

Adorning the Doctrine

by Mack Tomlinson

This sermon emphasizes the importance of adorning the Gospel through living out the beauty of the Gospel with a holy life and exemplary lifestyle. It highlights the need for believers to diligently pursue spiritual matters, maintain authenticity in their faith, and make the teaching about God attractive through their conduct. The message encourages individuals to be impactful examples of godliness and Christ-likeness, reflecting the beauty of the Gospel in all aspects of life.

Scripture: Titus 2:1, 1 Timothy 2:9, 1 Peter 3:3, Acts 4:13, Philippians 2:15, Psalms 90:17

Topics: "Living Out the Gospel", "Authentic Faith"

Description

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Transcript

What a treat to be here. I've been looking forward to it. I didn't know I was going to see some friends that I wasn't even expecting to see tonight.

And I bring you greetings from our church in Denton. You know, these trips to Missouri for me kind of end up being like multiple family reunions. Family reunions in Sedalia, Columbia, and I had to St. Louis this weekend.

So, anyway, it's special. I brought some copies of the life of Conrad Murrell. I just want any home that doesn't have a copy to take one.

And if you have it, but you have, let's say, a believer in your extended family that wouldn't have it, and you think they could benefit from it, or a close friend in the Lord that you think could benefit, then even if you have one at home, take one. Titus 2 is what we're going to look at tonight. I want to try to be mindful of the children being here.

Having raised six and having currently ten grandchildren that live near us, sometimes I think privately in my head a little too near us sometimes. I've never had the courage to say that out loud to Linda. So I'm going to be mindful of the children.

Thank you for being here. We'll read the first ten verses. Our text specifically is a phrase in verse 10.

So we'll get there. So follow with me if you would. Titus 2, verses 1-10.

But as for you, speak the things which are proper from sound doctrine. Let the older men be sober. I think there's a couple of us in here.

Maybe two or three that classifies older men. Let the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in the faith, sound in love, and in patience. The older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things, that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands in order 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 doctrines showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed having nothing evil to say of you. Exhort servants, bond servants, I think the King James has the word slave probably, to be obedient to their own masters, to be well-pleasing to them in all things, not answering back, not pilfering or stealing or being dishonest, but showing all good fidelity, trustworthiness. And here's the text right here.

In order that they may adorn the doctrine of God, our Savior, in all things. Adorning the doctrine of God, our Savior, in all things. So let's pray again.

Our Lord, tonight we desire and we ask we need to hear Your voice and not just a man's voice. So we pray You'd speak. Lord Jesus, these are Your sheep, dear sheep.

And we need fresh food from the garden that You attend. So give us the myrrh. Give us the spices.

Give us freshness. Give us words from Your heart to our heart. Bless this message for Your glory, for their good.

Lord, we look to You. I trust You to enable me to speak. And my brethren, I trust You to speak, Lord, to them tonight for Your glory and their good.

In Jesus' name, Amen. You know, through the New Testament, we are exhorted to keep things. To keep many things.

Jesus said, if you love Me, keep My commandments. Paul said in one place that he is keeping the things that have been entrusted to him. At the end of 1 John, John says, little children, keep yourself from idols.

And Jude has this amazing exhortation to keep yourself in the love of God. Think of that. Wow.

So it is vital that we as believers make much of giving all diligence in spiritual matters. We never are on vacation spiritually. We can never ease up.

We can never relax. We can never become lethargic and fall asleep. But giving all diligence as Peter says.

So the passage tonight points us to this. The last phrase there in Titus 2. Adorning the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. I think as I was reflecting on this chapter, in some ways, there's no more powerful chapter in the New Testament than Titus 2 in terms of believers living out the beauty of the Gospel with a

holy life and with an exemplary lifestyle that is blameless.

That no one can point to you and say, you know, honestly, you talk it good, but you don't live it well. To talk the Gospel without living it well dishonors the Gospel. It would be better to be silent than for your life to contradict your profession.

So this is a great reality that Paul is speaking of. Adorning the doctrine of God not just on the individual level but as a church in terms of a biblical church family. A church can be a mighty example in its community of adorning the Gospel.

I mean, if the Bible says two are better than one, and a threefold cord is not easily broken, then how much more of a group of saints living together in the holy bonds of the Gospel who together are living epistles of the truth they proclaim. Paul here is calling Titus and the saints under him to such an example. So he gives Titus here many qualities and characteristics for every Christian.

So when you come to the end of verse 10, almost in passing, it would be easy to read over it. Almost in passing, Paul states the goal of it all in verse 10. And this is our text.

In order that they may adorn the doctrine of God. Now, what does adorn mean? Well, the word comes from the Greek word *kosmeo*. You ladies are nodding.

And it means to put in order. To arrange. In order to make something attractive.

One translation puts it to make the teaching about God our Savior attractive in every way. That's a tall order, isn't it? It's a lifelong process of working out our salvation with fear and trembling. In order that the Gospel becomes more and more attractive to us and through us.

