

**August 9, 2009**

**Titus 2:1, 5, 8, 10 (Titus 2 Part 2)**

Take your Bibles if you have them, if not, take one of the pew Bibles from the pewback in front of you and turn to Titus chapter 2 with me.

While you turn there, remember that Titus as a letter is a chance for us to see God's blueprint for establishing his church. Titus is charged by the apostle Paul with organizing and setting up the local churches on the island of Crete and this letter is designed to empower him to do that as well as to give instructions to the local congregations themselves by way of Paul's communication with Titus.

We saw at the end of chapter 1 a crucial truth that salvation is by faith alone. We cannot depend on our works – on what we do – to save us. In fact **what we do is worthless when it comes to making us Christians or making us RIGHT with God. Faith in Jesus Christ – belief in the truth of the gospel as communicated by Jesus and through the Word – is the ONLY way God has provided to be right before him.** God does not judge us in terms of salvation by our actions, but by the position – the belief of our hearts.

That might lead us to think then that our actions don't matter – that works are worthless – that as long as you believe right doctrine then all is good. But like we saw last week, **the idea that 'as long as you PROFESS to believe in Christ, then all is well' is far from the truth.** And we see why in chapter 2.

Again – we are looking at the chapter as a whole rather than verse by verse like we normally do because this chapter is so interwoven, so let's start with verse 1 today. Titus 2:1.

*"You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine."*

This whole section – chapter – is introduced with this remark. Titus is to teach what is in accord with sound doctrine as opposed to the false teachers Paul addressed at the end of chapter 1, if you remember, who were basically making up their own rules in verses 10-14. Titus is to be bringing the churches on the island of Crete up to a standard of virtue – a quality – a characteristic that fits God's blueprint for his church. That is what chapter 2 is about.

There are several key words here in verse 1. First of all, the NIV says that Titus is to **teach** what is in accord with sound doctrine. The word there in Greek comes from the verb **laleo** which just means to talk. It isn't the Greek word **kerusso** that means to preach – it isn't the word **didasko** that means to teach, it is just to talk. **Present tense and ongoing – just keep on TALKING about the things which match up with sound doctrine.**

Now you would think when you hear that that Paul had some intensely deep aspects of theology in mind. That Titus was to be talking all the time about the Trinity or God's sovereignty or Election or any number of things, but that is not all what is going on here. Instead, Titus is to consider the relationship of a person's theology and ethics – a person's belief and behavior. That is what is meant by **"what is in accord with."**

The word there is **prepo** in Greek – it basically means **proper or seemly or BEFITTING.** So Paul is telling Titus to **talk about the things they need to do that FIT the doctrine they believe.** It calls for living what is in complete accord with the truth.

And I want to make a point here before we go on. **The Bible teaches often that godly behavior COMES FROM and bears witness to the truth of the gospel. It never suggests that Christians should base their behavior on the CULTURE that surrounds them.** In fact, the church then and today almost always finds itself needing to repudiate the standards and societal norms of the culture profoundly, constantly, and in many ways.

So Paul is not just telling Titus to teach sound or good or healthy doctrine, but to demonstrate how doctrine and practice go together. Doctrine must never be held as something good for us intellectually – something to discuss in seminaries and deacons' meetings and church councils but of being of no value in the daily grind of life. Rather, doctrine is foundational for behavior. You will

behave according to what you believe. So Paul urges Titus to show that the doctrine of the gospel serves as the foundation for Christian behavior and practice.

The same is still true for us. Our beliefs are never meant to try to go solo in our thinking. We're not to compartmentalize doctrine so that we have our beliefs on one end of our lives and our behavior on the other. Doctrine, when properly understood, never walks alone. It is fitted together, if you will, with right practice.

How are we to respond to the fact that God is Creator – that we are sinners – that God sent Jesus as a mediator – that Jesus justified us through his substitutionary death on the cross and that we have life through his resurrection from the dead?

Those are all doctrinal statements and thoughts yet each of them affects how we live. If I realize God is Creator then I pause to see his glory all around me and to confess that I am not God and that creation, life, is not all about me.

If I realize I am a sinner and ponder that God who created me will also judge me for my rebellion against him and if I ponder how Jesus mediates by becoming human in the incarnation and bears God's judgment for me at the cross, then I respond with gratitude and humility and trust in Him. See each of these theological or doctrinal truths affects the way I behave if I truly believe them.

And yet we do tend to compartmentalize these truths from the Christian life as if really dealing with these doctrines is optional when it comes to my life as a Christian. But that perspective misses the whole point of the gospel in the first place. The gospel is not something you do or a one time event in your life. **Embracing the gospel of Jesus Christ REFOCUSES every detail of life so that the Christian begins a Christ-centered or gospel-focused life.** Rather than compartmentalizing our Christian lives, we are to see how **EVERY aspect of our lives is to magnify and reflect the gospel.**

**Why?** Why is that so important? Why is that intricately associated with the gospel? Why is God through Paul tying that understanding in chapter 2 to God's blueprint for his church?

