

Titus 2 - Sound Doctrine While You Wait

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Introduction

The last time we were together in the book of Titus we saw that Paul had directed Titus to appoint elders in every town and the reason for doing so was that there were those of the “circumcision party” that were “upsetting whole families” with their teaching for selfish gain.

This week will we see that Paul has another task for Titus in Crete. He is to “teach what accords with sound doctrine”. He has appointed the men to protect the Church and now he is going to give them the shepherds staff of truth to guide them in there leadership.

Why should he “teach what accords with sound doctrine”? Well, there is good reason to do so and that reason will have God himself breaking through the veil of earth to reveal himself and to gather up what is rightfully his.

I get goose bumps just thinking about it. Let’s pray and get started.

God’s word says this in chapter two, verse one of the book of Titus,

Titus’ Task

Teach Sound Doctrine

2:1 But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine.

So Paul stands Titus up against what we saw in chapter one, the “circumcision party”, who are “upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach”. He knows what to do with the opposition (silence/rebuke), but what now is he to do with the others? Did you hear it? He is to teach what accords with sound doctrine. No getting back at that evil “circumcision party”. No feeling sorry for himself that he’s been put in this position. No worldly ways to accomplish worldly ends. He is to teach sound doctrine. He is to bring God’s word to these people that they might see Christ as He is and the circumcision party as they are. These people need nothing in this time but the Word of God taught to them for the growth of their souls.

Imagine being Titus at this point. He has the entire Old Testament and some other scrolls lying around...where to begin? What shall I teach them first? What will I leave in the hands of these new elders to get the ball rolling, so to speak. Paul is about to give him the place to begin. God’s word says this in verse two,

Older Men

2 Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness.

Gentlemen, hold on to your hats, 'cause you are first. In Paul's mind you are who needs sound doctrine first and foremost. He has four things to tell you. These count for today as well, so listen closely.

You, older men are to be sober-minded. This is not just an absence of alcohol. No, being sober-minded has to do with having this mind of Christ. We see many older men in our world today who continue to function as children. Running around after the next thrill and never stopping to serve others or think through the serious issues of life. When you speak to them you get the feeling they are just children in an old man's body. Older men who love Jesus will seek to mature in their faith, putting away the things of this world as they come closer and closer to meeting their Savior.

Older men are to be dignified, handling yourself in a way that looks like Christ. You are to be joyful, yet not silly. You are to be passionate, yet not overcome with lust. You are to be courageous, yet not careless. Handle yourselves with dignity and put away the foolishness that dishonors your Savior.

Older men are to be characterized by self-control. You are to be a model for the church of self-control. What areas challenge you in this that you need to pour yourself into? Is it back away from the table sooner? Is it shutting down the computer? Is balancing the budget? Is it the way you speak? Is it where your mind wonders when there's nothing pressing to think about? What is it? We older men are to be characterized by self-control. How are you doing? Where to you need to repent and make changes to bring glory to God?

And lastly older-men are to be sound in faith, love and steadfastness. As we carry on long into the years we should be challenged by these words from Paul. Apparently, we older-men have a tendency to lose the "soundness" of our faith, our love, and our steadfastness. The word sound is one we all know and would pass over if reading without difficulty, but I looked it up as I prepared for this evening and there are a stunning number of definitions. Here's the one I believe applies best to the verses before us. Sound is defined as "of substantial or enduring character". So older-men, is your faith substantial? Is it enduring? How about your love? Have you grown unloving in the hard years of life? Or has your love become more gentle, more patient, more kind? And have you continued on your walk with Christ in a steadfast manner? Will you hit the finish line picking up speed or barely crawling having nearly given up the race? I suggest in all of these you look to your savior on the cross and remember what some of his last words were, ""Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Still faithful, still loving, and steadfast in his desire to bring home his own. Is that us old-men?

