

My name is Josh Patterson. I am one of the pastors on staff at the Village. Usually I attend the Flower Mound campus, but I'm glad to be here with you this morning. A couple weeks ago, I was driving and obeying the laws of the land, and I get pulled over. There was a time in my life when getting pulled over would strike a bunch of fear in my heart of needing to play it cool and there were a lot of nerves. Those days are gone for me, by God's grace. So I'm there just waiting to see why I was pulled over. I have no idea at this point. He comes up and says, "Do you realize that you have an expired registration sticker?" I said, "I didn't, but thank you. I know that now." He said, "Can I see your proof of insurance and drivers license?" So I hand him both those things, and he says, "Do you realize your drivers license is expired?" I said, "Man, no I actually had no idea." He said, "Yeah, it expired three days ago." Do you know that license that you get that's good for eleven years and then you have to renew it? That's what it was. I got it in my early 20's, and now I'm 34 and I forgot. So he says, "I'll be right back." He comes back and I say, "You know, I just appreciate what you guys do. You're just out here keeping the streets of Flower Mound safe. In fact, I have a great friend who is an officer there with you, Officer Mark Loser. I actually did a ride along and got to see what you guys do, and it was just awesome." And he was like, "That's great. Tell Loser I said hi. We give him a hard time. Here are two tickets." So Loser did nothing for me, and now I've got to go and get these things taken care of.

So now I have to go to the DMV. I went on a Friday afternoon, probably the worst time to go. As you know, it's been hot recently, and the line is out the door. There I'm standing in line. It's like 102°F and I'm just dripping with sweat. I keep telling myself, "Good attitude. I'm going to have a good attitude." I get to the front of the line, and the lady comes out and says, "I'll take 12 more of you." So she counts us off and lets us come in. We get a number and then we sit and wait. There's this TV that literally will show you the next five numbers in line. But the numbers aren't in order. It's not like it says, "Now serving number 6. . .now serving number 7. . .now serving number 8. . ." It is, "Now serving R326. . .now serving B211. . ." So you have no idea where you sit in the mix. You don't know if you're getting called next or if the guy next to you is. You don't know how long you're going to be there. An hour into it, I finally get called in. So I've spent an hour outside and an hour inside, and now I'm up to the front. She asks, "What do you need?" "I need to renew my drivers license." So she's going through all this information. She says, "Do you have your Social Security card on you?" "No. And the reason I didn't bring it was because when I looked up on-line, it didn't say anything about bringing my Social Security card with me. So what seems to be the problem?" She says, "Well your birthday that the Social Security Administration has doesn't match up with the birthday that we have." So I was like, "Well, I can clear that up right now. I'll tell you what my birthday is." So she just looks at me and says, "You're going to have to go to the Social Security office. There's nothing more I can do for you now." So I was like, "Do I have to wait through all this again?" She said, "No, I'll give you a little fast pass."

So I was in Dallas earlier this week, and I'm up against it now. I've got to get this thing taken care of or I will get a "failure to appear." So I go to the Social Security office off of Central Expressway. I walk in at 3:20, and they close at 4:00. I get this ticket that says, "Your wait is 70 minutes." So I'm sitting there watching and waiting. They have the same system. At 4:00 a voice comes on over the intercom and says, "I'm sorry. We're closed." So I walked up to the window where a lady is shutting down. I'm like, "Ma'am, do I have to come back. How does this work? She said, "We called your number a long time ago." I was like, "Ha ha! No, you didn't. All I have been doing since I got here has been looking at this screen and listening for you to call my number." She said, "Well what do you need?" I tell her, and she says, "Well there's another lobby for that. Just go down the hall. I think we can help you." So I go down the hall and this lady calls me up and says,

"What do you need?" I say, "Apparently you have my birthday wrong in the system." She says, "What's your SSN?" I give her my social. She asks, "Where were you born? What were your parents' full names?" I give her everything about me. And she looks it up and is like, "When did you say your birthday was? July 2? That's what we have in here. There's no discrepancy in the system." I go, "Okay, can you just write that down and maybe put a stamp on it so I can go back and get this taken care of?" She said, "Well I'm not sure what we would do with this." And then she prints off a piece of paper that has my name, my SSN, my birthday, where I was born and all of this information. She looks at it and then slides it across to me, and then she goes, "I'm not sure I can give this to you." I say, "Why not?" She whispers, "The information is too personal." I whisper back, "It's my information. I just told you all of this stuff that's right here." And then she says this, "Maybe I can just slip it to you." So I'm feeling awkward, and I'm feeling criminal at this point. I'm thinking, "Am I going to get arrested for this? Is this a big joke?" So I say, "Ma'am, do what you need to do. I just need to get this taken care of." She goes, "Well let me go ask a trainer." So she goes and asks a trainer. She comes back and says, "Sir, there is actually a form for this that I can fill out for you." So she fills out the form, and I leave.

