

"Walking the Talk"

- Titus 2:11-3:15

by Pastor Tim Dodson
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11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our

great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. 15 Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you. 1 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, 2 to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men. 3 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. 4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. 8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works.

3:11

If you are well versed in the extreme Calvinistic belief system that says God has chosen some to receive salvation...whether they want it or not, and other have been chosen by God to *not* receive salvation *whether they want it or not*, you will of course have issue with this passage and for that matter many, many, more. For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to *ALL* men. The door to salvation is open to all. (Rom 5:18, John 1:7, 1Tim 2:4) His grace has appeared to all men... Paul tells us here as well as elsewhere in his letters, that mankind is without excuse. That what is evident of God, is known to all men because He put it there inside them.

Romans calls upon us...once redeemed, to "walk in the newness of life." So such a walk is a reality for those who are indeed reborn, spirit-filled, and grasping God's patient grace. Indeed, the character traits that Paul presents will no doubt never be mastered in this life, but can and will be manifested and increased in a life which embraces God's grace.

2:12

Paul has elsewhere made it abundantly clear that grace is not an excuse to sin, it is not a "free pass," but instead both teaches and empowers us to live godly lives. While God's grace is the teacher and the empowerment...it is not the "decider." God's grace will not circumnavigate our free will or overpower our own decisions. We still personally must do the "denying" and the "dying" to this world.

We are called to reject the desires of this world, and to live in practical holy living. It is a choice. One that we actually make daily. Many of us are waiting for a supernatural 'unction' to fall upon us...where we will no longer desire the world and sin. And true, as we walk in Christ the things of this world may grow dimmer and less enticing. But the reality is, as fallen creatures, we will probably always hear the call of the world.

And yet, for God there is no “gray life.” We either glorify him in what we do, or we do not. We are “without excuse.” We either “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness”...or we don’t. (1 Cor 10:31) A life of faith has never been just about “not doing bad things.” It has much more to do with doing right. Thus Paul says “we should **live...**”

2:13-14

What is this “blessed hope”? On other occasions we have examined this word “hope” in scripture and have seen that such did not leave an air of ambiguity like it does today. But rather it spoke of an anticipation of a sure event. Paul here speaks of the rapture of the church. The coming again of Christ.

Nothing leads us to believe that Paul was ‘into death,’ nor do we have any reason to think he somehow hated life. He wasn’t a masochist or wanting to die. But his heart and eyes were firmly upon the eternal, not upon this life. We do not have to have some sort of death wish or find no joy in life in order to be looking for the return of Christ. It is the living in the light of the factual and imminent return of Christ that Paul is directing us toward. A lifestyle that brings glory to God and says “*I’m not from here...*”

What about you? As a born again person, what do you live for? Is your focus still upon THIS life, and all of its pleasures and pursuits? Or is all of what you do...even the pleasures and the pursuits, a “worship”...an act of glorifying God? Many people think that they are always being asked to do *more* in service than they already are involved in. So often...it is not *more* than is being asked of them but *different*. To put Christ first in all that they already do.

Would you love to have the Lord return today? For Jesus died on the cross that “he might redeem (save) us from all iniquity (sin)”...and “purify us” ...and “make us a unique and special people” (different in life, soul, and mind than the rest of the world)... and “anxious and committed to serving God”. This is why he died. Does this describe you?

If we are indeed born again, we are Christians...a “special people.” People that stand out in a crowd. Not because we’re exceptional or better than others. But because with the supernatural presence of God dwelling in us, we are inexplicably recognized to be “different,” even before we open our mouths.

2:15

Finally, Paul tells Titus here that it is not enough that he (Titus) believes all of this, or even that he practices all of it! He must also *testify* of it all. Teach all these things to others, and to do so “full of the Spirit and with serious power and authority.” Don’t flinch. Don’t cower. Don’t be shy. Bring it on Titus. Speak the Word!

You can almost hear the voice of Paul and the emphatic nature he is taking here. This is your call Titus. Are you in the game? Or are you giving yourself a “by?” Are you excusing yourself from the action because you are just too wrapped up...too busy, in your stuff and your issues to get involved in kingdom pursuits?

If you are not fully engaged, are you still calling yourself a Christian? You would therefore be negating all of scripture, as well as the faith of millions around the world, including untold thousands of martyrs who gave their lives for that which you now find to be excessive and unnecessary. Is that where you stand today?

Chapter 3

The second chapter of this letter to Titus deals with righteous living inside the church and the home.

Now in chapter 3, Paul turns his attention to dealing with righteous living in the world outside. We need to understand that we cannot avoid spiritual responsibility here by merely claiming citizenship in heaven. Faith in Christ is clearly practiced “horizontally” as well as vertically!

We know that on more than one occasion Paul claimed his Roman citizenship, and the rights that went along with it. Paul’s practice and position seemed to be to follow the laws of the land, and respect and honor those in political control, as long as they did not infringe upon the directions and precepts of scripture.

