

Title: It's always about the gospel
Text: Titus 2.1-10
Theme: Living out the gospel
Series: Titus #3
Prop Stmtnt: Our gospel witness to the world begins with our gospel witness to one another.

Read Text:

As a follower of Christ, you can expect to be held to a double standard. Our society has an expectation of what a Christian ought to look like. And yet, when someone actually lives like that way, many resent it and just wait for that person to mess up. For example, Tim Tebow plays minor league baseball for the St. Lucie Mets. His consistent reputation for being humble, encouraging, and wholesome drives some people crazy. You get the sense that there is a whole group of people who just wait for him to mess up so they can castigate him for being a hypocrite.

Many of you live in that arena though not to the same degree. There are people you work with, live with or are related to, who resent your testimony and if you would ever lose your temper or say something the least bit off, or are even perceived as possibly doing something wrong, you can expect to hear the jeers and cutting comments. So, while you cannot expect your world to cut you some slack, the truth is, they do and should expect that what you believe to affect how you live. That is the point of this text. Titus is called to teach that which accords with sound doctrine which means that the church is supposed to live in a manner that reflects the message of the gospel. It's always about the gospel.

I. **What you believe drives how you live.**

After establishing the qualifications of an elder (1.5-9), Paul contrasts what a leader is supposed to be with what the opponents of the gospel are seeking to do in the church (1.10-16). So now he is emphasizing godly behavior. But, godly behavior is always connected to the gospel. The Bible never simply says, "do this!" The emphasis is always on "be this" and then in view of who you are, live that way. Within our text there are five groups of people in the church who are challenged to live a certain way along with four purpose clauses that continually answer the question of "why" we are to live this way. These purpose clauses are all related to each other and they help us recognize the urgency of living in a way that reflects the gospel. This is really highlighted in verses 11-15, which we will get to next week. In those verses Paul reminds Titus of the glory, the power, the hope and the beauty of the gospel and he begins v.11 with the preposition "for" which once again tells us the ultimate reason for why he calls us to live godly lives. The gospel is the most important truth in the world, therefore, if you claim to be a follower of Christ, then your live must reflect the gospel because it honors God, it puts Christ on display, it adorns the gospel, and God uses a beautiful life of grace as a means to reach others with the gospel.

In verse 1 Titus is told to “*teach what accords with sound doctrine.*” So, the call to the older men, older women, younger women, younger men and slaves is all related to how the gospel is to be put on display in their lives. This is reinforced three other times. For example in verse 4 the charge to young wives is “*that the word of God may not be reviled.*” The charge to young men to live godly lives is “*so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.*” And the call to slaves to serve with distinction and integrity is “*so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.*”

The gospel not only saves us, but the gospel drives our thinking, behavior and priorities, because the only way for anyone to be rightly related to God is through the gospel. And if we love people, we are going to share the gospel with them. But sharing the gospel starts with living out the gospel.

II. What are you supposed to believe?

You are supposed to believe the gospel which is comprised of many essential truths. Here is a summary of them.

- A. God is God (and you are not)
- B. God is righteous and you are not.
- C. You need righteousness that you do not have.
- D. God is merciful and loving and has provided forgiveness and righteousness for you.
- E. That righteousness is available only in Christ and must be received by faith.

Let me explain these.

Have you ever heard someone say, “I’m so tired of other people telling me what to do.” What do you say to a person like that? It is not like you can actually go somewhere where you get to be God. It’s like the kid who said to his parents one day, “I’m so tired of other people telling me what to do; I’m leaving home and joining the army.” Why is it such a struggle for us when other people tell us what to do? It comes down to this. Either this world was made by someone – and we are not alone or this world was not made by someone and we have no idea how it got here and what is going to happen and we are all alone. But, if someone made the world, then we are under the one who made it. Someone is over us. Someone had/has a plan. Someone is in charge. Someone is in a position of power and authority to make the rules. And we are not that Someone – and that terrifies some people and they do everything they can to pretend as if there is no God.

But, if the world was not made by someone then there is no plan. No one is in charge. There are no rules and no one has the inherent right to tell anyone else what to think or what to do. This week the 9th circuit court of appeals issued a ruling that a high school football coach, Joe Bremerton was not permitted to go to the 50-yard line after a football game and pray. That ruling is not only grievous but, when you think about it, it is ludicrous. Now, I may not be the sharpest knife in the drawer, but even I can figure this