Well in this chapter there are three statements that are called 'hina clauses.' Basically because they always begin with the Greek word *hina* and express a cause, a reason. They are statements of why – explanations – in this case – for why we must see the link between sound doctrine and actions – between belief and behavior – and why the practical commands all through Titus 2 are what they are.

We read this text last week, so let me just point you to where these clauses are. In **verse 5** we read that if we live a distinctly Christian life, that ***“no one will malign the word of God.”***

In **verse 8** we read that if we live a distinctly Christian life, that those who oppose us ***“will have nothing bad to say about us.”***

And finally in **verse 10**, we read that if we live a distinctively Christian life, we ***“will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.”***

**There are other reasons, of course, for living a faithful Christian life – but here special emphasis falls on the WITNESS such behavior gives to the world.**

This is crucial to the life of the church – not only for its own internal well-being but for the sake of its witness. These are evangelistic matters. We want the Word of God honored not maligned, we want the opponents of God's truth silenced not empowered, we want the truth of our Savior to be attractive not repulsive and in order to do that we have to conduct ourselves in a godly way – which means that older men are to behave a certain way – older women a certain way – younger women, younger men, even, in this context, slaves a certain way as well.

The gospel calls us to a new standard of holy living. Listen, that's why the gospel is never viewed in the New Testament as being merely decisional. So many people have been mistaken at this point – thinking that if they make some kind of decision related to the gospel, they have their assurance of

eternal life and so they can put that in their little box and lay it aside. But like we saw a couple weeks ago, **Christianity is life – not simply a DECISION unrelated to the day to day happenings of life.**

Like our vision as a church of doing life in Christ together one step at a time – Dr. Robert Rayburn explains “Christianity is life lived in relationship to Jesus Christ and His body. The Christian relates to the Godhead with a new humility, awe, and dependence. The Christian looks to the Father with love and trust. The Christian looks to Christ and his sufficiency for forgiveness, righteousness, and grace. The Christian looks to the Holy Spirit for power, strength, and character. The Christian relates to the body of Christ as his brothers and sisters, the redeemed family, and fellow heirs of God through Christ. He is in union with Christ and his church. He has a new sense of kinship with people of different races, cultures, languages. He feels compelled to love those brothers, to exhort them in the Christian walk, to encourage them in difficulties and to help supply their needs.

We’ll look in more detail at the specific characteristics and behaviors in the chapter next week, but for now we need to just get the point first. All of that flows out of what we saw in verse 10 about making the teaching about God our Savior attractive. The verb there is the word *kosmow* in Greek – it means to adorn or to decorate – it is where we get our word cosmetics and it has that same idea – to make beautiful or attractive. It is used in other places of setting a jewel – like in an engagement ring where the setting is designed to show off the diamond in the most favorable light. A poor setting prevents an expensive and beautiful stone from being seen for what it is.

You get the point – the behavior of Christians – that is if we live as we should – should be a recommendation of the gospel to the unsaved around us. It should commend the truth to others – should make unbelievers sit up and take notice. The lives of Christians should be the setting of the diamond of the gospel. And those lives should confirm rather than call into question what Christians are saying. Our behavior, in other words, should reflect well on God.

See the world doesn’t judge us by our doctrine – by our theology. The world judges us by our behavior, right? And that carries over. **Our world judges whether the Bible is really true and powerful and life changing by whether it changes OUR LIVES.**

In fact in Romans you the same idea from an opposite and tragic effect. In **Romans 2:24** the Bible says “*God’s name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.*”

Well that’s the opposite of what you want to have happen – the opposite of God’s blueprint for his church – the opposite of what we are seeing here in Titus. That verse in Romans is a quotation from **Isaiah 52:5** where because of the sins of Israel – the people of God – their sin, their crimes, whatever you want to call it were attributed to the impotence of their God so that the pagans around them were basically looking at God in blasphemous perspectives.

See **what God is giving us here in chapter 2 when it comes to his blueprint for his church is the EVANGELISTIC strategy** of the church according to God’s plan. **We reach the world by holiness, not by technique.**

Let me just ask you something. What is our primary message to the world about God? Are we trying to tell the world that God is omnipotent? Well – he is. Are we trying to get across that God is omniscient? That he is omnipresent? That he is unchanging? Are we trying to get across to this world that God is the creator and sustainer of the universe? That he is sovereign? Eternal?

Yes all of that is true. But what we are really trying to get the world to understand is that God is a Savior – isn’t that it? We want them to understand that God is there to save them. That’s what we see in the hina clause – the why – of verse 10. How can we make the teaching about God our Savior attractive if we don’t look like we’ve been saved?

Not to lighten this up or anything, but if I tell you about my barber and you look at me and say “Your hair cut is a mess” then you aren’t going to my barber are you? How obvious is that?

It doesn’t do any good to commend something to you that doesn’t show up in my life.

