

(Through the Bible) Titus

by Chuck Smith

Chuck Smith's sermon on Titus emphasizes the importance of sound doctrine, the hope of eternal life, and the qualifications for church leadership.

Duration: 1:25:29

Scripture: Acts 20:31, Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 2:6, Titus 3:8-10, Titus 3:14, Philemon 1:1, Hebrews 11:25-26

Topics: "Through The Bible"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of holding onto the hope of eternal life in Jesus Christ. He highlights that this hope is based on the promise of God, who cannot lie, and has been manifested through the preaching of the word. The preacher acknowledges that the plan of redemption existed before the world, even though the reasons behind God creating man knowing they would fall are unknown. The sermon also addresses the lack of solid doctrine teaching in many churches today, with a focus on entertainment rather than sound teaching. The preacher concludes by reminding the audience of God's love and mercy, which conquered our fallen state and offers hope for a transformed life.

Transcript

Let's turn now in our Bibles to the book of Titus. Not much is known about Titus. Paul makes slight references to him in the Corinthian epistles.

Outside of that, we know very little about Titus except what we can pick up in the book. Evidently, he was a convert of Paul, as was Timothy, because he calls him his beloved son, as he did Timothy. He wrote his epistle to Titus at about the same time that he wrote the first epistle to Timothy.

There is a similarity between the two epistles in that in both of them, Paul is establishing the order within the churches. The appointment of the elders and the various other offices within the church and the functions of the various groups within the church. And so, with that brief background, let's turn directly to the book as Paul introduces himself here as a servant of God.

The Greek word is douloi, which is slave. It is a title of humility, but in the same token, it's a title of pride. What greater thing could a person be than the servant of the eternal living God, the creator of the universe? And so he sees himself.

Moses was called a servant or a slave of God, as was so many in the Old Testament. And so Paul begins his book to Titus by the declaration of himself as a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ or an envoy of Jesus Christ according to the faith of God's elect and according to the truth which is after godliness. So, Paul, a servant of God, writing to God's elect, the faithful, who are seeking the truth which is after godliness in the hope of eternal life, which God that cannot life promised before the world began.

Now, I do not know where God promised eternal life before the world began, except that God existed before the world began. This word eternal is the Greek word *aionios*, which is age-abiding life. And it is important that we recognize that this is more than just duration.

It is a quality of life. When the rich young ruler came and fell at the feet of Jesus and said, Good Master, what good thing must I do to inherit eternal life? He was using the same Greek word, this age-abiding life. He no doubt had been observing the life of Jesus.

And he saw that there was a quality in the life of Jesus that was above and distinct from anyone else he had ever seen. There was this glorious quality of life, this age-abiding life. And so his quest was for this quality of life as well as the duration.

Now God has given to us the hope of eternal life. This of course was promised by Jesus Christ when He said to Nicodemus that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. It is a blessed hope that we have.

A hope that has been confirmed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. So Peter in his epistle said, Thanks be unto God who has begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God. There is the promise in the Bible to those who will believe in Jesus Christ that God will give to them the gift of eternal life.

We read, this is the record. God has given to us eternal life. The life is in the Son and He who has the Son has life.

It is reasonable to assume that this promise of eternal life is a valid promise. As we look at nature, we see that God has created in nature the very hope of resurrection in the principles of nature. In the planting of a seed into the ground, the seed first of all dies before it comes into new life.

And then the form that comes out of the ground isn't the form that you planted because all you plant is a bare seed and God gives it a body as pleases Him and so is the resurrection of the dead. Planted in corruption, but raised in incorruption. Planted in weakness, raised in power.

Planted in dishonor, raised in glory. Planted as a natural body, but raised in a spiritual body. This past week, as we were up at the conference center, I saw one of these little caterpillars crawling along.

And I was reminded of our little girl when she was a little girl. She's now a young lady. Well, she's... Well, we'll settle for that.

How excited she was one day when she came running into the house and said, Daddy, Daddy, there's a furry coat walking outside. And as I watched that little caterpillar, as it was crawling along, I realized that it existed in a body that was designed to just do what it was doing. Crawl along the earth.

I can imagine that that little caterpillar could in his mind wish that maybe it could fly. But the body isn't designed to fly. The body of a caterpillar with all of its legs is designed just to crawl across the ground.

But one day, the little caterpillar crawls up the wall of the house, exudes a little glue, spins a chrysalis around itself. And in time, that chrysalis will begin to shake and jerk with convulsive movements until it breaks open and there unfolds the beautiful gold and black wings. And the tiger swallowtail butterfly begins to fly across the yard, over the fence, over the fields in a way.

What has happened is a metamorphosis in nature. It's a change of body where that caterpillar went into the chrysalis state. If you had taken during the chrysalis state and pinched the chrysalis, juices would have just popped out all over.