I rush back to the DMV and get there at 5:04. They close at 5:00. I'm knock on the door and I'm like, "Is there any chance?" There was no chance. So I show up the next day. I get to pass the long line. Now I feel like everybody in that long line is cursing me because that's what we did to people when they walked past us when I was in the long line. And then I sit down. As I'm sitting there, this guy right next to me says, "Why isn't anybody working in station 6?" After nobody answers, he says it again. A lady who works there walks by and says, "Because there's nobody in station 6." He says, "Yeah, that's my question. We're all sitting out here. Why isn't somebody working at station 6?" And then she says, "We are entitled by law to two fifteen minute breaks a day to deal with people like you." So I'm thinking, "Wow! This is happening right now." Literally the next number they call is my number, and I get called to station 6. So now everybody hates me. I'm walking by and people are going, "That's not fair." I'm like, "Look guys, I've got a story too." So I go to station 6, get a new drivers license, go and pay the ticket on the last day, and everything is reconciled.

Here's what was frustrating. I was studying Titus 3 all week for this message. I in my heart, as I'm in the DMV, as I'm in the Social Security Administration, as I'm back in the DVM, I'm thinking, "Everybody around me is stupid." I'm thinking that the system is dumb, the guy next to me is dumb and the lady here is unbelievably rude. I had this real feeling of superiority. I had this real feeling of entitlement. I had this real feeling of, "This should go my way. I deserve this to be different." Whether I do or don't, this is what I'm feeling in all of this. Now my wrestle is this. The message of Titus 3 all about the way in which those who have been redeemed by Christ are to interact those who do not know Him. To say it another way, the way the church is to be in the world is what Titus 3 is talking about. Titus is essentially establishing a healthy church in the region of Crete, and Paul is writing a letter to him to say, "These are some of the marks and elements of a healthy church." In chapter 1, he says, "A healthy church has healthy leaders. Here's the qualifications of healthy leadership." In chapter 2, he says, "Because of the gospel, because of what has happened, teach sound doctrine, and this is how the churches relate to one another. This is how the church is to be as the church gathers and interacts." And in chapter 3, he says, "As the church goes out into life, as the church weaves throughout what they do, as you go and interact, this is how you and I are to be." So it's haunting me, because my hope in those moments is to rise up and to be terse, sharp and to point things out. This was such a vivid wrestle for me. Listen to what Paul says in Titus 2:15. "Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you." He's essentially summarizing chapter 2. And then he's going to turn. In the turn, we are no longer talking about how we as believers in Jesus Christ are to relate to one another, but how we as believers in Jesus Christ are to relate to those outside of Jesus Christ. This is how we are to be when we are outside. It's crazy. The church is the light by which the city will see. As you and I interact in the city, we become the light by which a city that is otherwise blind will see.

Let's just read the entire chapter 3.

*Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people. For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people. But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned. When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing. And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful. All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.*

So Paul begins verse 1 by saying, "Remind the church of these things." He's going to list seven qualities, seven attributes. This is not an exhaustive list, but it is a list by which we look at and begin to understand the spirit in which we interact. Because the question is not whether or not you do interact, because you do. You interact with people all the time. So the question is not whether or not you do interact, but the question is in what spirit do you and I interact? How do we interact? So when you interact at the DMV, at the Social Security office, with a waitress, with a supervisor, with an employee, with a customer service agent, in traffic as you're driving, on-line with people on Facebook, at the airline ticket gate, how are you interacting? What is the spirit in which I interact. Paul's going to say that the church should have a marked difference, a marked spirit that sets the church apart. You've been talking about this idea of an alternative society, a city within the city. The church should be different. And he's going to list these seven qualities: submission to authority, obedience, readiness to do good, speaking evil of nobody, avoiding quarrels, gentle, showing perfect courtesy to all people.

Just run through this list in your heart. Just consider this list. Do you see authority as a blessing and a covering, or do you have what is called "an authority problem"? We need to recognize that we are all under authority, every one of us. Paul says that the church recognizes this and submits underneath it. So we recognize that there are rulers and authorities who are in place over us and we submit to them. The crazy thing is that Paul is writing to Titus who is in Crete. Crete is not some godly utopia. Crete is a region filled with pagan worship, and immorality is rampant. There is corruption throughout. And Paul says, "The church understands authority and submits to it."