So, you know, if we work to make our homes to be in order and properly attractive, if ladies dress and present themselves properly in a legitimate, attractive way, if men will at least give some effort to make ourselves publicly presentable, then how much more is the Gospel to be made presentable and attractive through us? Now, Paul and Peter use this word adorn. And let's just think about the word more. A holiday meal.

Thanksgiving is coming up. Christmas. How many wives, if extended family is coming over, serve Thanksgiving dinner on paper plates, plastic forks, and paper cups? Probably not very many.

What do they do with the table? They adorn it. The Thanksgiving stuff is out. The two turkeys and the salt and pepper shakers are out.

All that, they adorn the table. Twenty-five days later, a month later, it's different adornment, isn't it? And so, we adorn those tables because it's special. And we endeavor, the ladies do, to really make them attractive.

And so, that's what Paul tells us to do here with the Gospel, with the truth of God. Paul and Peter use the words in two places. So by way of introduction, 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Peter 3, here's what Paul and Peter say in a combined way.

Let the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, not with broader hair or with gold or costly clothing, whose adorning, let it not be that which is outward, but let it be the hidden man of the heart, even the ornament of the meek and the quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price. So the supreme

question in this text is, how do we, as individuals, how do we as couples, how do we as families, how do we as a church, adorn the Gospel and make it more attractive to others? Because we're called to do it. Week in and week out, month after month, year after year, until we join those saints above that we sang about earlier.

How do we make it attractive to others? By our example and our conduct and how we live. By doing what Titus 2 says. Your life and mine are to be an attractive and powerful sermon to others of the wonder and beauty of the Gospel.

As Paul said, we are a living epistle known and read of all men. Through our words, our behavior, our attitudes, our conduct, and our lifestyle. So in light of this text tonight, holiness of life should be the driving ambition of every Christian.

Truly living out the faith by walking with God and all that that means in all things in life. Godliness and holiness is to be the everyday business of the Christian. Now when you examine the chapter closely, Paul addresses six groups here.

Five of which are always in every church. Number one, older men. Number two, older women.

Number three, younger women. Number four, younger men. And then five, slaves in Paul's day and the application is employees in our day.

All are exhorted to have proper and godly conduct in behavior, example, and speech. So older men, here you go. Be sober-minded.

Dignify. Self-control. Sound in the faith.

Mature in love and patience and in steadfastness. Older ladies, here you go. Reverent behavior.

Not slanders or gossips. Not addicted to wine. Teachers to others of what is good.

Young ladies, here you go. To love your husbands and children. To have self-control.

To be pure and faithful in the care of your home. To be kind and also submissive to your husbands. Younger men, here you go.

Be self-control. Be an example to all those who know you in all things. Have integrity.

Develop dignity. Dignity is not for old guys. Young men, have dignity in all things.

Having sound speech that no one can find fault with. Employees, here you go. Be in subjection to your masters.

Endeavor to please them in all things. Do not be argumentative ever. That's a paraphrase, but that's what Paul means here.

Completely reliable, he says to employees, in everything. As someone said, be the best employee your company has. And by the way, single people, I don't know if they're single, I guess there's someone here that's single.

You're not off the hook. Because everything said here generally applies to singles as well as married Christians. So why does Paul tie all this together with adorning the teaching of God? Here's why.

Because living this way is adorning the truth of God. It's your habits. It's the way you live.

How you conduct yourself. That adorns the Gospel. It makes the Gospel authentic when you live in an authentic way.

It makes the truth credible when you live credibly. It makes Christianity attractive when Christians live in an attractive way. So I want you to think of someone tonight.

Just bring them up in your minds who has modeled for you in the greatest way godliness and Christ-likeness. Think about them. I don't care how old you are or how young you are.

You can be that person still to others. You can have that impact. You can have that influence.

You can be an inspiration. You can have that fragrant life to impact others as you live the way others have impacted you. Turnabout's fair play.

Freely you've received. What? There you go. You know, I have so many spiritual models over the last 50 years.

I've just been like a leech. A spiritual leech. Meeting godly men, godly couples, and I just hang out with them.

And I want to be with them. That's why I'm going to John and Virginia Brashears tomorrow to get another dose and hopefully encourage them. So many of my examples are passing on and I've often felt, Lord, why didn't You just take me? They lived it better.

They could still be here. But God's ways aren't our ways, are they? The living are to take it to heart to adorn the Gospel. So, let us live in such a way that you and I have a goal.

Lord, make my life an impact more and more. Give me people that the fragrance of Christ in me can blow on them. That some measure of godliness can rub off on them.

Like Elisha who's passing by and the woman says, behold, the holy man of God who passes by continually. He didn't know she said that. It was an unknown influence.

And you and I can have that as well. So, I want to ask some questions. Does your life adorn the truth of God in all your ways? Can your example to others be followed? Where will it lead others? Can you say to anyone, follow me as I follow Christ? Do you exemplify in word and action pressing on to know the Lord? Self-denial, consistency, intentional, proactive love of people, being all out for Christ, living it.