Nothing but juice. But yet it formed into that glorious tiger swallowtail butterfly which incidentally has the identical markings to the butterfly that laid the egg that hatched the caterpillar. Now, there you find a change of body that is now a new body designed for a totally different environment.

So God, when He made our bodies, designed them for the environment of the planet Earth. But it is reasonable to believe that if God brought forth resurrection in a seed into a beautiful flower, the seed that germinated or died, if God can change a caterpillar into a butterfly and give it a body for a totally new environment, then God can also give us a body that is adapted for a totally new environment. And that's exactly what the Bible teaches.

Even as we have borne the image of the earth and have been earthy, so shall we bear the image of the heavens. God has made this body, adapted it for the earth. And so we know when this earthly tabernacle our body is dissolved, we then have a building of God that's not made with hands, that's eternal in the heavens.

So then we who are in these bodies, often grown, earnestly desiring to be delivered, not that I would be unclothed or unembodied, but clothed upon with the body which is from heaven. So the Bible teaches that for the child of God, there is no death, there is only a metamorphosis, a change of body as I move from the tent into the house. The hope of eternal life.

A building of God not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. That new body that God has prepared for me simply because of my faith, belief, and trust in Jesus Christ. Oh, what a glorious gift.

And what a glorious hope we have. Now, outside of Jesus Christ, I know of no real hope beyond just life as it is in this span of 70 years, plus or minus. Live like a hog, die like a dog, and it's all over you.

That's all you've got to look forward to because that's all she wrote. Paul said if our hope were in Christ in this world only, we would be miserable. Man, if I thought, hey, this is it.

All of the purposes and everything else are accomplished in this span now. And look around. You see God's best.

Oh, hell. I would be miserable. But I have a hope that sustains me, that keeps me going when things are dark.

I have a hope that sustains me when things are going against me and I'm discouraged. There is that hope that keeps me going. Hope is so vital and hope is so important to existence to keep you going.

And it's amazing how hope can just keep you going. We've mentioned before the experiments done with the Norwegian wharf rats. There are some corollaries.

They put them in these tubs and they sprayed the tubs constantly with water so that they couldn't roll over and float. And the rats drowned in an average of 17 minutes. Then with an experimental group, as they were about to drown, they would take some of the rats, lift them out of the tub, dry them off, put them back in their cages, feed them, and let them live a normal life again.

And then later on, after they had recovered fully their health, they put them back in the tubs under the same conditions. And these rats that lasted an average of 17 minutes now were able to survive for 37 hours. Interestingly enough, the psychologist who conducted the experiments attributed it to the fact that the rats had experienced a salvation experience.

That is, they had almost drowned when they were saved. So they kept hoping for salvation again. And that kept them going.

Not just 17 minutes. Now it kept them going 37 hours. The hope made that much difference.

Oh, what a glorious hope we have. Don't let anybody take it away from you. That hope in Jesus Christ of eternal life that is made by God, the promise of God, something so sure, God who cannot lie, God's Word that cannot fail, has given to us the promise of eternal life and thus the hope of eternal life.

And so we live in hope of eternal life which God that cannot lie promised before the world began. But hath in due time manifested His Word through the preaching which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Savior. Now, the plan of redemption existed before the world because God knows all things.

Now don't ask me why God, if He knew man was going to fall, created man. I don't know the whys of God. God told me I wouldn't know the whys of God.

He said, My ways are not your ways. My ways are beyond your finding out. So, for His purposes and for His reasons, God created man knowing that man would fail, knowing that man would fall, but He also predestined the method of redemption, purposing to send His Son to reveal His love so that those that would believe in Him would have the hope of eternal life through Him.

And so, in due time. You see, time finally caught up with God in this one aspect. We're still behind in a lot of other aspects, but as we were explaining the eternal nature last Thursday night for you that were here.

How that God is outside of the time continuum. So that God looks at the whole spectrum of time with just one glance. He sees the end and the beginning with just one glance.

So it isn't 6,000 years ago or 2,000 years from now. God sees it all right now. The whole thing.

He sees the entire picture looking at the whole picture at one glance. I see it within the time continuum as it's passing by me, but God looks down and sees the whole thing at once. And so, that plan of eternal life, the plan of redemption, existed before the world began, but in due time God has made it known unto man.

And Paul said to him was committed the preaching of this glorious commandment of God and our Savior. Now he is addressing the letter to Titus, my own son after the common faith. Grace, mercy, and peace.

As with his epistle to Timothy, he includes the mercy with the grace and peace, which are Paul's common salutations from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior. I do not know why in the translation of the Bible they do not put a comma after the word Lord when it is coupled with Jesus Christ so that we have a clearer distinction that the word kurios is a title. It is not His name.

