

Titus 2:1-10 “Adorning the Doctrine of God Our Savior”
Ezekiel 34
Psalm 100

September 18, 2016

Last week, we talked about the task of the pastor –
both in teaching sound doctrine,
and in discipline – rebuking those who contradict sound doctrine.

I mentioned last week the distinction between the wolf and the big, ugly sheep.
The wolf is the false teacher who must be silenced
(or else he will devour the flock).
The big, ugly sheep is the Christian who is causing trouble –
but is still one of Christ’s sheep.

We see this distinction clearly in Ezekiel 34.
In the opening verses, the LORD rebukes the shepherds of Israel
for devouring the sheep.
Shepherds are supposed to care for the sheep – not eat them!

The shepherds of Israel have ruled with force and harshness.

But then in verses 17-24, God says that he will judge between sheep and sheep.
The problem is that the sheep are pushing each other around.
The big sheep are muddying the water for the little sheep.
And that’s not good.

After all, when the shepherds fail – when false teachers creep in and scatter the flock –
then the flock ends up without discipline,
beating up on each other.

Think about what happens in a home where the parents are not shepherding their children.
The children wind up butting into each other.
This is true in any community.
When those in authority misuse their authority for their own selfish gain,
the result is that the community turns chaotic.
When the shepherds are primarily focused on feeding themselves,
the sheep will mistreat one another.

Notice what God says to Ezekiel says about the solution:
“I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David,
and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd.
And I the LORD will be their God,
and my servant David shall be prince among them.
I am the LORD. I have spoken.” (v23-24)

Jesus is the good shepherd.

Jesus takes into his own mouth – in John chapter 10 –
the language of Ezekiel 34.

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”
The good shepherd searches for the strays and brings them home.
The good shepherd binds up the weak and the frail.
The good shepherd leads his sheep in green pastures –
beside still waters.

Psalm 100 speaks of how we are the flock of the LORD our God.
The sheep of his pasture.

Sing Psalm 100
Read Titus 2

Teach what accords with sound doctrine.

The end of Titus 2 provides us with a clear statement of that sound doctrine.
The healthy teaching of the scripture
is that the grace of God *has* appeared – in Jesus Christ –
bringing salvation for all people.
And yet we are still waiting for our blessed hope,
the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

At the heart of the NT message is this two-fold appearing of Jesus.

Jesus appeared the first time to give himself in order that he might redeem us
and purify us for himself.
But he will appear a second time, in order to make all things right.

And this means that we should live godly lives in the present age.

And that is what Paul is dealing with in the first half of chapter 2:

1. “Teach What Accords with Sound Doctrine (v1-10)

2 *But as for you, teach what accords with sound^[a] doctrine.*

There is a way of life that is in accord with the gospel of Jesus.

Last week we saw that the elders – the pastors –
are supposed to be exemplary Christians.
What we see today is that *all Christians* should be exemplary Christians!

As you look at the language used to describe the Christian life in chapter 2 –
it is very much the same as the language used to describe the bishop in chapter 1!

You see, it’s *not* that pastors, elders, and deacons are held to a “higher standard.”
Pastors, elders, and deacons are held to the *same standard* as everyone else.
Because there *is only one standard* – God requires that his people be *holy*.
The difference is, as James says in James 3:1,

“we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.”
It’s not a different standard,
it is rather, a stricter application of the same standard!

And so in chapter 2, Paul now works through each segment of the congregation,
encouraging Titus to “teach what accords with sound doctrine”
to each age group.

He starts with the older men:

a. Older Men (v2)

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

The word translated “older man” is *not* the same word as the word for “elder” in ch 1.

It is a related word –
but Paul is clearly distinguishing the “older men” in general
from the office of elder in particular.

Not all older men need to be elders.
But all older men should be dignified.

We live in a culture that exalts youth and tries to escape old age.

Some people try to hide their age –
others keep telling themselves that they are “young at heart.”
Stop it!

It won’t work.
You cannot stop the passage of time – nor should you want to!

Why are we obsessed with the beauty and strength of youth?

If we obsess with preserving and keeping our youthful appearance,
then we are directing our energies in the wrong way!
Paul says that the older man should be “sober-minded,
dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness.”
None of these things can be attained by obsessing about youth!

All of them require the self-discipline and moderation of age and experience.

The young will be energetic and eager to explore new worlds and try new things!
And that’s a good thing!
That is what the energy and strength of youth is for!
But the moderation and dignity of age is also needed in the church.

The word translated “self-controlled” is the same word used of the bishop in verse 8.

It has the sense of “moderate” – temperate – even-keeled – prudent.
Indeed, if you look at the first three qualities in verse 2,
the emphasis is on a man of prudence and moderation:

sober, dignified, self-controlled.

How do you become sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled?

