

It's not particularly difficult to tell what the main thrust of Titus 2 is about. Whenever I'm preparing for a message, something I usually do, is look for common or repeated words and concepts. And with this section, it just jumps out at ya...

It's all about teaching (and it's about a particular type of teaching).

V1 But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine (teachings).

V3 Older women are to teach what is good, ⁴ and so train the young women

In V7 Titus himself is told, and in **your teaching** show integrity, dignity, ⁸ and sound speech that cannot be condemned

In V10 the Bondservants or slaves are encouraged to be honest and respectful and submissive **so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine** (or teachings [adorn that which is taught]) of **God our Saviour**.

In V12 The grace of God has appeared, not only bringing salvation, but also ¹² **training** us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives

And in V15, Titus is told to Declare; exhort; rebuke with all authority, and these are all teaching tools for Titus to make sure the message is taught and not disregarded.

It's all about "teaching". In Chapter 1, the false teachers (Judaizers / Circumcision party) were condemned because they were teaching what ought not to be taught... And now in chapter 2, he's doubling-down on "But you've gotta have **good** teaching. And make sure you're doing it."

Now, when it comes to "teaching", this is what I've noticed within the church:

- The gullible and the undiscerning, are easily led away by false teaching;
- The proud don't want to listen to any teaching;
- The **unspiritual** will delight in worldly teaching that tells them what their flesh wants to hear;
- The academic may crave theological teaching, to increase their knowledge (which isn't always a bad thing);
- But the Faithful and the **spiritual** crave teaching that accords with sound doctrine, and they put it into very practical action.

Alright, so it's all about teaching, and how important it is to have teaching in the church, but what sort of teaching is he telling Titus to focus on?

And the answer to **that** question, might be a bit of a surprise to some of us.

For those who are already saved, it seems the focus of our teaching should be on doing good works.

Now, that may get the bristles up on some of us, because we're good protestants, aren't we? And good evangelical protestants at that... We've been taught, we're saved by grace/faith (which is true). We're **not** saved by doing good works...

But the problem is, in our zeal to make sure that everyone understands this (that we are not saved by doing good works,, and that we are only saved by the grace of God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ),,, there are many who will therefore despise and condemn any bible teacher whose teaching ventures into the field of "we also must be doing good works"...

In **my** past, there were some in a past congregation who would say, "Oh, he only ever teaches legalism... It's all about works..." , because whenever they hear teaching that Christians should do good works, in their idea, this is the opposite of being save by grace...

Not at all... This is what Grace teaches us to do.

V¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹² training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-

controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age....

And it goes on to describe this as “Good works”..

So, if I view teaching on “Godly living”, or teaching that Christians must do good works, If I view teaching like that as legalism or anti-grace, I’ve completely misunderstood the Gospel/Godliness/the cross of Jesus/ grace itself.

I did a search on the phrase “good works” in the New Testament. And depending on the version, that phrase came up between 13 and 15 times.

How many of those quotes do you suppose present “good works” in a bad light, or present it as something that should not be taught or expected of God’s people??? **Zero.**

In every case, “good works” are a marvellous thing.

- Good works are an indicator of faithfulness (Acts 9:36);
- are something that should be evident in the life of every Christian (Matt 5:16; 1 Tim 5:25);
- As new creations in Christ Jesus, we are **created** for good works (Eph 2:10);
- We are to be **rich** in good works (we’re not to be focusing on **worldly** riches) (1 Tim 6:18);
- We are to be **devoted** to good works (Titus 3:8)
- And this devotion to good works, is something that we must **learn** to do (Titus 3:14); and
- we are to stir one another up, to do good works (Heb 10:24)

If we are not a people, who are teaching one another and urging one another on to do good works, then we are not a people who live by grace. We are a people who don't understand:

- Grace;
- the Gospel;
- the heart of God;
- the purpose and the power of the cross of Christ

and we don't act as a people who belong **to** Christ.

