

## SERMON TRANSCRIPT

02.08.2026 | A Gospel Shaped Life | Titus 3:1-8 | Dr. Ben Day, Senior Pastor

We are continuing on in our sermon series the Book of Titus. We start at the beginning of 2026 and we've gone now through over these couple of months and next week we'll end our sermon series in Titus. What we've been looking at throughout this study is the ways that our lives are supposed to be shaped by the gospel. Book of Titus I think is really kind of centered around this theme of gospel shaped living. How we as individuals and as a community of faith are called to be shaped by the good news of Jesus and what it looks like in our lives. And you know a couple of weeks ago we were at the beginning of chapter 2. Pastor Clark led us through those first parts of chapter and as we look there we saw really these calls to live as the people of God, primarily amongst the community or the household of God. There were these commands to live self-controlled godly lives upright and to teach each other and to train each other and to love each other as the people of God.

And what we saw last week, we're down at the fellowship hall if you were with us, at the end of chapter 2, Paul says well here is how you do. Here's the foundation for that. You live sound upright lives by the grace of God. That the fruit of sound doctrine is sound living but at the root of the Christian life and the sound living is the grace of God. What we are going to see this week in this passage is really both of those ideas combined into one. I've called this sermon a gospel shaped life which is kind of the subtitle of this whole series because I think in this passage you have kind of a snapshot of what we're seeing throughout the whole book. In this passage we see clearly Paul unpack the gospel doctrines, the truths of the good news of Jesus Christ, but he also clearly calls us to live those out, to be shaped by the gospel. And one thing that I think is kind of different is that in chapter 2 as we heard these calls, these commands to live out the gospel, they're primarily amongst the people of God, kind of in the household of God. But here at the beginning of chapter 3 the calls are primarily out in the world. Today as we look at this passage what we're considering is how does the gospel shape our lives and what does it look like for the gospel to shape our lives as we live out in this world.

We're going to consider this as we read Titus chapter 3 verses 1 through 8. Paul writes, "Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all. For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others, and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, being justified by His grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people.

In July of 2020, I preached from the same text to my church in Las Vegas. And there, as I was preaching in the last service of the day, amongst the people of our Vegas congregation, there were some people from San Francisco there. Throughout the congregation, kind of spread around, were actually people from the pastor search team, from this church. They had come to Vegas, even in the midst of pandemic. They braved it all to come to Vegas to hear me preach live, to try to discern if I was the pastor that God was calling to this church. When I preached the sermon that morning, the title that I gave that sermon was that the gospel is the power for perfect courtesy. That phrase, "perfect courtesy," showing perfect courtesy toward all people, had really stuck out to me. And I wanted to draw it out for our church that morning, because I don't know if you remember much about July of 2020. There wasn't a lot of courtesy going on in our world.

I mean, as we were in the midst of a pandemic, in which the people had all sorts of kind of opinions about the ways that it should be handled. There's all sorts of political division, election coming up later that year, race relations, killing of George Floyd, kind of brought things to the surface, to a head. There was just not a lot of courtesy being shown. And sadly, I found that Christians were not setting a very good example in showing perfect courtesy towards all people. And so as I preached that morning, my message was that the gospel gives us the power, the ability to be perfectly courteous towards all people. You know, I think it's still a message that we need to hear today. Six years later, I don't see much more courtesy going on around our world. And six years later, sadly, I don't often see the church setting a great example in it.

And to be honest, we can't just blame the I mean, when you look back at Paul's writing to Titus here on the island of Crete, and he tells them, "Teach the church, remind the church to be submissive and obedient, to be gentle, to be patient, to show perfect courtesy." Remember that he's writing to people who live not just in the Roman Empire, but specifically on this island of Crete. We just kind of touched upon it briefly throughout this series, but the Cretan culture was devoted to greed and violence and sexual corruption. There's all sorts of problems on this island. Cretan values were not anywhere close to Christian values. And yet Paul says that the believers who are living on that island should be instructed and should be reminded, meaning he's told them before to live gentle, patient, kind, perfectly courteous lives.

And so it should still be for us today. As the people of God living in 2026, living in America, living in San Francisco, we live in a culture in which many of the values of our culture are very different, should be very different than the church's values. But how are we to conduct ourselves in the world? How are we to live in the world? Paul seems really clear to say that no matter what the world looks like, there is a call for people who have believed the gospel, who have been shaped by the to conduct themselves in such a way that they would show the goodness and loving kindness of God to the world around them. It's important that we hear this call to do this, but I think it's also really important to see how we are able to do this. That's also what I wanted to impress upon my church in Vegas that morning, that is the gospel that is the power for perfect. That we cannot be the people that we are called to be simply in our own strength and our own abilities.

