

**February 28, 2010**

**Titus 2 Remix**

Good morning and welcome back! Grab your Bibles with me and turn to the book of Titus. Get your message maps out of your worship guides as well and you'll notice that the title there says Titus 2 Remix. Again – that's because we've already studied through this material – it was just 7 or 8 months ago. And before we can pick up where we left off in chapter 3 of Titus, we need to know what leads up to what God through Paul says there. So we've looked at chapter 1. Today we'll look again at chapter 2 and then we'll move into chapter 3. But again – since we are taking the summary road here, if and when you want more detail or come up with questions on these verses, please check out the exposition of this text in detail from last summer on our website.

Now real quickly, a few relevant reminders from chapter 1. Remember this whole letter – short though it may be – is a chance for God to show us his blueprint for establishing his church – what he wants the local church to be.

We learned from Paul's description of his own ministry in the opening verses that God's church is not only to be about bringing those God has chosen to saving faith, but to be moving those who are saved to spiritual maturity.

We learned that the leaders of the church – the elders – must not only be men of character and gospel-reflecting lifestyles, they must be able to encourage and rebuke with sound doctrine.

And we saw the truth that righteousness – being right before God is the result of faith – of right belief in the truth – not of external works.

Now as we move into chapter 2, Paul is again addressing Titus in his writing about what Titus is to do – what he is to teach in these new churches on the island of Crete. But just like with the listing of the elder qualifications in chapter 1, this is again more for the Christians on Crete to see and hear than really for Titus alone. So look at the **first verse**: *"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 who were basically making up their own rules. **Titus is to be bringing the churches on the island of Crete up to a standard of virtue – of quality – of CHARACTER 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 keep TALKING about the things they need to do that FIT the doctrine they believe. It calls for LIVING that is in complete accord with the truth.

And I want to make a point here before we go on. **The Bible teaches 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.** We are never to do what we do just because every one else is doing it. We do what we do – we are what we are because of the gospel of Jesus Christ. 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 being of no value in the daily grind of life. Rather, **DOCTRINE is foundational for behavior. You will behave according to what you really 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.

Why is that so important? 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 will read this text in just a moment, 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 many reasons for living a faithful Christian life – but here special emphasis falls on the WITNESS such behavior gives to the world.**

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. And we'll see him describe that in a moment.

But first – **what God cares about has nothing to do with the SIZE of a church; what God wants has to do with the CHARACTER of a church.** This is so important for us to really grasp because there are so many other opinions and options out there. And yet what makes a church healthy has nothing to do with how many programs it has or how much money it has or how big it is; what makes a church healthy is its holy character. And that is rarely ever mentioned today in all the church growth stuff out there. We're told if you want to grow your church you need to come up with technique and strategy and marketing savvy, etc etc but that really doesn't concern the Lord. What God is concerned about is the quality of the church. The size of any given church is bound up in God's own sovereign purpose, but his goal is the godliness – the character of the church.

And that is what we begin to see here in chapter 2. As much as the end of chapter 1 was making sure we didn't see our external works as what make us right with God, as being more important than faith; in chapter 2 we see how important our external works are because that is how we impact the church and the world. **People judge our Jesus by what we do and who we are not just by what we SAY.** See **what God gives us here in chapter 2** when it comes to his blueprint for his church is **God's EVANGELISTIC strategy for His church. We reach the world by HOLINESS, not by magical techniques.**

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 how great my barber is 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. So what should show up in our lives – well let's take a look at **verses 2-9**. TEXT

What we see through the wide angle lens of chapter 2 there is God's blueprint not for the leaders of his church but for the congregation within the church. Each generation must relate to each other – they have particular responsibilities. You see that in how many times Paul refers to setting examples and to training each other in this chapter. What we must see is that **God designed the body of Christ so that older believers might be SHARPENED by the younger and younger believers might be TAUGHT by the older.**

The important implication for the church and all of us as individuals is that we must begin to give up our hard-won independence and become interdependent: we must become people who depend on each other.

Now that sounds nice doesn't it? Interdependence is much easier to acknowledge than it is to actually act as though our very lives hinge on others. And that is somewhat natural – I mean in our culture, growing to maturity means cutting the ties that bind us to others – we learn to make decisions and to chart our own course. So acting as a part of an interdependent body like we have seen God describe in so many places – involves unlearning the habits of a lifetime.

We talked about this last time we were in this text, but today there is often more "community" on Facebook or Twitter than in the church. I'm not saying those things are bad – not at all – but the reason our culture leans that direction is a matter of control. I share what I want and when I want to stop – when I want to no longer deal with you – I sign off – I unplug – I logout and there's nothing you can do about it. That community is individualistic. God's plan for our maturity – His blueprint for the church – is not individualistic. The only complete Christian is the body of Christ. Only the body can be whole. Anyone who wants to be a complete Christian must realize that he is part of that body – dependent on and depended on by others – and must act accordingly.

The simple truth is that we need each other. God's blueprint for establishing his church is people moving to life in Christ one step at a time together. Sound familiar?

Whether you consider yourself an older generation or a younger generation, **for the vast majority of us in here, there is a generation on either side of you – which means there are people on either side of you SPIRITUALLY in this place that need you to be and do what God shows as His plan for those roles.**

We need to pause here and go back to the question we've asked so many times: **If everyone did church and the Christian life like I do, would Fairway be BETTER or WORSE off?**

Is your church stronger because of you?

Do you serve with a servant's heart?