In recent years, there has been one verse from the Old Testament prophet Isaiah, that gets trotted out, to try and teach that Good works are something to be repented of... In Isaiah 64, “righteous acts” are described as being like “filthy rags”. Do you know why they're described in that way? It's because he's talking about those who are supposed to be God's people, but they've rejected God, and they've rejected God's ways. At the end of chapter 63, he says “**we are like those who are not called by Your Name.**”

You see, without repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are **not** God's people. And so what we are told to repent of, is “dead works” (Heb 6:1), which is anything we do as a rejection of God. But **good** works is not something to be repented of. As God's people, good works are something we are to **devote** ourselves to... And I stand by God's word on that. And here's why:

In Isaiah 63&64, the condemnation was that those who were supposed to be God's people, were like those who were **not** called by His name.

But in today's reading, v14 explains it how it **should** be. This is the purpose of the cross:

¹⁴ [Our great God and saviour Jesus Christ] **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.**

God owns us. He created us. But in our sin, at one time, we had rebelled against God. But on the cross, Jesus Christ gave himself, to redeem us (buy us back), and to purify us – to make us fit to be His people... In our sin, we were totally unworthy to be called the people of God... But by the blood of Jesus, by Grace, and in His mercy, He has purified us and made us holy. We are indeed, **a people for his own possession.....**

Now, as a people who belong to Him – as a people whom He owns, our character cannot be anything other than being zealous for good works.

Now, it shames the Christian church, that I need to explain that. I mean, this is Christianity 101. Saved by grace – not by doing good works, but saved to **do** good works.

Being saved, is a very practical thing. And it appears that the problem with the church at Crete (where Titus was), was there was a contingent who wrongly taught the need for religious rules and regulations (we saw that last week), but by their actions, they were not Godly, because they weren't doing good works.

So, V1: Titus, **teach what accords with sound doctrine** (teachings)... When it comes to righteousness and good works, what does that look like?

Well, he breaks it up into different people groups:

Older men (BTW, back then an older man might've been 30 or 40):

They are to be

- **sober-minded** (clear thinking, which includes “not getting drunk”, but it's more than that – it's about not being easily led by the mob);
- **dignified** (his actions and demeanour should be worthy of respect);
- **self-controlled** (reasonable / prudent);
- **sound in faith** (to have a healthy trust in God);

- [sound] **in love** (and why not? Jesus said to His disciples, “You will be known as my disciples by your love.)
- [sound] **in steadfastness**. (having a firm, unshakable faith)

Older women, like the older men, are to:

- **be reverent in behaviour** (pretty much what’s just been said for the older men);
- **not slanderers** (to be an accuser. Accusations are the foundation of Gossip. And to share accusations, whether they be true, or whether they be false, makes one a slanderer);
- **[not] slaves to much wine** (this is something that keeps coming up, over and over again. And in our culture, drinking alcohol and drinking it in excess, is very much a part of our culture, and many have the attitude, “I can’t have a good time without it”... But as Jesus' possession, clear, sober minds, are good, and drunkenness is forbidden – it gives Jesus a bad name;
- **They are to teach what is good**, Who are they to teach?

The older women, are to teach the **younger women**. Back in 1 Timothy 2, Paul said something that isn't popular in a world that values "equal opportunity" – he said "I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man"...

Now, does that mean that there is no role for women for teaching? Of course not. Older women, are to train younger women...

As a pastor/teacher, my calling and my duty, is to teach the word of God, to help all of us to understand it... But I am fully aware of my short-comings. On some issues, I'm totally naïve. How could I (as a bloke), possibly be able to fully teach everything a woman needs to know about how to practically apply her faith to being a woman/wife/mother? How could I possibly share with a newly widowed woman, from my own experience? And so older women, are to train younger women.

- **to love their husbands and children** (I suspect one of the reasons that the divorce rate is so high today, is because it's generally understood that "Love" is something that someone can 'fall into' and just as easily 'fall out of'... And that even love for one's child, is innate.)

But how to love, is something we need training in. Love is often a conscious and determined giving of one's self, for the benefit of the other, at great cost to ourselves. And when men and women, husbands and wives, mothers and fathers are not trained how to love, that's when love seems to come to an end, because we've never

understood what love is, and how to do it);

- **to be self-controlled** (Sometimes, an older woman who's been through the sleepless nights of dealing with a teething child, and who has experienced the fluctuations in hormones subsequent mood swings, they're just the right people to get alongside other women who are struggling, and need some tools to help them cope);

- **pure, working at home**

Now, some people see that as “A woman's place is in the home – she shouldn't have another job”.... That doesn't really line up with what I read in the Scriptures-

- Prov 31 describes the perfect wife, and we're given a picture of a woman who works hard at home and provides for her family, but she's also a business woman, and buys land; and works hard; and plants vineyards; and trades by buying and selling;
- In Acts 16, a godly woman by the name of “Lydia” is a merchant, who sells very expensive purple goods...