This doesn't just "happen."

It requires *practice*.

You have to develop *habits* of life and conduct.

If you want to form a habit, what do you have to do?

You could wait until you feel like doing it.

But then you might happen to wait a *long* time!

Because you are probably never going to "feel like it."

Your feelings are a very poor guide to direct your habits.

Really, the key to the first half of verse 2 is found in the second half of verse 2 –
the three qualities that older men should display:

soundness in faith, in love, and in steadfastness.

These are the keys to forming the proper habits of life:

Soundness in faith.

Trust God.

Believe him – believe his promises.

After all, whenever our hearts wander –

it is because we are believing a lie –

we are listening to other voices besides God,

and we are trusting in the promises of sin.

Soundness in faith means that we rely entirely upon God –

trusting in him – resting in him.

But the secondly, developing good habits requires soundness of love:

Love toward God – and love toward one another.

What is it that you love?

The ND Friday lunch group is discussing Jamie Smith's book

"You Are What You Love."

If you really want to know what motivates someone,

don't ask, "what do they think?"

Ask, "What do they love?"

What do you desire?

If you are willing to sacrifice what God says for some other goal,

then you love that other goal more than you love God.

Being sound in love means that you are disciplining your heart
towards God – and towards others.

And thirdly, we form proper habits by being sound in steadfastness –
perseverance – endurance.

There is a way in which this “steadfastness” is another way of saying “hope,”
because steadfastness is about enduring – persevering – toward a goal.

And Paul is very clear at the end of the chapter – what that blessed hope is!

So the older man is to be sound in faith, hope, and love –
enduring patiently until the end.

Now, all these things should be true of every Christian –
but Paul understands that as you draw closer to the end of your life,
these things become all the more important.

It can be really easy for an older man to just “check out” –
to say “I’ve served my time” – and just coast along.

But no, the older man needs to persevere in faith, hope, and love.

In verse 3, Paul turns to the older women:

b. Older Women (v3)

³ *Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine.*

“Likewise” – Paul understands that all of these exhortations are going to be similar,
because all Christians are called to exhibit fundamentally the same character –
the character of Christ!

And so *likewise*, older women are to be reverent in behavior –
the word Paul chooses has strong priestly overtones to it.

Older women are to be “priestly” in behavior.

They are to be holy – reverent.

And if you want to know what that looks like –
look at what it is contrasted with:

“not slanderers or slaves to much wine.”

Paul understands the temptations of age for women as much as for men.

In one respect, it is the same temptation –

just as older men can be tempted to “check out” –
older women can face the same temptation.

But older women tend to be more talkative than older men.

And that can lead to gossip and slander.

Paul warns the older women not to be slanderers –
 don't use your tongue to tear down and speak badly of others.
And don't be slaves to much wine –
 don't try to drown your sorrows in alcohol.

Instead of using your mouth for gossip and wine-bibbing,
Paul says, “they are to teach what is good, and so train the young women...”

The older woman cannot say “I’ve done my time” – any more than the older man.
 You are needed by the younger women.
 They are trying to figure out how to live the Christian life.
 They need you.

That’s why it is so essential to start working on this *when you are younger*.

I once interned in a church
 where the older women and the younger women never talked to each other.
The younger women would tell me, “I wish the older women would talk to us.”
I asked some of the older women about this,
 and they answered, “We feel like we don’t really have anything to say.”

As I have reflected on this over the years,
 I realized that a major part of the problem is that our churches
 are not preparing women for the calling that God has given them.

And the solution is to do what Paul tells Titus to do:
 We need to do a better job of preparing and training the older women
 to train the younger women.
 There are a couple of conferences
 that have been very useful for our women over the years.
 There is the Women of the Word conference in Philadelphia every fall
 (they focus on teaching women how to interpret and teach the Bible).
 And then there is the annual conference
 of the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation
 (that’s for both men and women).

Then, just this weekend, our Presbytery
 organized a gathering of pastors’ and elders’ wives.
 Hopefully that will continue to bear fruit in women’s ministry in the region.

Because the older women *are to teach...and so train*.

c. Older Women Are to Train the Younger Women (v4-5)

They are to teach what is good,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, that the word of God may not be reviled.

It is important to note that Paul does not tell *Titus* to train the young women.
He tells Titus that the *older women* are to train the young women.

Why does Paul say it this way?

Because teaching and training is not simply an intellectual exercise.
The way that you train someone is not simply by telling them to do it.
It's by *doing it yourself*.

The reason why I can never train a younger woman is *not* because I lack the knowledge.

It's because I lack – well – certain parts.

I'm not a woman!

I can't be a woman (no matter what some surgeon may offer to do about it!)

If we are going to develop the *habits* – the *virtues* – of the Christian life,
then we need to *see* them lived out in those around us.