But by what God does in the gospel, what He has done in our lives, when the gospel is really shaping our lives, this is what gives us the ability to live in this way. It's very similar to what we saw in the last couple of weeks. Again, you might remember that the first 10 verses of chapter 2, Paul said, Here is what you're supposed to remind the people of God, the household of God to live. Live in such a way that they would adorn the gospel, show off the gospel. And then, we remember last week, we saw in verse 11, he said, Well, a similar thing happens in Verses 1 and 2, Paul says, remind them to live in such a way. And then verse 3, he says, 4, this is what has happened in the gospel And this just brings out a really important point that I could have mentioned last week. I chose to just kind of bring out this week, which is something really good for you to know as a Christian. Something that's really good, I think, for you to know as someone who's seeking to follow Jesus, someone who's going to hopefully read the Bible on a

Kind of just a main idea to kind of be over this whole passage is that it's good to remember that in the Bible, imperatives flow from indicatives. In the Bible, imperatives flow from indicatives. Let me just unpack that for you for just a moment. An imperative is a command. It is a call to do something. This is a challenge. An indicative is a statement of fact. It's a statement of reality. It's a declaration of truth. So many times in our world, in different belief systems, in different systems that we live in this world, imperatives lead to indicatives. The way that we so operate in our world is that if you will do this, then this will be true. Right? If you give enough money, then you can belong to our club. If your sales number get to a certain point, then you reach this kind of tier, this level. Right? If you do enough good things, then you can have a place here in our religion or in our group. I feel like airlines love to divide us up into classes. Right? Like if you've spent enough money, if you fly enough miles with us, then your gold status or silver status or your premiere and you get to board early. All of these systems in our world train us to think that imperatives lead to indicatives.

If you read the Bible, what you'll notice is that it's just the opposite. In the Bible, it doesn't say that, well, if you love enough, if you do enough, you'll be loved. The Bible actually says you are loved, so therefore love. The Bible says you are forgiven, clothed in Jesus' righteousness. Now live and walk in righteousness. And by the way, this isn't just something that shows up in the New Testament. It's actually all throughout the Bible. I mean, think about some of the most kind of well-known commands, imperatives in the Bible. Those 10 commandments. How do the 10 commandments begin? You go to Exodus chapter 20, verse 1, God says, it says that God spoke these words saying, verse 2, "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." Then verse 3, "You shall have no other gods before me." God didn't go to the people of Israel and say, if you will obey these 10 commandments, then I will be your God, and I will bring you out of slavery, and I will save you. He said, I have saved you. I have redeemed you. I have brought you into freedom. Now here's how you live like it.

In the Bible, it's always the indicatives first and then the imperatives. And sometimes when we only read certain verses or pay attention to certain parts, we only read the imperatives and we feel like it's something we have to do in and of ourselves. But it's important to even see in passages like this that's very clear that the commands of God are, they come from, they flow from the realities of what God has already done in our lives. So what I want to do is not begin in verse 1 of Titus 3. I want to begin in verse 3 as we consider the indicatives. What is already true in our lives because of the gospel? What is God already done? Therefore, how does that shape us to live out these calls and these commands?

So three parts of these indicatives of the gospel that I just want to draw out for you this morning. The first one that I think Paul draws our attention to is our past bondage. When we think about what is true in our lives, what is true in the gospel and what God does, the first thing that we have to consider is our past selves. The ways that we were enslaved in bondage to sin. Paul begins this section by saying remind them to be devoted to these things, to live in this way. And then he says in verse 3, 4, again here is the basis for how you are supposed to live. And where does he begin with what we are supposed to know and believe? It is our past selves. For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.

Paul says if you ever look out at the world and you see the way that the sinful world is living, remember that that was once you. Remember that you were lost and living in sinful ways. And so many times it is easy for us to say, yeah, but I wasn't like them. Like, yeah, I know I was lost, but I wasn't that lost. I mean, I did some bad things, but I wasn't going to where they are going, saying the things they are saying. That is where we go back to last week, that do we really believe that salvation is all of grace? Do we really believe that our righteousness, our good works, the things that we do contribute nothing to because if salvation is all by grace, then we have to recognize that we were just as dead in our sins as anyone else we might see. We were just as enslaved and in bondage to our sins as anyone else we might see. In fact, Paul says you are enslaved to various passions and pleasures.

