

TITUS

2:1-15

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Taught at our Sunday morning service, 15th January 2023 @ Deal Christian Fellowship

Reading: Titus 2:1-15

Introduction

We're studying Titus, one of the shorter books of the Bible at just 3 chapters - less than 1000 words long - which is a letter written by the apostle Paul to a young pastor by the name of Titus, who was on the island of Crete in the Mediterranean Sea. The culture there was not great - even one of their own described them as lazy evil liars. Yet, in the midst of that there were several churches, and we read Paul instruct Titus to set godly leadership over them.

In the first chapter, which we studied last week, Paul describes what godly leadership should look like. That those with that responsibility should set an example of how Christians should live - not for the sake of it, but so those watching would indeed follow those examples. Specifically, he lays out the requirements of eldership, starting with integrity and character; with a man's life at home, and in public. And with those things in place an elder should hold the Word of God fast, faithfully applying it to himself, *that he may be able to exhort and convict others*. Whether via the pulpit, or personal conversations. These godly men are to do that because there are many others who would talk the talk without walking the walk. That would deceive others, twisting scripture for personal gain.

Now, as we get into chapter 2 this morning, we'll see Paul say - but as for you Titus, don't be like these men who handle the Word of God deceitfully and dishonestly, but rather teach sound doctrine. And that's what chapter 2 focusses on - what sound doctrine is. Right away, we'll see Paul say who sound doctrine is for - it's not reserved for theologians, scholars, pastors or Bible college students. No, he says sound doctrine is for older men, *and* younger men. It is for older women, *and* younger women. It is for all Christians. And it is to be applied in our homes, *and* our workplaces.

Chapter overview of Titus

As a quick reminder then, here is how the 3 chapters of this book are laid out...

Chapter overview of Titus

- Chapter 1: Sound leadership
- Chapter 2: Sound doctrine
- Chapter 3: Good works

But as noted last week, these are not the only things covered in each chapter - for example, this morning we'll begin to talk about good works, even ahead of chapter 3 next week.

Overview of chapter two

Zooming into chapter 2, we see that it is book-ended by commands to teach sound doctrine, to urge all those in the church to follow it, and to rebuke those that live contrary to it. But it's in the bulk of this chapter that we see Paul explain *what* sound doctrine looks like (and for who), and critically, the reason for living it out.

Overview of chapter two

- v1 - Teach sound doctrine!
- v2-6 - Men, women, young, old, at home, at work
- v11-14 - The effect of grace
- v15 - Speak, exhort, rebuke!

In verses 2-6 we see the things that sound doctrine should produce in both men and women, young and old, in both the context of our home lives, and work lives. Then in verses 11-14 we see that grace teaches us to live holy lives.

Chapter two

So let's go through this chapter, verse by verse. We read...

Titus 2:1

But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine:

Having warned in chapter 1 of idle talkers and deceivers who teach things for dishonest gain, for what they can get out of it, Paul commands Titus to teach *sound* doctrine. He isn't to hope things will turn out OK, but to teach the Word. To teach the Bible. And to do it faithfully. Why? Not for the income, but the outcome. That there would be a change in the lives of those that hear it.

And that is the pattern that every church must follow. This isn't extra curricular material. This is foundational to every church, if indeed it is to be a godly and Biblical one.

In Acts 2:42 we see the pattern of the church established, that...

Acts 2:42

...they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Sound doctrine means the apostles' doctrine. Not some random guy you met in the street's doctrine, or the Christian keyboard warrior on twitter's doctrine, or online pastors who you have no idea who they are doctrine. But the apostles doctrine.

We are to teach the Bible. Nothing more. Nothing less. But what is this doctrine for? You might think that Paul would go on to define sound doctrine in terms of pneumatology, eschatology, soteriology. That it would be a seminar on theological principles. But no, he goes on to show that sound doctrine is for every Christian, for every part of their lives. In other words, it is the Bible *applied* to our lives.

