

Good Works -Titus

by Anton Bosch

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living out our faith in every area of our lives, and warns against the dangers of compartmentalization and a lack of authenticity.

Duration: 36:50

Scripture: Titus 2:2-7, Titus 2:9-13, Titus 3:1

Topics: "Good Works"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of living out our faith in reality and practice, rather than just seeking a feel-good religious experience. He highlights the example of Jesus, who not only spoke and wrote about love and salvation but demonstrated it by dying on the cross. The speaker encourages believers to demonstrate their faith in every area of their lives, including their speech and behavior. He also emphasizes the need to live differently from the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and instead living soberly, righteously, and godly. The sermon concludes with the reminder that as believers, our hope is not in this world, and we should hold our possessions loosely, demonstrating our hope in a heavenly country.

Transcript

And chapter two, we've been going through the Bible, one book per week, and giving an introduction and background to the book in the Bible study on Sunday mornings, and then in the morning service, I've been speaking about one aspect out of each one of those books, and so we've been, we've come a long time, it's over a year now that we've been going at this, and we're in the book of Titus this morning, I gave an overview of the book this morning, and unfortunately there's always a bit of repetition for the sake of those who were not in the morning study, and I want to read from chapter two, and in fact, we'll read the whole chapter. I forgot to announce that obviously we have the Lord's table after the service, and we'd encourage everyone who loves the Lord Jesus, who was born again, to remain behind and to share with us at the Lord's table. All right, Titus chapter two.

Those for you speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine, that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, and in patience. The older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, but given too much wine, teachers of good things, that they may admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. Likewise, exhort the young

men to be sober-minded in all things, showing yourself to be a pattern of good works, in doctrine, showing integrity, in reverence, and incorruptibility.

Sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed having nothing evil to say of you. Exhort bond servants to be obedient to their own masters and to be well-pleasing in all things, not answering back, not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity that they may adorn the doctrine of God, our Savior, in all things. For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 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.

Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority that no one despise you. And we established this morning that one of the themes, there are two main themes in the book of Titus. The secondary theme is that of our blessed hope, which many commentators say is the main theme of the book, but in fact, when you count it, there are three references to the word hope, but there are five references to the word works, five references to the word works.

And so this book is about works, about the things that we do. And you'll find that there's all sorts of lists of things that people do and don't do and should do and shouldn't do. And that really is a very important part of our faith.

Today, unfortunately, many Christians believe that as long as I believe on the Lord Jesus, as long as there's some kind of faith, that's all that really matters. Some go a little bit further than that, and they say, well, as long as I understand and I have the teaching of the word and I have the doctrine and I have all of these things figured out, then that's all that matters. But when you go through the New Testament, you find that, yes, we need to believe.

That is important, that is where it begins. We need to know what we believe. That is important.

But we need to put into practice and we need to live what we believe. That is absolutely vital to our Christian experience. And you find that right through the New Testament.

All of Paul's letters deal with theology or with doctrine, normally in the first part of the book. And then the last half of the book normally has to do with teaching concerning how we need to live, how we need to put this into practice. And you see, the problem is that we can have all of these theories, we can have all of the theology in our heads, but if we're not living it, we're really wasting our time.

And in fact, Paul here makes a very strong statement in chapter one and verse 16. He says, they profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work. Now, this is so typical of the time in which we're living today.

Many people profess to know God. Some will tell you that they're born again. Some will say, well, I just believe in God.

But how do they live? What are their lives like? And Paul is writing to a particular situation here in Crete, because Titus was on this area, it's an island called Crete, and they had very real and serious problems, very similar to the society in which we are living today. And this had an impact on the church, and the church had become just like the world. And Paul writes and he says, some people claim to be Christians,

but the way they live denies what they claim.

And so you can see that it's not just what I believe. It's not just what I claim. It is how I put that into practice.

And we ended off in the Bible study this morning by saying that we have this disconnect today between my faith and the rest of my life. We call it compartmentalization. We put things in compartments, little pigeonholes.

And so there's a compartment for my marriage. There's a compartment for my job. There's a compartment for my recreation.

There's a compartment for my faith. There's a compartment for my politics. And so I have all of these different things in different little compartments, and there is no connection between them.

