

## Living out the Faith

Part 2 – Titus 2:6-15

Does anybody remember a number of years ago when we did something called ‘Stump the Pastor’?

I got the idea from a seminary professor. The kids would bring in random objects and put them in a box and then a volunteer would pick an item out of the box and I would have to relate that item to a bible story.

Most of the time I did ok, but every now and again I got stumped.

If you will indulge me I want to do something similar this morning.

I’d like a few volunteers to name their favourite person from the bible, other than Jesus, and I will try and give a rough summary of their story.

Is there anybody willing to shout out a name?

[Take a few names].

Do you know what those people have in common?

They believed God. Do you know how we know they believed God? They did stuff that demonstrated their faith.

There is a chapter in the Bible that is all about people of faith, it is Hebrews chapter 11.

That chapter begins by saying, “*Now faith is the assurance of the things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen*” and then it goes on to describe a bunch of people who lived that out to one degree or another.

The recurring theme through the chapter is people believing God and that faith being live out in their actions.

I think the big lesson to be learned there is that genuine faith in God gets lived out in tangible ways.

[That is certainly the lesson that the apostle Paul has been giving to Titus in chapter two of his letter to his disciple and friend whom he left on the island of Crete to put some things in order in the churches that had been planted there. In verses 2-5 older men, older women, and younger women are addressed about how to live in light of the gospel. In verses 6-10 Paul addresses young men, Titus directly, and slaves. In verses 11-15 he pulls everyone’s attention back to why our faith must be lived out. This morning we begin in verses 6-8 with this lesson, that...]

**Point #3 – Church leaders need to be diligent in their life and teaching. (Verses 6-8)**

God's people need to see in the lives of those who care for them that theology is more than an intellectual pursuit, it is truth that gets lived out.

*In verse 6 we find a brief comment to young men. (Verse 6)*

The word 'likewise' again reminds us that the moral virtues being encouraged in these verses are for all believers.

The command for self-control would seem to be very important to the apostle because he repeats it a number of times in these verses.

Remembering the description of the culture in which Titus is ministering helps us to see why the command for self-control is so critical.

The Island of Crete was a place of low morality and high indulgence which sounds like our own day.

It would be easy to say, "That is just the way it is, they can't help it they are Cretans."

Instead they are reminded of the need for self-control because it is critically important to the fight against evil in the life of the believer.

The Christian has to know that he/she has the capacity to say no to things that God hates.

*Titus himself, likely a younger man, is no exception and Paul addresses him next (Verse 7-8).*

That is a very high bar that is being set for this younger pastor.

"In all respects". In everything in your life Titus. There are no parts of life that are exempted here.

In everything be a "model of good works."

Give people a good and consistent example of what it looks like to live out the Christian faith.

The pastor, elder, overseer, should be applying what he teaches to his own life so that people can see the good fruit of godliness in him and that filters down to deacons, Sunday school teachers, small group leaders, and every other area of ministry in the church.

"Do as I say and not as I do" can never produce a healthy church because it is powerless to help anyone else walk with the LORD.

Leaders need to be diligent in their way of life, never making excuses for failures but humbly seeking to kill their own sin and do what is right.

*The same diligence must be shown in the teaching ministry of the church.*

He says show ‘integrity’ in your teaching. The sense of that word is honesty, meaning teach what is true.

If the preacher is self-serving he will twist the truth to benefit himself or try to establish unbiblical power and control over people.

If the preacher concerns himself with saying what people want to hear then he will be willing to shade the truth or ignore the truth for the sake of keeping people comfortable in their sin.

A preacher of integrity loves people enough to concern himself with doing his best to teach God’s word as it is so that they might hear what God desires for their life.

He is to show ‘dignity’ or seriousness in his teaching. The issues of life, death, sin, holiness, heaven, hell, and the glory of God are weighty matters and the preacher ought to feel the weight of them.

He needs to demonstrate ‘sound speech that cannot be condemned.’

What he says ought to make sense, it ought to be filled with logic and wisdom that people can clearly see for themselves.

*The purpose of all of this is so that those that oppose the truth ‘may be put to shame and have nothing evil to say.’*

The hope here is that the people of God would be clearly shown the foolishness of those who oppose or distort the gospel of Jesus Christ so that they would gain no ground in the church.

Be so sound in teaching that they would have no legitimate grounds to say anything bad about what is taught.

Of course evil people will say bad things about solid bible teaching, but they will be based on lies and corruption rather than legitimate grounds.