Paul, when writing to Timothy for the second time, says:

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

For a long time we have had in our statement of faith (which you can read on our web site by the way) that *we seek to teach the Word of God in such as way that its message can be applied to an individuals life, leading that person to greater maturity in Christ.*

That is what pastors and elders are to do. That is what doctrine is for. We read in 1 Thessalonians how this should all play out...

1 Thessalonians 2:10-12

You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

This teaching of doctrine is to be done now, and done continually. We read later in 2 Timothy...

2 Timothy 4:2-4

Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering 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.

We live in times, like many before us, like Titus in Crete, where there are those that want to twist scripture. We must hold fast to the truth. We should contend for the faith, as Jude writes. *But*, we are not to fight with each other. What I mean by that, and urge you to be very careful in, is that many Christians love to use doctrine as a stick which they can use to beat others.

But the purpose of sound doctrine is that, first, we may know Jesus - that we would understand more of who He is, and what He has done. Second, that we may walk closely with Him. And how can we walk with Him if we don't keep His commandments? If sound doctrine only produces theology, and no change in your life, then you are not applying it. Sound doctrine isn't there so we can win arguments, but so that we may know the Lord, win souls to Him, walk with Him, and please Him. It is there so our lives would be radically transformed, that we would be zealous for good works. Good works are not the focal point - Jesus is - but they should be the end result. Faith without works is dead.

Let me clarify... if you spend more time disputing doctrine, than you do serving Him and serving others, something is out of place. If you've won a hundred doctrinal arguments - whether with Christians you know, or via Social media, but you've never bought someone a coffee and talked with them. Or if you've never been late home because you took the time to listen to with a brother or sister in need after service, then you're missing the forest for the trees.

Don't you dare fight over doctrine without showing the love that Christ did to you. Oh, we are to call out heresy. But where two godly people have concluded different things from the same verse, don't ignore other parts of the Bible so you can vigorously or even aggressively defend the parts you're focussed on - that's ludicrous. We are not to bite and devour each other as we looked at last week. We have to approach these things rightly. We should be anything from aghast to furious when blatant false teaching is in front of us - but, we are to be angry and sin not.

So then, pressing on, let's consider the *things* that are proper for sound doctrine...

Titus 2:2

that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience;

Who of you then are older men? I'll leave you to decide. But I think it's helpful to think of this as mature men, whether through age, or in how long you've walked with the Lord. For maturity brings responsibility to not act as a child, and rather, to set an example that others can follow.

That example older men are to set, is laid out plainly here. You are to be **sober**. Never drunk. Nor having your judgement influenced by drink. Following the example of the elders of the church. Strong's Bible dictionary defines this word as sober, temperate.. abstaining from wine, either entirely or *at least* from its immoderate use. That is going to require a decision on your part. It's going to require obedience to God and His Word. We read in Ephesians:

Ephesians 5:17-18

Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,

Continuing here in Titus, we are told that the older men should also be **reverent**. That there is a certain seriousness you give life. A level of respect, especially regarding the things of God, not joking and playing around with the Bible, not making a mockery of what we believe. It's not that you can't have fun, or that you aren't fun to be around. But that you show appropriate respect.

And, we read, older men are to be **temperate**. Moderate in all things. Men, we are not renowned for self control. But that's what maturity should look like - especially as a Christian. Not only with regard to drink, but to our belly. We must not be gluttons. God has blessed us with our bodies, we need to take care of them. I struggle with this! Likewise we shouldn't spend mindless amounts of time on social media, but know how to control and conduct ourselves, acting with prudence - taking the trouble to think out what you are doing and what is likely to come of it, as CS Lewis put it.

The older men are to be sound in faith, love and patience.

You are to be **sound in faith**. Not easily moved. Having a sure foundation that comes from being both attentive to the teaching of the Word, AND diligent in your own personal study of it. We read this rebuke in Hebrews chapter 5:

Hebrews 5:12-14

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

If you have not grown in your faith in the last 5 years, there's a problem - not with the pastor who has taught you, or elders who have led you. But in your own desire and appetite for the Word. For there are those who have visibly grown in their faith who have sat under the same teaching.

