

Titus: Unfinished Business

Make It Look Good

Fairview Missionary Church | Angola, IN

Scripture: Titus 2

Speaker: Joel Greenwood

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Do you ever go to a garage sale or look on Facebook marketplace and think to yourself, "Does this person really want to sell what they are trying to sell?" You maybe look at the pictures and they're awful or the item is filthy or way overpriced or doesn't even make any sense. Maybe it even smells bad or you can tell it hasn't been taken care of.

Maybe it's been sitting out in the rain or the weather for a while and you just think, "What is this person trying to sell?" Sometimes I will watch the show, "American Pickers," just so that I can get the heebie-jeebies. For someone who is OCD like me, it's hard to imagine having something that is of value or worth and just allowing it to be ruined in a barn somewhere. Now, I know that some of the things they take out still have a lot of value, and they sell them for a lot of money.

But I can't help but think to myself, if they actually took care of it, it might be worth even a little more. Now, I do think that some of my OCD comes from my father, who happens to be here today. I wasn't planning on him being here, but he taught me at a young age to take care of my things, to take care of my toys, take care of my vehicles. Here are some of the sayings that I remember from my dad, all right?

Saying number one, "We don't have a lot so we take care of what we have." Saying number two, "We always clean up when we are finished with something." Saying number three, "If we borrow anything from anyone, we should return it in better shape than when we got it." And saying number four, "There is a place for everything and everything in its place." If I was ever asked, yes, he's applauding. Yep, those are good.

Good sayings. But I do remember as I was growing up, if I was ever asked to clean anything around the house or to wash a vehicle, there was always something I missed, right? We just could not do it perfectly. And this drove me crazy as a kid because I felt I never did anything right. Now that I am an adult, I am sure that I do the same thing to those around me. Don't ask my wife. Just take it for granted, all right? But one thing was true.

If my dad ever listed something to sell in the classifieds, kids, you can ask your parents about that. You know it was a newspaper with word articles. It was before Facebook Marketplace. You couldn't post pictures or anything like that. The first person that came to look at whatever he was selling instantly when they saw it said, "I'll take it." Because if it was humanly possible, it didn't matter how old whatever it was that he was selling, if it was humanly possible, it looked like new when they were coming to buy it.

So I learned at a very young age that I'm not a salesman. I've never been trained in this, but I did learn from my dad the deal was all in the presentation. It was all in what you presented. You should put your best foot forward. Make it look as good as you could. Be friendly when the people show up and ask yourself the question, "What would you want it to look like if you were going to buy it?" And then make it and present it like that.

Today, as we continue in chapter two of our series in Titus, we are going to look at some specific instructions that the apostle Paul is going to give to you and to me as to how we should look when we are presenting ourselves to

the world. How are we supposed to live so that we are attractive to those that see us in the world in which we live? Now, I understand you're not selling Jesus to others.

That's not your job, but you are representing Him to others. Paul actually says when he's writing to the Corinthian church that we are Christ's ambassadors. What does this mean? An ambassador is somebody who represents their own country or government in a foreign land. And so as Christ followers, you and I are called to be representatives of God's kingdom, living out our faith and demonstrating Christ's character in our daily lives while we live in a foreign kingdom.

Now, this is an amazing honor, but it's also a huge responsibility. So the question we should ask is this, how are we supposed to live in order to represent Christ and His kingdom in our foreign world? Well, Paul is going to answer that question for us in Titus chapter 2 as he is writing to Titus about the Cretans, but it also applies to us today.

So if you have your Bibles, I encourage you to open up to Titus chapter 2. We're going to go through the entire chapter, verses 1 through 15, Titus chapter 2. Let me pray, and then we'll jump in. Heavenly Father, I thank You for the privilege that You have given to us to represent You to the world around us, this foreign place in which we live because we were not created to live here in this fallen world forever.

You have created us to live with you for eternity. And so while we are here, may we represent you well as we point others towards you. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen. I want to give you a quick recap of chapter one. Maybe you weren't here last week, but here we're in the book of Titus, which is actually a letter that Paul writes to a young man named Titus while he is still on the island of Crete in the Mediterranean.

They both arrived there and began to plant churches. And Paul went on to other places to spread the news about Jesus. And he left this young man named Titus there to finish the job. He was there to kind of clean up the churches and put leaders over the churches, if you remember last week talking about elders and overseers. And this island of Crete was a dangerous place to live, both physically and spiritually.

In chapter 1, we saw that even one of their own poets, a Cretan poet, said that Cretans are known for being liars, gluttons, and beasts. Paul leaves Titus there to plant churches on this island, and Paul goes on. And so as he writes, he is writing to encourage and give specific instructions to share with the Cretans about how they were to live now that they were members of God's kingdom because their life should be transformed, it should be different.

And the amazing thing about this is even though this letter was written 2,000 years ago, the directions that he gave to the Cretans also apply to us today. It applies to all believers. This is how we are to live in the world in which God has placed us. So let's look at some of those instructions in Titus chapter 2, starting in verse 1. Paul says, "You, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine.

Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love, and in endurance." So the first command that he is going to give is to older men. Now, I'm not going to give an age group for that today, but if you feel like you fit in that category, this is for you, okay? You can determine that. I'm not going to determine that. And he says, "Okay, older men, you are to be temperate.

You are to be worthy of respect." What does that mean? What does it mean when Paul says to older men that they are to be temperate? It means that they are to be personable, approachable. They should be able to tell others just by looking at you, that seems like a nice, kind person. I could go up and talk to that person. It means that you're calm. It means that you're even soothing to be around.

Your presence actually lifts anything that would be hindering people in the room, just you being there. It means that you're mild-mannered and that you do everything in moderation. That's a word that our culture doesn't like

today. You would do everything in moderation. You would be temperate, calm, soothing. This means that as you are older, you've gone through the difficulties of life and you've come out on the other side better because of it.

And so because of that difficulty, because of the seasons you've gone through, when younger men and younger women come to you, you have godly advice to share and wisdom to give. It means that as you are living your life, you are an example for others to follow as to what it looks like to praise the name of God. Older men, when you are temperate and self-controlled, it means that you know how to work hard and to give your all for God.

It means that you love others well, and you know what it looks like to live a selfless life. You know That can be one of the most difficult things in our culture that as you get older and you retire and you plan for that, and many men will think to themselves after they've gone through their whole careers, "Okay, I have finally arrived. I have done everything for everybody else all the way up to this point. Now I can do what I want to do." And Paul says, "No, no, that's not really the case.

You still are called to be a servant leader and to live humbly and to give and to live a selfless life as hard as that may be." We go on in verse 3. Paul says, "Likewise, I want you to teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good." Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and their children, 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.

All right, if you thought I was not going to put an age group on men and I was going to on women, you were way wrong. All right? So if you consider yourself an older woman, this is for you, all right? If this is your category. And Paul says, "As an older woman, you are to live a life of respect and truth." He encourages the women on the island of Crete as well as women today don't fall into the easy trap of pointing out other people's problems or tearing them down so that you can lift yourself up.

It's easy in our culture. It's easy in our world to look at others and to point out all of their wrongs and all of their errors and so somehow to feel better about ourselves. Well, at least I don't look like so-and-so. At least I don't act like them. Paul says, "Don't do that. Don't compare yourself. Don't fall into that trap. Instead, do the opposite.

I want you to invest in the next generation of women, teaching them what is important and showing them how to live so that if a young woman comes to you who has just had a baby and is wondering if they're going to make it through, you can say, "Yes, you will make it through." It's going to be difficult. It's going to be hard. Everything you're feeling is normal. Do you know how good it is to feel when you feel like your life is out of control and somebody older just looks at you and says, "Yep, that's okay. I've been there. We've made it through.

You will make it through as well. There's encouragement that comes with that." And so he says, "Listen, older women invest in these younger women. They need you. They need to know that they're going to survive and that they're doing a good job." They need to hear that from you. Paul says, "Do that. Don't fall into the trap of tearing them down. Invest. Teach them what is important." Paul says that women are also to live self-controlled and obedient lives. Godly women should be trustworthy and pure.

You should be able to share things with an older, godly woman and know that it's not going to make it all around town. But instead, she's going to pray for you. She's going to care for you. Before we move on, let me address the elephant in the room before I get a ton of emails, all right? What did Paul mean when he used the phrase that older women should be busy at home? Does this mean that women are supposed to stay home and do the housework and fit that kind of thing that we've established?

Let me just say no, okay? That's not what Paul is saying here. Paul is recognizing here as he's writing to the Cretans and their culture. And just understanding humans in general recognizes that women like men were created with responsibility. You have tasks to accomplish just as we have tasks to accomplish. And there is a

fulfillment that comes in accomplishing those tasks. Now, as he's writing to Crete, most of these women in that culture stayed home.

And so Paul is encouraging them. When you are at home, accomplish the God-given work that He has given you to do. Whatever that task is, raising the children, going out and working, whatever it is, live by the example that has been set for you. Be productive in our world instead of just sitting around and gossiping and talking because the truth of the matter is, the more we sit around, the more trouble we get into. How many of you have said that to your kids, right?

You try to keep them busy because the more you sit around, the more trouble you get into. And Paul is saying to both the older men and the older women, "Don't just sit around. Be productive. Continue to do what God has created you to do. It might look different. It might be an encore career. It might be something else. It might be volunteering. But understand you still have huge value and purpose in the kingdom of God. Otherwise, he would have taken you home.

There's still a task for you to accomplish, and you are very important to the family of Christ. And so do what God has called you to do. He goes on, "Sorry, I forgot to put up the picture of older women, okay?" I had to really scroll through some pictures to find one. I'm like, "I don't know. It's kind of scary." All right. Here we go. Verse 6, I definitely didn't choose anybody's picture who attends the church. I know that. I wasn't going to put that up. Smarter than that. All right. Number six.

Similarly, Paul says, "Encourage the young men to be self-controlled." Are you noticing a theme here? In everything, set them an example by doing what is good. In your teachings, show integrity, seriousness, 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. There is this trend.