So many times we think of that as His name. It is not His name. It is His title by which we signify relationship.

If He is Lord, then we are the servants. If I call Him Lord, the immediate relationship is I am servant. By my calling Him Lord, I am declaring myself His servant, His subject, His slave.

That is why Jesus said, why do you call Me Lord, Lord, and yet you don't do the things I command you? That's inconsistent. He said many will come in that day saying, Lord, Lord. But He'll say, hey, I never knew you.

A lot of people use that title as a name, and thus they don't really understand the significance of the title. The Lord, that is His title. His name is Jesus.

Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins. And Christ is His mission. He was the Messiah.

He was to be the Messiah, the Savior. That was His mission. His name is Jesus.

His title to me is Lord. And so I always like to pause and say, the Lord, Jesus Christ. I mean, just to make it separate from the name, giving the distinction of the title.

For this cause, Paul said, I left thee in Crete, that thou should set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city as I had appointed thee. Now, Crete had a very bad reputation. The people of Crete were known to be unscrupulous.

They were money mongers. There were, in the ancient days, what they called the three evil seas. The Cretans, the Sicilians, and the Cappadocians.

But Crete, they said, was the worst of all. And in fact, a Greek word, kretia, was ultimately coined from the evilness of the Cretan people. And kretia is a man who is so money hungry that he's dishonest and unscrupulous in all of his dealings.

And such were the Cretans known to be. And yet, in this environment, there was the body of Christ. And Paul left Titus, who was much like Timothy.

According to Paul in Corinthians, he had the heart of Paul. He was a trustworthy servant and companion with Paul in the Gospel. And so he left him in Crete for the purpose of ordaining elders in every city as Paul had appointed him.

Now, somewhere along the line, the church got the idea that elders were to be elected. Where this idea developed, I do not know. In the New Testament, the elders were always spoken of as being ordained.

Selected and ordained by the pastoral leadership. And so he is telling him that he is to ordain elders in every city. The qualifications.

If any be blameless, husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot or unruly, for a bishop must be blameless as the steward of God, not self-willed, not soon angry or not short-tempered, not given to wine, no striker. And that means a guy that's cuffing people or hitting people. And somewhere along the line, it must have happened that those who were appointed to the offices of bishops could not really handle their power.

And thus there are rules in the early church against the bishops. If a bishop is striking a man or striking people, then he is to be deposed from his office. You know, there are some people that just can't handle power.

It goes to their head. And they become just tyrants. And that happens even in the church, unfortunately.

And so they're not to be a striker. That is one who strikes someone. That doesn't mean someone who goes on strike, but someone who strikes someone else with his hand or fist.

Not given to filthy lucre, which of course was hard to find in Crete because that was the characteristic of the Cretans. Those are the negative. The positive traits is that he must be a lover of hospitality.

In those days, there was a lot of travel and there weren't always good accommodations. The public ends were usually places of ill repute, immoral and just a place of debauchery. And so when a Christian traveled, it was hard.

And so there developed within the church a great hospitality to the other Christians. The opening of the door. And it was a very important thing that the elders set the example and that their house be an open door so that Christians passing through would have a decent place to lodge.

A lover of hospitality. A lover of good men. Sober, just, holy, temperate.

Now, as you look at these, they're pretty much just the opposite of the things that he had said earlier. He said not quick to anger and here he says temperate. And so just sort of the opposite of the negative characteristics that he had named earlier.

And as you compare this with 1 Timothy, you'll find that the list and the qualifications are pretty much identical with what Paul gave to Timothy in the ordaining of elders. A few differences. Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught.

That he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers or those that would ridicule Christianity. So he had to be a man of the Word. He had to be a man of sound doctrine capable of teaching sound doctrine.

One of the greatest weaknesses of the church today is the lack of solid doctrine teaching or the teaching of solid, sound doctrine. Too many times the church has become an entertainment center. The church has sought to attract the crowd through an entertaining program.

And the churches vie with one another for the most entertaining program. For the grandest organ. For the greatest choir.

For the biggest productions. People with itching ears. Wanting to hear sermons with cute little stories and filled with jokes.

No content to them. But they're very entertaining. He's an excellent orator.

Oh, I never laughed so hard in all my life. Oh my, is that fellow funny. Sad.

Because the church is weak. What we need is sound doctrine. We need those who can teach sound doctrine and establish people in the faith and through the Word of God prove that Jesus is indeed the Messiah.

The Promised One of God. Exhorting and convincing people of the truth. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers.

Especially they of the circumcision. That is, the Judaizers. Those who were saved from the ranks of the Jews.