And probably for many of us, maybe we were enslaved to some of the more respectable passions and Maybe you were enslaved to workaholicism. Maybe you were enslaved to a self-righteous way of living, of doing a lot of good things. Sometimes if we are enslaved to those types of things, we can look down upon other people who are enslaved to trapped in bondage and some of the more not respectable sins. But Paul says we were all foolish. We were all disobedient. We were all living for ourselves, not loving the people around us. And it's because we were enslaved in our sin. We were trapped in our sin. We were in bondage to our sin. I think that's an important reminder for us. It's important to look around the people at the world and to be empathetic. To recognize not only was that you at one point, but also to recognize why they are the way that the Bible constantly puts before us that the enemy that we have in this world is not people. The people have been blinded by the enemy. People are in bondage to the enemy.

This is why we are to treat people with gentleness and courtesy. But we are not to treat the enemy with gentleness and courtesy. Don't be gentle with the devil. Don't be courteous to the devil's teachings and the lies. I mean we saw earlier in this book that we are to clearly rebuke and denounce false teachings. Things that go against the truth. So it's not that we're supposed to be gentle or courteous with all things, but specifically with people. Because we recognize that we were in that state as well. We recognize that they are in that state in bondage and what they need is to be set free. And we recognize that the only reason we are not still in that state is because of the grace of God. There was nothing we did to get out of that state. Even while we were still in the state of being disobedient and foolish, living in hatred, the goodness and loving kindness of our God appeared.

How do people who have been shaped by the gospel live? When we see people living in these ways, we bring the goodness and loving kindness of our God to them. This is a second indicative for us to consider as we think about what is true for us as the people of God. Paul says, "Remember your past bondage, but then also remember, know God's powerful mercy." What is true about us before we are called to live in a certain way in the world, before we're called to treat people in a certain way in the world, what is true? What is true is that we were in bondage to sin. We were just as lost in living in that way but God. Just as we read from Ephesians chapter 2, earlier to start the service, "But God, who is rich in mercy." We considered this last week as we talked about the grace of God, that while we were sinners, "But God" gave his grace, it appeared.

That's what Paul explains next in verses 4 and 5. He says, "But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit." There's so much that we could unpack in this indicative, some that we considered last week about the grace of God. But what I just summarized it to say is that it's clear here in these verses that God loves sinners. That even while we were still disobedient, even while we were still sinners, even when there was nothing within us to cause God to want to act on our behalf, the goodness and loving kindness of God appeared in Jesus Christ. His mercy was powerful and it came into our lives to save us. Paul says it saved us by the cleansing that comes with the regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Spirit. So what Paul is talking about here is not a bunch of different things, but he's saying all in one thing, what is salvation? It is being cleansed from all of your sin and it is being given new life. The fact that Jesus' death covers the payment for your sin and Jesus' resurrection gives you a new birth and a new life. It says you have been cleansed and you have been regenerated to be born again. You have been renewed because the Holy Spirit has come upon .

Perhaps one of the best prophecies of the Old Testament that predicted this, that describes this is found in Ezekiel. In Ezekiel chapter 36 verses 25 through 27, God says, "I will sprinkle clean water on you and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness and from all your idols I will cleanse you." God says, "I will wash you totally clean of all your sins." Then he says in verse 26, "And I will give you a new heart and a new spirit I will put within you." "And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh and I will put my spirit within you." "And cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules." What God had prophesied through Ezekiel has now come true in Jesus. God's mercy was towards us and works powerfully in us to cleanse us, to give us new life because his spirit is poured into us. It says, "By his spirit," verse 6, "whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior."

When you trust in Jesus, you not only receive the grace of God as we talked about last week. The reason that grace of God can train you and shape you is because it comes in the person of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is given to you to set you free from the bondage, the enslavement of your sin that you once lived. This is important for us to know because just as much as we need to look at the world and say, "We have empathy," "We understand why people would live in the way that they do because that was once us," "We also need to not live like the world anymore." We need to not walk in the enslavement and the bondage that we once walked in. We need to no longer walk in the hatred and the malice that we once walked. The reason we can be marked by perfect courtesy and gentleness and kindness to people is because we have the Holy Spirit of God living inside of us. You have been set free. Now you live like it.

