

We are walking through the book of Titus. Paul is writing this letter to Titus, his spiritual offspring, who has set up shop on the island of Crete. Brand new churches have established all over the island. These are new believers in house churches throughout the island. Paul, inspired and fueled by the Holy Spirit, wants to establish the church and set the church up in such a way that God would build health in the life of the church by first building up and setting apart godly leaders who would teach and instruct in sound doctrine, so that the gospel message would not be lost in this work, so that the new church would be taught the truth and the gospel in the right way, so that they would have an impact for the glory of God because of the gospel throughout the island of Crete. And that's what we talked about last week.

Today we're going to talk about what the role is of the body of Christ within the church. What is the role of the women in the church? What is the role of the men of the church? What is the role of the young men, of the younger women, the leaders of the church, of those who were slaves? What does the gospel look like impacting those lives all across the board in the life of the church to be able to build a healthy church for the glory of God that in turn just demonstrates what a changed life because of Christ looks like? What does it look like to live different in this culture?

Before we go there, the gospel also changes the way that we just live in our community. It ought to have an impact on our community. And that's one of the reasons we have this ministry called Transform. Transform is an incredible ministry. We began to do this work on Charles Rice Elementary campus, and it's unbelievable what the Lord has done there through you going down mentoring kids, taking on kids in your live, loving them, being down on that campus instructing them, being involved in their lives and also just being involved in giving that campus a huge facelift. After two years, the Lord has given us favor and an open door right across the street at Cary Middle School. There are 477 kids we have been given an entrance to by Principal Arona, by the leadership of that campus, by DISD, which is very unusual for the Dallas Independent School District to open up their doors and partner with a local church with an evangelical, gospel-centered, Christ exalting ministry and invite them in. They took the initiative and said, "Come on in." God has done this. It's unbelievable how God has just said, "Go get them." And so what's what we're doing.

So let's get into Titus 2. I'm going to read the whole chapter for you. There is so much that Paul is instructing Titus to instruct the young church on what it means as new believers, compelled by right, sound doctrine, that we ought to have lives that match good honest, true, sound teaching. Our lifestyle ought to match what we've been taught. So we ought to have lives, because of the gospel, fueled by the gospel, that really match the truth. It's not just enough for us to come in week in and week out and go, "Yeah, that's good. . . Oh I love that. . . That is the truth. . . Amen!" It ought to match our lifestyle in the life of the church and out in the community. Our homes, our workplaces, our relationships all should be platforms that are screaming of a life that has been changed by the gospel of Jesus Christ. So that's part of the whole point of the book of Titus, that God has left us on this earth, in this city to declare, by lives that are being changed daily, how good and awesome a Savior He is. So let's read. Titus 2, starting in verse 1:

*But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. Older men are to be soberminded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching*

*show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us. Slaves are to be submissive to their own masters 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. For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 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. Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.*

So I want to go back and start with making a difference in this culture. I want to read again from Stanley Hauerwas, a professor at Duke University, this whole idea of being a people who are resident aliens in a culture that is anti-God, anti-Christ, many dechurched and many people who are hearing the gospel for the very first time, just like on the island of Crete and are drawing conclusions and their understanding of Christianity from your life and from my life. This is no small thing. So that's why Paul made it really clear. "Go find, recruit, build up, train elders and pastors who would teach with authority sound doctrine so that, within the life of the church, there would be a health of sound doctrine." Now the call is to live a lifestyle that is matching the message of the gospel. So Stanley says, "The church is a colony, an island of one culture in the middle of another. In baptism our citizenship is transferred from one dominion to another, and we become, in whatever culture we find ourselves, resident aliens." The world needs the church. It needs it not to make it run smoother, be a better place or a safer place. He continues, "The only way for the world to know that it is being redeemed is for the church to point to the Redeemer by being a redeemed people. The way for the world to know it needs redeeming, that it is broken and falling, is for the church to enable the world to strike hard against something which is an alternative to what the world offers." So we are the alternative, the gospel people, the people changed by Jesus Christ. We're not any better. We're all messed up people. We're folks in constant need of the saving grace of God. Praise His name that He has done this for us in Christ and is changing us. But we are by the grace of God a redeemed people. He goes on, "We serve the world by showing it something that it is not, namely, a place where God is forming a family out of strangers."

