

It's my intention to take a short break from our exposition of John's gospel, and spend a few months examining Titus chapter 2—there are at least three reasons for this decision—[1] I have wanted to preach through this chapter for several years—this past week while in NYC, we happened to providentially read through Titus in our consecutive Scripture reading—and even though we passed Titus 2, I kept coming back to again and again in my mind...

[2] The chapter fortifies our minds from this present evil age—if there was ever a generation in our country that needed education in domestic responsibilities, it's ours—what was taken as common knowledge 40-50 yrs ago, has been forgotten or despised, even by professing Christians...

Paul left Titus on the island of Crete for the purpose of establishing the churches (1:5)—Crete is a large island just south of Greece—it was a pagan island visited by Paul in his final missionary journey—Paul himself describes the Cretans, 1:12—"One of them, a prophet of their own, said, Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons. This testimony is true"—that is, they were largely speaking, a slanderous, brutal, lazy people, who lacked self-control...

This is the context in which the gospel found these people—thus, Titus was to teach the people to live differently from the Cretans around them—they were not to be conformed by the world, but were to live different from it—they were to look different in their everyday affairs—older men and women, younger men and women, and servants (slaves), were to act in a way that adorned the gospel of God—they were lights in a dark world...

And brethren, things have NOT changed—we still live in a spiritual and moral Crete, surrounded by Cretans, and we desperately need to be reminded how Scripture expects us to live, and not be conformed to this evil world...

[3] The chapter beautifully harmonizes the law and the gospel—as we shall see this morning, the chapter divides into two parts—vv1-10 (law or duty) and vv11-15 (gospel or grace)—in other words—this chapter reminds us how and why Christians are to obey the law—vv1-10 are filled with commands of Christian duty, vv11-15 are filled with glorious gospel truth—put simply—vv11-15 tell us how and why we are to obey vv1-10...

I. The Text Explained

II. The Text Applied

I. The Text Explained

1. Here—it's my intention to rather quickly, move through v1 examining its three primary or major parts—but as for you, speak the things, proper for sound doctrine...
2. [1] But as for you—this is in contrast to the false teachers of the previous chapter—notice their teaching and living...
3. [a] Their teaching, vv10-11—"For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain..."
4. Though we are not told specifically what they taught, we are told the result of their teaching was—subverting whole households...
5. The "subvert" is "to weaken or throw into confusion"—the teaching of these men, was destroying whole households...
6. Put another way—because their teaching was not sound or healthy, it was having devastating effects upon them...
7. [b] Their living, v16—"They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work..."
8. As we shall see in a minute—what we believe necessarily relates to what we do—doctrine determines practice...

9. Because their doctrine was bad, their practice was bad—because they held to diseased doctrine, they lived sickly lives...
10. Paul describes them as—"disqualified for every good work"—that is, they were unable to do ANY good works...
11. The doctrine they believed and taught, failed to have impact upon the way they lived—it didn't end in good works...
12. Now—we are going to see from chapter 2, that this is very different from that sound doctrine Titus was to speak...
13. In fact—the concept of "good works" is found through the entire book of Titus—it's the goal of sound doctrine...
14. False doctrine fails to produce good works (1:16)—Titus was to be an example of good works (2:7)—Jesus died to have a people "zealous for good works" (2:14)—we are not saved by good works (3:5)—we must be careful to maintain good works (3:8)...
15. [2] Speak the things—that is, Titus was to verbally correct the false teachers—in positively teaching the truth...
16. The word rendered "speak" literally means "to speak, teach, or preach"—it refers to verbal, authoritative speech...
17. V15—"Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you"—exhort and rebuke...
18. [a] Exhort—this word literally means—"to come alongside"—it means—"to speak so as to encourage someone..."
19. In his preaching, Titus was to come alongside his hearers—he was to urge or encourage them—with sound doctrine...
20. [b] Rebuke—this word means to "correct or refute"—it refers to the "confrontation and correction" of error...
21. Titus was to do this—"with all authority"—that is, as one commissioned by Christ Himself—in the name of Christ...
22. My friends, preaching is authoritative not merely suggestive—Titus wasn't to offer suggestions to his people...
23. No—he was to "speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine"—he was to exhort and rebuke the people...
24. Furthermore, Paul says—"Let no one despise you"—that is, remember you speak as an ambassador for Christ...
25. Thus—we find that central to a speaking or preaching ministry, is the ability to exhort and rebuke with all authority...
26. Tit.1:9—"holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict..."
27. [3] Proper for sound doctrine—"speak the things that are proper for sound doctrine"—doctrine means teaching...
28. The word rendered "sound" literally means "healthy"—it's in contrast to doctrine that is unsound or sickly...
29. [a] It's sound in CONTENT—that is, it's in keeping with the truth of God, as revealed through the apostles...
30. For Titus—sound doctrine—refers to the Apostolic tradition, passed down to him, from Paul and the other apostles...
31. It's doctrine that harmonizes with the OT—it's doctrine taught by our Savior—and revealed by His Holy Spirit...
32. 2Tim.1:13—"Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus..."
33. Paul exhorts Timothy to "hold fast the pattern of sound words"—"which you have heard from me (learned from me)..."
34. The word rendered "pattern" literally refers to "a sketch, outline, or brief summary"—likely an early creed...