Despite this, Paul himself called upon us to live separate from the world. A unique and holy family in unity, peace, loving care, and honest sincerity. However, we are not called to live in a bubble. We must interact and testify to the lost and dying world around us. All of this is to be done while “obeying the laws of the land.”

The greater church world today sadly represents the extreme positions on both ends of that spectrum. On the one side there are those who shun or even reject all government involvement in our lives, and on the other, those who want to practically operate a Christian religious state that legislates and mandates pseudo-biblical behavior. But know this; despite our responsibility as earthly citizens, scripture nowhere teaches us to immerse ourselves in earthly politics.

Lot could not purify conditions in Sodom by running for office, and neither will we for the world we live in. However, the Bible is clear that we are to obey the laws of the land, pay our taxes, and obey those in authority! What we are called to do is “live in peace.” 1Thess 4:11 *Make it your goal to live a quiet life, minding your own business and working with your hands...*

3:1

Paul begins chapter 3 by calling upon us to be obedient to the laws and to those who wield them. Of course, that does not mean to the degree that would deny or reject scripture and God’s instruction in it. For God and scripture must always be our higher calling. (Note Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego)

BUT, nowhere in scripture are we given direction to not pay our taxes, or not obey the law. Pilate in John 19 held the governmental power at that moment and he did not do right by it. But Jesus said clearly in verse 11: “You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above.” God doesn’t need our help with such matters. His hands are not bound. His sovereignty is not limited.

“to be ready for every good work”

Not all worthwhile endeavors are found within the walls of the church. Some civic and social organizations are doing good things for humanity, and can perhaps even show your Christ love. We must however, be cautious to avoid letting the kingdom fail to be furthered, or the needs of the church suffer because we are busy ‘bettering the world.’ We can so often invest in the things of this world...however upright they might seem to be, while failing at the same time to serve Jesus and further His kingdom because we are just too busy.

3:2

Paul is telling us here to control our tongues when it comes to slander and gossip. And not just when it concerns a brother or sister in Christ, but all men. (Note: “no one.”) This is not a new or revolutionary teaching, but in fact a common theme throughout all of Paul’s letters. He consistently has called us to truly live our faith out in our simple everyday interactions, and he reminds us here again with this issue, to do so inside or outside the church!

If something needs to be said, make sure it is true, that it's useful to be said, and that it is not for revenge or fleshly satisfaction. Oh, how this issue is so grossly abused! It is apparently some churches pastime to badmouth others by name!

What about those who reside outside the church? Because frankly, we are often so quick to criticize and condemn those in the world, especially those in power. Yet we forget that the world not only does not live according to God's ways, but **cannot** live by them. Why do we expect them too? How can they without embracing the gospel?

"...people who aren't spiritual can't receive these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means." 1 Cor 2:14

We are called to "show humility" to all men. That requires us to place others before ourselves as well as grasping the truth of who we are individually and especially who we are not.

3:3

One of the best ways to heed Paul's warning concerning gossip and our humility is to remember that we in truth are no better! The fact is, without Christ, we all are lost in sin and the power of it. Scripture tells us that "*the heart of man is desperately wicked,*" and that means you and me.

"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." Mark 7:21-23

3:4-5

We know that God's love for us existed before we were even created, but it only appeared to us when we realized our own sinful state and knew that we were lost without him. Paul's point is that God's love and kindness came to us when we didn't deserve it, which straight off reflects His heart toward us. God is thereafter calling us to reflect that same love and kindness to those around us even when they don't deserve it!

We can never earn such from God, so why would we mandate that others do so from us? Such a fact should drastically affect our dealing with the lost world around us. For as Paul reminds us that our works do not earn us His love...that it is free and unconditional, we are thus told that God expects us to love others that same way. His love and salvation is offered to everyone out there the same way that it came to each us in here that have been reborn.

And note that it is "not by works." If salvation could be earned, then there would have been no need for the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross. The plan of salvation is not based upon what man can do, or upon our ability to live righteously. It is based upon **His** work, not upon **ours**! And that is the truth in our initial salvation as well as our eternal standing. It is all through His mercy that we are saved...pure and simple. We don't deserve it, nor can we earn it. God does the saving, and because for reasons beyond our understanding, He loves us!

"by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Do you ever wonder what actually takes place through the process of our rebirth? Here we are told.

In our salvation we are "washed" by the "water of the Word." "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you." (John 15:3) John also tells us that that Word "became flesh and dwelt amongst us."

“Regeneration” herein means “new birth, ...re-creation.” Not a *renovation*, but a *re-“creation.”* Not “fixed up”, but “made new”.

