

Titus 24-07-31a

Greetings, Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is the 31st of July 2024. We continue our study in the book of Titus.

We are at the cusp of chapter 3. There is a great opportunity here for us to recognize the way the Word of God communicates, and it is key to understanding much of the Scripture, both Old Testament and New. We have a great example here, and we'll continue looking at it in just a moment. Let's ask God's blessing on our fellowship and study, and we'll resume.

Father, it is such a privilege, such a deliverance, such a blessing, such a wonderful status quo to find ourselves held securely in your hands as events and circumstances swirl around us. Our opportunities and challenges change day to day, sometimes moment to moment, but the constant is the foundation under our feet. We are built on the solid rock of the Lord Jesus.

Our relationship with you through him is secure, and whatever may be tied, we know you will take care of us. We are grateful for another opportunity to nourish our souls and to refresh ourselves at the oasis of your Word, and we pray that the Holy Spirit will impress it on our hearts, help us to understand it, to remember it, and to apply it in the days ahead. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. So, looking here at Titus through my gold-rimmed glass lookers, we last looked at the center section of Titus chapter 2, where we saw the exhortation that is secondary in the group. So, Titus, as with Timothy, is to exhort others to exhort, whether it is finding faithful men who can teach others also, whether it is the older women who are to encourage and admonish the younger women, as we saw last time, or whether it is slaves.

Slave is the bottom level. Very few slaves have underslaves. There are a few who do, but you're kind of at the ground floor level if there's no basement.

And these are all exhorted to a very similar approach to life. Any time we need a gut check, any time we want to seriously examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith, we can come to Titus chapter 2 for a quick checklist, because all of these characteristics, all of these descriptions apply to all of us. You don't have to be a young woman to be discreet, chaste, to pay attention to what you have oversight and preside over, such as wives who look over their home.

They are a home maker. But all of us have something over which we have stewardship. It can be our job area.

It can be our pets. It can be someone in our family. It can be a responsibility that we

have undertaken.

Many of us have engaged in clubs or participated in groups. And well, I'm the secretary. I'm the vice president.

I'm the treasurer. Whatever it is that we find under our hand, we should be diligent to serve as an example of what it is like to be a person of purity, to be a person of faithfulness, to be a person who is willing to put themselves aside in the interest of something greater than ourselves. So again, I would encourage all of us.

This is something I've been doing here of late. I just go back and read Titus chapter 2. And I think, can I find a place where each one of these adjectives, each one of these descriptions rightly applies to me and the negative of it doesn't apply to me? Because as you know, as we've seen throughout 1 Timothy and the first two chapters of Titus, these are just examples. They are put for the areas of each of our lives where we are in a similar position.

So just pick out the adjectives as you skim through chapter 2. Speak things that are proper for sound doctrine. Is this something we do in our conversation? Speaking what is proper and reflects sound doctrine. Doctrine is the practice of our theology.

It's the outworking of our purity. All things are pure if we are pure. We saw that last time.

So is it reflected in our conversation? We speak things that are proper in the light of the sound doctrine that we are endeavoring to reflect as we live. Are we sober? Are we reverent? Are we self-controlled? Are we sound in the faith? Anytime a challenge comes up, what's our go-to? Is our go-to panic? Is our go-to complaint? Is our go-to histrionics? Is the first thing we do to call somebody up and say, oh my gosh, you'll never believe what just happened. And anybody in the world can do these things.

If we are suddenly challenged, our gut response, our first response, the 911 call ought to be to our faith. Take a breath. Take a beat.

Look to God. Send up a prayer for the fruit of the spirit to be manifest in this new, often unexpected circumstance or situation. Just stop and remember, who am I? Why am I here? Nothing comes inside the ring of fire unless God allows it.

He has allowed this, whatever it is. What should my response be? What is He looking for from me? And it is seldom the ways of the world. Any godless, faithless person can start throwing sweat grenades and start pulling strings and rattling chains and speaking all manner of blame and shame and why me and any number of other things.