And so Paul makes it clear that we are to be about teaching what accords with sound doctrine. We are to be a compassionate presence in this city, we are to be a counterpresence in this city and we are to be a prophetic, a speaking and living the gospel presence in the city. So we'll see today that this call is for us to live lives that are different, absolutely different. And Paul says, "Teach these things that are fitting." So a healthy doctrine leads to healthy living. This word "teach" in Titus 2:1 is not necessarily "stand up and teach week in and week out." We established that last week, that there is to be that teaching and preaching where we just throw on you sound doctrine, we just throw on you, by grace and love, the truth. But this word for "teaching" is this ordinary conversation that we are to walk with you in. We are to be instructing one another in the way of living out the gospel changed life. We're just to teach life with one another. So as we continue to sow the gospel into one another, as we continue to teach healthy doctrine, this will over time, by the grace of God, enable the church to function and behave in a certain way. And that's what Paul is going to unpack.

So let's hit the lifestyle of the older and younger first. What does the lifestyle of the older and the younger within the church look like because of the gospel? Verse 2, "Older men. . ." I think you can make the break historically and culturally at about 50 years of age. But at the Village, an older man may be 30. Now we have pastors leading this church who were in their late 20's when they began. They were really considered for a season to be the older men at age 28. Trust me when I tell you I am so thankful that the Lord has begun to bring to this campus older men. So you young men and young ladies in this campus need to affirm that God has been gracious to us on this campus to bring us and continue to bring us older men and older women. And you'll see why as we work through this. You older men are a

blessing to this church, and you are not to come and sit here on the sideline and go, "Oh now I'm going to let the young guy take over." Scripture does not give you and afford you that luxury. In fact, I love John Wesley who, at the age of 83, after traveling 250,000 miles on horseback preaching the gospel, preaching over 40,000 sermons, writing over 200 books and pamphlets, felt a little bad that he could only spend 15 hours a day reading, writing and preaching. His age had limited his effectiveness. He felt bad that he could only serve for 15 hours a day and he couldn't get up before 5:30 in prayer. I go, "Thank You for older men like that." If the Lord is willing and if He has numbered my days in such a way that at 83 I could still be living, I just want to live with faithfulness and vigor to the end like that. Paul says, "Older men are to be sober-minded, . . ." This means temperate. It means sober, not indulgent in anything other than the gospel. That's what older men are to look like. In this context, it literally means that there is nothing dominating their lives outside of the gospel. So these are men who are literally walking sober. There is a seriousness about them. The next word is "dignified." They are to walk with dignity, worthy of respect, honorable, noble. They're not laughing at the things they used to laugh at. They're not goofy the way they used to be in younger ages. There is a seriousness and a dignity, and honor and respect is to be given to them. The Greek word is *semnous*. It's literally means they are not frivolous. We just don't need a culture here of silly older men. My prayer is that we would continue to walk as men with much dignity in the life of the church. These are to be men who walk with self-control. This is a self-disciplined man who walks with self-restraint. Again, this is all graced by God. This is the man who is to be self-restrained in all of his passions and desires. The older he gets, as sanctification continues to wear on him, he is conformed more and more to the image of Christ. I am so thankful that God has placed in my life older men in my 20's and 30's who would gently come alongside me and instruct and encourage me from my nature and tendency to be silly, goofy and extemporaneous. They were so gracious to say, "Steve, there is so much in you that the Lord has done, and I just want to call you to greater seriousness." I'm thankful for that. That's what older men do. They are to be men who are sound in faith, grounded in the faith. They are healthy in the faith. In other words, there is a continuation of his trusting in God. That's what this word for faith *pistei* means, that there is a faithfulness about these men over the long haul of their life. They are to be sound in love. I pray for this campus that there would be a culture for the outside watching world and for those who make their way in here that they are seen and welcomed by fifty, sixty and seventy year old men who walk by the grace of God with an unbelievable love in their life. I pray that there's just love, a deep-seated love. I need an older man who comes alongside me to tell me what I need to hear, but he must do that with great grace and love. Our younger men desperately need older men who are sound in love, sound in steadfastness. You are to be men who are steadfast or persevering. There are men who you can learn from in the life of this church, there are men who God has blessed in this campus who are steadfast over the years. They have buried spouses, they have even lost children, they have seen and wrestled through their own lives with cancer, heart issues or physical issues, they have been lost their jobs and they know what it means to be misunderstood and unappreciated. And even though their body is wearing out on them, their spirit is being renewed. These are men who God has set apart for the life of the church. These are men who are persevering. These are not perfect men or men who have arrived, but it would do you well to watch these men. They're in this room. It would do you well to find one of those men and go, "Hey you, you look like you're at least 50. I just want to introduce myself to you."