And then he goes on to say, "The church is obedient." The posture and disposition of our heart is one of obedience. So do you humbly submit to the laws of the land? Here's where we want to go. We want to begin to say, "What about the opportunity to challenge the government? What about the opportunity to disagree and have conflict or confront?" Rather than our first disposition to say, "Yes Lord," we go there. But the Lord will go there with us and say, "In those times when challenge, confrontation, disagreement and conflict are needed and necessary, the spirit in which we disagree, confront, challenge and have conflict is one that recognizes ultimate authority is from God Almighty, and you walk in humble submission under this authority." There is a difference between someone who bows up against authority and challenge and someone who submits to authority and challenges. There is a marked difference. And he says, "The church will be noted by this."

And then he continues to say, "The church, believers are ready, prepared to do good." So the question is this. Are you hopeful? Are you a contributing citizen? Do you give more than you take? Are you eager to do good for your neighbors? In some small way, is your community better off because of your presence? Think of the movie *It's a Wonderful Life*. George Bailey has this chance to see what life is like if he's not in his town. What happens in his town, as his bank is removed and Potter comes in and takes over, Pottersville begins to flourish. Pottersville means that the town is filled with corruption, greed and injustice. Bailey sees this and realizes that he really can have an impact. His life really does matter. So he goes back to his family, he rejoices and the town is changed. Timothy Keller, who is a pastor at Redeemed Presbyterian Church in New York, says that's how the church should be. So if the Village Church was removed from this neighborhood, would there be an impact? If this campus wasn't here, would Cary Middle School even notice? If the Village Church wasn't in Flower Mound or in Denton, would there be a sense of loss in the community? Would there be a noticeable loss, that there was once a beacon of light, that there was once good that was being infused into the city, into the neighborhood, into the community by the presence of the church? Just take that and distill it down to your life. Would your neighbors miss you? Would there be any sense of loss on your street if you up and moved today? Think of your cubicle, your workspace, your office. Whatever your spheres of life are, wherever you find yourself, if you were removed from that, would somebody say, "Man, I miss that guy/girl. They did good. There was something marked about their presence here that contributed to something that was healthy and positive"? Jesus is saying through the apostle Paul here, "This is what My church is to be. As the church goes into the world, the church becomes the light by which the city will see." You see, the city can't see. The city is blind, because the city is filled with those who do not know Christ. And those who don't know Christ can't see. So you and I have the opportunity to come in and infiltrate the city in such a way that helps lead the blind to the light. We are to be ready to do good.

The next attribute he mentions is seasoned speech or speaking evil of no one. This one is hard for me. Do you build up with your speech, even your enemies and those you disagree with? Do you bless or curse with your words? Consider how you interact verbally around controversial topics, people or situations. Just take our government. Take our Congress, our Senate and our President. Have you expended more energy tearing down those people than the energy expended blessing, building up and praying for them? This is the black eye of the church. We spend so much energy tearing down Obama and just joining in with every other talking head and every other pundit that there's nothing distinctively Christian about what we're saying or how we're interacting. It doesn't mean that you agree. It doesn't mean that you're on board. It doesn't mean that you cast your vote this way. It means that you recognize that God Almighty puts these men and women in place and that our role is to humbly submit to them, confront and challenge ungodliness and be a light by which they might see. We speak evil of no one; rather we are blessing, praying and hoping.

He moves on to "peaceable." So do we build bridges to our enemies? Do we make a way to them, heading toward them rather than standing back here lobbing grenades on the other side of the fence. What marks the church? What marks your life? This text is saying, "Your words matter." And when we speak, we have the opportunity to either build up and bless or tear down and destroy. Paul is saying in Titus 3 that the mark of a heart that has been transformed by grace is a heart that has not only received grace inwardly, but extends grace outwardly. That should be the mark of a believer.

He goes on and says we are "to be gentle." Are you gentle? Is your disposition gentler or aggressive? Are you ready to confront, ready to challenge? Or are you gentle? Are you easy to be around?