Take a beat. The only reason you and I have a heartbeat and respiration at this point is to represent the Lord Jesus Christ on this earth. We have no other reason, no other purpose.

You say, but wait, I have a family. I've got this. No, the only reason you and I are here is to represent the Lord Jesus.

We represent Him in those other relationships, in those other circumstances, in those other situations. God could put anybody down here. The rocks could sometimes do a better job.

At least they're stable and they don't talk more than they do. We have to look at ourselves as living stones, Peter calls us. We are here to feature, to lift up, to represent and to glorify the cornerstone, the chief stone rejected by the builders.

But it's the most essential stone there is. And that's the Lord Jesus Christ. And we are here only because we are related to Him.

Every arch falls to the ground without the keystone. Every building will fall to the ground without the cornerstone. And we are only here because of Him.

This is going to be featured as we move forward in the chapter. So it's important to see it here. So this is your checklist.

Guys that fly, pilots we call them, will walk the aircraft and there's a checklist. For many, it's actually on a clipboard. In the military, you've got to fill a thing out.

But there's at least a mental checklist. Walking around, checking, looking, is everything secure? Is everything working? Flaps, ailerons, wheels, hatches, latches. Is there anything coming loose? Is there anything that doesn't look right? Is there anything leaking? You get into the cockpit, you sit down, you check the gauges and you ensure that there's a checklist.

Most of us have procedures that we follow when things are important. I can promise you this, if you ride a motorcycle, there are a lot of things you check before you take off on two wheels. I can't afford a bad tire.

I can't afford a bad chain. I can't afford to not have sufficient fuel. There's just a lot of things you check the bike and be sure, are all of my lights still here? I got to a destination, went back out to start it up and discovered my taillight was gone.

Stoplight, brake light, this is important when there's people behind you and you want to slow down and you're on two wheels. You have a hard enough problem with visibility without having no bright, big, small coffee can size taillight back there to alert people that you are present in the darkening of evening and that you are applying your brakes. That's a serious, I wouldn't have known that except I always walk around my bike before I get on it and ride it.

And thankfully I did. Got a new one, it's on, good to go. But checklist, this is the checklist.

This is as good a checklist as any. If you want to find something else in the word of God, you certainly can, but this is a great one. Titus chapter two.

So notice it starts with speech. The emphasis in first and second Timothy and Titus is on what we communicate with our mouth. This is why before every Bible class, my prayer to God is the same as David's.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, oh Lord, my strength and my redeemer. But how does that begin? What is that prayer? Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in your sight. Oh Lord, you are my strength.

You are my redeemer. You're the only reason I'm here. So this checklist starts with what's coming out of my mouth.

There's nothing casual about it. Speak things proper for sound doctrine. Be sober.

This word is really a great one. Sobriety is such an important attribute. We've seen it before.

This is nephalius. And as I mentioned, I think two sessions back, this means holding no wine. You're not skewed.

You're not dulled. You're not slowed. You're not under the influence.

You've got clarity. I think this is a good colloquial translation is you're operating with clarity about your goals and purposes, your values, your objectives. You've got clarity.

Reverent. This is God oriented in everything. You remember that word is semnous, S-E-M-N-O-U-S.

And the idea is that you're oriented to what is lofty. You're not so earthly minded. You're no heavenly good.

You've got an awareness that there is a higher existence, which we enjoy and reflect. And we're aware of who we are in Christ, that we have a heavenly citizenship. It's different than godliness, eusebia.

This is the awareness. Clarity is awareness of what's around you. That's the sober part.

The reverent means I'm an ambassador in a sense. I'm a representative of God's family, of the Lord Jesus, my savior. And I view myself in that light.

If you've ever been an American overseas and you go out and you're in the public, there is an awareness because everybody's speaking a foreign language and you don't necessarily speak it. You might have a handful of phrases, but your clothes are

American. Your demeanor is American.

Your source is American. And when you go into a cafe or a business and you're interacting with someone and many times they will have some English and they will say, Oh, Americano or, you know, American or whatever. And you say, yes.