[We see examples of this in the Bible. Remember Daniel? He was a man of great integrity and diligence so that evil men could not find any just reason to bring anything against him so they had to come up with an evil plan to get Daniel thrown into the lion’s den for praying. Or think of how many times the religious leaders tried to trap Jesus and He showed them to be fools. They still plotted evil against Him but it was all based on lies.]

That is the kind of diligence that leaders in the church need to strive for.

The kind of diligence that puts the goodness of God's word on display in the way we live and with what we teach.

[It is a real challenge to fight against laziness. It is a real challenge to fight against fear and doubt. It is hard to face failure and continue on striving for godliness, but it is a necessary part of living out what we say we believe. That brings us to another important lesson concerning living out the faith. The next group of people in the church Paul addresses are slaves and from what he says to them we learn that...]

**Point #4 – Christians must trust in God's providence and provision. (Verses 9-10)**

Without minimizing the importance of life choices, the believer understands that the LORD is the One Who determines our circumstances and trusts in His goodness.

Look with me at the beginning of verse 9 and the command that is given there.

The command is for the 'bondservant'/slave to make a willful choice to place his own will under the will of his master.

It is important that we qualify the words 'in everything'.

Whenever the bible gives the command for a human being to submit to another human being it is always under the ultimate authority of God.

We need to understand 'in everything' here to mean everything that is in keeping with God's moral laws, so if a master asks a servant to disobey God the servant must say no because obedience to the LORD always comes first.

He fills that out more with this... (**Verses 9-10a** stop at "faith").

Slaves are to be 'well-pleasing' to their masters.

They are to be known by their good service, someone who is viewed as working for the greater well-being of their master.

They are not to be 'argumentative' which can also be translated as 'rebellious'.

That can happen in obvious ways or it can be done behind the master's back.

The idea is that the servant is working against the wellbeing of the master.

It is easy to see why someone in the position of a slave may want to work against his master.

It would be easy to grow weary of menial tasks, it would be easy to feel mistreated, it would be hard to be treated as if you don't matter, and it would be hard to have such a limited ability to make decisions for yourself.

Lots of things could make a slave bitter and resentful towards a master, but the Christian is to strive to seek the good of his master.

Why? Because the slave, like all believers, must first and foremost entrust himself to God.

He does not have to accept slavery as a good thing to trust that God is in control of all things and has directed the course of his life to be exactly where he is at in this moment in time.

If freedom is a possibility the Bible says to pursue it, but if not it says not to be troubled because the LORD is in charge of everything that happens, which is what we call providence. (1 Corinthians 7:21-22).

Next he says, they are not to be 'pilfering, but showing all good faith.'

Pilfering is petty theft. Taking small things here and there, things that would likely go unnoticed for long periods of time.

Again it is easy to see why a slave would do something like that. They do all the work and get very little material benefit why not help yourself to something every now and again.

But the Christian is to be trust worthy. Whether it's a small amount or a large amount sitting out on the kitchen table the Christian can be trusted to keep it safe.

Why? Because the Christian knows that his/her needs are met by the LORD and therefore we should be content with whatever He provides without resorting to breaking God's commands for the sake of worldly gain.

Verse 10b makes it clear that what we say we believe about God is driving these commands.

Commentator Donald Guthrie points out that the word adorn here means to arrange jewels in such a way so as to set off their beauty.

In other words adorning is not making something beautiful or glorious it is the displaying of something's beauty or glory.

Trusting in God's providence and provision for life does that, it puts the glory of the Christian faith on display.

[Think of it like a mirror in the ancient world which was made from polished metal. What is the purpose of a mirror? It is to reflect an image. The mirror doesn't do anything to alter the image it can only do a good or a poor job of reflecting or displaying the image. Apart from faith in Christ we are like badly tarnished or rusted metal that doesn't reflect much of anything, but when we begin to trust in the Lord the Holy Spirit starts polishing and the more we get polished the better we are able to reflect the glory of God.]

Resting in God's providence and trusting in His provision has that kind of polishing effect on our lives.

When we can trust that God is in control of our everyday lives, it removes every excuse we have for disobedience.

When we are content with what we have in our lives it keeps us from all kinds of evil that is caused by the love of money.

It puts on display for the world to see that Jesus is the treasure of our lives.

[While there are important differences between slavery and having a job, there are some things that we can learn from these instructions. Christians ought to be hard workers, we ought to seek the good of those signing our paycheques, and we should be trustworthy especially when no one else is watching. There is a growing spirit of discontentment and envy in our day and the Christian ought to be living in sharp contrast to it. That brings us to I think the most important lesson of chapter two. All of the things said from verses 2-10 fall under Paul's instruction to Titus to 'teach what accords with sound doctrine.' In other words teach people what it looks like to live out the Christian faith. In verses 11-15 he tells us why that is necessary which shows us this lesson, that...]