And then finally he says this, ". . .showing perfect courtesy to all people." Now consider that. Perfect courtesy to all people. There are no loopholes in that. As we consider who we were, as we consider what He has done, then those two realities collide in such a way that we consider others differently. We're recognizing them as image bearers. In light of you being an image bearer, you have inherent worth, as does everybody else. Although it is fractured because of the fall, that dignity remains. They're image bearers. And in light of that, because of that, you and I are mandated by God

Almighty to treat people with courtesy. We are to show them deference, show them respect, even if they do not deserve deference and are not respectable. You see, that's not the point. Paul is going to say, "Consider you. Consider your own life. You didn't deserve it. And although you didn't deserve it, you received it, and that should change the way you and I interact with others." So when you're on hold with AT&T for two hours with a customer service agent who is just trying to do his/her job, when the telemarketer calls you, with somebody who is just trying to do their job, do you show them perfect courtesy? Or are we terse? Are we short? Are we condescending? Are we rude? How do you interact? He's saying here that the church is the light by which the city will see. And if there's nothing distinctively Christian about the way that we relate, then there's no way for the world to see what Christ has done in our hearts. He's saying there should be something distinctively Christian about us.

So he takes this list and he begins to say, "Consider who you were. Consider what He has done. That should lead you to consider others differently. So picking up in verse 3, Paul says, "For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another." He is describing the lost condition. He is describing your condition before Christ. He is describing my condition before Christ. The reality is that condition is all too familiar in my heart. There was a day, there was a time when I was enslaved to my own pleasures, to my own passions. There was a day I can remember the hurt I both received and inflicted as I hated others and others hated me. I was living my days in malice, envy and greed. And some of you in here might have come to faith as a child and you might not have had the opportunity to really flesh out the desires of your heart, but you just know that this was your life too. And some of you might have had a life that was really well-crafted and controlled, and you might have been a good person. But he's going to tear this down in verse 4, and he's going to deal with our self-righteous arrogance and remind us, "You had no shot." You were in a position of despair and hopelessness. Unless somebody came in and did something for us that we could not do for ourselves, you and I would be left in the same bleak, hopeless condition that we found ourselves in before Christ. He's saying to the church, "Don't lose sight of this. Don't forget this. You need to conjure this up. You need to remember this but not so you become enslaved to the past." This idea of remembrance theology is woven throughout all the Scriptures. As Israel was called to remember what it was like that night they painted the blood on the door posts and as the angel of death passed over them. They remembered it every year with the Passover meal. They remembered through feasts. They remembered through sacrifices. They touched the animal in such a way that they would remember. Jesus says, "Eat of this bread and drink of this cup in remembrance of Me." Remembrance is woven throughout the Scriptures, and that remembering is to fuel our hope for a future better day. So he's saying, "Harken back. Remember. Don't lose sight of this."

And then he makes this shift in verse 4. "But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior. . ." if you look at verses 3-4, there's a stark contrast. In verse 3, the main player and active agent is you and me. We're the ones active in this life. We're the ones being described. And there is a contrast in verse 4 when he says, "but." God steps to the forefront. God takes the main stage. And you will notice in verses 4-7 not only the work of the Father, but you will notice the work of the Son and of the Holy Spirit coming together in perfect unity and love, working for your salvation. The Godhead becomes the main character in the story. You and I in verse 3 are stuck in the pit, and according to Psalm 40, He comes and takes us out of the muck and mire, sets our feet upon the rock and puts a new song in our mouths, a song of praise. This is His good work in us. So as we consider where we have been, who we were and what He has done, those things come together and cause us to consider others differently, to consider the city differently.

So I want to list five things that the gospel does. The gospel motivates and encourages. Paul's list of seven attributes is not a list you write on your chalk board and go, "I'm going to try to do these seven things." But what motivates you is a changed heart inwardly that begins to work itself outwardly. You become fundamentally different. God gives us new

motivations and tastes. It's like God gives you new taste buds and things that did not taste one way now taste sweet to the lips of the believer. So when it says to humbly submit to rulers and authorities, to be peaceable, to be gentle, to avoid quarrels and to show perfect courtesy, those things taste like life to the heart that has been transformed. So the gospel motivates us. The gospel of Jesus Christ and His grace are motivation. The gospel is also encouragement. As you look at where you were and what He has done, it wells up in you the spurring on aspect of your faith where you realize, "This is God's work. He has started this in me. He came, He got me, He pulled me out of the muck of the mire and now God has promised me in Philippians 1 that He will see this thing through." That encourages me. It wells up strength in me.

The gospel not only motivates and encourages, but the gospel produces compassion in the heart of the believer. So as I look out and see a sea of humanity who does not know the Savior, rather than standing up in self-righteous pride, what wells up is a heart of compassion, recognizing they can't see. The heart of the believer should well up not in judgment, not in confrontation but in compassion. Confrontation happens through the gospel as the Spirit begins to confront the man or woman about the posture and position of his or her heart. Compassion wells up in the heart of a believer.