Now what does Paul call them? Empty talkers. That is, there is no real content to their message. There is no real discovery of salvation through Jesus Christ in their message.

They are deceivers. Whose mouths, he said, must be stopped because they subvert whole houses teaching things which they ought not for filthy lucre's sake. Men who are in the ministry for the profit, for the financial gain.

Willing to say the things that the people want to hear in order that they might live a luxurious lifestyle that they want to live. One of themselves, Paul said, even a prophet of their own, said the Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. He said this witness is true.

Now, what is he saying? That it is true, that this is true of the Cretans? They are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. Well, it was quite true of the Cretans. Many of them, but of course, generalizations are never right or accurate.

You can't say all Cretans. You can't generalize. Yes, it is true of some of them.

I think when Paul said this is a true witness, what he is saying is, I know that someone actually said this. Someone actually did say that. One of the prophets in talking of the Cretans.

And this is a true witness that actually was said. Wherefore, Paul said, rebuke them sharply. So here is Titus who is to stand up before these false teachers.

These men who are out after their own glory and enrichment. And he is to rebuke them sharply that they may be sound in the faith. Not giving heed to Jewish fables and the commandments of men that turn from the truth.

So those Judaizers that were a plague to Paul wherever he went, who taught the people and a mixture of faith and law in order to be saved. Paul said unto the pure all things are pure. Jesus said it isn't what goes into a man's mouth that defiles a man, but what comes out.

For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. So Jesus is saying really it's what's in a man's heart that is really important. Unto the pure all things are pure.

Now I've met some people that are looking for dirty little innuendos in everything. That are always looking for some impure angle in the speech or whatever else to make some dirty little pun. A reflection of what's

in their minds, what's in their hearts.

Unto the pure all things are pure. Oh God make me pure. But unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure.

But even their mind and their conscience is defiled. I've been around these kind of people. I feel like taking a bath or a shower when I leave them.

Filth rolling out of their mouths continually. They profess that they know God, but in their works they deny Him. Being abominable and disobedient unto every good work they are reprobate.

And so Paul is warning Titus concerning these false teachers. But he said to Titus, speak the things which become sound doctrine. Again, the emphasis in the exhortation is that of sound doctrine.

Now, teach that the aged men, and this should be the older men. What age is aged? I don't know. Probably 85, 90, 100.

Surely not one in their 50's. That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in their faith and in their love and in their patience. You know, it's a beautiful thing the way age does seem to mellow.

The older men should be sort of mellowed out as they grow older. I personally feel that, and I'm certain it is with a great deal of prejudice, that my son Chuck Jr. is one of the finest Bible expositors I've ever heard. I'm so proud of that young man and his ability to teach the Word of God.

His tremendous knowledge and understanding of God's Word. But he's had a problem in his ministry. And that is his sharpness.

And this has concerned me so that whenever he was going to speak here, when I would be gone, I would tell him, now Chuck, remember the love of Christ and remember grace, because he has a tendency to use the whip. And as my wife and I have talked about his ministry, we felt that was the chief shortcoming of his ministry. The lack of mellowness.

But I have told my wife, that honey, in time, he will mellow out. And with the recent arrival of twins making five children, it's amazing how he has mellowed out. Age does that for you.

You become more temperate, more patient, more mellow. And it's good. We need that.

We need to be more understanding and more compassionate. And dealing with the shortcomings of others with a great deal of compassion and understanding and meekness. Paul said, If a brother be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering yourself, lest you also be tempted.

The younger people have a tendency to be a little sterner and harder because they haven't experienced yet those things in life that have, by their very nature, the tendency of causing a person to become more mellow. And so, the aging men, sound in faith, in love, and in patience. The older women, likewise, forty or so, that they be in behavior as becomes holiness.

Not false accusers. Not given to much wine. Teachers of good things.

That they may teach the young women to be sober. To love their husbands and to love their children. In that culture where women, for the most part, stayed in their rooms, never mixed socially.

Would only go out into the public market in twos. Never alone. There was little for the woman.

Life became a drudgery. And alcoholism among women was very prevalent as they sought to escape the drudgery of life. And so, that is why the emphasis upon being sober.

To love their husbands and love their children. Oh God, we need such teachers today. When our whole culture is pressuring women to find a career, to make your way in the world.

Why be confined to a house? Why give your life for those children? Put them in a daycare center and you find your place in the world. Make your mark. How we need those who will teach the younger women how to love their husbands and how to love their children.

How to be discreet in discretion among women. How to be chaste. Keepers of their homes.

Good. Obedient to their own husbands. That the Word of God be not blasphemed.

One of the saddest byproducts of the failure of a Christian is that it gives occasion to the enemies of God to find fault with Christianity and to blaspheme God. When David had committed his sin with Bathsheba and Nathan was rebuking him for it, he said, you have caused the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. You've given them a cause to blaspheme God.

