

## "Is My Life Making the Gospel Attractive?"

### *Titus 2*

The dilemma with preaching on Mother's Day and Father's Day is that we're not all fathers and mothers. If we only talk about women on Mother's Day and men on Father's Day, the other just tunes out or has a nap because we're not talking to them. And we both parent together if we want to talk about parenting. So we're in Titus 2 this morning, which talks about mothers and fathers, but also men in general and women in general. And their roles together as marrieds but also their roles as examples from women to women and men to men. And in this passage, the apostle Paul is writing to his young protégé Titus, who is overseeing all the churches on the island of Crete. Crete had a bad reputation for immoral living. Paul even comments on this in Ch. 1:12-13. But now that the gospel was making inroads on the island, Paul assigned Titus the task of bringing order to the churches and helping them grow spiritually through sound biblical teaching so that lives would be changed by the believer's godly lives that were making the gospel attractive.

Similarly, we too can attract people to the gospel through our godly attitudes and actions. Like the Cretan believers, we too live surrounded by many people who show by their actions and attitudes they have no interest in God and care very little about other people. They need to see that Jesus' followers are different and that faith in Christ can not only give them a better future with God but a better life now for God.

We read in 1:5 that Paul had probably started the work there and left Titus to plant churches in different communities by selecting solid spiritual leaders. Aside from having a bad reputation ["Cretans are always liars, evil brutes and lazy gluttons"] (1:12), Crete had become the home of many myths about Zeus, Apollo and other Greek gods. Paul's main thrust in his letter to Titus was that he clearly teach the truth of God's Word. Because in 1:11 Paul was concerned about false teaching that was infiltrating many homes (which is where the churches met then), *Ruining whole households . . . for the sake of dishonest gain* (1:11). Paul points out in 1:16 that these so-called religious teachers *"claim to know God but by their actions they deny him."*

So, Paul says in 2:1 to Titus *"You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine."* And then he tells him what to teach older men, younger men, older women, younger women and slaves. "Sound doctrine" of course is the truth of God's Word. The word for 'sound' is the Greek word *hugaino* which is the word we get "hygiene" from. It means healthy. Why do we need 'healthy' teaching? Well, unhealthy teaching leads to unholy living. So if we're to make the gospel attractive people need to see how it changes the way we live and makes for a "healthier/attractive" life. It was Timothy's responsibility to teach God's Word correctly but

### **Each of Us are Responsible for Learning Truth** **(2:1-10; 1:9-16)**

Paul was concerned that false teaching was ruining whole households. That means fathers and mothers did not know how to properly love each other and parent. That resulted in bad examples for the younger men and women. The emphasis on Titus to train doctrinally sound and mature men to be elders of the local churches was so they would pass along sound doctrine. Just because the gospel was saving people doesn't mean the gospel was changing people's lives immediately. It takes time to learn and apply truth to your life. Noticeable differences in your life that draws attention to non-

believers who know you and, whether they realize it or not, are attracted to what the gospel is doing in our lives. And then they ask questions about this change.

We cannot presume believers know how to be godly. When we were young and we were told by our parents to do certain behaviours or not do certain things we often would say 'Why?' In 1 Peter 2:2 the apostle Peter speaks to grown men and women saying,

*<sup>2</sup> Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, <sup>3</sup> now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.*

There is always the need for us to 'grow up' in godliness, to become more like our Lord every day. The Word of God is our source for growth. We are responsible to find places of worship where truth is taught but also be in the Word on our own so that we are learning to apply it. Learn it so you can change. Don't learn it so you can just have knowledge. That's Paul's main point here. He wants us

### ***To become godlier (vv.1-6)***

This whole chapter is about the need for godly living. How can we know how to be godly? By going to God's Word. I emphasized the phrase "to be" because that's the little phrase Paul repeats over and over in these verses.