And then he talks about the lifestyle of the older women. He says, "Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine." And then it's the older ladies who are to be giving instruction to the younger ladies. It's to be the older ladies who come alongside the younger ladies. Verse 3 says they "are to be reverent in behavior. . ." That means she is worthy of respect and honor. Again none of us have arrived. None of us are walking in perfection here. So these are not exhortation from Paul to the Christians on the island of Crete for men and women to be beat down, because none of us have arrived. But this is the tenor over the course of the life of a church as the gospel is being preached. The result of the word finding its place in our hearts are godly lifestyles. So these older women are to be worthy of respect in her actions, in her attitudes, in her words and in the way she carries herself. And then it goes on to say that they are not to be slanderous. The Greek word is *diabolous*. It literally means "not Satan-like in their speech." That's pretty heavy. I assume one of the issues on the island of Crete was that there were many who had the

issue of idleness. There was a lack of business and giving attention to the things of the gospel, and in that idleness, it gave room to much conversation that was really wasteful, worthless conversation. And worthless conversation can then be fueled by the enemy, and then you can get into malicious gossip. So Paul is saying, "Ladies, guard what comes out of your mouth." And then he says they are not to be enslaved to alcohol or any other addictive elements. These ladies were to live in such a way that there is a culture of discipleship among the young ladies. This is what the older women are instructed by Paul. They are to teach the young ladies. This isn't formal teaching. This isn't necessarily standing up in front of a class, opening up the Bible and teaching word by word. This word "teach" means, "Older ladies, come alongside younger ladies and intentionally involve yourself in their lives. Encourage them, exhort them and, by your example, show them a life that is worthy of the gospel." It seems that in Crete the older ladies now had a little more freedom on their hands now that their children were grown up, and these ladies could now go to the younger women in their homes, walk alongside them, teach them and instruct them. It was the older ladies who were to go after the younger ladies, instructing them and loving them. I pray that that would continue to be the culture here. In verse 4, he says that they're to love their husbands. I'm not assuming that every lady in our congregation is married, but again consider what the proper implications are for you if you are single or if you are a single mother as well. These women who are married are to love their husbands and love their children. The Greek word is philandrous, which means that this is a committed kind of love. If you are married, your vocation by the power of God is to display the gospel by the way you love your husband, the way you love your children. He goes on to say that older women are to be self-controlled, pure and one who walks in absolute surrender to the authority of the Spirit of God. And then it says they are to be faithful and diligent workers at home. When I first started studying Titus, I was like, "Oh, this is going to be fun." Let me read this from John Stott. "It would not be legitimate to base on this word either a stay-at-home stereotype for all women, or a prohibition of wives being also professional women. What is rather affirmed is that if a woman accepts the vocation of marriage, and has a husband and children, she will love and not neglect them. . .What he is opposing is not a wife's pursuit of a profession, but 'the habit of being idle and going about from house to house.'" I don't think that Paul is necessarily commanding a stay-at-home vocation for all women. I do believe with all my heart that he is saying that the primary responsibility for a wife is that she will be faithful to not neglect and to love her husband and her children. The primary call in her life, regardless if she has something outside of the home that she's involved in, is to be about loving that husband, who may not be very lovable, and those children. So I think he's saying that there is not to be an idleness, but there is to be a faithfulness. There is to be a work about the house that is primary. This is so good, and our culture so wants to let this thing condemn. But it's not condemning, and it should not be divisive. It's beautiful. So take it and receive it with much grace. Then he says again in verse 5 that these wives are to live hupotassó or live voluntarily submitting to their husband where their heart's posture, because of the gospel, is to love and submit themselves to their husband, to love him in that way. I think there is a way to adorn the gospel in this that really shows off Christ and His power.

And I know that in our church, we have many ladies and men who have been divorced. As a singles pastor in downtown for years, I know that wrestle, I know that cut and I know that struggle. God has brought many of you here to heal. And I'm so thankful. So for you, the implication is not to condemn. So don't let the enemy do that to you today. For you, that implication may be, as you are having to work outside of the home as other mothers are and there is a profession out there, that God and the gospel will enable you to continue. And the help of the church, we are to come alongside you. That's what community is for in group. Are you getting this? That's what community is to look like, that those who are single and leading their children by themselves, that's part of the gospel being fleshed out in the life of the church, that we come alongside those moms, those young widows and we walk with them and love them. I don't want to belabor it, but you are in our midst as the body of Christ. And I just want to make sure that you hear God's heart for you that really what God is saying is that what the Lord wants to build here is a culture of discipling in the life of the church. That's what it's about. We're to have older women come alongside younger women in every context, going to coffee, going to their homes, inviting them into your home, getting in the car, going to the park, hanging out. Older men with younger men.