And so I can believe one thing as far as my faith is concerned, and I can practice something else in the way I live my life because there is really no connection between these two things. They are two separate compartments. And without getting political, but a previous president of this country made it very, very clear that how could he engage in illicit sexual affairs? Well, that's my sex life.

This is my Christian life. On Sunday, I go to church with my Bible under my arm. On Monday, I live this kind of life.

There is no connection between the two. I don't have to be able to connect the dots. But when you go to the New Testament, you find that you have to connect the dots.

There are not separate compartments. You cannot say, I am a Christian, and that's what I do on Sunday. That's what I believe in my heart.

But on Monday, I am a businessman, or I am a plumber, or I am a whatever you do on a Monday. And there is no connection between the two. That my marriage and my Christian life really have nothing, no, they're all connected.

It's all one thing. And it really needs to be, all of my life needs to be an expression of my faith, not the other way around. You see, many times we find the problem that they had here in this church in Crete, where the society and the environment shaped the Christians.

And so the Christians began to act and to behave and to have the culture and the traditions of their society. But in fact, what should be happening is the other, it should be the other way around. The one thing that should be the dominating force in my life, that should be controlling who I am, is my faith.

I am a Christian. And therefore, as a Christian, I will live in a particular way. As a Christian, I will act in a particular way in my relationship with my husband or my wife, with my parents or my children, with my employer or my employees.

I will act in a particular way in my relationship to the government and to the policemen and to every other area of my life. And so it is in that context then that Paul writes through Titus, and you'll see that he addresses many, many areas. And he's saying as Christians, what needs to happen is that our lives should impact upon and affect every single area of our lives.

Just have a look at chapter one, and from verse 10 through 16, he addresses some of the problems that they had. There are many insubordinate, in other words, rebellious, idle talkers, deceivers. These are things that had come into the church.

So people were rebellious to authority, whether that be the authority in the home or authority in the church or authority in the state, but rebellious to authority. Idle talkers, just talking, going nowhere, not saying anything, not having anything to say. Deceivers, and you know, he doesn't define where the deception lies.

He doesn't speak about deceiving in monetary affairs. He's just saying deceiving. In other words, it can be about the way I sell myself.

I sell myself as a good upright citizen and a nice moral Christian. But in reality, deep down, that's not who I am. That's deception.

And so you can see that he's begun to deal, and I'm not gonna deal with every one of this. That'll be too depressing for us to deal with each one of these one by one. But you can see that he's dealing with some very, very real issues here.

And he's dealing with my attitude of insubordination, how I speak, how I present myself as a deceiver or not as a deceiver. You'll see that he speaks about this 12, about liars, evil brute beasts, lazy gluttons. It even affects the way that I eat, how I relate to food.

Now, this is a sensitive issue for us. But you know, he's really saying that as a Christian, every area of my life is affected by that truth and that reality. And so when he speaks here, and I just wanna stop on this for one moment because it's a very pertinent and very graphic illustration.

He speaks about the fact that, verse 12, that Christians are always... Now, what he's doing here is he's quoting one of their own poets, a poet from Crete who lived or spoke, wrote about 670 years before Christ. And so Paul is quoting one of their own poets who made these accusations. So Paul is saying, this is not what I'm telling you, this is what your own poets have said.

And he says, it's true, it's true. And he then, and the question came up in the Bible study because there's a difference in some of the translations. This translation of mine, the new King James says, they are lazy gluttons.

The old King James says, they are slow bellies, slow bellies. Now, it's difficult to translate, but the slow belly, that's literally the Greek that he used. And so he is saying, who are these men? They are just bellies, they're just stomachs.

And sometimes you see people who literally look like that. Now, he's not speaking about literally, he's meaning literally, but he's meaning spiritually. But I'm sure you've seen people, before he comes around the corner, you see his belly first.

And when you see him, it's not his face that strikes you, it's nothing else about him that you notice, it's just this huge belly. And he happens to have a few feet that carry this belly around and the mouth that feeds it. But that's all he is, is a stomach.

And he says, not only is he a stomach, but he is a slow stomach. Now, it doesn't mean he has a problem with his digestive system, it just means that he is lazy, as in the new translation. Because he's just this big guts, all he does is he moves slowly.

Now, of course, today we say, well, it's not politically correct to say these sorts of things. I don't care whether it's politically correct or not. But folk, when Christians are dominated and controlled by their appetite, we're in serious trouble.