Older men - you are also to be **sound in love**. Maybe listening to the Word is not the issue, maybe it's the application of it that is the problem. Paul writes to the Corinthians:

1 Corinthians 13:1-2

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

Christian roots should produce Christian fruits. And we also read here in Titus that older men should be **sound in patience**. Not snapping, not quick tempered. But also patiently enduring trials. Patiently persisting in prayer for others. Patiently serving God, leaving the results up to Him.

We read in Galatians chapter 5:

Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Now, in verse 3, Paul addresses what sound doctrine is regarding older women. We read...

Titus 2:3

the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behaviour, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—

Now, first of all, I'm sure I'm on dodgy ground here addressing the older women. I'm not going to say who you are. But again it's a question of maturity. I use the example of fine wines with caution, but it's generally recognised that a fine wine leaves a better taste in your mouth the older it gets. So it should be with you. Better, not bitter with age.

Specifically, we read that older women should, just like the older men, be **reverent in behaviour**. How does that look? Well, let me remind you of the example of Ruth Fowler who attended this church for many years until she went to be with the Lord. I used to watch her - she'd come in, kindly ask how people were, but then quietly sit down and pray ahead of the service. That's wonderful. It often reminded me of the phrase *"Before the service talk to God, during the service let God talk to you, after the service talk to one another."*

Jon Courson, in his Bible commentary, says "Sound doctrine for older women is that they exhibit holy, whole, together lives." That's not a bad summary.

Paul continues saying that older women should **not be slanderers**. That is, you should give no place to gossip. You should not speak badly of or tell lies about someone so as to damage their reputation.

Neither, should you be given to much wine. That is, like the godly older men - you should never be drunk. The Bible doesn't prohibit wine. Look at Paul's instruction to Timothy to even use it for his good. But it should not be a snare to us. Look at what happened with King Ahasuerus with Queen Vashti. It clouds our judgement, it reduces our self control, and inhibitions.

Rather, we read, older women should be **teachers of good things**. What are those good things? And to whom should they teach them? We read in verse 4...

Titus 2:4

that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,

So, young women - this is for you. I'm guessing more of you ladies feel happy about being in that camp, right? Well, regardless, what is it that sound doctrine is regarding young women? We read in the greek a word translated in the King James Version as **sober**, and omitted here in the New King James Version. But this word is more indicative of being of a sound mind, or of restoring one to their senses. And that figures, while it should be obvious for young women to **love their husbands** and children, it's not as easy or natural as we might think. So indeed there is a restoring to ones senses to be done here.

The greek word used for love toward **husbands** is not agape - to sacrificially love them (that's reserved for how husbands should love their wives) - but rather it is *philandros*, that is to be fond of them. To be affectionate. Remember who is to teach this - the older women. For they are the ones, especially if widows themselves, that can come alongside the younger women and say "honey, be fond of your husband. Love him while you've got him - because it goes by quickly".

The greek word for love, as relates to **children**, is *philoteknos* - indicative of maternal love for their children. Why would the young women need reminding of *that?! Perhaps it is that ooo's and aaa's quickly turn into, "come on, you're running late. Put your coat on. Get your homework done. Tidy your room". It's a tough job being a mother. It's possible to end up jaded by it. Older women, especially if mothers, know exactly what it's like. So come alongside those in your church family with sound doctrine, love, and support.*

Paul is dealing with real life here. And he continues...

Titus 2:5

to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

Young women are to be discreet, not parading themselves around. Not dressing suggestively, wearing revealing clothing. There is a battle in the mind of many men, and how you dress can help or hinder them. "But lust is the guys problem, not mine" you might think - claiming that you feel empowered or confident when you dress that way. Well, look at what Paul wrote to the Corinthians...

1 Corinthians 8:13

Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

If Paul was willing to give up burgers, steaks, and bacon sandwiches so that he would not cause another Christian to stumble, so ought you to be willing to dress modestly for the sake of your Christian brothers that might be struggling terribly each time you wear that piece of clothing. In other words, be sensitive to the conscience of others. Peter says there's a far better way...

1 Peter 3:3-4

Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel— rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.