We must be careful in our life, the way we live, that by our actions we live a pure, chaste, discreet life so that the enemies of God will not have an occasion to blaspheme the name of Jesus on our account. Yeah, he's supposed to be a Christian and look at that, you know, blankety-blank so-and-so. If that's Christianity, you know, blah, blah, blah.

And you give cause for the enemies of God to blaspheme the name of Jesus Christ. God help us that we don't do that. Young men, likewise, exhort to be sober-minded.

In all things, showing thyself a pattern. So, Titus, don't just tell them, you be the example. That's what he said to Timothy, you remember.

Be thou an example unto the believers. Paul, when he was talking to the elders of Ephesus on his last recorded visit in the book of Acts, as he met them on the beach at the shores of Miletus, Paul said to them, you know how that over the space of three years, I was with you night and day, showing you and teaching you. It wasn't just teaching precepts, but he was actually demonstrating the lifestyle that he was espousing.

And so he is telling Titus now, now look, Titus, let your life be the demonstration. Show them, Titus, live before them this kind of a life. Teach them that they should be sober-minded.

But in all things, showing yourself the pattern. You set the pattern for them. The pattern of good works.

In doctrine, showing uncorruptness, gravity, and sincerity. Sound speech that cannot be condemned. That he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed because he can't say any evil thing about you.

Now, there are people who will say evil things about you just because you are a Christian and they don't like you for that fact. We were told recently by a young girl that her parents are constantly lying to her about us because they don't want her to be drawn to Christianity. And she said, did you say this to my mom? And I said, oh, my, no.

She said, well, I didn't think you did. I said, no, of course not. I said, in fact, she had done something and her mother said, oh, he's very angry with you.

He came out and he's just really upset with you for doing that. And she said, are you upset with me? I said, oh, no, I think it's really great. In fact, remember, I gave you a pick to help you.

I think it's great what you did. It's the only wise thing to do. She said, well, my mom told me you were really upset and mad.

But she lies a lot about you to me because she doesn't want me to like you. She doesn't want me to be drawn to Christianity. So, they're going to lie about you.

They're going to... They're looking for things, really. And if they can't find something, then they'll make up something and that's sort of sad. But don't give them any fuel for their fires.

Don't give them any cause for speaking evil. But live a life of commitment to Jesus Christ. Dedication.

Now, the servants, exhort them to be obedient unto their own masters and to please them well in all things, not talking back. Now, that's under your breath because you wouldn't dare talk back out loud if you were a servant. But so many times we go away mumbling, not purloining, gold-bricking.

Do you know what that means? Probably not. A bunch of you young ones, those that go back to World War II days know what it's all about. But showing all good faithfulness, that is the servants, 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 lust, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Now, the grace of God that brings salvation, I am saved by grace. Does that mean I can live any old way? No.

What does the grace of God teach me? That I should deny ungodliness. That I should deny the worldly lust. That we should live soberly and righteously and godly.

God's grace teaches me that. It doesn't teach me that I can go out and live any old way I want and the grace of God will cover for me. But it teaches me that I am to live a righteous life as I look for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

And this is the thing that keeps our life in perspective better than anything else. The realization that Jesus is coming soon, looking for the glorious hope of the blessed appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. John in his epistle said, Beloved, now are we the sons of God.

It doesn't yet appear what we're going to be. We know when He appears we'll be like Him, for we will see Him as He is. And He who has this hope in Him purifies Himself even as He is pure.

It's a purifying hope. Knowing that Jesus is coming at any time, live righteously, live godly. The book of Jude, the central message is found in verse 21 when Jude said, Keep yourself in the love of God.

And one of the ways by which he tells us that we can keep ourselves in the love of God as we are looking for the glorious mercy of God at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Again, to keep my life in perspective, it's important, so important that I know and realize that Jesus is coming at any moment and that I need to live in anticipation and expectancy of His immediate return. The glorious appearing of our great God and our Savior.

Here Jesus is called our great God. Much to the chagrin of the Jehovah Witnesses. Who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.

These things speak and exhort and rebuke with all authority and let no man despise thee. He said to Timothy, Let no man despise thy youth. Titus was probably older.

Just don't let any man despise thee. Now, Jesus gave Himself for us that He might redeem us. The redemption through the death of Jesus Christ through His shed blood.

Redeem us from what? From all iniquity. But redemption is also positive to purify unto Himself a peculiar people. Now, some people have taken that wrong.

I can remember years ago in my college days that there was this one gal who always dressed so peculiarly. I mean weird. And I one day asked her why she always wore such weird clothes.