Brothers, is this us. If we were to visit one another at home unannounced, would this be what we would see. In your home are you considered to be this way. Likely, the answer is yes, and no. More often than not, might be the testimony of your family. May I just say that, "more often than not" is not enough. We have been purchased by God to do his work in this world and all our families can see is "more often than not"? Where is our time in prayer and repentance over our sin? Where is our yearning to be more like Christ? Where are we resisting sin to the point of

shedding our own blood? We have a perfect Savior who has called us to be Holy AND given us the means by which to be so....we have no excuse! "More often than not" is a cop-out that we should never be satisfied with. Let's pour ourselves out for the God who poured himself out for us and see what he will do with one Church full of men who love Jesus more than themselves. That, is what Titus calls the men of Crete to and that is what God is calling the men of Clearcreek Chapel to.

Lady's, if you thought you would escape unscathed...God's word says this in verse three,

Older Women

3 Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good,

Notice how the older men seamlessly connects with the older women. Likewise" he says, or just like the older men you "are to be reverent in behavior". You, like the older men claim Christ as your head and you should act likewise. You need to act like you live with the Spirit of God inside you.

Steve Black has been walking us through the book of Exodus in ABE and we have learned about the tabernacle and all of the instrument within. We have learned about the thick curtain that separated the priest from the Holy of Holies where God was. He dwelt there. They knew who was behind that curtain and they acted differently around that place. No one sort of casually walked in and leaned up against he ark of the covenant. No one! If they would have they would not have walked out. God would have killed them. Do you think they handled themselves differently in that situation? I bet they did! That is how you older women are to handle yourselves. With reverence because God no longer dwells near, behind the curtain, but now he dwells inside of you. Imagine. What would have killed you, has taken up residence in you. Live like it.

I feel like the next two wouldn't be a problem if the first one was understood. No, as a child of God you should not be going around to others slandering people. You have enough sin of your own that you should never be taking time to speak evil of others. How could you take God with you to destroy others with your lies and half truths about them, not loving them enough to tell them the truth of what you might be thinking, or at least asking the questions so you can find out the truth. And No, as a child of God you should not be a drunk. You are full of the Spirit, you do not need to fill your body with anything else that takes control. Can you see the connection? You are God's, and that is how you should live.

Lastly, you are to teach what is good. How can you do that if your are an irreverent, slanderous, drunk?! We've been talking about community for months now in our Sunday mornings together and here's yet another part of that community. Who are you to be teaching? We're not there yet, but I think I'm okay to spoil the surprise. You are to teach the younger women. How can you do that if all you do is sit around the table and sip wine with them while you slander others. This is not what Godly women do! This is what the world does. Be reverent in your behavior. Don't

slander and be a slave to much wine, but live as if you are indwelt by the Holy Spirit (because you are!) and teach the younger women.

Paul is about to let you in on what it is you are supposed to be teaching them. God's word says this in verses four and five,

Young Women

4 and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, 5 to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands,

Apparently is not just a given that young women will innately know how “to love their husbands and children”, “be self-controlled”, be “pure”, “work at home”, or be “kind and submissive to their own husbands”. Older women, we need you! Our young women, need you. It is hard to give up yourself to be the helper of another. It's not easy to realign your life with the needs of your children in mind. And sometimes it just seems like an impossible task to do both! We just discussed at our Flock meeting on Wednesday that giving birth is no easy task and the difficulties don't end there. The bare bones practical sides of life are not always obvious. None of this comes with an instruction manual. Young women need you older women to show them the way of love in their home.

They need you to show them how to be self-controlled. How many times have you walked into a situation with a younger women who had “had enough”! Was “done”! - with her husband or children. Who “just couldn't do this anymore”! Is there ever a better time for the wise, experienced at life, voice of an older women? Is there ever a better time for you to put your arm around her and help her bring the world back into perspective? Younger women need the calm assurance of a seasoned saint, to help them see what time and experience has not yet revealed. Be God's grace to them today.