And they are judging the entire nation by the one person standing in front of them, which is you. That's what it is to be reverent. The entire world is judging what a genuine Christian ought to be looking at us.

We're a representative and it matters. It counts. There's an emphasis all the way through on reputation, on not being ill-spoken of by those who are outside.

And it comes from being reverent. So each of these, and we've talked about most of them before temperate, this is self-control sound in the faith. You've got to know the faith to be solid in the faith, right? That's why we are a Bible church.

We're sound in love. Soundness is consistency, right? No point in having a great foundation. If there's a giant crack down the middle, no point in pouring something solid.

If it's got a giant void in it, that's going to give way at some point. Soundness in love, soundness in patience. This is kind of like a, let's say to change the metaphor a bit, a roach in the souffle or a cricket in the soup or a giant insect of some sort, a moth that does a back flip into the main course.

Look at all of it that's not contaminated. Look at all of it that is not defiled. It only takes one small noticeable flaw to spoil interest in the entire thing.

You know, the many illustrations of this. Well, that's why it is so important to be sound in patience. You can be patient 98% of the time, but the 2% that you're not patient is what people are going to remember.

Patience is generally not that memorable, but when you're impatient and you throw a fit and you make an idiot of yourself, that's going to be memorable. People will remember that for years. And all of the other times you were patient, I think about this in terms of safety.

You can drive tens of thousands of miles in whatever your conveyance is. Those are generally unmemorable hours. It's the one time you fall asleep.

It's the one time you are careless. You turn without looking. You do something impulsive and there's an accident.

All of the previous careful driving doesn't matter in that moment. That moment is the one that counts. That's the one that broke the bones.

That's the one that totaled the car. And you can't say, well, why is my car total? Look at all the hours I've driven safely. It just doesn't have any traction in that moment.

Soundness means consistency. I am always, always, always super cautious, super aware, super consistent. You can't lapse for a moment.

Think about these airline pilots that fly tens of thousands of hours. So you're going to spot the guy one hour to fall asleep at the controls because, well, he's flown so many. It's okay if he sleeps for an hour and there is no autopilot and we're close to a mountain range or over the ocean.

That's okay. Take an hour. I mean, look at all the time you've flown safely.

That's all right. You can lapse this once and everybody dies. This is how we have to view soundness in faith, soundness in love, soundness in patience, ever diligent, watch and pray.

Don't ever lapse. One lapse can create a world of grief. This is how we can go down the checklist and judge ourselves.

Older women, reverence, again, not slanderers. Remember the notes? Am I talking out of school? Am I sharing information that, well, you know, I'm not supposed to say this, or they told me not to tell, but it's kind of a secret, but, and then you spill beans that shouldn't be out in other people's knowledge. And any of us that have had the experience of sharing something in confidence, thinking, well, this person will respect it the way I do and not share it.

And then suddenly it's kind of everywhere. It's coming out on Facebook and people are texting it back and forth. And, you know, it's face palm time.

Why did I tell this one person? I thought they would keep confidence. They told me they would keep confidence. The only person you can guarantee that's going to keep confidence generally is yourself.

And things that are supposed to be not broadcast ought to enter our brain and die there in terms of communication. Nobody else needs to know. People get a charge and a little bit of an adrenaline pump out of sharing information that others don't know.

You've got to stomp that out. So not slandering, not given too much wine, not given to anything that dulls your sensibilities, that loosens your inhibitions. As we've talked about before, wine is just put here as a placeholder, fill in the blank with that, which I need to not do very much, very often.

Teachers of good things, communicators of good things, whatsoever things are good, noble, pure, lovely, you know, they're positive, they're upbuilding. It's glass half full, not

glass half empty. Be a communicator of those things.

Reflect them in personal example and extol the virtues in speech. Admonish those who are junior. Notice older women are senior to younger women.

You don't admonish people above you. You admonish people that you properly have influence over because you've got some time in grade on them. You outrank them.

Admonish the younger. To love, this is not generate some kind of sugar-coated emotion. This is to exemplify someone who is dedicated to the interests of others.