Examples are powerful to us, but they're also powerful through us. Because it makes the truth come alive when you are a living example of the truth. You adorn the truth when you live out the reality of it.

A mediocre life makes the Gospel mediocre in the lives of others. But godliness and Christ-likeness makes the Gospel attractive. I remember one time in the 1980's in Bob and Mary Redmond's living room, Keith McClelland was preaching.

I had never heard him. And he walks in the front door late for the meeting. And I had already been hearing him a couple of nights.

But I looked up. And honestly, it was like he was glowing. Bob Redmond looked and he and I turned to each other like, did you see what I saw? There was such godliness coming off of him that I was impacted.

And so, Luke says in Acts, they took notice that they had been with Jesus. Do people know that about our lives? Behold how they love one another. Do others see that in you? In darkened Egypt, I just read through Exodus not long ago.

When the plague of darkness came, darkness that could be felt in Israelite tents, the light was in every one of them. In this dark world, are you shining as a light in the darkness? So, I told you I was going to be brief. Here's my application.

I have two. Number one, true diligence in our life increases our adorning the Gospel. Application number two, genuine prayerfulness increases our adorning the Gospel.

Number one, true diligence. Scripture says the soul of the diligent is richly supplied. So if we're diligent in the things of God, in the Word, in prayer, in meeting with the saints, in living out the Gospel, we will be richly supplied by the Lord that our life will be a blessing to others.

Scripture says whatever your hands find to do, do it with all your might. Keep your heart with all vigilance, for out of it flow the springs of life. What things make us... We'll pause.

Lord, help her and comfort her. So if we're to adorn the Gospel, our life can actually unadorn it. It can make it unattractive to someone at any given point.

What things unadorn the Gospel as far as our diligence? Besetting sins and not dealing with them? Inconsistency in our example? Pettiness, jealousy, envy, unforgiveness, judging others, carnal competitions between Christians, moral weakness, self-centeredness, hypocrisy. Anything like that takes away from our adorning the Gospel. An inconsistent example by us.

Carnality displayed by us. Any of it dishonors the Savior and discredits our testimony. So we have to give full diligence to living the Christian life.

We can't be spiritually lazy. We can't be slothful, half-hearted, half-engaged. But we must be in pursuit.

Full throttle. We must keep our lives in order. We must stay fresh in the things of God.

As somebody said, keep the ax sharpened. Keep your running cleats clean. Keep the engine tuned.

Trim the hedges of your life. Keep control of the taming of your tongue. Spiritual maintenance is a must in our lives.

So, diligence adorns the Gospel. Secondly, prayerfulness adorns the Gospel. Prayer, true prayer, heart to heart with the Lord Jesus, heart to heart with our Father, connects us organically, relationally, even in ways that Bible reading doesn't.

Prayer is communion. And when we maintain prayer and prayerfulness, we have the presence of God more than if we're negligent in prayer. I love Moses' prayer in Psalm 90.

It's so applicable. It's a simple prayer, a powerful prayer. It's a prayer that's certain to be heard.

Here it is. Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us and establish thou the work of our hands. What's he praying for there? Two things.

Number one, he prays for holiness of life. Lord, let the beauty, the favor of the Lord our God be upon us. In other words, Lord, let Your presence and Your favor and Your blessing and Your life-giving grace be upon us.

That's what's going to keep us adorning the Gospel. That's what's going to make us impactful. More like the Master I would ever be.

Pray for holiness to increase more and more in our life in every way. The second thing Moses prays for is fruitfulness. And establish thou the work of our hands.

Holiness and fruitfulness. If you have those things, and you're full of the Spirit of God, and you're walking with God, what else do you need to drag through this waste, howling wilderness? I think Bob Jennings used to call it to tread this place in our earthly journey. Holiness.

Fruitfulness. Paul says to the Philippians that you may be blameless and pure in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation among whom you shine as lights in the darkness. What was true for Titus and the saints of old is just as true for us today.

Brethren, adorn the Gospel. Dress it up. It's holiday feasting in order that the beauty of Jesus would be seen in us and upon us and through us.

Amen. Let's pray. Lord, I think of the two lines to those two hymns.

More about Jesus would I know. More of His love to others show. And then another one.

More like the Master I would ever be. Holy Spirit, we pray that You would begin a new work in each of our hearts. That the breezes of Your Spirit would blow upon our garden and, Lord, bring freshness.

A new season of knowing You, loving You, walking with You, pleasing You. And that we would adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. Help us, Lord.

This is a work of Your Spirit. Do it. Do it in us.

You have promised, Lord, You promised that the good work You've begun, You'll continue it. And You promised that You are at work in us to will and to do of Your good pleasure. So, Lord Jesus, we are Yours.

Take our hearts. Take our lives. And Lord, do this in us.

Make this a reality for Your glory and our good and the good of our churches. In Christ's name, amen. Well, thank You for letting me drop by.

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