They need you to model purity for them. What does it look like to be someone's wife? What does it look like to change your mindset from that of a single lady to a married one? It's not always, or should I say, it's seldom a well traveled path in our world. The path of purity for a young women is nearly invisible in our culture. It cannot be in our church.

They need you to teach them how to be “workers at home”. This is not a command for the wife to stay inside the same four walls everyday, but a call to the priority of her husband and children in her day to day life. She has been called to be his helper and their caregiver...older women can help guide her to her priorities when she has lost site of them.

And lastly, they need you, older women, to teach them how to be “kind and submissive to their own husbands”. Because, let's face it, kindness and submission aren't always the first thing your thinking of when the baby's been up all night and your husband has just decided the family should do something you are opposed to. Yes, they can read Scripture, and they should, to find these things out, but seeing an example and being given the compassion of someone who has already been there, done that, can speak volumes to the one who is struggling.

So why. Why are the older to teach these things and why are the younger women to learn these things? God's word says this at the end of verse five,

that the word of God may not be reviled.

Older women are to teach, and younger women are to learn, because if you don't...the word of God will be reviled. The world would look in and say to themselves, "Ha, they don't live any different that we do". Shame, huh. Since we have the Spirit of God living in us and they don't. What will call them to come if not the community of God worked out between the older women and the younger women. May God show himself brightly in our church through our women.

Paul moves on to younger men in the next verse. God's word says this in verse six,

Young Men

6 Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled.

Young men, what do think of your, comparatively, small list – a list of one. Do you think that makes your list easier. I think it's just in indication that as a young man there is one thing that will color all the rest of our lives if we are not careful, and that, is a lack of self-control. Why is pornography such an issue among you? Why is it that nearly every time I see a road rage incident in the news, it's two young men? Why are prisons full of young men? All of these things have to do with a lack of self-control. Young men, you are the future of the church and the church needs dignified older-men, not ones who are just learning how to control themselves. What do you want to be? Do you still want to be involved in the same childish pursuits you are involved in today or do you want to grow into the kind of older-man the younger ones will look up to and say, "I want to be like him – I want to follow his example". If that's what you want, start working now to be in control of yourself. You know the areas where you feel like you are being lead by your desires instead of you leading yourself to grow in the right kind of desires. Repent, find help, learn to sacrifice what you want for the glory of God and the good of others. The reward at the end will be all the sweeter.

Paul takes a bit of a detour into the personal for the next two verses. Titus being a "younger man" himself is addressed here and we can all benefit from Paul's encouragement to him, but those to whom God has given a role of leadership in the church should listen especially hard. God's word says this in verses seven and eight,

Titus

7 Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, 8 and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.

Do you see the weight of Paul's admonition? Titus is a leader and while he is to be a model of

good works (comparing him to those who “are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work”) he must concentrate on the area of teaching. He will be the face they associate with Apostolic teaching. He will be the one who appointed these elders and got them up and running. In doing so he must act with integrity, dignity and sound speech. Teachers of Clearcreek Chapel, you need to think on these things well. Do you carry yourself into the role of teacher, wherever that might be, with integrity, dignity and sound speech? Notice at the end of verse eight who will reap the consequences of your actions if you are not – US. Us in the context may just be Paul and Titus, but I believe we can take this into our day and see US as the church. If we teach like this our enemies will be put to shame and they will have “nothing evil to say about [the Church]”. The representatives of Christ on earth. You, teacher, are held to a higher standard, never forget that. Be a model of good works, and teach with integrity, dignity, and sound speech, bringing glory to God through his Church.