Paul continues to Titus, and says that the older women should also teach the young to be **chaste**. To be pure, to be clean. It's not a big stretch, to note that the Bible teaches that men and women alike should be virgins before marriage, and faithful after it. That's the Biblical standard. Anything outside of that is sinful. It's fornication, or adultery. But there are passages that speak more clearly regarding that, and I think this is speaking in the more general sense - of being pure in all things.

The young women are, it says here, to be **homemakers**. Do we skip that? Well, no - that's what it says. Now anyone saying that's unfair probably ought to consider how inept the typical man is at making a house anything but untidy, let alone making it a home. Have you ever seen us try and colour coordinate? But I don't want to disparage the guys who have this sorted. The key here is the wonderful ability of a mother to make a house a home - a place where her children feel safe and secure, where her husband feels loved and respected. That is to be encouraged, and not looked down on. Shame on our society for considering it some lesser calling. I was listening to Pastor Joe Focht teach on this passage and he commented; "There is nothing easy about that job description and there isn't anything less sacred about it than what I do."

Paul continues, stating that the young women are to be **good**. That surely needs no explanation! And they are to be **obedient to their OWN husbands**. Well, it makes good clear sense that this is to their own husbands, not someone else's. But obedient? What's *that* about?! Well, the idea here is of responding to their husbands. So find me a husband who loves his wife as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it, and see how his wife responds to that sacrificial love!

Of course, there's work to do on both sides here. But older women, come alongside the young women and teach, and encourage them in this - to let their husbands lead their household.

And all of this is so that, we read, **that the word of God may not be blasphemed**. People will read you before they read the Bible. And if they don't like what they see in your life, they may never pick up a Bible. Don't forget that! Jon Courson comments "Notebooks full of theological insights are useless if they come at the expense of a well-ordered home and a well-loved family."

So, we've heard about older men, older women and young women. What about the young men? Well, we read...

Titus 2:6

Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded,

Likewise - like the things above, there are things for a young man to consider, so that they live in a way that causes no-one outside the church to speak reproachfully about the Bible, or about our Saviour. People will do that anyway - don't let yourself be the cause of it!

And we read Likewise **exhort**. Older men - you have a part to play here. To come alongside the young men, and disciple them. Not to have them follow after you. But to follow after Jesus. And what is it that young men are to do? They are to be **sober-minded**.

What?! That's it? After all the things said to others? Well, maybe Paul's keeping it simple for them. You know, "look you have one thing to do!". But in reality, there's a lot of depth to this. Simply put, young men are to mature, to grow up, to take life seriously. Wouldn't that solve so many problems we see today?!

There's a reputation to change. And we need to be sober-minded. We need more studies, and less man-caves. And most importantly, we need time spent in the Word of God. We need a child-like faith, not a childish faith. And we're to make a sober estimation of ourselves - not inflate our egos.

Now, Paul, writing to Titus, a young pastor, says he is to be an example - to the young and old alike.

Titus 2:7

in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility,

He was not simply to tell others what they should be doing, but to model it. To demonstrate it. With actions as well as words. Applying doctrine correctly, not for dishonest purposes. Handling the Word of God with respect, not treating it lightly, as if it were something to play with. And teaching it faithfully, rightly dividing the Word of truth. With...

Titus 2:8

sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.

People can argue with what you say, if what you say is merely your opinion, but if you speak the Word of God, then in the end they are the ones who will look silly. So hold fast to the Bible, in Word *and* deed, that anyone who is antagonistic toward the gospel may find nothing they can hold against you personally - for people want an excuse, they don't want this to be true, they don't want accountability to God, and in their eyes, a hypocritical life in a Christian is probably all they need to justify to themselves their dismissal of Christ.

Continuing on we read...