Older women, younger men, younger women, we are to live lives of self-control. We all should be even-tempered, easy to talk to, live life in moderation, not threatening so that when others look at us, there's something that's attractive about us because we aren't pursuing and running after all of the things that the world runs after to try to fulfill that inner desire because our inner desire is filled by God. And so we don't have to run after all those things.

Paul says, "Older women, younger women, older men, younger men should be attractive. You should stand out from others in the world because your life has been transformed by the power of the Spirit." "We should be so different," Paul says, in fact, that if anyone tries to bring a charge against you, it would just look foolish because they would say, "Of course that person wouldn't do that." It doesn't matter what position we find ourselves in. We should be radically different.

How radical? Well, listen to what Paul says next, starting in verse 9. He says to Titus, "Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them 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." Paul says as he's writing to the island of Crete and slavery was practiced there, both the slavery where you just take advantage of people and, of course, slavery where you had a debt that you couldn't pay, and so you were enslaved to that person.

Paul says, "Even in the most extreme circumstances, even if you are a slave, be the most productive and trusting slave possible." Why? So that your master and those who watch will want to know about your God. Even in this horrific situation, it seems like crazy talk. What do you mean, Paul? If I'm a slave, shouldn't I have freedom? Well, yes, you should. But even as you're living as a slave, this is how different we are supposed to be as followers of Christ.

Our desire should be so strong to shine and make God look good that even if we find ourselves being a slave, that we would continue to be obedient to what God has called us to. Of course, slavery is wrong. Paul is not

condoning slavery here, but he's saying, "Even in this extreme case, we can help God receive the glory." That's pretty extreme, isn't it? Be willing to sacrifice, live selflessly so that God can receive the glory.

Let's go on in verse 11. "For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people, this grace teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age." We are all still part of this present age. While we wait for the blessed hope, and what is our hope?

It's the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us in order to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good. God is creating for Himself a people that are eager to do good. These then are the things that you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.

You see the gospel, the good news of Jesus, must prove its redemptive power in the public square if it is going to transform culture. What do I mean by that? I mean that if we are ever going to transform our culture for Christ, it is going to happen because those who claim to follow Christ actually live like Christ. That's what's going to change our culture if you and I are actually representing Him well.

We are not going to transform our culture through social upheaval or by running away from everyone and kind of just going and doing our own thing. The Christian message, the gospel, the good news will become compelling to the world when you and I fully participate in public life, where our lives and our homes look similar on the surface. But after a closer look, the world will discover that you and I live by a totally different value system.

We don't live for the same things that the world lives for. That value system that you and I live for is born out of a devotion to a totally different God than the God that most people in our world serve. The value system that drives your way of life and my way of life is God's grace. That is what transforms us. God's grace which appeared in the person of Jesus Christ and will appear again at His return.

The Christian way of life is founded on God's generous grace. This grace was first demonstrated in Jesus' redeeming death for His enemies of which you and I are included. That's God's generous grace. And it's this same grace, God's generous grace that calls all believers to say no to the corrupt way of life that are inconsistent with God's generous grace.

And instead, this generous grace calls people to a new way of life, a new way of living. When you and I were called to follow Christ, our eyes were opened to a new way of living. And God is offering that new life to anyone who would simply come before Him, repent of their sins, proclaim Him as Lord, and submit to Him. God offers us His generous grace.

And as we receive that generous grace, we are called to live in such a way that that grace would flow through us to others. And when we live that way, it is attractive to the world and so different from anything they have ever seen before that they can't help but say, "What's different about you? You're different." You see, God cleans us up.

God makes us attractive to the world, not because of anything we have done, but because of His generous grace. He cleans us up so that we can put our best foot forward, so that we can be different, so that we can be a light in a dark world. I shared with you at the beginning of the service that we are having some baptisms this evening. And one of the things that we ask of those that are going to be baptized is that we could just record their testimony.

Why are you getting baptized? It's encouraging for me. It's encouraging for the congregation. And I love that of the 20-some people that we're having getting baptized, all of the young ones have done their video and all of the older ones haven't. All right? I know it's hard to do, but it is such a blessing to the congregation when you will share your testimony because we all have stories. Every one of us have stories of what God has done in our lives.

And as these individuals are getting baptized, they are proclaiming with their actions and with their words that they have asked Jesus into their heart and have proclaimed Him the Savior of their lives. And so we celebrate that. Tonight will be a celebration. When I told Brenda, I remember I told her this week that we were having almost 20 baptisms, and she says, "Man, the angels are going to have a party tonight." And I said, "Yes, they are. They are going to have a party tonight."

It is awesome for us to celebrate that." So we have a few videos, but just for time's sake, we're going to split these up. So I'm going to show three today, and we're going to keep showing them until we've shown them all for the next few weeks. So hopefully, you guys will come back to see those. And then for the end of our service today, we're going to sing a song entitled Different. And the words of the song are going to say, "I want to be different. I want to be changed." That's our goal. We want to be different, not for our sake, but for His sake so that He can receive glory and praise.