*<sup>2</sup> Teach the older men to be temperate, <sup>3</sup> Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, <sup>4</sup> train the younger women to love their husbands and children, <sup>5</sup> to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, <sup>6</sup> Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. <sup>9</sup> Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything,*

If we're to be godly we must be listening to healthy teaching. Healthy teaching can be tested by all of Scripture. Sometimes people take one verse out of its context and make it say something that isn't sound. Sometimes people use God's Word to promote themselves and not God. Sometimes people even use God's Word to rationalize their own sin. Vv.11-15 describe what we should refuse: things contrary to God and passions that have nothing to do with God. Healthy teaching focuses on what God desires and how God can be exalted through us.

Paul tells Titus then to speak to specific groups: older men, older women, younger women, younger men and slaves. Titus is to provide the environment for healthy teaching so that the people should be doing it to each other as well. We need are responsible to listen to sound instruction to become godlier.

### ***So we can be an example to others (vv.2-8)***

In Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> letter to Timothy (written around the same time as this one to Titus), Paul told Timothy that . . .

*<sup>2</sup> . . . the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.*

Pass the baton. Instruct others so they can pass it on. While Paul specifically mentions that older women are to train the younger women to be godly wives and mothers yet to each group he uses the word "likewise" inferring that what the previous group was asked to do the next group is expected to follow also. Paul already told Titus in ch. 1:9 that the elders are to "*hold firmly to the*

*trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine . . .*" and to be an example to each other.

The word for "teach" here is not the usual word for teaching. It is the simple word for 'speaking'. Paul isn't necessarily talking only about a formal teaching context but whenever you have an opportunity to share your knowledge of God with someone else. In Deut. 6 parents were instructed to teach their children,

*<sup>6</sup>These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. <sup>7</sup>Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. <sup>8</sup>Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. <sup>9</sup>Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates*

The idea behind tying them as symbols on your hands and foreheads was a figure of speech to say, 'use whatever your hands do and your mind thinks as opportunities to talk about God.' Doorframes on houses and gates represent the places we gather in the community as opportunities to talk about God.

We teach more than just through words; we teach by our actions, which Paul tells us here to do as well. A lot of the character qualities listed here are things you model just as much as you teach. What does being reverent look like? What does loving one's spouse and children look like? How does one show kindness when treated unkindly? Titus is told in his training younger men,

*<sup>7</sup>In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness, soundness of speech*

So we are to speak and show to one another by our life how the Word of God teaches us to say no to godliness and yes to upright and godly lives. What does godliness [or Godlike qualities] look like? With all this instructing going on one might think godliness was measured by how much we know about God's Word. But that's not what Paul says it is here to Titus. Paul says godliness is measured by our **Maturity** (vv.2-6)

Notice how Paul starts his list: the older to the younger. He starts with older men because men are to be the spiritual leaders, modelling maturity to their wives and children. The word for "older" is the usual word used for aging. The assumption here is that the older we get the more mature we should be. So life experience and lessons learned are a great asset that older people have that younger people do not. Lord-willing, they have learned from these and can model and share to those younger what godliness looks like.

But age is not an automatic indication that one is a mature follower of Christ. Maturity in how quickly one learns in life how to be temperate, self-controlled, kind, not slanderers, husband-lovers and children-lovers. Sometimes some of the more mature godly people are those younger in age who have walked closer to God in their fewer years than those who are older in age have. Some come to Christ later in life and haven't had the same time to mature in Christ can learn much from those younger in age who have walked with God longer than.

Those who are more mature in Christ should be taking the time and opportunities to help others less mature to grow in godliness. And anyone can do this. If you are in your 20's and have walked with God for some time you can help those in their teens or younger. If you're a teenager who's walked with Christ for a while you can help those younger than you. But even if you're in your 20's or 30's you might be able to help someone in their 40's, 50's or older who came to Christ late in life or for whatever reason just never grew in Christ the way they should have.

Paul emphasizes this a little more with women than he does with men. Older women are to live godly lives so they can model it and instruct younger women. You might be thinking 'I can't teach anyone anything! I'm not gifted for that. What can I share?' This isn't about giftedness. It's a natural process of the older to the younger, the mature to the less mature. We are always modelling godliness or ungodliness. People watch your life. They listen to our words. We show by our example how not to live and how to live. How do I know this? We're always watching others and we're always being watched. What are we telling others by how we live and the words we say and the attitudes we display?