Again, this is not a call to do all these good things that God will give you his Holy Spirit or give you more of his spirit. He has poured out his spirit upon you. He has given you new life that you might walk in freedom. Let this truth of the gospel compel you to live in a new way. See that you were once in bondage, but God powerfully has set you free by his mercy. And see that as he has done that, he has given you a place of belonging. The last one is our promised belonging. The last truth that I want us to grasp this morning, the last indicative is this place or this position that we It's not that only that God found us in our sin, in our bondage, and had mercy upon us and brought us into new life, but he has brought us into a new community, into a new people.

I was with the youth this morning as we were walking, they're walking through the book of Philippians, and I just got to talk to them about the end of chapter 3, beginning of chapter 4, when Paul says, "You are now citizens of. You belong to a new people, you belong to a new kingdom, you belong to a new family." That's what Paul says here in verse 7. He says, "He poured out his spirit upon us, renewed us, regenerated us through Jesus Christ so that, being justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." He says, "You are now heirs," meaning you are now part of God's family. When you believe in Jesus, you are adopted into God's family. I do think adoption can be a really helpful way to think about this relationship between indicatives and imperatives. Think about almost always, a child is not adopted into a family because they do something good or great. Not that they do something to earn their place into a family, it's almost always just out of the love of a parent that a child is adopted into a family. They belong. They're a son or a daughter. They have a place in the home and in the family, and then they start to learn what it looks like to live in this new place of belonging.

So it is with the family of God. God has worked powerfully by his mercy that you'd be justified, forgiven of your sins, so that you would become part of the family of God. Now, part of the family of God, you live like it. Part of living like it is

having a new outlook on this world. He says, "We are heirs of the King." Part of this, I think, draws our attention forward. We'll come to the table in just a minute and we'll remember that Jesus has come, saved us powerfully by his mercy. We'll also look ahead to the fact that one day we'll gather around a greater table with our King because we are heirs of the King. This attention of a new promised belonging draws our attention to our hope that is in the future. Why can we be perfectly courteous and gentle to people in the world? Because we don't need to grab for the power of this world. We don't need to try to earn our place in the kingdoms of this world because our hope is somewhere else. Our promised belonging is somewhere else. It is with the people of God, in the kingdom of God. So we are set free to love people, to be kind to people.

These are the imperatives that then Paul gives. So see what is already true in the Gospel, but then see what Paul calls us to. And we won't spend a lot of time on this. I think it's just really straightforward. Paul says, "Here's how you live as people who have been shaped by the Gospel." I'll summarize it in two phrases in the imperatives. The first is that we would pursue public goodness. Paul says, "How do you live as people have been shaped by the Gospel?" Pursue public goodness. Again, you look back at chapter two, there were some commands, some imperatives for us to follow. And I think a lot of them had to do with our personal lives, how we live amongst the people of God, which are so important. But here the focus in chapter three is not so much just amongst the community of faith, but it's in the world. And he says, "Seek public goodness. Seek the goodness of the city that you live in, the island of Crete, the city of San Francisco. Seek the goodness of the people around you." It starts in verse one. He says, "Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work."

There's a clear call in Scripture that God is the one who sets up governments and ruling authorities. There's this call in Scripture to be submissive and obedient to those who are in power over us. I mean, even as Paul writes to people who live in Rome or the island of Crete, there is this call to be submissive, to obey. I think that's a needed word because when you hear that you're a citizen of a new kingdom, when you hear that your hope is not in this world, you could just feel like you should just check out. You don't have to obey the laws of the land. You don't have to worry about what's going on around you. But Paul says, "Actually, it's just the opposite." Really, to be a citizen of heaven is to make you a better citizen of earth.

So there's this call throughout Scripture to submit and obey to governing authorities, but there's also clear examples in Scripture to obey God rather than man. That the call to obey governing authorities isn't so much just about doing whatever the government tells you, but it's seeking the good of the people around. So he specifically says, "Seek to do good works." I love the way one commentator put it. He said this call to be submissive and obedient is not a call to just be passive. It's actually a call to be proactively positive in the world. Seek the public goodness of the world around you. At times, like in the book of Daniel, it will mean not obeying our governing authorities. Even in the New Testament, it will be obeying the calls of God rather than the commands of men. The call so much is not about what is the law of the land tell us, but rather how do we seek the public good of those who are around us. Specifically, I think this is reiterated in verse 8. As Paul comes back around, he says, "The saying is trustworthy." After he's talked about the gospel, he says, "I want you to insist on these things so that those who have believed in good may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people."