Do you see what is at stake here? Souls. Eternal souls. You see wrong conduct on the part of Christians leads non-Christians to slander God. Holy conduct on the part of Christians leads people to glorify God. This is the whole matter of evangelism. **What makes God's church powerful in the world is not its strategy, it is its virtue – its holiness. What we BELIEVE is directly linked to how we live and how we live is directly linked to EVANGELISM.**

So going back to the very first point that God's church is never to take its marching orders from the culture around them – if the marketing strategists in the church growth movement are wrong and if we don't have to become and in fact should not become like the world to win the world, then what do we do? What is our strategy to be?

What is the underlying issue that gives us a platform on which to speak? How do we win the attention of the world of sinners so they will at least listen to the truth?

I think the principle is completely foundational and Jesus lays it out for us in **Matthew 5** as simply and directly as he could and it cannot be improved upon. He said this in verses 14-16:

*"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."*

Our credibility in the world is our testimony. The platform on which we speak is godliness, righteousness, transformation. **The greatest and the most powerful element of evangelism in God's church is not technique, it is not some marketing strategy, it is not cultural relevance, it is the power of a TRANSFORMED life.**

To convince a man that God can save him, I need to show him a man God saved. To convince a lady that God can give hope, I need to show her a lady with hope. To convince a person that God can give peace and joy and love, I need to show that person someone with peace, joy, and love. You see the way we build the platform is by living the life. So hear it again, the greatest and most powerful element of evangelism is the power of transformed lives.

CS Lewis who had been drawn to the Christian faith in part by the example of Christians that he knew, wrote in a letter to a friend in 1955, "What we practice...is usually our great contribution to the conversion of others."

It is very often the impression made on an unbeliever by a Christian's life that opens his heart and mind to the good news of Christ's love and salvation.

Now all of this sets before us a direct, clear challenge. Are we living so intentionally? **Are you and I living so as to make the doctrine of Christ and salvation by faith in him ATTRACTIVE?**

Now let me encourage you first here because Christians are very likely to think, "No; my life is not," even when it is. I don't know how many times this has happened to me and to others I know. Someone will say how I or another Christian has made a positive impression on him and I immediately think: "I did?" "He did?" Because thinking back I cannot imagine how that could of happened. Sometimes we are more likely to think that we didn't do a very good job at all leaving a good impression for Christ's sake. We as Christians are so conscious of our failures that we can't see the difference that Christ makes in our lives that is plain for any unbeliever to see.

But – let me also say this – that there is more, much more that all of us can and should do to keep the Word of God from being maligned, to give opponents nothing bad to say about us, and especially to make the truth of our Savior attractive.

Just a couple years ago at the Oscars in 2006 you may have noticed the Oscar for the best original song written for a movie went to the song "It's Hard Out Here for a Pimp," which appeared in the film Hustle and Flow. When the hip-hop group that sang the song came to the podium to collect their award for their song about being a pimp, one of the singers, blurted out "Thank you, Jesus!" There is a lot of that going around, as you know. A complete breakdown between life and message, between the life so-called Christians live and the message Jesus himself calls upon us to believe. Jesus does not belong in the same sentence with a song about being a pimp. And it is not to be suggested that he honored such a song. There is no adornment of his message there. Christ is dishonored not honored; his message made ridiculous, even pathetic, not held up to admiration.

But it is not to be so with us. To quote again from Dr. Rayburn, "We are not to be living in violation of God's laws, as if they meant nothing to us and as if we thought Christ's way was dull, boring, or irrelevant. We are not to be narrow, shallow, loveless, brittle, easily angered, selfish people. We are to be faithful to our relationships, selfless in the service of others, kind-hearted, cheerful, generous to a fault, reverent and devout yet hard to offend. Being with us ought to be a pleasure not a pain for people, whether or not they are Christians. We should be obviously interested in others and less taken up with ourselves. There ought to be something of God's love, Christ's sacrifice, and heaven itself in our speech and our carriage and our behavior. It ought to be evident that we have higher purposes to live for than the world can supply and sources of peace, joy, and love the world knows nothing of."

And what God through Paul to Titus is telling us today as the church of God is that we ought to intend – to purpose – to want our behavior to be this way precisely for the sake of the effect it may have on others. Such a life is our witness for Christ and the gospel - just as much as a verbal explanation of the cross and the resurrection of Christ is - when we have a chance to share it.

The connection between sound doctrine and that which accords with it cannot be ignored. **If the saving grace of Christ is going to reach all men, it is going to depend on the CHARACTER of the church.** If we honor the Word, if we silence the critics and demonstrate that God is a saving God buy our transformed lives, then the gospel will be powerfully effective.

In God's blueprint for his church – his plan for you and me – there is no separation between what we believe and how we live. God's plan to reach our world starts not at 10:45 on Sunday morning in a worship service. It begins when your alarm clock goes off every day.

What does that mean? It means when you get up in the morning and begin your day, and when you encounter other human beings, remember that you carry with **you the reputation of JESUS CHRIST. They will think of him, to some degree, as they think of you. And that should be motivation enough for us to live what we believe – to LIVE a distinctively Christian life every day!**

Folks lets pray today that we really get the connection between sound doctrine and right practice.

That if we really believe the gospel of Jesus Christ has saved us, that we will really make that truth attractive as we bear His name every day.