The sound doctrine that Paul teaches

has a particular application to *women* as well as to men.

The first six virtues of verses 5-6 fit together in pairs:

The first two, loving husband and loving children describe her relationships –
which combined with the last line “submissive to their own husbands” –
makes it clear that we are talking *particularly* about young married women.

It is noteworthy that of the first four categories:

older men, older women, younger women, younger men –
only the young married women are defined so clearly
by their relationships.

Why is this?

The simple answer has to do with biology.

Women alone are capable of bearing and nursing children.

And while pain in childbirth may be part of the curse,
the ability to bear children is the gift of God.

All that humanity can do in filling the earth and subduing it
is utterly futile without the birth of babies.

And, quite frankly, young married women

have *always* been focused in these two directions:

toward her husband, and toward her children.

That's what happens during your child-bearing years.

That's why Paul urges Titus to exhort the older women

to teach the younger women how to do this right.

The second two virtues, being self-controlled and pure, describe her character.
Again, this word “self-controlled” is that same word for “moderation” –
“prudence” – that we saw earlier for the elder, and also for the older man.
The young woman is to be developing the same sorts of habits
of faith, hope, and love as the old men (and the young men –
as we’ll see in a few verses).

The third pair, “Working at home” and “kind” describes her activity.
I should make clear that when Paul speaks of her as “working at home”
Paul is not thinking about the notion of “separate spheres.”
Paul is not saying that men work at their jobs, and women work at home.
The “oikos” – the “house” – is the economic sphere for both men and women.
The contrast is *not* between working at home and working at a job.
The contrast is between *working* at home – and being *lazy* at home.
The focus here is that young women should be *diligent* – and kind –
as opposed to lazy and self-indulgent.
Think of the Proverbs 31 woman, who manages the estate –
even buying a field (without consulting her husband!).

Obviously, society has changed since the first century.
How should we think about this?
While the details of how this works out may change over time,
the principles remain the same.

And so the *regular pattern* will be that women will marry and bear children.
That does not mean that *all women* will marry and bear children.

So, if you are an older woman,
how do you do this?

How do you train a young woman to love her husband and children,
to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind,
and submissive to her own husband?

By modeling this yourself.

I can teach what the Bible says about women,
but only godly women can be examples of this for others.

Think about how Paul says this over in 1 Timothy 5:9-10.
Paul is giving the criteria for enrolling widows
on the list of those who are fully supported by the church.
(In other words, the church provides for 100% of their needs)
“Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age,
having been the wife of one husband,
and having a reputation for good works:

if she has brought up children,
has shown hospitality,
has washed the feet of the saints,
has cared for the afflicted,
and has devoted herself to every good work.”

I want you to think about the five categories that Paul uses there:

- 1) if she has brought up children –
notice that there is nothing here about *bearing* children;
Paul understands that a barren woman can still be a mother!
- 2) if she has shown hospitality –
love for strangers – welcoming in the traveler, the sojourner
not just, does she invite her friends over,
but does she welcome the stranger?
- 3) if she has washed the feet of the saints –
this is talking about inviting your friends over for dinner –
but the imagery of washing feet makes it clear that the focus here
is on the humble service of one another
- 4) if she has cared for the afflicted –
devoting special attention to those in need;
- 5) and if she has devoted herself to every good work.

Obviously no one can devote equal time to each of these five categories.

When you have lots of young children,
the bulk of your time will be spent on them!
But do not neglect the other four!
Look for opportunities to welcome the stranger.
Take the time to wash the feet of the saints,
and to care for the afflicted.
Because as your kids get older,
you will need to spend more of your time in those areas.

And there are many of you who are single –
or recently married, who are only just starting out in the raising of children.

Make sure that *even in your singleness* –
or even at the beginning of your married life –
make sure that you include children,
welcoming the stranger,
washing the feet of the saints,
and caring for the afflicted
in your pattern of life.

You might say, “Oh, but I’m not comfortable around strangers –
I wouldn’t want to bring one into my home...”
That’s not my gift!

Hospitality is not a gift – it is a duty.
You are called to welcome the stranger into your home.
This is not an optional part of the Christian life.

If you wait until you are a widow before you start doing this,
then you will not be ready to be a widow!

But then going back to Titus 2:6, Paul says:

d. Younger Men (v6)

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

Here's our key word for the passage again!

The younger men are to be *moderate*, prudent, self-controlled.
After all, if you are going to become an old man who is self-controlled,
then you had better start practicing it now!

Now, at first it might look like Paul is letting the young men off too easy –
There is only one word used here!

But of course, Titus is himself a young man –
therefore we need to see verses 7-8
as being directed to the young men around him as well.

e. Yourself (v7-8)

Once again you see how the bishop – the pastor – is to be an exemplary Christian:

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.*

A pastor must be “in all respects...a model of good works.”