And she said, God told us we were to be a peculiar people. We're different from the world, that's for sure. But it shouldn't be in the dress, but in our total lifestyle that the difference is observed.

Peculiar because I want to do good works. That's where I stand out from the world. Now, rebuke with all authority.

Don't let any man despise thee. But put them in mind to be subject to the principalities and powers and to obey the magistrates and to be ready to every good work. So, here as in many other places, the Christian is exhorted to obedience to the governmental authorities that are over us.

It isn't just when I like what they are doing, but even in those areas that I find very galling to me. Even in areas where I feel they are wrong, I'm still to be in subjection to those authorities that have been placed over me. Romans 13, all authorities of God.

Be in subjection. Peter tells us to be in subjection. Now, Paul is saying the same thing.

For Titus to teach the people the obedience to the governmental authorities. To speak evil of no man. Not to be a brawler, but be gentle, showing all meekness unto all men.

For we ourselves also were at one time foolish and disobedient, deceived, as we were serving our diverse lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. Now, this is much like Ephesians chapter 2, where Paul gives a very interesting before and after contrast. And you, he said, who were dead in your trespasses and sins, who in times past walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, that even now works in the children of disobedience, among whom you all had your manner of living as you lived after the lust of your flesh and of your mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others, the before life.

But God, who is rich in His mercy, wherewith He has loved us, and who has seated us together in Christ in heavenly places, manifested that in the ages to come He might manifest the exceeding richness of His grace and love towards us in Christ. For by grace you are saved through faith, and that none of yourselves. So, the before and after.

Now, here we have the before and after also. And in the before, he divides it into three sections. The first section are the foolish things that we did.

For we ourselves also were at one time foolish. It is foolish to disobey God. Foolishness was marked by disobedience.

As Samuel rebuked Saul when he did not utterly wipe out the Amalekites and offered some flimsy religious excuse for his failure of total obedience. I brought them back to sacrifice them. He said to obey is better than to sacrifice.

And to hearken unto God is better than the fat of lambs. And in that you have not done what God commanded you, you have done foolishly. It's always foolish to disobey God.

The second manifestation of the foolishness is his being deceived. And what a deceptive thing sin is. You remember Samson after his hair was cut, and Delilah said, Samson, the Philistines are upon you.

He said, I will jump up as I did before. And he knew not the Spirit of God had departed from him. He was deceived as to his own capacities and his own strength.

And a person who is deceived about the truth of their condition is foolish. Now the second category is under the category of slaves. That is the same Greek word, douloi, as you were slaves to your diverse lusts and pleasures.

And it is easy for a man to become a slave to his lusts. All too easy. And all around you can see people who have been enslaved by their lusts.

Their desire for drinking, their desire for alcohol, their desire for sex. These pleasures that they pursue, they become masters over them. Tyrants ruling over them.

And a man can become so easily enslaved by his fleshly appetites when we carry them to extremes. The final listing is in the lifestyle. Living.

What is your lifestyle? Living in malice and envy. The world around you. James said, from whence come the fighting and the wars among you? Come they not from your own desires, your lusts? You desire and you have not.

You envy those that do have. This envy. How hateful it is.

And how hateful it makes you. And so, hateful and being hated. The world around us.

Paul said, that's the way we were at one time. We were foolish. We were slaves.

Living a miserable lifestyle filled with malice and envy, hateful and being hated. Even as he gave the black picture in Ephesians, concluding with, by nature the children of wrath, he began the next verse with the word, but, which is a disassociative conjunction. How I thank God for that disassociative conjunction.

Here I am in this miserable, hopeless, lost state. Alienated from God because of my lifestyle. Walking after the flesh.

Denying the things of the Spirit. But God loved man in that fallen, miserable state. The love of God conquered.

But God, Paul said, who is rich in His mercy, wherewith He hath loved us. And here, having again listed these things, but, after that the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared. Here was man in this terrible condition, still loved of God.

And in time, God's love was manifested. The kindness of God manifested to man in this helpless, hopeless state. So, the tying together of the contrasting ideas, man in his wretched, fallen state, and God in His glorious, loving state, desiring to redeem lost, wretched man.

But after the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by the works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us. Paul in Ephesians, By grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourself. It is a gift of God.

Not of works, lest any man should boast. So here he declares, not by the works of righteousness, which we have done. That doesn't save me.

My works of righteousness can never save me. There is only one work that can save me, and that's the work of Jesus Christ. And when they came to Jesus one day and said, what must we do to do the work of the Father? Jesus said, this is the work of the Father.

Believe on Him who He has sent. So the only work that will bring you redemption is the work of Jesus Christ upon the cross. And there's not one single work that you can do.

to save your soul from the damnation that it deserves. But by believing in Jesus Christ, God will grant to you forgiveness, pardon, and eternal life. Oh, the depths of the riches of God's mercy and love towards us in Christ Jesus.