out. What gives the court the right to make rules? Ultimately that right comes from God. Certain inalienable rights come from the Creator and when a court attempts to eliminate God, it is cutting the branch that it hangs from. If there is no God, then there are no rights and there are no rules, and anyone can claim anything and no court matters. If there is no God, then the past is murky and the future, well, the future does not matter. The inmates are running the asylum. We (human beings) do not answer to anyone. There is no one who is looking out for us. There is no one who cares about us. There is no one in charge. There is no reason to have any hope for the future, because if we can explode into existence by a chance combination of gases, we can certainly explode into oblivion as well. And if that is the case, then you really ought to be terrified as well as being mystified. Because if you are terrified about the notion of not having a future, and not having a hope, then you ought to be mystified about the fact that you are terrified. In other words, if there is no creator, and if nothing matters, then why do you feel as if it does matter? The irony is that the very thing that we try to run from (being under the authority of God) is the very thing that we need and the truth is, living intentionally under the authority of God is like getting the planets all lined up in our life. Happily living under the authority of God is how life is supposed to be lived. But if this is how life is supposed to be and how life was designed, then why do we fight against it? As crazy and inconsistent as it is, we fight against the idea of living under the authority of God, not because it is rational, but because it is irrational. Sin is irrational and we are sinners. The heart of a sinner is rebellion. We don't want someone telling us what to do and we will deny the obvious and overwhelming evidence of a Creator because we can't bear the thought of being accountable to him, yet, we are and we cannot escape that. Even if you found an island where you could live all by yourself and do what you wanted you would still be under the laws of gravity. You would still be subject to the laws of thermodynamics and physics. You would still be at the mercy of the earth's rotation and weather patterns. So, the intelligent and obvious course of action is to find out everything you can about the Creator such as: why he made the world, what his plan is, and what is your part in his plan. When you do, you will discover that God made this world as a kingdom for His Son where God the Father can put on display the glory of his Son to demonstrate his love for His Son. His plan is to multiply the glories of His Son by making a people who will be like mirrors who reflect the Son. These millions of people who reflect the Son will not only reflect the glories of the Son, but will themselves enjoy and delight in the glories of the Son. The key to understanding creation is to understand the Trinitarian relationship that God (Father, Son and Spirit) enjoys as God. The Father is in charge and the Son loves the Father and the Father loves the Son and the Spirit loves to highlight the love that the Father and the Son have for each other and does everything he can to draw attention to that and spread that all over the world. This relationship is the most delightful, most satisfying, most beautiful and most hated relationship there is. It is hated because Satan hates it and in his rebellious and insane quest to be God, he convinced the first two humans (Adam and Eve) that they too should rebel against God because they could do better on their own (wink, wink). What a colossal mess!

Here is another example of why it is insane. This week a man, who was about to be sentenced in court, arrived early and waited outside the court building for the judge to arrive. When he spotted the judge, he pulled out a gun and shot the judge. What was he

doing? He was attempting to kill the one who enforced the law. Let's say that he was successful in doing that and let's say that he was able to kill every judge and every police officer in the land because he hated to be under authority. But, he would now be in charge and if the new law of the land was to kill those in authority, then he would be hunted and killed.

Adam's rebellion was passed on to every human being, resulting in every one of us being born with the heart of a rebel. Every new parent has these moments of utter disbelief when this little child they love so much defies them. Where does this come from? No one had to pour it in them. No one had to teach them to throw their food, to hit in anger, or to say "no." Rebellion is already bound up in their heart and it is more than just a war, it is sad.

Because God is righteous, just and holy, He has to confront this rebellion and deal with it. This rebellion has to be justly punished and since God makes the rules, he made the rule that the payment for rebellion is death. Therefore, the just response of God to every rebel is death, but if God did that, then we would all die. In order to spare us God sent his own Son, whom he loves to come to this earth to die in our place. The death of Christ satisfied God's wrath against our sin, but it also demonstrated God's incredible love for us and why Jesus is so incredibly glorious. This is how glorious the Son is. He, the Creator, would become part of his own creation and die for them. When you realize how intense God's righteousness is and then how serious your sin is, now you can see how deep God's love is and how perfect and complete Christ's death is and when you trust in what Christ has done for you, then the relationship that you were originally made for is restored and you are happy to be under the authority of God. So, once again...

- A. God is God (and you are not)
- B. God is righteous and you are not.
- C. You need righteousness that you do not have.
- D. God is merciful and loving and has provided forgiveness and righteousness for you.
- E. That righteousness is available only in Christ and must be received by faith.

When you trust in Christ, you are changed and that change in your heart drives the change in your life. So,

III. **How are you supposed to live?**

You are supposed to live in a manner that reflects the gospel. You are supposed to live in a manner that reflects the fact that you are under the authority of God (submission, self-control) that you depend on Christ for righteousness (humility) and you now love others more than you love yourself. When you come to faith in Christ, you are placed into the body of Christ and God has designed the local church to be a visible representation of his people on earth.