Paul says godliness is measured is by our ***Character***

Paul lists many godly qualities that men and women are to seek to have in their life. Paul mentions older men are to be temperate and older women are not to be addicted to much wine. The abuse of alcohol was a problem in Paul's day as much as it is today. People who drink too much are a walking billboard for reasons why not to drink. The Bible doesn't say 'don't drink at all' but it does say not to do so excessively and not to put stumbling blocks in another believer's way.

To each group Paul says to teach them to be self-controlled. He doesn't tell them about what in particular but we know what lack of control looks like in anger, indulgences, bad habits, ways we speak, etc. The word for self-control comes from the Greek word Sophia which we know means wisdom. Self-control is the discipline of one's mind to keep the tongue or body in check. We need to develop self-control, disciplining our minds to be in God's Word to know the right thing to say or do at that moment and to stop the temptation to say or do the wrong things that discredit God.

Both mature men and women are to be reverent or worthy of respect. Respect is something we earn over time through wise living. Make it easy for people to respect you as you get older because you have been growing consistently in your walk with God.

Home life must have been a problem on the island of Crete. Satan always likes to divide homes; to divide husbands and wives. The love and respect for husbands can happen naturally when the love and respect for wives is already happening. Yet, God's Word does not say we don't have to love and respect them if they don't love and respect us. God calls us to do what we're to do and model that to one another. Younger couples need to see that modelled in older couple's lives. The children and grandchildren need to see it modelled in their parents and grandparents lives.

Paul also said to Titus to show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech. Our speech is so crucial to our walk. It only takes a slip of the tongue to ruin our testimony or reveal our lack of maturity. Again, self-control means to discipline the mind over the body.

Younger women will understand more clearly what it means to love their husbands and children, to be busy at homes [which means to make the home your priority] and to be kind if they see **examples** of it in more mature Christian women. The younger men will grow in maturity if they see our example of integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech. And employers will see it modelled in their employees when they respect their authority and don't steal from them but are to *"Show they can be fully trusted so that in every way they can make the teaching about God our Saviour attractive."* This is what Paul has been telling Titus to teach the believers in Crete because when we live out the Bible ...

***We make the gospel more appealing (vv. 5, 8-10)***

*<sup>4</sup> Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, <sup>5</sup> to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, **so that no one will malign the word of God.***

*<sup>7</sup> In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness <sup>8</sup> and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, **so that those who oppose you may be ashamed** because they have nothing bad to say about us.*

*<sup>9</sup> Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, <sup>10</sup> and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, **so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.***

That word “attractive” is where we get our word ‘cosmetic’ which means to make beautiful. We who know Christ, does our life malign the Word of God giving people the opportunity to say bad things about Christians or does it reflect God which attracts others to the gospel? If we want to attract people to the gospel we must live cosmetically in Christ. It has to show in how we love our families, how we treat people better at work and play, how generous we are with our resources and how we respond to persecution and hardship.

And in vv.11-15 Paul gives the reason why we should be godly so we can make the gospel appealing. Because

## **Each of Us Has Received Grace to Live by the Truth** **(2:11-15)**

*<sup>11</sup> For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. <sup>12</sup> It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, <sup>13</sup> while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, <sup>14</sup> who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. <sup>15</sup> These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.*

God’s grace – the gospel of salvation as we read in the Word – teaches us what to say ‘no’ to and what to say ‘yes’ to. To live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age as we wait for the future age when Christ will come and bring His rule of godliness. It always comes back to what Jesus did for us on the cross and what He’s waiting to do for us in eternity. Our future assurance in Christ motivates our present walk with Christ. Do we want others to have an assurance of future hope with Jesus forever on a new and perfect earth that will “*come down from heaven from God prepared as a bride, beautifully dressed [cosmetic] for her husband*”?

Then let's make sure we are instructing others with our life and with our words how to live godly so that we make the gospel attractive to them, praying they'll want Christ as well, since they see how Christ makes us better people. More loving husbands, respectful wives, compassionate moms and kinder dads, obedient children and hard-working employees, and caring employers. We need to listen to the sound doctrine of the Word for the purpose of obeying it. Jesus said in Matt. 7:24

*Blessed is the one who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice*

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