's saying is that *neglecting and shunning* the role of wife and mother is the wrong course for a *young* woman to take.

I find it interesting that now that the Feminist Movement has had a chance to age a bit, many of those who at one time advocated women rejecting the traditional roles of wife and mother and entering the work force to find their fulfillment there – have done a complete flip-flop.

Many women in the 60's 70's and 80's went to college, got a degree, and landed a job.

But after a few years realized the fulfillment and satisfaction they were looking for had alluded them.

They married, had a child, and discovered what they'd been looking for!

May I say, that the same is true for a man.

While he may be able to draw a tremendous sense of satisfaction and fulfillment from his career – it doesn't come close to the fulfillment he gains from his role as a husband and father.

The home has always been and will always be the core, the root of civilization and society.

When a husband and wife love and serve one another, and raise their children as the Word of God counsels – it provides an example to the world that is an incredibly powerful testimony to Christ.

In a 1993 poll conducted by the *Family Research Council*, people were asked if they would prefer to live in a community governed by traditional family values or one with nontraditional values.

76% opted for the traditional community!

⁶Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, ⁷in all things showing yourself *to be* a pattern of good

works; in doctrine *showing* integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, ⁸sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.

While the older men of v. 2 would be more reserved in their behavior because age would mean a quiet retirement from the hustle and bustle of the work-a-day world, the younger men would be the ones out in the marketplace.

They would be the most visible ambassadors of Christ to the world.

So their lifestyle must be marked by a general godliness that keeps them free from a reputation of being impure in conduct or speech.

If someone wanted to disagree with the message of Christ, they ought not be able to reject it because of the immoral lifestyle of the Christians he or she knew.

How many people today reject Christ because of Christians?

How many have failed to come to faith, not because of some flaw in the gospel, but because of a serious flaw in some believer they know?

We can either be an attraction or distraction.

Our speech and behavior determine the difference.

Here Paul is telling Titus to urge the young men to be holy.

Years ago the communist government in China commissioned an author to write a biography of Hudson Taylor with the purpose of distorting the facts and presenting him in a bad light.

Taylor was the man most responsible for evangelizing China and they wanted to discredit his name so they could more easily undo his work.

As the author was doing his research, he was increasingly impressed by Taylor's saintly character and godly life, and he found it extremely difficult to carry out task with a clear conscience.

Eventually, at the risk of losing his life, he laid his pen aside, renounced his atheism, and received Christ.

Whether we realize it or not, our example leaves an impression on others.

⁹Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all *things*, not answering back, ¹⁰not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.

In a word, servants are to *serve*!

How? In any way their master requires.

And they aren't just to be obedient to the letter of the master's law – but to the spirit of it!

So they don't just sweep the floor but put the sweepings under the rug.

They don't serve with mere eye-service, but to the heart and intent of the master's desire.

They don't talk back. They don't mimic and make fun of the master behind his or her back.

And they don't pilfer – meaning they don't steal items they think they can get away with.

What Paul writes to servants is equally applicable to the workplace of today.

Yesterday's servant is today's employee.

So let me ask – on your job – who are you working for?

If you are working for some man or woman, you'll be constantly tempted to cut corners and get by with the least amount of effort.

But if you work for the Lord as an act of worship, then your work will be the best you are able to do.

Do you make it your aim to please God or man?

I've told this story before, but it is such a good one I'll share it again:

My friend Errol Hale used to be a painter and wall-paperer.

When he was young and working with his father doing a house, he was going to neglect papering behind a toilet because no one could see the wall there.

His father saw him planning out the wall and asked about that spot – called the toe kick.

Errol said it was a waste because no one saw that spot and was hard to paper.

His father, a believer, said, "Errol, God sees. The rest of the wall for is man, but the toe kick is God's piece."

In some of the cathedrals of Europe, way up high in the spires, towering dozens of feet above the ground, is some of the most ornate and exquisite of all the craftsmanship.

It is so high, and in some cases located in a place no one on the ground will ever see it.

Yet that is where the masons and carpenters did their most careful and skilled work.

Why? Because it was for God alone! It was an act of worship. Strive to make your best work, work that is done in privacy, with no one looking – as an act of worship.

Seek to develop an attitude of LOYALTY to your boss and those above you.