The church is made up of different groups of people. Each group is not the church, but is part of the church. If you are an older man and you only hang around older men, then you are not following this text. If you are an older woman and you are not rubbing shoulders with and sharing your life and wisdom with younger women in the church, then you are missing the mark. The emphasis of this

A. Older Men (2)

If there are younger men in the church than you, then you are an older man. If there are older men in the church than you, then you are a younger man; which obviously means that many of you are both.

- a. sober-minded (clear headed)

This obviously means that alcohol or substances do not cloud your judgment.

- b. Dignified

living in a way that others respect. There are stories you would repeat. There are jokes you would not tell. There are certain things you would not do, places you would not go. They would not adorn the gospel.

- c. self-controlled

no older man should have “anger issues.” An older man is to be marked by following (and submitting to) Christ so much that his life takes on a submissive posture.

The next three sound like, faith, hope and love which are familiar and important marks of a believer.

- d. sound in faith – a vibrant trust in God.

This week I was with a man in our church who has walked with God for many years. He was just diagnosed with a brain tumor and was in the middle of the tests that would reveal a grim prognosis. But what I heard from him was a reasoned, calm, thoughtful and certain trust in God’s providences and purposes in his life.

- e. sound in love

Older men are to be characterized as being full of love and care for others. Again, if you are an older man who has walked with Jesus, then your life is going to be marked by love for others. The gospel will produce that.

- f. sound in steadfastness

The older men are to set the pace for the rest of the congregation. If you are an older man in this church, please do not believe

B. Older women (3)

- a. reverent in behavior – carry yourself well.
- b. not slanderers –

Keep in mind that these qualities that are to mark older women are to be the fruit of the gospel and as such are to help create a culture of trust and security within the church. The older women are to teach the younger women, but if an older woman does not guard her words and is known to talk ill about others, then younger gals will not trust her and will not allow her to speak into their lives as they shouldn't. A universal rule is: if people talk to you about others, they will talk to others about you.

- c. not slaves to much wine

A woman who is not self-controlled is not going to be trusted and we need women to be in a position where they can teach others. All of these qualities are to set the stage for opportunities to help other women by being...

- d. teachers of what is good

and so train the young women. The purpose of the older women being reverent and respectable and self-controlled is that they may have the integrity to be able to teach the younger wives how the gospel affects their marriage and home.

C. Younger women (wives)

- a. love their husbands and children

Loving your husband and loving your children can be a challenge. It shouldn't be but your husband is a sinner and your children are sinners and you are a sinner and when you put that many sinners under the same roof, there are going to be issues and you need to learn how to work through those issues. There are going to be times when you need encouragement and you need someone helping you.

- b. to be self-controlled

Notice how these qualities have such an impact on the home. A wife has such an enormous influence on the rhythm of the home and I think that is what Paul is emphasizing here. The list begins and ends speaking about the young wife's relationship with her husband and in the middle of these qualities is the call for her to be working at home. Her home is her arena of ministry, but as every young mother will tell you, it is also an arena for conflict. So, if you are a young wife, recognize that your home is your

arena to manage and to make it a place for comfort, calm, joy, and rest. You give your husband and children a priceless gift when you have your home ordered. That is the entire thrust of this, but you are not going to get your home in order if you do not have yourself in order. Controlling your home starts with controlling yourself; and that's hard, isn't it? That problem is not unique to young moms. That is something that is hard for all of us, which is why this issue pops up in v.2, v.5 and v.6.

c. pure

Purity is priceless and a young woman who pursues it is rarer, and therefore more influential for the sake of the gospel.

d. working at home

e. kind

It is amazing how much of an influence you can have for the gospel by being kind.

f. submissive to their own husbands (that the word of God may not be reviled)

Why do younger women need older women to teach them how to do this? Because it is not natural and it is not easy. In fact I've talked with a couple of gals who think that because they know (or at least think they do) a little more about the Bible than their husband that they need to be in charge. After all, I can pronounce propitiation. But if she was really all that spiritual she would obey the Bible. But, when we become followers of Christ, we are all under submission and God puts us into these positions where we set aside our rights in order to obey him. No wife is to submit to her husband if he asks her to sin because a husband only has the right to lead the home to the degree that God has vested him with that authority. My authority in the home is on loan from God. It is not mine inherently and therefore I have to exercise it as unto him.

By the way, God did not set this up because women are inferior. That idea or accusation is rubbish. The relationship of a husband and wife is to reflect the relationship that God enjoys as God.

D. Younger men

a. self-controlled,

And then Paul challenges Titus to set the pace for the young men (7).

E. Slaves

a. submissive to their own masters in everything

b. not argumentative

- c. not pilfering
- d. showing all good faith (in order to adorn the doctrine of God our Savior)

We feel the tensions in our culture. People with different views are increasingly hostile toward one another. While we cannot fix everything out there, we can offer a different reality than what most people experience. And that is the heart of what the church is supposed to be. We are a different reality because of the difference of Christ.