And then the gospel absolutely tears down the pedestal of self-righteousness that we are constantly trying to build. By self-righteousness, it's this idea that there was somehow some worth in me, some dignity in me, something that I can do that would muster up strength or merit in me. Self-righteousness is me trying to prove myself to you or anybody else. There are just these feelings that this has something to do with me. But the gospel just crushes that. As I'm sitting in the DMV or the Social Security office, as I'm thinking thoughts of superiority, unbelievably self-centered, arrogant thoughts, the gospel confronts that in me. The gospel confronts that in the church. He says in verse 4, "But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness." There is no righteous work that you're providing so that God will accept you. He's saying that He has accepted you based solely on His good pleasure and mercy and on the merit of His Son. That changes the game.

So the gospel produces encouragement and motivation, it wells up in the heart of the believer compassion, it knocks out the pedestal of self-righteousness and it enables us to forgive. Do you realize that you and I have been forgiven much, recognizing that our greatest offense was against a holy and righteous God and that God could have justly destroyed us? Rather, in His mercy, He has saved us. It says that He has washed us with regeneration. It's this idea that sin is washed off. The filth is cleansed off. We're now standing before Him clean and regenerated. That means something new is in place. And then it goes on to describe the renewal of the Holy Spirit. That brings up the imagery of 2 Corinthians 5:17. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." I'm fundamentally different. Fundamentally, by nature, there is a change in me, a change in you. And that change, that inward grace in me means that I can extend grace outwardly. I have the opportunity and ability to forgive, and so I forgive because I can. There was a day when I had no platform for forgiveness and I had to hold on. The reason I had to hold on was because that would be excusing the wrong and that would be an injustice. But God is telling me, "No, the greatest injustice was done against My Son, and I have forgiven you in light of Him. So you let go." The church has the opportunity to extend grace. You have the opportunity to forgive. And forgiving somebody doesn't mean that you say, "You know what? That was okay. That was right." It's saying, "That wasn't okay, and that was wrong. Despite that being wrong and an injustice, because of what Christ has done for me, I can forgive you." And as we interact, as we go out and simply are in the community, you will be wronged. It's even going to happen here. It's going to happen one to another in the church, but even more so as you interact with somebody who does not have a platform of grace to extend to you. But in their injustice toward you, in their wicked, malicious intent toward you, in their looking you over for a promotion, in their talking down to you, in their condescension to you, in their leaving you, in their abandonment of you, in all of those things which are wrong and are injustices against you, by God's grace in you, you don't have to become enslaved to that.

In fact, you can not only free your own heart, but pronounce forgiveness outwardly as well. That's the mark of the church. The gospel enables us to forgive.

And then finally the gospel allows us to lay down our lives for the sake of the city, for the sake of the community, for the sake of the world. Look at what he says, starting in verse 6. God saved us "by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people."

He says in verse 7, "being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Here's what this means for the believer in Jesus Christ. You and I, because we believe in Jesus Christ, have sure and steady promises that we are indeed heirs to the promise of eternal life. That means when I breathe my last breath, I wake up in the presence of the King. It means that the new heavens and new earth are mine in Christ. It means that right now sealed up in my heart, as a seal, a deposit and a guarantee of my future redemption, is the Holy Spirit according to Ephesians 1. Since Christ rose, I too will rise. In light of the resurrection, I can live differently here. I can hold money differently, I can move to different neighborhoods, I can leave this country and go to far away lands and I can radically allow the gospel of Jesus Christ to take over my life as I lay it down. In John 11, Jesus says, "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." In Matthew 16, Jesus says, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." So He's saying, "Church, this is when you will find and taste life." It's as Dietrich Bonhoeffer says, "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die." It's the invitation of Christ to the church, and it's the invitation of Christ to the church to finally experience life.