So yes, let's be obedient and submissive to governing authorities, pray for leaders, obey the laws of the land. But more importantly, let's consider what is actually good for the people around us. Let's devote ourselves to good works that are profitable for people. I guess just phrasing it this way has just been on my heart as I think about February's Black History Month. We often think about the history of black people in our culture, our country. A couple of weeks ago, a few weeks ago, we had Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Oftentimes around that day, I'll read through the letters from a Birmingham jail, a letter from a Birmingham jail that MLK wrote to white Christians and specifically white pastors who told him, "Just obey the laws of the land." That's what we're called. Dr. King knew that it was better to obey God rather than man. He led people to proactively seek public good, especially for those who are in need or being oppressed. I think that is the call for us as Christians, to proactively seek what is good in our society. How do we operate as people who belong to a different kingdom to actually be a benefit, to seek the welfare of our city, to seek the benefit and the goodness of those who are in need. Those who are around us. I just want to encourage you, I think it starts in very practical ways.

Ways that you can do in your life, even through some of our local partners. You can seek public goodness by being a part of International Students Incorporated welcoming international students to our country. Letting them know that there are people here who are glad that you can be a part of seeking public goodness by blessing mothers and children and families through Alpha Pregnancy Center. Letting mothers know who are facing an unplanned pregnancy that there are people who want to support them, love them. People who want to come alongside children and see them have a great life in this world. You can seek the public goodness by participating in our urban ministry outreach, which we seek to fellowship with and feed people who are unhoused. Yes, there are so many other ways that we can do this in our civic lives, in our personal lives, but just even thinking about our church life, there are ways that we can just be seeking the good of the people around us. And be seeking the good of the people of San Francisco.

This is what it looks like to have a gospel shaped life. We really believe that there is a God who loves these people. We believe, only by the grace of God, that we are no longer walking in their way, that we will be seeking the good of those who are around us and we will treat them as such. And so, along with public goodness, I believe we're called to patient gentleness. It's clear throughout scripture, and especially in these verses, that we as Christians are called to be marked by. Certainly, I think there's supposed to be a love that we have for each other. It's different than other people experience, but there's also a unique love that we have for the people of this world. Kind of just see that patient love, gentleness, summarized in verse 2, he says, "Speak evil of no one. Avoid quarreling. Be gentle. Show perfect courtesy toward.

It's interesting that this is a problem or something that needs to be addressed 2,000 years ago. Something that probably still needs to be addressed now. I mean, social media wasn't even invented when Paul writes this. So many times I see quarreling and people not being courteous or gentle towards others online. In our lives, in our dealings with people, we are called to be different I mean, how counter-cultural would it be if Christians actually lived like this? So many other groups in the world love those who are in their group and shun or hate those or cancel those who are not in their group. What if we as Christians were really marked by gentleness? Perfect courtesy. I just love that phrase. I mean, the idea, I think, in the original language is like all gentleness, all meekness, all respect to those who think differently than we do, believe differently than we do. We live differently than we do. Again, it's not about compromising on truth. That's been so clear throughout this letter. We don't waver on gospel doctrines, but we live out gospel-shaped lives by loving people.

You go back to chapter 2, verse 10, when it says, "You live in this way so that your life would adorn the gospel." Literally, your lives are shaped in such a way that they would show off the goodness of God. What a gospel proclamation it would be for us to be perfectly courteous towards people, gentle, kind, patient with them. Isn't this what God did with us? That when we were disobedient, when we were living in this way, when we were enslaved and in bondage to our sin, the goodness and loving-kindness of our God appeared. What would it look like for the goodness and loving-kindness of God to show up in people's lives through Christians, the ways that we treat people? This is what it looks like for the gospel to be not just believed by us, but to shape our lives. This morning, as you come to the table, we confess that our hope is only in what Jesus has done, his broken body and his shed blood. Our hope is only in the fact that Jesus is coming again and that we are a part of his family. Let us not only believe this message, but let's be shaped by it so that when we exit out of here, our lives are marked differently. We have gospel-shaped lives that proclaims the gospel in the ways that we interact in this world, in the ways that we treat the people around us.