35. Paul taught Timothy basic and sound theology by way of outline—and Timothy was to hold it fast with faith and love...
36. 2Tim.4:2-4—"Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables..."
37. There was coming a time, when "healthy and wholesome doctrine" would no longer be endured but despised...
38. Unfortunately, because of men's evil desires and itching ears—they will prefer instead food that isn't healthy...
39. Lenski—"Who wants diseased teaching? Diseased animals are not offered to the public for consumption, they are taken out and buried, but some pulpits today offer such diseased matter..."
40. [b] It's sound in EFFECT—that is, sound doctrine is doctrine that results in healthy living—in spiritual piety...
41. Paul literally tells Titus to—"speak those things that are fitting for sound doctrine"—things that agree with sound doctrine...
42. In other words—the things that Titus was to speak—would naturally flow from the sound doctrine he preached...
43. John Calvin—"Sound doctrine is so called from the effect produced by it...Sound, therefore, means wholesome, that which actually feeds souls..."
44. V1—"But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, etc..."
45. In other words—the sound doctrine that Titus was to speak, would result in obedience described in verses 2-10...
46. Titus was to ensure that the Bread and Milk he offered the people, was pure and wholesome—it's healthy food...
47. For example—what if a mother fed her toddler mouldy bread and sour milk—what would be the result or effect...
48. Well—obviously, the result would NOT be physical health—the toddler would NOT grow healthy and strong...
49. But—in contrast to this—if the mother fed her child sound and healthy food—he would grow strong and healthy...
50. So too—Paul is exhorting Titus to feed the people good food (sound doctrine)—that they might grow strong and healthy...
51. Thus—technically speaking, vv2-10 contain things that agree with sound doctrine, and vv11-14 are a summary of that sound doctrine...
52. Or, perhaps I could put it this way—while vv11-14 are sound doctrine properly considered, vv2-10 are its effects...
53. We find the same principle put very concisely in chapter 3—in vv4-7 we have the same thing found in 2:11-14, and in v8 we have the same thing found in 2:2-10...
54. Titus 3:8—"This is a faithful saying (sound doctrine), 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..."
55. To summarize—Paul exhorts Titus to continually teach the gospel, that its effect will be, practical holiness...
56. Put another way—the only way Christians can live holy and loving lives, is by knowing and believing the gospel...
57. As a result we learn—the only way Christians can do vv1-10 is by knowing, believing, and loving, vv11-14...

II. The Text Applied

A. Sound theology results in practical piety

1. Perhaps I can put it this way—good theology embraced in the heart by faith, results in a changed and godly life...
2. In other words—what we believe necessarily impacts the way we live—theology forms or shapes practice...
3. Put simply—sound and healthy doctrine makes sound and healthy hearts—they necessarily relate together...
4. Now—if this is true, and it is, then this necessarily means, those with the best theology should be most pious...
5. If we believe that Reformed Confessional religion is pure and sound doctrine—then Reformed Christians should be most holy...
6. Dear brethren—there should be no people in all of the universal church, as holy and loving, than Reformed Christians...
7. When we are taught, understand, embrace, and love sound doctrine—this should lead to a heightened piety...
8. Perhaps I can put this another way—how does a person grow in practical piety, but by growing in sound doctrine...
9. Sound doctrine is the very fuel that drives practical piety—sound doctrine is the engine that drives practical holiness...
10. This is evident throughout the NT, in that most letters are divided into two parts—DOCTRINE and PRACTICE...
11. The apostles first provide chapters of great theology, and then they provide chapters of practical living or application...
12. Again the point is plain—sound theology and doctrine, always leads to a practical piety—a holy and loving live...
13. Now—at this point I want to anticipate an objection—What about people who sit under sound theology and yet evidence little piety...
14. Well—before I answer this, let me clarify—I'm here assuming that people are in fact sitting under sound doctrine...
15. If a person is faithfully attending to the ordinary means of grace, and sound doctrine is being heard, they should grow...
16. Thus—if a person is not growing it's very possible that the problem lies in the teaching—it's not sound doctrine...
17. Or else it could be, they are not faithfully attending to the public means—that is, they are poor churchman...
18. But—let us assume that both are true—sound doctrine is being taught and they are overall faithful attenders...
19. And yet, for all this, there is little growth or godliness displayed—let me address this objection with five answers...
20. [1] You may not be a true Christian—this is a rather sober possibility, but we should not quickly dismiss it...
21. The Scriptures repeatedly describe people, who sit under sound doctrine, who grow in learning, but not grace...
22. Elsewhere, Paul described them, 2Tim.3:7—"always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth..."
23. My dear friend, let me say this as plain as I can—if sound doctrine never impacts your heart, there is a problem...
24. It's impossible for a Christian to be in a prolonged state of declension, where truth no longer tastes appealing...
25. But—if this continues for year after year—the gospel isn't attractive—there isn't any real hunger or thirst for Christ...
26. Tit.1:16—"They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work..."
27. [2] You may be growing but very slowly—dear friends, not every Christian grows at the same pace as others...