Younger men with older men intentionally. We cannot, the life of the church, create every platform and venue for this to happen. This must be something that, through groups, through your life, through intentionally going after it, you are pursuing one another and living and serving as an example of the gospel. This is what we do. Find them. I know it's difficult. I see it and I hear it. Why is this so important? Verse 5, ". . .that the word of God may not be reviled." So the home, that houseplace. that workplace, the gospel is so believed and changing our hearts in those places that your home and your life is an advertisement to the world of Cretans and Dallasites who are watching. That's the point. They're watching and saying, "How's that life look different? How is the gospel changing?"

And then he goes on and says, "Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled." We have a ton of young men. I love our youthfulness here. Urge these guys, come alongside these guys to be self-controlled. Young men are historically impulsive and passionate and ambitious. At times we're volatile and given to arrogance and sometimes excess. And Paul is saying, "Serve as an example to the younger men, and let's come alongside these younger men and show yourself as an example of what the gospelchanged life is to look like." So give them an example. Not perfection, but give them an example of what a life being changed by the gospel looks like. Spurgeon, on being selfcontrolled, says that young men "are full of spirits, they are very sanguine, they are apt to be carried away with novelties; exhort them to have that which is thought to be a virtue of age, namely, sobriety. Let them be old when they are young that they may be young when they are old." Let's be faithful. Come alongside the younger men and love them. That has really been the history of my 30 years of ministry that God has called me into is walking alongside and loving and encouraging and exhorting. And I love this part of it. I'm not good in a lot of things. I'm not really good at that, but I do know that God has called me to walk alongside the younger men, to pour into them and to love them. And I'm so thankful for the other older men on this campus that God has brought here to do that. We are to provide an example in righteousness.

He goes on and says, "Call these young men to walk in integrity." I was talking to a couple guys after the service last night who said, "We are being iced out in our work, in our business because we are men whose lives are matching and honoring the gospel." So the gospel has taken root in some of these guys' hearts and they are living that out on the job. And they are being iced out in the workplace because of their integrity, this wholeness that the gospel brings. So we just prayed and I encouraged and exhorted them to great faithfulness. They are to be challenged and exhorted to walk with dignity, not unfaithful, not licentious, not perverse. These young men who are being saved and changed by the gospel, let's call them to that. And then he goes on and says, "Guard your speech." We are to continually place before these young men sound speech that they are to live with. I love that.

And here's the second reason why Paul is encouraging Titus to encourage the church. Verse 8, ". . .so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us." The outside world is watching. Eyes are on those who confess and profess the gospel. This word that we're to live, matching what we believe, is to be lived in such a way that it puts to shame those who have a word against the body of Christ. It literally exposes them for the lies that they bring about and speak against the bride of Christ. And in their exposure of the lie that they spread about your and my life, in that shame, they will be uncovered and the gospel will have entrance into their hearts as well because of your life. It is beautiful.

And then he goes on and talks about slavery. Verse 9, "Slaves are to be submissive to their own masters 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." Please hear this. Paul is not endorsing in any way slavery. One commentator said, "The commands to slaves in Titus 2:9-10 are to be seen, of course, in the setting of ordinary daily life in the first century. Slavery was a fact of life and there was no point pretending it wasn't. You could no more abolish slavery overnight in the first century than you could invent space travel. The fact that you might hope it would happen one day, and wished it would, wouldn't justify giving slaves the impression that now they were Christians they could disobey their masters." He is not endorsing slavery. What he is teaching slaves here is how to function in such a way that the gospel is just adorned,

that the gospel is believable, that the gospel is seen as life-changing. In the midst of some of the most heinous and difficult places where their lives were given to unjust and horrible situations, he is saying to them, "As the gospel changes your heart and changes your life, this will scream of the glory of God in very unjust, horrible situations." What an incredible testimony. And most of us in this room can't even come close to understanding this. One of the loosest parallels of this passage is a work/boss relationship, but there is some parallel to it. But we don't even have a clue of what the New Testament church was dealing with or what our brothers and sisters who faced the slavery that was a part of this country earlier on in the life of our nation dealt with. These slaves who were coming to Christ, can you imagine the watching eye of the Cretans when Paul tells them they are to be well-pleasing and submissive? He tells them why this is so important in verse 10. ". . .so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior." Can you imagine what that looks like, what the gospel is screaming to these who have slaves when their slaves are loving them, are well-pleasing, are walking submissive as unto the Lord, are walking faithful, are diligent and are not stealing? Can you imagine what that is saying about Christ, what that says about you in your job, in your work, in your relationships, what that says about the gospel?