Titus 2:9-10

Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

The application here is simple - we are to be such wonderful employees that we soften and not harden our employer's or manager's hearts to the Word of God. That our conduct in the workplace would point to the gospel, rather than turn people away from it. And the same goes for our attitude at school toward our teachers. But what if we have difficult managers, teachers or lecturers? Well, the Bible is clear, that even then we **are not to answer back**. Peter writes:

1 Peter 2:18-23

Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;

So do what is required and requested of you (so long as it is not contrary to scripture) to the best of your ability, for God's glory. Christians should work with the heart as well as with the head and hands. And, we read, we should work well, **not pilfering**. That is, the pile of paper clips on your desk in the office shouldn't be getting smaller while the pile on your desk at home gets bigger. It also means that you don't play fast and loose with the hours you work if working from home. Simply put, don't steal the goods, money, resources or time that your employer has entrusted you with. Rather, act in good faith toward your employer. Be a reliable, faithful employee.

Why? So that the gospel we share isn't drowned out by the life we live. Just as elders are to have both their home life and public life in order, so are all Christians.

"Isn't this all legalistic though?" you might ask. "Aren't we supposed to be under grace, and not the law?!" you might say. Well, what is it that you think God's grace does? It saves us, but grace takes us far beyond that. We read in the next 2 verses...

Titus 2:11-12

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,

That is, the grace of God doesn't give us permission to live how we want, but rather it motivates us to live how He wants. We read in Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome...

Romans 6:1-4

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Our lives as Christians should be radically different from how we would live if we had not been saved. Not because we're trying to keep a set of laws to earn our salvation, but because we want to please the One who died in our place, paying for our sin. Grace changes everything!

And Paul says here to Titus, that this grace should motivate us to **deny ungodly and worldly lusts** - that means voluntarily abstaining from certain things. Making an active choice to not abuse sex, power, or money, drink or the like. And it should motivate us to be **sober** - the idea behind this word is not the same as v2 which speaks of being drunk - but that we should be of a sound mind, to be in control of ourselves, being temperate. And we should be motivated by the grace God has shown to us, that we would live **justly, properly, uprightly** - being **godly** men and women. Not at some distant point in the future - but now. Right now. Because Jesus could come back at any moment, and we're to eagerly expect that, for this letter continues...

Titus 2:13

looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ,

This is our blessed hope, that Jesus will return for us. And John, speaking of this hope writes this:

1 John 3:1-3

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. **And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.**

Looking for Jesus return, knowing it could be at any moment, has a purifying effect on us. Like when as older children, your parents go away on holiday for a few days, and when you are finally close to the day they are coming home, you tidy the house, do the washing up, do the hoovering and so on. That happens just before they return - at least it did in my experience - and that's why we are to look for our blessed hope at any moment, that we would be ready now.

Let me ask you this - if Jesus returned in 5 minutes from now, would it be a joyful or frankly a rather embarrassing experience for you? Would you be found living for Him, or for yourself?

Again, what motivation we have when we look at Jesus sacrifice for us...

Titus 2:14

who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

You see, all these things that Paul is instructing Titus to teach, all these things that constitute sound doctrine, are the very reason Jesus saved us - that's what it says here. God doesn't want to reform us, He wants to redeem us. There's a big difference. The gospel is not something that is designed to encourage Christ-rejecting men to do better. No, He wants to redeem us, and that can only happen through Jesus death and resurrection. God wants to set you aside for His purposes. He wants you to be zealous for good works. We read in Ephesians that we are not saved *by* good works, but *for* good works...

Ephesians 2:8-10

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

We don't live according to the Bible to earn God's grace - if we could earn it, it wouldn't be grace - but rather God's grace is what moves us to live for His glory.

Titus 2:15

Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.

Paul says to Titus, preach the Word! Press on with what you are to teach. Rebuke with all authority. Not your own, but God's. For it is His Word you are preaching. However, don't live contrary to it yourself and cause people to despise you as a hypocrite.

Conclusion

Sound doctrine is of critical importance to every church. But it shouldn't produce theology nuts with a ton of head knowledge yet without any change to their lives, but simply folks who love Jesus, live for Him, and love others - that's what it is there for. It should produce people zealous for good works. But what will it do in you? Will you let it produce greater maturity in you as a believer? Sound doctrine should produce right living.

Application questions

As you go through this week, consider the following questions to help apply this chapter to your life:

- Whether young or old, male or female, how would God have you live?
- Do you live and love as you should at home?
- Is your conversation and conduct in the workplace honouring God?