Are you a consistent servant or a convenient servant?

Have you retired from being involved?

Are you isolated from relationships?

If everyone lived like you, would we fit better or worse into God's blueprint for His church?

And the reason why we need to understand this is that we ought to want to be this way – we ought to intend 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 – of each of us.** We are the church – so this is about your character and my character. If we honor the Word, if we silence the critics and demonstrate that God is a saving God by 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!

Hearing God through Paul to Titus to us lay out these things adds credibility to the words of Brennan Manning that were quoted by DC Talk recently. *“The single greatest cause of atheism in the world today is Christians, who acknowledge Jesus with their lips, then walk out the door, and deny Him by their lifestyle. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable.”*

It makes sense then that all of what Paul has been saying about our interdependence and living what we believe leads up to verse 10 where he ends by saying *“so that in every way [you] make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.”* So he defines the teaching about God our Savior as the basis for the kind of life we have just been instructed to live. And now in these last few verses he goes on to describe that foundation for all Christian conduct – and **the foundation for all Christian conduct is that God has saved us so that we might be EAGER for good works so that we are used by God to lead others to Him.** We live to put God's power on display. That is the point of these last verses. So let's take a look. **Verses 11-15. TEXT**

Verse 11 said that salvation is brought by the grace of God in Jesus Christ. And we know that at that point of salvation, we become new creations – we are cleansed – the Holy Spirit of God takes up residence in us – in who we are – and prompts us toward ever increasing holiness. That's what we see in verse 12 when Paul says that this grace of salvation in Christ teaches us. It reprograms the computer if you will with longing for holiness and righteousness and virtue and the goodness of God. That's what happens in the transformation of salvation.

So when he says in verse 12 that the grace becomes our teacher it means we come under the teaching of God by His Spirit through His Word and a process of training goes on – as through sanctification we are made more and more like Jesus.

And we need to stop there and see how important it is that we understand that. There are some people who say – ‘well no, when I got saved all I wanted was fire insurance. I just wanted to make sure I didn't go to hell.’ Frankly – you might question someone like that. Not that that fear can't lead someone to truly embrace Jesus, but when you see a genuine conversion, it will be marked not only by a concern over a fear of the future, but a desire to be delivered from the present power of evil.

In other words – a saved person isn't going to say ‘well I'd like to continue my life the way it is, but I certainly don't want to die and go to hell.’ That's not the stuff of genuine repentance. There's no salvation in that. Because God's Word says when the Holy Spirit brings conviction, according to John 16, He is not convicting the world of hell. He is convicting the world of what? Sin. People come to

be saved from sin – being saved from hell is just a by-product. **To reduce salvation to just deliverance from HELL and not from the power of SIN day to day is to destroy the gospel.**

And that's what we are seeing here in Titus 2. Verse 12 says that grace of God in Jesus Christ that saves us *“teaches us to say No to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.”*

Why? The key to all of this is in the end of verse 14 – that Jesus saves us to make us his own – that we might be a people it says *“eager to do what is good.”* A people who live in good deeds so that others can see the saving power of God on display – that's the point.

That's why the word 'eager' is important. Jesus doesn't just want us doing good works. He wants us passionate about good works.

Now listen – we know that when we speak of good works today it is in no way confused as promoting or providing your eternal salvation. Verse 11 said we are saved by grace and once we are saved, that same grace teaches us to live self controlled, upright, and godly lives.

But here is the deal – the people of God – are a holy people. It is for this purpose that we are born and brought into the world – that we would be holy. For this we are redeemed by the blood of Jesus and made his precious possession. **The end of God's purposes is not complete until we become a people eager for GOOD WORKS – to do what is good.**

Which gets back to the heart of God's blueprint here in Titus 2 – the heart of God's blueprint is that our lives are to reflect the effectiveness of the gospel. The sermon that is preached by the mouth is soon forgotten. But what we preach with our lives is rarely forgotten. There is nothing like faithful practice – holy character – biblical lifestyle – if we would preach to our world.

Church the reason why God spent chapter 2 talking about that which accords with sound doctrine – the behaviors that must be lived at every stage and station of life – is **because if our lifestyles on the OUTSIDE don't reflect the effectiveness of the gospel, then the gospel has not affected us on the INSIDE either.**

**Salvation is accomplished by grace – lived by faith – and proven by WORKS every single day of our lives as we follow Jesus. That's what it means to be a Christian. And that is the very BEST life there is.**

We have a tremendous privilege as the children of God and with it comes a tremendous responsibility. We've been left in this world to be a people zealous for good works who thereby make the teaching of God our Savior attractive in every respect. The truest thing that can be said about God in his relation to man is that He is a saving God. But is it not shocking to us that the evidence of His saving power is in great measure dependent on us? That is a high calling, a great privilege, an awesome responsibility, and that is why we are taking serious God's blueprint for His church – for us – that we must be doing life in Christ one step at a time together – worshipping Jesus – learning truth – building community – and reaching your world for the glory of our God.

So the question is how are we doing?

Or really the question is, how are you doing?

Because how we are doing at fitting into God's blueprint for His church is the result of how each of us is doing at living lives that match what we say we believe – living lives that make the teaching about God our Savior attractive – living lives that are eager to do good works.

As much as this is an “us” chapter this morning – the challenge to go home with is – if everyone did what I do – lived like I live – did church like I do church – would Fairway be better or worse off?

You and Jesus and me and Jesus need to deal with that question – and then live our lives according to what He says.

Let's pray.