I'm going to tell you what makes all of this possible, what is the grounds, what is the motivation for all of this. All of this is done, continues to be lived out and is possible by the grace of God. Who of us in this room have walked in sinless perfection to this point and can say, "I'm the epitome of all these things"? None of us. That's why I love the gospel. Paul says in verse 11, "For the grace of God has appeared, . . ." God in Christ Jesus has appeared. He came as a humble servant. God in the flesh, Christ Jesus, the second Person of the Trinity came. This is central to the Christian message. This is central to the gospel. Jesus Christ came. He appeared. There was an incarnation. God has flesh on Him. Incarnate literally means God came in the flesh. He was robed in flesh. He came to this earth sinless. "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, . . ." He brought salvation to the Greeks. He brought salvation to the Cretans, who were lazy and evil beasts, who were indulging their evil desires. He brings salvation to Dallas. He brings salvation to a wicked husband. He brings salvation to a guy who thinks he's righteous and thinks he's saved by his good works and by his church attendance. He brings salvation to the Jew. He brings salvation to women. He brings salvation to women. He brings salvation to children, to races of all kinds. There will be people at the throne of God from every tribe, every tongue and nation who are exalting Jesus Christ because God has saved them. This is beautiful. ". . .bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions. . ." So the gospel has come, and it has freed us from the penalty of sin. That's the beautiful thing about the gospel. It frees us from death, hell, Satan's reign over our lives, the flesh reigning over your life. From the penalty of sin, it frees us to deny some things, and it frees us to affirm some things. Verse 12, ". . .and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age. . ." It's the grace of God that keeps us connected by the blood of Christ to the Father, not your good works. It is not your works. It is not your faithfulness that God continues to say, "Oh, I'm so happy with you. If you'll just keep doing these works, then you'll stay in really close intimacy with Me." We perform and do these works because of the gospel in us. The effect of the gospel is a changed life. That's the change and the work of the gospel. He continues in verse 13. ". . .waiting for our blessed hope. . ." He's coming. Part of the gospel message and narrative is Christ came, died, was resurrected from the grave on the third day and then He ascended into the heavens where He is right now seated at the right hand of the Father and the earth is His footstool. So what completes the gospel, what is part of the gospel narrative is that yes Jesus Christ has conquered sin and death, and this Savior is coming again. He's coming visibly. You're going to see Him. You're going to know Him. He is coming in power, in glory. It will blow you away. So whatever your plans were, if He were to come, those plans become moot. Verse 13 says it is a blessed hope, not a cursed hope. He's coming for the bride, and He's coming with blessing. So I just want to prep your hearts for that. That's what the gospel does. It doesn't mean that we're always thinking about His return, but do we think about it at all? We are "waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 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." That's the gospel. He has changed lives in here for His glory, so that we could adorn the gospel. You can make the gospel believable by your changed life.

So as we wait for His appearing, I just pray that there is a transformation that's happening in this city through your work, at your home, in your neighborhood, among your friends. I want to see people changed and come to Christ. I want this church to become even a healthier bride ready and eagerly waiting for His return. I love you, and I'm always eager to stand before you and encourage you.

Let's pray to that end. "Father, help us. Lord, help us to live out this gospel in such a way that is not legalism, is not the means of trying to please You. You have been pleased by the sacrifice of Your Son. So You have called us apart to Yourself. You have deemed us a royal priesthood. You have given us the treasure. You have called us Your treasure. Bless Your name. And You have deposited within us the ministry of reconciliation and sealed us by the Holy Spirit until the day of final redemption. You have left us in this city to make disciples. Thank You. You know our hearts, Lord. We all wrestle. We all struggle. I thank You that You have placed us in the larger context of the body of Christ, to be able to affirm one another, encourage one another, reprove one another, love one another and pray over one another. I just pray today that all of those things would take place. I pray that our songs of worship would be pleasing, honorable and a delight to You. Bless Your name. We love You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen."

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