Lastly, teaching what accords with sound doctrine includes bondservants. God’s word says this in verses nine and ten,

Bondservants

9 Bondservants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, 10 not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

Well, if any of you thought you had an excuse to not follow the instructions given here in Titus 2, you will want to consider what’s before us. The term “bondservant” isn’t always helpful. Our ears would hear the term “slave” and get a better picture of their role. If you thought your role under whatever authority you live was especially difficult, you might want to think about what Paul just instructed the slaves to be like. He just said they should be submissive in “everything”! Wouldn’t that be just the most difficult part of being a slave. You have NO choice. You have no passage in Scripture that gets you out from under that command. You are to submit and do so with a “well-pleasing attitude”. One that does not argue. Also, you will not take anything that is not yours. No “borrowing” what is your masters, but showing yourself to be the trusted slave as Joseph was. In all of this, you, you who owns nothing, not even yourself, will make the doctrine of God our Savior beautiful! You who have nothing are taking part in the most glorious story ever told. You who have nothing, have everything and God in his infinite grace has allowed you to make him look more beautiful by giving up even your own self to make the gospel shine. What a privilege!

Now tell me how hard it is to live under the authority of the government, church leadership, your husband, your parents... You are a slave of Christ, give up all that you have to make him look beautiful!

We turn now from Titus’ task to Paul’s Reason for giving it. Why should Titus teach what accords with sound doctrine? God’s word says this in verses eleven and twelve,

Paul's Reason

Teach Because Jesus has Come

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,

You should do so because God has done so! He has appeared as the Lord Jesus Christ's work on the cross and resurrection from the grave. And that, that work on the cross has brought salvation for all people. Older-men, older-women, young women, young-men and scandal of all scandals it has brought salvation to the slave as well. All of them. God has not left any one of these groups out. Praise God!

In this salvation we are being trained to put-off "ungodliness and worldly passions". In this salvation we are being trained to put-on "self-controlled, upright and godly lives" NOW! Right now! Teach sound doctrine because the results of it is the salvation of people. God has come and "the fields are white for harvest".

This is the hope of all who believe, but there is more! Bless God there is more! God's word says this in verses thirteen and fourteen,

...and Will Come Again

13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

What, you mean to tell me God that you are not done with your people? Your appearing was not a one-stop world tour, but that in all of this training, renouncing, putting-off and putting-on there is still something more. Oh yes! Much more. He is coming back! We have been given a hope that far surpasses anything this world has to offer. Our great God and Savior Jesus Christ will return to take us home with him. He gave up his own life to make us his and turn us into a people who reflect his character and glory and he will be back to get us.

In the mean time. While you wait for your savior. Be about his work. Don't work hard because you owe him something you could never repay. Work hard because you serve a God that would give his life for you and will return for you someday. Recall the words of the old hymn,

"And Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
Even so, it is well with my soul."

Is it? Is it well with your soul that Jesus is coming back to take his people home. If it's not it should be terrifying to know that he'll return. Your life, your eternal life, depends on whether or not he has made the truths about his death, burial, resurrection and return well with your soul.

Paul closes this rousing chapter with these words to his brother and son in the faith. God's word says this in verse fifteen,

One more thing...

15 Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

Declare it my brother! He says. Don't mumble it. Don't hem-haw around it. Declare it! Their lives depend on it. Build up and tear down all that needs either one to be done with all authority. You, my true child in the faith are left in Crete with the same Apostolic authority Paul carried with him. And with that, they have no choice, but to listen. Do not allow them to sluff off what you are saying. You are there in God's good providence, with his Spirit, and the authority given the Apostles. Do not let them look down on, or disregard you.

Closing

In Closing, brothers and sisters we are to be obedient to the commands God has given us in scripture. Walk back through this passage sometime this week and pray over what applies to you. Are you believing God in an obeying way? Are you repenting and turning away from sin in your life? What are you putting on to replace the sin in your life with Godliness? Learn what accords with sound doctrine, because the grace of God has appeared and will appear again at the coming of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

And as we talked about this morning in our message from 1 Peter, if you are not anticipating the return of Jesus Christ to gather up his own, then you are in need of him. This that you have heard tonight is sound instruction on how to live life until he returns. It will be impossible for you to do until you repent of your sin and trust him as your Savior. Won't you do so tonight and join the rest of God's family as we look to a soon coming day when we will be done with the troubles of this world having gone home to live with God!