Not by the works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us. When you come to God, we don't come and say, oh God, justice. I want justice.

But I come and say, God, mercy. I need mercy. I deserve the judgment of God for my disobedience and rebellion against Him in my past life.

But God is merciful towards me. God loves me. God has been so good and kind to me.

And not by the works of righteousness that I've done, but by His mercy, He has saved me. By washing me with the regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. That is that regeneration.

Being born again by the Spirit. That's where I find my new life and that's where I find my hope. I've been saved by the work of God's Spirit within my life.

That washing and cleansing of my sin and of my past. That's the glorious thing about the Gospel. Is no matter what might be in your past, what horrible, ugly things may exist there, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses a man from all sin.

And by your coming to Jesus Christ, there is a complete washing, a total obliteration of the past. And as far as the east is from the west, so far has He separated our sins from us. Aren't you glad He didn't say, as far as the north is from the south, He has separated our sins? Because my sins would only be 8,000 miles away if I went straight through or 12,500 if I went around.

Because I can only go north so far and I hit the north pole, then I start going south. And there's a definite measurement between the north and south pole. 8,000 miles going through.

12,500 miles going around. But He said as far as the east is from the west. Now you start out east tonight and you can fly east the rest of your life.

Or you can start out flying west tonight and you can fly west the rest of your life. You'll never fly east flying west. Though you can ultimately fly south flying north.

The moment you hit the north pole, you're flying south from the pole. As far as the east... Did David figure that out when he said that? Or was that inspired of God? As far as the east is from the west, so far has God separated my sins from me. Oh, how good and how loving and how kind God is.

To me, a hopeless, miserable, wretched sinner. The washing, the regeneration, being born again, the new creature in Christ. And the renewing of the Holy Spirit who renews me day by day.

Which He shed upon us abundantly. Oh, how God has poured out His Spirit of grace and mercy upon our life because we needed it abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior. All that God has for you is wrapped up in Jesus.

You don't get anything apart from Him. He is the package. And it's all in Him.

All inclusive. This is the record God has given to us eternal life. The life is in the Son.

He who has the Son has life. God has given us peace. This peace is in the Son.

He who has the Son has peace. God has given us love. He who has the Son has love.

God has given us joy. He who has the Son has joy. It's all in Jesus.

God has nothing for you apart from Jesus. All wrapped up in Him. Which He has shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.

That being justified, having been justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. So, having now been justified, that is declared innocent, declared righteous by God. The word justified is a declaration of my total complete innocence.

How can God do that when I'm so guilty? Because all of my guilt was placed upon Jesus Christ and He died for me. So the forgiveness of God towards me is a total forgiveness. So total that my past will never be brought up to me by God.

Paul the Apostle said in Romans chapter 8, Who is he that shall lay any charge to God's elect? Oh, he's a liar. Oh, he's done this. Oh, he's guilty of that.

And he said, who's going to lay anything to the charge of God's elect? He said, it is God who has justified. In other words, know this. God isn't charging you with any wrong.

The opposite. God has declared you totally innocent of all charges. Justified you through Jesus Christ.

So, being justified by His grace, we should be made the heirs. The effect of that is I am now an heir of God. Of God's eternal kingdom.

The riches of the glory of the eternal kingdom of God is mine. I'm the heir of God. I'm a child of God.

And if a son of God, then I'm an heir. An heir of God and a joint heir with Jesus Christ. Oh, the glorious work of God's salvation.

Not just saved from the wrath of God that is to be revealed against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men who hold the truth of God in unrighteousness, but saved for the glory of God, to experience the glory of God through all eternity as a child of God and as an heir of God. This hope that I have of eternal life through Jesus Christ. Listen, the world has nothing that can even come close to offering to you what God is offering to you tonight.

If the world could offer you the whole world with all of its glitter and all, it would be a sham compared with what God is offering you through Jesus Christ. Because if the whole world were yours, the glory of the kingdoms, the grandeur, the pomp, the circumstance, the adulation, how long would you have it? How long are you going to live? How many more years are you going to be here? Say you could have it for a hundred years. What is that compared with eternity? Moses made a very wise choice when he chose rather to suffer the affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ's greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.

By grace, we've been saved. We've become heirs. We have the hope of eternal life.

This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that you affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. Now you say, whoa, that sounds just the opposite of what you've just been telling us. No, it is not at all.

It's the next step. By grace, you have been saved through faith, not of works that we have done. But by the grace of God, you are saved.

But you that are saved need now to bring forth fruit unto righteousness by your good works. Your good works don't save you. They cannot save you.

But your good works are a proof of your faith. For faith is active. Believing is an active verb, not a passive verb.