For husbands, for children, be discreet. Discreet is a variation on to discern, to tell the difference what's important and what's not. Should I magnify the miners? Should I make mountains out of molehills? Or do I have discernment? I can let that pass.

That's a small thing. I am going to be inflexible about essentials, but I'm going to be flexible about non-essentials. What a great policy, taught to us long ago by a previous pastor.

It's a great discernment. To know whether or not to be flexible or inflexible, you got to figure out whether something is essential or non-essential. And this is done in prayer, in sound doctrine, in speaking truth to another in love without devolving into slander and gossip.

Discreet, chaste, this is a great word. It has the idea of, it's hagnas is the word. And it is that which awakens religious awe, according to the lexicon.

And once again, this is like reverence, but it is in the horizontal realm. And instead of being aware of our vertical relationship to God, His watching us, let your moderation be known to all men. The Lord is nearby.

The Lord is at hand. It doesn't mean the Lord's about to come back. It says the Lord is right here.

So live in a way that not only is aware of the vertical and the heavenly throne room, but also where two or three are gathered, the Lord is in the midst. And we should be awestruck by the privilege and the opportunity to represent the invisible Lord Jesus, the unseen guest at every meal, the silent listener to every conversation, the plaque on the wall said when I was a child and it's true. So again, personal checklist.

How am I doing? I can always tell myself I'm doing great. There've been so many different surveys and scientific studies done of what people think about themselves and what other people think about them. And the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

Who can understand it? Who can know it? Jeremiah 17, 9. The heart is deceitful. Don't

trust self-judgment. Get an objective checklist and go down and survey recent interactions, recent behaviors, recent circumstances and experiences, and strive for objectivity.

Do it prayerfully. God the Holy Spirit will give us clarity. He will open our eyes.

The Word of God splits us asunder to see our motivations and thoughts and intents. God's power can do it. We can't.

Our heart is going to tell us what we want to hear. This is where confirmation bias comes from because our conscience is often unreliable. So this is a good checklist.

So, chaste, dedicated to taking care of what has been entrusted to me. That's what a homemaker is. Dedicated to take care of what has been entrusted to me.

Good stewardship. Good oversight. Good management.

Good, obedient to their own husbands. It will surprise you, perhaps, if you circle the number of times in the past orals we are exhorted to be obedient. And this is really interesting because there are several different words for obedience and we're going to look at them at the beginning of the next session.

So just hold the place here for obedience. It's coming up again in our primary passage this morning. But in this case, it is hupotasso.

And hupo, that's hypo, that's under. And tasso is to stand. My easiest memory aid for this is, you remember the day when the man of sin is revealed and so on.

That day will not come until what resists him is taken out of the way. That day will not come except there comes first the apostasis. Stasis is that which stands, right? Apo is away from, unless there comes first the standing away.

If you stand away from solid doctrine, you're in apostasy. You're standing away from what is right. You've distanced yourself from it.

You've gone in a different direction. If you're on the earth and God's about to start breaking the seals and rendering judgment, I want to stand away. And there's no doubt in my military mind that that is a reference to the rapture.

Others disagree. Go be warm, be fed. And someday you will see that I am right.

But obedient, this is to stand under. Military men don't blindly obey all orders. We pledge to obey the lawful orders of those appointed over us, the lawful orders.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord is another example. Your husband can say, stand still, I want to beat you into a bloody pulp. You don't say, well, it says obey my husband.

That's not even common sense, much less spiritual common sense. We obey in order to glorify God. If obedience is not going to glorify God, if it is going to create harm, danger, sin, evil, then there is the higher law of God that says we have a stewardship and a responsibility.

So obeying their husbands, loving their husbands first, and then obedient to their own husbands. So that what is the purpose? What is the purpose? So that the word of God may not be ill spoken of. Blind obedience can leave you in a situation where you are giving Christianity a bad name because you're not actually following scriptural guidance.

Our purpose is that it's not necessarily my self-interest. It is the testimony of the word of God, that people can't find fault with it. They can't find a reason to criticize it.