And this had come into the church and it is in the church today. This is an old problem, it's not new. Remember right back in the beginning, there was two brothers.

And the one brother sold his birthright for a pot of stew. And the New Testament reminds us, in the book of Hebrews, he says, be careful, lest there be amongst you, amongst us as Christians, an evil person like Esau, before one pot of stew sold his birthright. Remember the people of Israel, there was a mixed multitude amongst them.

And what was the problem? They wanted to go back to the flesh and to the leeks and the garlicks and the onion and the fish and the food of Egypt. Their stomachs was more important to them than their salvation, than God's wonderful ideal of taking them to their own land, of freedom from being oppressed by a slave master. None of these things could compare with their desire and their lust for food.

And of course, this is not just a physical problem, it's a spiritual problem. And so you can see that he is saying, if I'm a true Christian, even my appetite will be affected by that. What I say, how I act, and even how I eat.

Now we say, but brother, that's legalistic. You know, we're not here to hear about the law. This is not the law, this is the reality.

If my appetite for food is greater than my appetite for God, I'm in serious trouble. And so he's addressing these things. And you know, the problem is we don't want to address these things today because people don't like these kinds of messages.

People find them uncomfortable. Because there are many of us who don't fall in one or two or more of these areas. And so he says then, verse 16, they profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

In other words, he says that there is nothing good that they can do. Wow, that's terrible. That's terrible.

And so then he goes in chapter two and he begins to say to us, these are the things we should be teaching. Now, remember he's speaking to a young preacher who, in fact, I don't think Titus was that young anymore because Titus had been with Paul for a long time and had been with Paul virtually from the beginning of Paul's ministry. And so he speaks to this preacher and he says in chapter two, as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine.

Now, when we find that word doctrine, we clam up and we say, well, yeah, this is heavy stuff. This is for theologians. This has got nothing to do with me.

But I want you to just stay with me for a minute. He says, now you need to preach sound doctrine. And we say, okay, what is sound doctrine? What is he gonna tell Titus now to preach? What is the sound doctrine

he needs to preach? Oh, he needs to preach about the Trinity.

He needs to preach about free will and predestination. He needs to preach about all of these, that sound doctrine. Now, I want you to see what sound doctrine is in Paul's definition.

In fact, in my translation here, there's a colon at the end of sound doctrine, two periods, meaning here is the list. Here is sound doctrine. Sound doctrine is number one, that all the men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love and in patience.

Can you see what he's doing? He's saying sound doctrine is how you live. We'd say sound doctrine is what you believe. No, he says, it's how you live.

It's how older men act. Sound doctrine is verse three, how older women should be acting and what they should be doing. They should be reverent in behavior, not acting like teenagers, not slanderers, not involved in gossip, not given too much wine, teachers of good things.

They should be admonishing the younger woman and this is what younger women should be doing. They should be loving their husbands. They should love their children.

They should be discreet. They should be chaste. They should be homemakers.

They should be good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. Now, look at that. Why should we be living like this? Why does it matter how a woman treats her husband? Why does it matter how a man does his job? Paul says that the word of God may not be blasphemed, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

Now, remember this is, if there's one, and I have many themes, I have many pet things that I speak about all the time and you remember this is one of the things. The prophets in the Old Testament pointed to Israel and it says, because of you, the name of God is blasphemed amongst the Gentiles. This was quoted by Paul in the book of Romans also.

Because of you, the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles. Why do unbelievers not believe the gospel? Because Christians have brought this credit upon the gospel. We say we are saved.

We say we have the truth. We say we have met with God and yet our lives do not show it. Our lives are unchanged.

There is no difference between us and them. And I think I've told you this illustration but it is just so, it's just so poignant and it just so clearly illustrates this point. In South Africa, we had a, one of the first reality shows that came to South Africa was the Big Brother House.

And I assume it was based on an American. You have, did you have that here? The Big Brother House? A bunch of young people locked up in this glass house with cameras on them all the time. And in this, and I don't remember whether, but we used to watch it from time to time just like everybody else, I guess.

And there was this young couple in this house. Now, I don't know how it went here in America but certainly in South Africa, it was pretty rough inside of that house. There was a lot of drinking and fornicating and cursing and every other form of evil work that you can imagine.

And in this particular series, there was two, there was two young people, a young man and a young woman. And both of them confessed to be Christians. They came into the house professing to be Christians.