And true belief will manifest itself in the works of a person's life so that James said, you show me your works and I will show you your faith. You say you have faith. Faith without works is dead.

You don't really believe it. Now, if I would make a prophecy that Southern California is going to be shaken and wiped out into the Pacific tomorrow morning, and you called me up. Say I made the prediction for 8 o'clock tomorrow morning.

You call me up at 7.30 and say, still think it's going to happen? Oh yeah. Well, if I'm still here. You say, oh, he really doesn't believe it.

But if you call me up and you've got a recording and it says, sorry I'm not here, I'm in Phoenix waiting for the big shake. You say, hey, he really must believe it. You know, I mean, his actions now are in keeping with his declarations.

My actions, my works must correspond with what I declare to believe. If I truly believe it, then there will be corresponding works that will be a witness to what I am believing and declaring that I believe. That's what the Bible is saying.

So that if your works are not in harmony with your profession, your profession is a lie. It is empty and you'll never be saved by a lie. I believe in Jesus Christ.

Oh, great thing to say. Then let's see what it has done in the changed life. If you're still living after the flash, if you're still doing the same old things that were a part of the past life and yet you're saying, oh, I believe Jesus is my Lord and Savior.

You're a liar. In the first little epistle of John, which we'll be coming to pretty soon. Very shortly now.

John is going to give us several professions that people make. Oh, I walk in the light. Oh, great thing to say, isn't it? But if you say you walk in the light and are walking in darkness, you're lying.

You're not telling the truth. Oh, I'm not sinning. Hey, hey, wait a minute.

If you say you have no sin, you make God a liar and the truth isn't in you. Oh, I abide in Christ. What a glorious thing.

If a man says, I abide in Him, that's a glorious thing to say. But, if you're abiding in Him, then you ought to be walking as He walks. Oh, I love God.

Another glorious thing to say. But I hate my brother. John said, hey, hey, hey, you're wrong.

You've got a mistake here. How can you love God whom you have not seen and yet hate your brother whom you have seen who is made in the image of God? So, it's not what I say. It's the works that prove my belief and my faith.

And so, Paul said, now affirm to those who believe in God. Affirm constantly this truth that they maintain good works. Let your works be in harmony with your declaration of faith.

But avoid foolish questions and genealogies. Ministers can become ensnared in so many foolish questions which quite often are not really asked with an honest desire for an answer. And there's a difference between foolish questions and honest, serious questions.

I have no time for foolish questions where a person is just wanting to, you know, cast doubt on the Scripture. Where did King get his wife? I'm always suspicious of a man who is interested in another man's wife. Avoid the foolish questions and genealogies and the contentions and strivings about the law for they are unprofitable and they are vain.

They're a waste of time. Every once in a while, I get caught up in them. You know, some kids will come along and they'll start asking the questions and just to create arguments and sad.

Now, a man that is a heretic, and that's a man who believes something that you don't. His beliefs differ from yours. After the first and the second admonition, then reject him.

In other words, if he continues at it after you've admonished him twice, then reject him. Admonish him a couple of times. Give him a couple of chances.

If he is a heretic and he's got some weird doctrine, give him a couple of admonishments. And if he doesn't heed the admonishments, then just put him out of the fellowship. Reject him.

Knowing that he that is such is subverted and sins being condemned of himself. Now, he finishes the epistle with little personal asides to the different ones. When I shall send Artemis unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me in Nicopolis, for I have determined to stay there this winter." So, he was going to send some relief to Titus.

Either Artemis or Tychicus was going to go and take up Titus' position so that Titus could meet Paul there in Nicopolis where Paul was planning to spend the winter. Now, bring Zenos, the lawyer, with you. And Apollos.

Apollos, that great interesting man that ministered in Ephesus and then later in Corinth. Became no doubt a companion with Paul. I imagine they had a great time together because they both were so knowledgeable of the Hebrew Scriptures and they were both able to convince men mightily from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah.

So, he wanted Zenos, the lawyer, and Apollos. And take care of them. Don't let anything be wanting unto them.

And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses that they be not unfruitful. All they that are with me greet, salute you, and greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.

Amen. Paul's letter to Titus. Next week we get to the shortest book in the New Testament.

The book of Philemon. But the lessons that are there in Philemon are glorious. A tremendous blessing next Sunday night as we study the intercession of Paul the Apostle which gives us a little insight of the intercession of Jesus Christ for us.

And so, be a short lesson next Sunday night but dynamic as we study this book of Philemon. May God be with you and may God bless you and may God keep you in the love of Jesus Christ. And may God help you to abound in all good works for the glory of His name and of His kingdom.

And may God strengthen you in your walk with Him in Jesus' name.

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