Look at the faithfulness, look at the self-sacrifice, look at the dedication, look at the endurance, look at the joy despite circumstances that would normally create suffering and depression. Look at the perseverance, look at the countenance, look at the inner beauty that is shining forth in this lady. She's got a difficult husband, but she is doing what she does as unto the Lord.

I want to know what that is. I am drawn to that light as an unbeliever. This is a good test, by the way, of whether our behavior is comporting to the checklist or not.

Does what we do end up having people disparage? Well, you're an idiot, and the Bible is making you that way. That criticism needs to be examined. Am I giving Christianity, the word of God, Jesus Christ, God the Father, am I giving them a bad name because I'm being some kind of a legalist and not sensible to the spirit of Scripture? I'm doing some weird letter of the law thing, like the Pharisees.

The Pharisees gave the word of God a bad name among the general population because of the way they tithed, and the way they treated their parents, and the way they gave their contributions. The things they were doing they thought were godly and ought to bring approval and compliments, and instead it gave the word of God a bad name. This ultimately tells us whether or not we are becoming pure people.

To the pure, all things are pure. And if we are pure, what we do, by definition, is going to reflect the glory of God, and the grace of God, and the love of God, and the power of God, and it will be above reproach. Against such there is no law on the fruit of the Spirit.

So, the word of God should not be blasphemed because of me. The way we treat members of our family, inside the one and others, or outside the one and others, whatever else it does, it shouldn't cause people to say, well, I don't want to be that kind of Christian. Look at the intolerance, look at the holier than thou, look at the you are dead to me attitude.

Um, that should not apply to us. The word of God should not be blasphemed, even when

we are implementing difficult policies and procedures in our lives. It should still be done with grace, mercy, peace, love, spiritual common sense.

It's one of the checklist items. Young men, sober minded, show yourself to be a pattern of good works. How can you do this? Here's a pop quiz from last time.

How can you show yourself to be a pattern of good works? What's the key? Remember, to the pure, verse 15, chapter 1, to the pure, all things are pure. If I want to be an example and a pattern of good works, I have to become a person of purity. Then everything I do is going to reflect that purity.

It will be enabled and empowered by the spirit and the word of God. So I can't say, well, let me get a list of good works and see how many of them I can do today. I need to go down this checklist and ask God by his grace to cleanse me and renew my mind so that I can be Romans 12, 1 and 2. Living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, not conformed to the world, but transformed by the renewing of my mind.

And I know what the good and acceptable and perfect will of God is, and my life reflects it in a pattern of good works. You can't just jump to the pattern. You've got to get the source.

Pattern of good works. In doctrine, integrity. Integrity is consistency, just like we saw above.

Sound in faith, sound in love, sound in patience. Soundness and integrity are just two sides of the very same coin. Integrity.

Reverence. Once again, very same word we had up above. And those that are repeated in this list, doubly important.

If it's mentioned more than once, I've really got to concentrate on my vertical sensitivity. When something's coming out of my mouth, am I aware that there is a connection to the throne room of God? Am I truly representing the fruit of the Spirit as I act, as my face yields expressions? How am I acting? Sound speech that cannot be condemned. Once again, above reproach cannot be condemned.

The Word of God is not going to be blasphemed because of me. This is a really good test. How am I doing? Are people dismissive of Christianity because they look at me and they say, well, whatever that person's doing, I don't want a part of it.

If that's Christianity, not for me. We can't be that person. Look at what the Word of God says.

The Word of God should not be blasphemed because of me. People should have nothing evil to say of us. The end of verse eight, sound speech that cannot be condemned,

nothing evil to say about us.

So how do we behave politically? How much ammunition is being launched against Christians because of their improper involvement in politics? Nobody should have anything evil to say of us. And the Word of God should not be blasphemed because of us. So whatever those people are doing, they need to change it because this checklist can't be checked off on this item.

We'll pick up at verse nine when we come back from the break with bond servants, the lowest level in the authority structure. So interesting. And we're going to see what it is to adorn the doctrine of God when we come back.