My wife and I have just been walking through difficult seasons and with difficult seasons with friends. You've walked through them here as we. Those difficult seasons have pressed us in to have conversations that ultimately lead to the reality that we're heirs to the hope of eternal life. They are conversations that start like this. "Natalie, I love you. I'd lay my life down for you. I love our three kids. I would do anything for them. And you just have to know this. If something happens to me, if the Lord takes me, you need to know that I'll be with Him in glory. And you will be given a special measure of grace, and it will be okay." It's scary I know, but these are the conversations the church needs to have. These are the conversations that you husbands need to lead out with your spouse. Wives, you need to prayerfully consider and urge your husband into these conversations. These are the conversations that matter, because these conversations begin to open up our fingers and release this clutch that we have on the world. And it frees us up to lay down our lives, knowing if something were to happen, ultimately it's okay. Death becomes the servant that ushers me into the presence of the King. And because Christ has risen, because of the resurrection, I too will rise. Which means that we can live differently here. It means that my pursuits will likely change. It means that my priorities can be turned upside down. It means that some of my fears might be put to rest. But I'm able now to interact in a way more freely because I can lay my life down, because I'm anchored in this reality – I'm a son. I didn't deserve to be, but I am. And in light of that, I can live differently. So the church is the light by which the city will see. Jesus says in the sermon on the mount, "You are the light of the world."

And Paul is so serious about this that he says in verses 9-11, "If people come in and stir discord, start dividing the church, start inviting the church into foolish genealogies and dissensions and get the church off of a gospel focus and off of a mission focus, then here's how you deal with that person. You engage them once, you warn them twice and then you get rid of them. It's gracious, it's quick and it's urgent. If somebody comes in among us and begins to distract us from the mission of God and the gospel of God, then you deal with that person swiftly."

I want to end with just this encouragement to you. Look at verse 13. "Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing." If you're like me, you have no idea that Zenas existed. Let me tell you what we know about Zenas. He's a lawyer. That's it! He's mentioned only here in the New Testament. Here's what jumped off the page to me. Zenas the lawyer is woven into the redemptive work that is going on in Crete. Zenas the lawyer is woven together with Apollos. He's working alongside the apostle Paul and Titus. There is this working together. Zenas isn't some professional pastor who is separate from the laity, but he is out among them. So his position as a lawyer is not in conflict with the kingdom. Rather, his position as a lawyer becomes the platform by which he serves the kingdom. So the vast majority of you in here are not pastors or ministers. Do you know what you are? You're teachers, you're lawyers, you're pharmaceutical reps, you're students, you're retired, you're in sales, you're in business, you're a small business owner, you're an entrepreneur, you're in real estate and you are out and about in the world. And God is saying to you, "This is by design. I have placed you where you are on purpose, for a reason – so that you do interact, so that you rub shoulders with those who don't believe." And the gospel infuses you with such grace and power as you consider who you are, what He has done and that collision causes you to consider others differently, recognizing that the church is the light by which the city will see. So go and be a lawyer, go and be a doctor, go and be a teacher, to and be a businessman or woman, go lead your company, go and be. Because there is one thing that you have. You have Him. Let me read you a quote from Gordon McDonald. He says, "The world can do almost anything as well or better than the church. You need not be a Christian to build houses, feed the hungry, or heal the sick. There is only one thing the world cannot do. It cannot offer grace." But you can. The one thing that the world can't do is the one thing that is distinctively different about you.

Richard Niebuhr wrote about revival and renewal, and he says this, "The great Christian revolutions come not by the discovery of something that was not known before. They happen when somebody takes radically something that was always there." So this is not for the church to begin to look up for some big pie in the sky revelation. He's saying that it's here. You have it. It's the gospel of God. Look and see what He has done. He has done great and mighty things. And if this is not awe-inspiring for you, if this is not transforming for you, if this does not well up worship in you, then you are either not saved or you have no understanding of what it truly means. So he's saying that finally the church takes hold of something that they've always known, that they grab it tighter, that they ingest it deeper, that it saturates and flows through them more fully, that they radically take an old truth and wash it over their lives in such a way that it does something marvelous and renewal begins to take shape. Revival always begins with the individual before it begins with the community. So my hope for us as a body is that we would radically take this truth that the gospel of Jesus Christ renews, regenerates and transforms us and God's people will be different and, as they have ingested grace, they will begin to extend that grace outward.

Let's pray to that end. "Father, I thank You for Your Word to us through Titus. I thank You for how Your Word pierced me even this week, how Your Word read me this week, not only my actions and speech but the intent of my heart. Lord, I thank You for that. That's good for me. I pray for our church. I pray for this campus. I pray that we would radically and profoundly hold on to the truths of Your Word and the gospel of Jesus Christ, recognizing that Your gospel motivates us, encourages us, fills us with compassion, enables us to forgive, knocks out the pedestal of self-righteousness and allows us, because of the reality that we're heirs, to lay down our lives. So Holy Spirit, do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. We recognize that the gospel is the source of our godliness and that this isn't going to happen by our own strength. So do a great and mighty work. We pray in Christ's name. Amen."