I think one of them brought a Bible with them and they kept speaking about their faith. But you know what? There was absolutely no difference between them and the rest of them. They did everything else that the rest were doing.

And then one day, and I remember this so clearly because it just illustrated, because this was just a microcosm of real life. These two were having a private conversation late one night. Everyone else had gone to bed and the cameras obviously were still rolling.

And one said to the other, you know, the difference between us and them is that we are saved. We're saved. But there is no difference.

There is no difference. But folk, I wept as I saw that because that just spoke to me of the state of the church in the world today. We're saying we're saved, we're going to heaven.

But you know, the reality is the bottom line, there is no difference. There is no difference. The divorce rate amongst Christians is higher than it is in the world.

And we say we have the truth. But there has to be something more and something more real and more substantial to our faith than just theories. And it has to translate to every area of our lives.

And as we've been going through this section, you see that he's speaking about every area of our lives. What we speak, how we eat, how we relate to our employers. Verse nine, exhort bond servants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well-pleasing in all things.

Not answering back, not back-checking your boss is part of being a Christian. Oh, we say, but that's my right. But remember Paul teaches elsewhere, when you work for an unsaved boss, who are you really working for? You're serving Christ.

And he may be unsaved and he may be unjust and he may be unfair. I mean, your boss, that at the end of the day, if you're really serving Christ, your attitude will be very, very different. He goes on and he deals in chapter three, remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be ready for every good work.

You see, there's that word again, for every good work. Subject to rulers and authorities, obeying the laws of the land. And folks, when we don't keep the laws, whether they have to do with the IRS or whether they have to do with the traffic laws or whatever other laws there are.

And we say, but that's the government. That's the state. And their laws have got nothing to do with me.

I'm a Christian. I'm part of another country. And I don't mean South Africa, of heaven.

I'm subject to a higher law. And therefore I have no need to submit to the laws of the state of California. Now we have to go into great teaching here and we'll get to it as we go through the book of Romans.

By the way, Sunday evenings we're teaching through the book of Romans verse by verse. And Paul comes to and he devotes almost an entire chapter to this whole question. But the bottom line is, if I am a true Christian, that does not absolve me from obeying the laws of the land.

In fact, it makes me more responsible. I should be keeping the laws of the land better than the next guy down the street. Again, not just because of the, there's a whole lot of theology behind that, about that he doesn't carry the sword in vain and he's there by God's appointment, whether he's just or not just and whether it's a good government or a bad government, got nothing to do with that.

That's the whole theology behind it. But just the practicality of your neighbor saying, you claim to be a Christian and you're caught on a DUI conviction. Or whatever it is, what does this do for the testimony? And so we should be keeping the laws.

We should be exemplary citizens in every area of our relationship to the government. Now, folks, this is not politics. I'm not telling you who to vote for or anything like that.

I'm telling you how we should be acting in our society. There must be a difference. And this is, to me, one of the messages that comes out of the book of Titus.

There has to be a difference. There must be evidence. Wherever I go, the moment I open my mouth, people know I'm not American.

It's evident. I can't hide it. But, folk, there should be something more than that.

Wherever we go, people should take note of the fact that we are different, that we are citizens of a heavenly country, that we have this great hope. And Paul says this is one of the reasons we should be different is because we have a great hope. Our hope is not in this world.

But, you know, when we're as materialistic as the rest of the people in the world, what are we saying? We're saying we have no hope beyond gathering as many possessions in this world as we can. But when we're able to deal with our possessions in a good way and we're able to hold them loosely, we're able to confess we have a hope. When we live our lives in a way that people are able to look, when we open our mouths and we speak, people say, hang on, there's something different about this individual.

There's something different about the way they act. There's something different about the way they speak. There's something different about the way their families are.

There's something different about their relationships. There's something different about the way this man does his job. And folk, you know what? When we do that, we're not just living our faith, but we're preaching it.

We're making a bold declaration that there is something more to Christianity than just this hypocritical thing of going to church on Sundays, going through the motions and then going back and living our lives as though nothing ever changed. And so verse five of chapter two spoke about the fact that the word of God may not be blasphemed. But then in verse 10, he says, in your relationship to your masters, not pilfering, that's a big word.

What does that mean? It means not surfing the internet in work time. I'm serious. That's pilfering.