I reckon what he's getting at, is the old saying (not in the bible BTW) “Idle hands are the workers of the devil”...

Keeping busy and doing good, helps us to remain pure

- **kind** (Sometimes we need to be reminded that our kindness needs a bit of work);
- **submissive to their own husbands** (Just as we all submit in different areas, and husbands and wives submit to one another, sometimes a word from a Godly older

woman, can help a new wife, to understand what that means.)

And there's a reason for all this: **that the word of God may not be reviled.**

And I reckon, it's not only for women – it's for all of us... If we don't live as Godly people, what does that make us? Hypocrites. And that reflects badly on God, and on God's word.

Younger men:

He uses the word "Likewise". In other words, this all goes for you too, and he draws attention to:

- **be self-controlled.**

Young men are not always known for their self-control. (Run off the handle; Get a bit rash)... But as Jesus' possession, we are to learn to be self-controlled (Notice I said "we". I keep forgetting I'm not a young man any more. I'm a grandpa, and I still think I'm a young man.)

And then he turns to **Titus** himself. And what Paul says here, is true for all of us, but specifically for leaders in the church.

Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works,

In other words, practice what you preach. Now, I've said this numerous times before, "When I'm preparing for a sermon, I'm very aware that I'm going to be preaching to myself". I'm

probably learning more than you are. And as God's challenging you, He's challenging me. And as you apply changes in your life, I need to as well.

So Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works

And the way that one teaches, is important. in your teaching show integrity, dignity,⁸ and sound speech that cannot be condemned,

What one teaches, must be what Jesus and the Apostles taught. It's got to be true, and one has to rightly handle the word of Truth.

And the reason, is so that those who are opposed to the true Gospel, won't have a leg to stand on...

And the final group he addresses, are the slaves or the **bondservants**. They:

- 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

You see, in all things; in every station of life: the way to honour God, is to do good, be faithful witnesses to Him, and to serve others as well as we can, in what God has called us to.

Now, for us, no one here is a slave or a bondservant. But even so, even if I hold the most menial of jobs, I am to honour God by doing it honestly and well.

Even if I am mistreated by my boss, that doesn't make it a good witness to be argumentative or disobedient. If I feel I'm not being paid enough, that doesn't mean that the boss' assets are fair-game for me to take home...

Let everything that we do, prove the truth of the Gospel.

Bondservants or slaves, often had to serve in the most difficult of circumstances. And as believers, as they served well in their circumstances, this is testament to the saving and life-changing power of the Gospel.

Why are lives changed? Because by grace, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we have been saved. And this grace, trains us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age

You see, as Christians, we don't strive and struggle to get the best we can get; nor do we crave the desires of the flesh as the world would crave, because our hope is set on something greater....

We're not living for this present age. As V13 says, we are¹³ waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ

We long for the day when Jesus returns. We long for that day of glory ... And this (my friends), is the difference between having a spiritual outlook and an unspiritual outlook. Spiritual men and spiritual women live not for this present age, but for the age to come.

And as we live for that day, we know that we are His own possession, **zealous for good works.**

And so Chapter 2 finishes with Paul telling Titus: ¹⁵ **Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.**

If it was important for Titus, it's important for us, to declare; exhort; and to rebuke with all authority... Living righteously (doing good works), is the way we honour Jesus, as we await His glorious coming.

Let's pray:

Heavenly Father,
We thank You that You have saved us by Grace.
We were totally lost.
No good works could ever be good enough

to pay for the sin we have committed.

And so we thank You that Jesus Christ
gave Himself on the cross,
that we might receive mercy,
and be saved.

Lord,
How great and how wonderful,
is this salvation.

And what a blessing it is,
to be redeemed;
to be a people for Your Own possession.

Lord, Help us to live as Your people.
Living righteously;
Doing good;
Being at all times,
a people of justice; and mercy; and love.

And while we await Your glorious coming,
may we be a people who bring You honour and glory,
In this present age.

in Jesus' Name,
Amen.