A model for whom?

Well, for all the congregation – but especially to the younger men.

Notice how verse 7 follows after verse 6.

While you are urging the younger men to be self-controlled, moderate,
you must yourself be an example – a model of good works –
and in your teaching (of all people, but especially these young men),
“show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned.”

The same qualities that should characterize the older men
should also characterize the pastor!

With the result that “an opponent may be put to shame,
having nothing evil to say about us.”

It's important to be *prudent* in speech.

So that our opponents may have nothing evil to say about us.
It's tempting to say, "Ah, but our opponents are evil people,
so they will say evil things about us!"

But Paul thinks otherwise.

Sometimes we put our own foot in our own mouth.
Sometimes Christians can bring shame on our Savior
by forgetting the importance of showing integrity and dignity
in the way that we speak.

f. Slaves (v9-10)

⁹ *Bondservants*^[b] 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.

Verses 9-10 then deal with slaves.

The fact that there is no address to masters here
suggests that the church in Crete had few masters, but many slaves.
It's important to recognize that Paul did not focus on the injustice of slavery.
Slavery was different in the Roman empire than it was in the American south.
In the United States, slavery was limited to those of African descent.
In Paul's day, a slave could be of any race.

But Paul's admonition to slaves helps us understand how to deal with injustice.

After all, what *were* the slaves in the American south supposed to do?

Rise up and start killing people?

That's not very Christ-like!

It might sound like Paul's approach would result in slavery lasting forever.

(And it's worth noting that Paul's approach does not *guarantee* the end of slavery)

But as a matter of historical fact,

Paul's approach led to the gradual end of slavery.

It took centuries –

but it demanded that masters and slaves alike

“adorn the doctrine of God our Savior” –

with the result that slavery faded out of the western world.

Because the truth of the matter, is that whatever social or economic system you live in,
there will be injustices.

There will be problems in the relations between those in charge
and those who are under that authority.

You can translate verses 9-10 very easily into our own economic world:

employees are to be submissive to their own bosses in everything;

they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative,

not pilfering, but showing all good faith,

so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

Why does Paul urge people to endure suffering and injustice patiently?
Because of the doctrine of God our Savior.

2. The Doctrine of the Grace of God (v11-14)

a. Which Brings Salvation for All People (v11)

¹¹ *For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,*

Every kind of people – old, young, men, women, slaves –
the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people.

That grace *has appeared* in Jesus Christ.

Paul is not talking about some abstract concept of grace.

He is talking about the appearance of Jesus Christ in the flesh –
because it is *that* appearing of Jesus

that has *brought* salvation for all people.

The atoning death of Jesus was truly *sufficient* for all people.

Salvation has been *brought* to humanity.

No one is outside the reach of the call of the gospel.

But that grace of God which is sufficient for all –
is only efficient – it is only effective for those who receive it by faith:

b. Which Trains Us to Renounce Worldly Passions and Live Godly Lives in the Present Age (v12)

¹² *training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled,
upright, and godly lives in the present age,*

The grace of God in Jesus Christ now *trains us*

to renounce ungodliness – those things that are inconsistent with piety –

those worldly passions – the lusts and desires that are inconsistent with Jesus.

And Paul returns once more to his favorite word to describe the Christian life in this book:

“to live *self-controlled...lives*”

Self-control, moderation, prudence.

You simply cannot live the Christian life in a worldly manner.

Your habits and patterns of life must be directed by the gospel.

The grace of God – in Jesus Christ – brings salvation

but it also *trains us* – it also disciplines and disciplines us

(through one another)

to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.

And the present age is contrasted with the age to come –

c. As We Wait for Our Blessed Hope, Jesus Christ (v13)

¹³ *waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,*

This is our hope –

 this is our future goal –

 that prize that keeps our eyes fixed on the target.

Where we get in trouble

 is when we allow other hopes to become more important.

 For those of you who have a job – why do you work there?

 So I can feed my family – right?

 For those of you who are stay-at-home moms – why do you do that?

 So I can care for my children – right?

 For those of you who are students: why are you studying?

 So I can get a good job – right?

 No, you are doing these things because you are waiting for your blessed hope!

 And the way that you get there is described in verse 14:

d. Who Gave Himself for Us – to Redeem and to Purify (v14)

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.*

Jesus has redeemed you.

 He has purified you.

 Salvation is *all* of God.

 But when he redeemed you (from all lawlessness)

 and purified you (for his own possession)

 he also has made you *zealous for good works*.

By paying for your sins and purifying you from unrighteousness,

 Jesus has changed your heart and remade you from the inside out,

 so that you now are *his*.

Conclusion: Teach Them to Observe All These Things (v15)

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