“Renewing” means a “complete change for the better.” This is the part that is the life-long process. Through salvation, we are indeed a new person, both in heaven and in earthly reality. But then comes the *practice* of change. The “change” of direction, desires, and lifestyle. The power, wisdom, and energy for such a “renewing” comes through the Spirit of God. A “holy” Spirit. GOD’S Spirit!

3:6

The Holy Spirit which God “poured out upon us,” he did so “abundantly.” Ah! Do we really and fully understand the magnitude of that act! God “abundantly poured out upon us” the Holy Spirit! One of the greatest displays of love we have or will ever know!

The wording is the same that is used in Acts 2:17-19 concerning the last day’s “outpouring” of Spirit.

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy. I will show wonders in heaven above And signs in the earth beneath...”

Will we respond to all of this in service, or will we live in apathy? Will Jesus come first, or will we attempt to cram Him into the little box that includes our plans, desires, wants, interests, and dreams? True “rebirth” will result in holy, “committed-to-Christ” living. He will be our first, and our last. Our reason to get up in the morning, our reason to live and breathe. And we will seek to serve Him and the kingdom with all of our might, because we are in love with Him.

And we are promised here that our service will not only further the kingdom, but we ourselves will be blessed in our service! This is the most incredible, yet often unrealized aspect to serving the Lord.

3:7

Through the process of “justification,” (“justified” or “just-as-if-I’d” never sinned), He positionally makes us like Himself. Pure and unspotted.

“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ...” Rom 8:16-17

In that position, we become “heirs”...inheritors of the bounty of heaven and eternal life, and all that that means in the practical realm! It presents all of the security, as well as the responsibility of being a son...the heir to the family holdings and responsibilities.

3:8

Paul is telling Titus...*and me too*, to “affirm this truth constantly” to those we pastor over. The New Living renders this: *I want you to insist on these teachings so that all who trust in God will devote themselves to doing good.*

Some may grow tired of me saying it. Some perhaps have plugged their ears to the message. But I will continue to preach it until I no longer have breath: if you are born again and are in love with your Savior, you will set

down your life and pick up the cross and follow Him. Not out of obligation, but out of a thankful heart and a love for Him.

3:9

This is not the first time that Paul has given such a warning. He essentially told Timothy the same thing in the letters to Him. He instructs the faithful servant of God to stay away from foolish arguments with foolish people. It seems to always come to no good end, and anyone who has attempted to ignore this passage, and debate with such folks, has found it ultimately to be the truth anyway!

So often we feel compelled to run to the defense of God...thinking that somehow the Word will fail without us getting into a banter with some heretic or wolf, or even a legalist desiring to bring us into the bondage of his own making. But the gospel is “living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Heb 4:12) That passage certainly doesn’t make it sound like the Word of God needs our help defending it does it?

3:10-11

The fact is, there are always those who will come in amongst us, or will enter your life outside the church who is bent on division. Some guys just seem to thrive off of such. What we are instructed to do, is deal with the individual in truth, and to give it two shots, and then let him be.

“**reject**” (gr) means to “*shun, avoid, and refuse*”. This may mean to personally cease contact with him, and it may mean to ask him to find the exit door of the church and use it.

“...watch out for people who cause divisions and upset people’s faith by teaching things contrary to what you have been taught. Stay away from them. Such people are not serving Christ our Lord; they are serving their own personal interests. By smooth talk and glowing words they deceive innocent people.”

Rom 16:17-18

The old King James goes so far as to call this guy a “heretic,” which means “a follower of false doctrine that causes division.” His actions are sin. Pure and simple. And his actions condemn himself.

It’s good that you are “out there” and engaged in ministry. But such requires the gift of discernment that comes through the indwelling Holy Spirit. Know when to fight, and when to run away to fight another day...

3:12-13

“be diligent to come to me” means “earnestly” and “speedily.” Such an attitude was not unfamiliar in Paul’s vocabulary. For Paul, all that he did was for Christ and what he expected of those who served that same Christ, was diligence!

3:14-15

“**And let our people...**” means “those within the family of God”...those who serve and fight on the same side as you are in what is no less than a spiritual war. That speaks of community and the bond of unity and fellowship. Paul and Titus understood this, but do we? Are you bound to these people, or are you just stopping by until something worldly better comes along?

Paul hits them again with the issue of service: “*learn to maintain good works.*” Often, it is not the actual service, the work, which is the problem. But it is the maintaining of those works that is the issue. It is the

priority of those works that is the issue! The initial thrill wanes, our busy schedule returns, we fail to get earthly praise, we get bored, or tired, and then we fade away.

Such occurs when we are serving and working for the wrong reasons. The lack of endurance only reflects the truth of our heart and the lack of real loving passion of God and kingdom. It says *“I have not really died to myself and my plans. I want God to get on my train...”*

Notice it says we need to **learn** to maintain good works. My prayer for us all! For through the Spirit we all need to be “fruitful.”

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.” John 15:1-6