28. I think this is a common problem with most Christians—they grow discouraged with their perceived lack of growth...
29. Furthermore, as I've already said—it's very possible for a Christian to go through seasons of very slow growth...
30. Most Christians struggle with discouragement concerning their present growth—no one is where they want to be...
31. [3] You may be hearing but not doing—that is—you may be hearing the word but not applying it to your soul...
32. This I fear is the single largest problem among churches where sound doctrine is taught—we hear but fail to do...
33. Merely sitting under sound doctrine isn't enough if you are not humbly receiving that word into your own heart...
34. Here's how it goes—people continually hear about Christ and His cross, and at times they grow weary of it...
35. They think within themselves—Here we go again—another sermon on God, Christ, His cross, heaven, and hell...
36. I don't need to hear another sermon about these things—I need practical sermons, that help me live a godly life...
37. And so what often happens is—such people tune out the word—they think such things has no relevance to them...
38. But oh my friend—there can be nothing further from the truth—for this is what fuels you to live holy and loving...
39. It's not until sound and healthy doctrine is eaten—is taken into the soul or heart—that it produces fruit in the life...
40. My dear friend—you can sit under the soundest doctrine—and not profit unless you apply the word to your heart...
41. Technically speaking, though we talk about the preaching applying the word, no preacher can apply the word...
42. Applying the word is something the hearer does—you must do more than hear the word—you must apply it...
43. Now—because this is such an important point—I want to digress for a few minutes and provide two helps...
44. [a] To apply the word to yourself is to HUMBLY RECIEVE that word, Js.1:21—"receive with meekness the implanted word..."
45. Lk.9:44—"Let these words sink down into your ears"—that is, understand and humbly embrace them by faith...
46. John Calvin—"God did not give us His word so that it might merely beat on our ears or so that what was said was allowed to vanish into the air. He intends it to be food for us and to shape our lives..."
47. [b] To apply the word to yourself is to LOVINGLY CHERISH that word—you must receive the word with faith and love...
48. 2Thess.2:10—"they perish, because they refused to receive the love of the truth"—or, receive the truth in love...
49. 2Tim.1:13—"Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have head from me, in (with) faith and love which are in Christ Jesus..."
50. [4] You may be engaged in unrepentant sin—the manner in which we hear sound doctrine is vitally important...
51. Now—I admit at his point, this is a great mystery—for the power lies not in us, but in the holy word of God...
52. And yet—the Scriptures teach us, how we approach that word, has a necessary impact upon its effectiveness...
53. Jas.1:21—"Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls..."
54. 1Pet.2:1—"Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby..."

55. Both of these texts use the imagery of filthy garments—these must be laid aside as we come to God's word...
56. Brethren, usually, not always, but usually, when someone is not growing, it's because they are not dealing with sin...
57. [5] You may be neglecting other means of grace—we must remember, Christianity is more than public worship...
58. Though we must always give the priority to public worship, we must never neglect, private and personal worship...

B. Christians need specific domestic instruction

1. For the last 50 or 60 years especially, the home has been under attack, so that Biblical rolls have been distorted...
2. There was a time in this country, before most of us were born, when homes reflected the teaching of Titus chapter 2...
3. [1] The world will seek to squeeze us into its mould—the world hates fewer things more than the Bible's teaching on the home...
4. This is something we've been recently reminded of—Why would you encourage your daughters to marry young...
5. Well—perhaps it has something to do with what Paul told Titus to teach—young ladies to love their husbands and children...
6. What—you're not going to encourage your daughters to have fancy careers—to become doctors or lawyers...
7. No—but I am attempting to train them—"to be discreet, chaste, homemakers"—that is, skilled in domestic duties...
8. Dear brethren, this country is no better than first century Crete—and most Americans are no better than the Cretans...
9. And as we shall see, beginning next week, fewer things will allow us to shine as lights, than domestic piety...
10. [2] The church is often confused in these matters—you are likely very sheltered, if you think this point is unnecessary...
11. The church, in the broad sense, has buckled under the pressure of the world, and now often looks little different...
12. Thus—the problem for our generation is not merely to stay clear of the world, but also the professing church...
13. [3] The flesh tempts us to grow discontent with truth—there is an evil principle remaining in the best Christian...

C. Practical piety adorns the gospel of God

1. All throughout Titus 2, the apostle describes a primary reason for such domestic piety—why Titus must teach sound doctrine that leads to practical obedience...
2. v5b—"that the word of God may not be blasphemed" v8b—"that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you" v10b—"that they (bondservants) may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things..."
3. The living described in vv2-10 is fitting for sound doctrine, it adorns sound doctrine, it agrees with sound doctrine...