It's your boss's bandwidths and it's your boss's time. It means not taking pencils home that belong to the boss. It means not reading the newspaper in the bathroom when you're on the clock.

That's pilfering. It's stealing your boss's time. Folks, this is serious.

Now he says, when we do these things, not pilfering, but showing good fidelity. Oh, I was trying to get to the end of the verse. I need to stop.

What does good fidelity mean? Showing good faith. What does that mean in practice? You know, we can go on and we can talk about pilfering in many, many different shapes and forms. We can talk about fidelity in many shapes and forms.

But what is fidelity? It's a whole line of fidelity. It means working as hard when he's not there as when he is there. Not slacking off when he's not in the office or not on the factory floor.

That's fidelity. Being truthful and honest in my dealings with him. That you may, now look at this.

That you may receive an increase and prosper in the way that you live. No, why should I not pilfer? Why should I show fidelity that I may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior? Wow, that's quite a concept. What does adorn mean? Make beautiful.

We use that word in, or Peter uses that word in the context of women. That women's adorning not be an external thing, but let it be an internal thing. Adorning means to put ornaments on, to make it beautiful, to make it attractive.

Now, what's he saying? He's saying when we are good employees, we're making the message of the gospel, the doctrine of God, beautiful. Why? Because we're making it real. We're no longer saying you're gonna go to hell because you're a sinner.

We're saying, Jesus has saved me and he's changed my life. Once I was this or that, today I'm different. I'm making the doctrine of salvation.

Verse 10, that you may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior. The doctrine of God saving us. We're making that beautiful.

Now remember, verse five, he spoke about blaspheming the name, blaspheming the doctrine by the way we live. Now he's gone from that point, past the neutral point to a positive point. And so, what do people say about the way that you live your life? Are you bringing glory to God? Are you adorning the gospel? Are people saying, I want to be like him? Or are people saying, if that's what a Christian is, I don't wanna be one.

That's really the issue. That's the question. Folks, it has to become real.

It has to become real. Otherwise, we're really wasting our time. And you may as well go and find another pep talk somewhere on a Sunday morning or on a Wednesday night or whenever, somebody who can make you feel good and make you feel happy, make you feel all religious.

That's not what it's about. It's about reality. And remember, it all begins with Jesus, who didn't just speak about saving us, who didn't just write about loving us, but proved and demonstrated his love for us by dying on the cross of Calvary, as we're gonna remember around the Lord's table in a few minutes.

God proved it, showed it, demonstrated. And he's saying to us, we need to demonstrate what we believe in reality and in practice in every area of our lives. Let me say this again.

We need to be the best husbands, the best wives, the best children, the best parents, the blessed employees, the best employers, the best citizens. And the list goes on and on in this world. And people may take note.

Remember, it spoke about the disciples. People took note that they had been with Jesus. And folk, I pray that as we go from this place this morning, people in our environment, people where you live, where you work, your friends and your family will take note that you've been with Jesus.

I'm not talking about a Holy Joe, religious, more holier than thou kind of attitude. I'm talking about a reality that changes my values, that changes my culture, that changes who I am and makes me to be like Jesus. Father, we pray that as we speak through these hard things that it may change our lives.

Forgive us, Lord, for trying to somehow believe one thing and be something else. We pray, Lord, that there may be a breaking down of compartments in our lives, that it all may become one. And Lord, that we may worship you in everything that we do, that we may glorify you in everything that we do, that we may honor your name in everything that we do.

And Lord, that our lives may be a demonstration of the power of the gospel. We ask this, Lord, for everyone who is in the service this morning. And not only for us, but Lord, for everyone who is part of this church.

In fact, Lord, for every Christian in the world. Lord, we know that this world would be such a different place if every Christian lived what they believed and what they knew. And Lord, we pray that you would make this real and that you would begin in my life and in our lives here this morning.

Lord, that there may be a new breed of Christians whose lives shine and stand out because they have been with Jesus. We ask this in Jesus' name, Lord. We pray for those who leave us now, that you'd go with them, keep them, and keep your word in the forefront of their thoughts.

And for those of us, Lord, who come around your table now, we pray that it may be a wonderful time of remembrance and of thanksgiving and of worship and of celebration of the great work that you did for us as you died upon that cross in our place. We ask these things in Jesus' name, amen.

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