Restrain yourself from making little comments critical of them.

And of course – don't pilfer.

Don't take office supplies for personal use.

Don't use the phone for mere personal reasons.

Don't abuse your break time – that's a form of stealing.

Paul says something remarkable at the end of v. 10 – he says that servants can “**adorn the doctrine of God.**”

The word “adorn” is the same one we get our word “cosmetic” from.

It means to set in an orderly and pleasing manner.

It carries the idea of bringing order to something that was previously chaotic.

Paul sees a godly lifestyle as something beautiful that stands against the stark background of a sin-wracked and chaotic world.

We can actually attract people to Christ by the beauty of our lives.

After receiving a gospel tract from a zealous missionary a man said, "Thank you for this tract, now I will watch your tracks and decide about becoming a Christian."

11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, **12** teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, **13** looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, **14** who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for

Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works.

We covered these verse two Sunday's ago, so I'll be brief with them tonight.

Paul presents the human race as divided between two groups:

The people of God, saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ –
And all the rest; the lost whose lives are marked by sin and rebellion.

It's the grace of God which makes the difference.

That grace appeared in the person of Jesus Christ who died for our sins and rose from the dead to give us eternal life.

Once this grace saves us from the penalty of sin, it then continues to save us by giving us victory over the power of sin.

And as v. 13 says, one day, the grace of God will save us from the very presence of sin.

[SHOW SLIDE]

¹⁵Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.

Titus wasn't wading into a ministry where the people were already doing well in what Paul writes here.

Their lifestyles were widely askew from this and Titus would be doing a lot of rebuking and correcting.

So Paul encourages him by reminding him he has the authority as a minister of the gospel to go about his duties.

If someone despised Titus for speaking the truth and daring to confront error, he wasn't to allow that to stop him.

Martin Luther once wrote, "I find it impossible to avoid offending guilty men, for there is no way of avoiding it but by our silence or their patience; and silent we cannot be because of God's command, and patient they cannot be because of their guilt."

TITUS 3

¹Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, ²to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.

The more I study the Bible, the more convinced I am of the priority

God places on the life of faith being a life of submission.

What is faith but submission to what God says?

What's the requirement Jesus gave to following Him – taking up our cross daily, which means to die to self. What is that if not submission.

Husbands are to submit to God and love their wives.

Wives are to submit to their own husbands as to the Lord.

Parents are to submit to the Lord and raise their children in His ways.

Children are to submit to their parents as to the Lord.

Masters are to submit to the Lord and treat their servants with gentleness while servants are to obey their masters.

And everyone is to submit to those God places in positions of civil authority.

It is my firm conviction that submission is the key that unlocks the fullness of life.

Sin has tweaked us, distorted us and made us think that submission means weakness and is the path to a frustrated life, while self-assertion and rebellion are the paths to self-realization.

But that's a lie.

Rebellion and promotion of self leads to bondage, while submission leads to freedom.

We have two dogs; Gretchen is super well behaved. The other Lady, is just plain stupid!

I planted flowers in our backyard recently and had to put up a barrier to keep Lady out because she loves to dig.

Now, we've tried to train her not to dig, but she just doesn't get it. She's chewed up both dog beds and even takes firewood out and gnaws on it.

Now she's managed to tear down the barricade and sure enough, has dug a massive hole in the flower garden.

There's only one way to stop her – tie her up!

So when I fill the hole in, that's what I may have to do – tie her up so she can't get to the garden.

Gretchen, because she is obedient, has free run of the whole yard.

Lady, because she's a stupid rebel, is going to be tied up.

When we submit to Go and obey Him, we enjoy tremendous freedom.

When we rebel against Him and demand our own way, to live by

our own rules, we come into bondage.

Bondage to our own pleasures, and in their endless pursuit,
disease, trouble, and ultimately, death and hell.

As Paul says here, as Christians, it would be well for us to embrace our submission to God by showing careful diligence in our submission to those He has placed in positions of authority over us, specially in the civil sphere.

We must be careful that we speak evil of no one and that we are peaceful, law-abiding citizens.

³For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. ⁴But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, ⁵not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Since we covered these verses last Sunday, again, I'll be much briefer with them tonight.

We must never forget that we were once part of the lost group and that it is not by our goodness and work that we were saved, but by God's goodness and work.