### **Point #5 – The glory of the Gospel demands a changed life. (Verses 11-15)**

God's grace given to His people through faith alone in Christ is a treasure beyond compare which has conquered, is conquering, and will completely conquer evil.

*Verse 11 begins with the word 'for' which most likely goes all the way back to verse 1.*

Teach them that they should be doing all these things "For...**verse 11.**"

Notice the starting point here is 'grace'.

That is the undeserved gift of salvation. It is never earned. We never do a thing to make ourselves right with God, it is the LORD who does everything to make that happen.

This grace is 'bringing salvation for all people.'

That does not mean everyone will be saved regardless of whether or not they accept Jesus as their saviour.

It means that the way of salvation is open to every tribe, tongue, and nation.

Regardless of skin colour, language, rich, poor, slave, free, man, woman, young, old, or in between, if you turn to Jesus by faith alone you will be saved by God's grace.

Look at what the grace of God does! (Verse 12-14)

The grace of God works in the life of the Christian so that the Christian strives for a godly life.

This verse absolutely destroys the notion of using the grace of God as permission to live like the devil.

Anyone who teaches that people can enjoy all the wickedness they like and God will forgive them has no idea what the grace of God does in those that belong to Christ and they are encouraging people towards and eternity in hell.

God's grace forgives us yes and it trains us in godliness in the here and now as we anticipate the future.

Living a godly life is the only reasonable course of action for someone who is looking forward to Jesus coming.

What will happen when He comes? He will come in glory beyond compare with legions of angels and all of His people throughout all of history and He will make all things new, defeating every enemy including sin, death, and hell.

Everyone who belongs to Him will receive a resurrected body completely free from corruption and His people will live in the light of His glory in fullness of joy forever.

This is possible because He gave Himself to 'redeem' His people "from all lawlessness".

Every act of rebellion forgiven! Amazing!

Now notice the important word "and" in the middle of verse 14.

The word "and" means that what is said next is tied to what was just said.

He gave Himself to "redeem" and "purify... **14b**"

Jesus died and was raised to forgive you and to transform your heart to live for the things He loves.

Jesus' death and resurrection is NOT a ticket out of hell, it is the means by which God can justly forgive us and give us a desire for holiness making us citizens of heaven.

That is what makes the Christian 'zealous for good works' it is a love for God, a capacity to see that God's ways are good, and therefore have a desire to walk in them.

If you have no desire for that then you have no concept of the glory of the gospel!

Could it be that the reason why so many of us are weak in the face of temptation is because the work of Christ is a small thing in our eyes?

[Remember Isaiah when we was taken into heaven before the throne of God? Do you remember what he said? He said, “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.” I’m a sinner in the presence of God and so I am a dead man. Then an angel flies to the altar gets a burning coal and purifies Isaiah’s lips. Why? Because the prophet deserves it? No because God is gracious. Do you remember what happens next? God asks for someone to go as His messenger. Do you remember who volunteers? Isaiah does. His experience of the glory of God on account of the grace of God gives Him a desire to live for God.]

No doubt most of us here today would say that we know that Jesus died for us, but how much consideration have we given to what that really means?

God wants us to consider it. That is why Paul writes **verse 15** to Titus.

Tell them what it looks like to live out the faith.

“Exhort” or encourage them. Build them up, tell them about the glories of the gospel, remind them of who they are in Christ, and that everything they do for the LORD is worth it because Jesus is coming.

“Rebuke” them, give them strong correction when they are doing wrong.

Do these things with “all authority.”

Don’t be afraid to exhort and rebuke God’s people in accordance with the Scriptures.

Lastly he writes, “Let no one disregard you.”

That might sound like he is telling Titus to be heavy handed, but actually in the original language this command is being given to the people in the churches.

Listen up Cretans, you need to listen to Titus because he is teaching you the word of God.

No one can force you into this! If I could twist your arm to get you to agree to what is said from the pulpit it would do you no good because your heart would not change.

You have to want to live for the Lord, you have to see the glory of the gospel for yourself, but you also need to know that if you refuse the grace of God it is the biggest mistake you could ever make.

Jesus died to forgive you, He rose again to conquer the grave for you, He sent the Holy Spirit to conquer sin in you, and He will come again to do away with sin everywhere in everything and for all eternity.

That is a glorious gospel, let’s live like we believe it.