It's not by works of righteousness we've done, but according to His mercy that we've been saved.

We did not cleanse ourselves from sin – the Holy Spirit cleansed us.

I have used Titus 3:5 many times in dealing with people in both the Mormon church and the Jehovah's Witnesses.

What separates Biblical Christianity from every other religion and group is it's belief in salvation by grace through faith in Christ.

Every other religious system puts the burden on man and his works as necessary to earn salvation.

But v. 5 is definite and clear in putting the kibosh on this idea.

8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.

While we are not saved by works, we are saved for them.

The proof of new birth is new life and this new life will bear marks and distinctives radically different from all the stuff we find in v. 3.

9 But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless.

This is aimed squarely at the Judaizers who loved to get wrapped up in word games, petty debates, and endless genealogies.

Jesus rebuked the Pharisees because they were so careful about observing the fine details of the law of tithing yet they had totally ignored the more weighty issue of justice and charity for the poor and needy.

When they harvest their herb garden, they would take one of every 10 leaves or seeds and set it aside as an offering to the Lord.

But then, walking to the temple to give it, they would pass by some poor widow who was begging and instead of stopping to assist her, they would curse her for getting in their way.

It was well within their power to relieve her hunger, but they just passed by.

The Pharisees would gather in little groups and debate endlessly about the meaning of some commentary – but they wouldn't lift a finger to help someone in genuine need.

Friends, when our religion becomes nothing more than a subject to sit around and argue over – it's become a dead thing.

While it is certainly a necessary to refute error – I would much rather reveal the superiority of the Gospel by *living it* than sitting around and arguing it with someone who just wants to dispute.

Notice what Paul says . . .

10 Reject a divisive man after the first and second

admonition, ¹¹knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.

We need to take careful heed to this.

“Divisive man” translates the word aihretikos [hahee-ret-ee-kos] from which we get our word heretic, in fact, that is the way many translations render the word here.

But the word means one who brings divisions.

It doesn't just refer to the one who brings in false doctrine, but the one who works to bring divisions in the Body.

Satan has long known that keeping the Body of Christ divided is his chief strategy for ensuring the Church's weakness.

So he'll attack on ANY level that will bring division – whether it be doctrinal, which is his first desire, but if he can't make inroads there, he'll try bringing division by stirring up factions within the Body.

We see this in the church at Corinth.

People were making camps around different people and then taking shots at each other.

Paul calls it immature and carnal and we warns the Corinthians to stop it.

Here he tells Titus that if a man or woman proves to be divisive, to be one who stirs up strife and causes factions, whether they be doctrinal or relational, he is to rebuke them, once, and again.

If after the second rebuke they do not respond, they are to be booted from the communion of the Church.

¹²When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. ¹³Send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey with haste, that they may lack nothing.

Now some personal business.

Paul was going to eventually send another man, either Artemas or Tychicus, to replaced Titus on Crete so he could join Paul at Nicopolis for the winter.

But that would be a while yet. In the meantime, Zenas and Apollos, who were n an urgent mission somewhere, would be visiting Titus and he ought to provide whatever assistance they

needed.

V. 13 is an important one because it shows us that contrary to popular thought, lawyers CAN be saved!

14 And let our *people* also learn to maintain good works, to *meet* urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.

On top of all the other specific exhortations to virtue and godliness mentioned above, Paul adds a carefulness to be on the lookout for urgent needs.

As a community of mutual love and affection, there are going to be plenty of opportunities to minister to one another in highly practical ways.

As when someone is sick or in some other kind of need.

We can share in providing meals.

In minor household repairs and maintenance.

The point is, we must be diligent to remain in fellowship and attentive to the needs of others and reach out a hand of assistance when we're able.

15 All who *are* with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

CONCLUSION

These 2 chapters have said a lot about how the believer is to live.

A child picks up traits more or less simply by dwelling in the presence of his or her parents.

In the same way the Christian develops the traits of godliness Paul lists here only through spending time with God.

There is no short cut to holiness.

Only the HOLY Spirit can make us holy.

We can't take a pill that will make us virtuous.

Spiritual growth requires consistent discipline, and one of the most important disciplines the Lord has given us for growth is fellowship in a community of serious believers who are going for it with God.