

This is our third week of four in our series on the book of Titus. Paul was writing Titus and teaching him how to take these young churches that had been planted on the island of Crete and to get them established and healthy to a degree that they are making God and the Christian faith attractive to their non-Christian neighbors. Last week, we talked about how a healthy church is a church that has healthy leadership. Healthy leadership is leadership that teaches the church the true gospel and nurtures an understanding and belief in the true gospel. Tonight, we're going to talk about how a healthy church is a church that lives in light of the gospel that they have come to believe. So let's read through Titus 2 together and then come back around, take it verse by verse and see what God has to say by His Spirit to us as a church and as individuals tonight.

*But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. Older men are to be soberminded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us. Slaves are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior. For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.*

Let's pray together. "Father, again tonight we thank You for this portion of Your Scripture that You've left us. More so, we thank You for Your Holy Spirit that You have left us who leads us into truth, teaches us, clarifies Your Word for us, leads us to repentance and gives us encouragement. So Holy Spirit, we love You and we pray tonight that You would speak to us through these Words that Paul wrote, that You would impress upon our hearts what You know we need. Individually and corporately, we want to hear from You. We're not here to just be here, but we're here to experience You, to know You and to hear you. So I pray that You would help us to set aside the distractions of the day or the week ahead or the anxieties and fears we come into this room with. I pray that You would enable us and empower us to put a pause thoughts and that we might hear from You. Soften our hearts. Give us ears to hear. We pray and do all these things for Your glory and for our joy. In Jesus' name we ask. Amen."

Like many of you, when I was in high school, I was an athlete. . .or at least I did athletics. I played basketball at a small school in Lubbock, Texas. If you've ever been to Lubbock, you were probably underwhelmed. West Texas is kind of the armpit of America. Because we won a state championship my junior year, our basketball team was really the most visible representative of the high school. We were out and about in the community. We played in various tournaments. We had different games. We interacted with the public schools a lot. We didn't have a baseball or football team, so the basketball team was kind of the sport at our school. So we were the ambassador, the representatives for our school. So of course, we took that privilege and responsibility seriously, at least we tried to. Our coach did a great job of helping us

take that seriously, and he established some different rules to live by that would guide us and help us in remembering that we're representing our school. And as a Christian school, we weren't just representing our school, but we were representing Christianity to some degree. We thought about that a lot and developed these rules. One of the rule we had was that, when we played away games, we would the place we were visiting cleaner than we found it. So in terms of the locker room, we would leave that cleaner than we found it. We would pick up trash and do different things to make sure it was in ship shape before we left. We would just try to make it nice and neat. And that was a simple way among other different ways that we tried to be good ambassadors for the school. So my senior year we went to the state tournament and got dominated. I was so disappointed. For eighteen years, I had spent my entire life putting my hope in basketball and the achievement, notoriety and validation that basketball brought me. It was my functional god. So here we are at the big game and we lost. I was the leader of the team. After the game we went through the line and shook hands. And then we went back to the locker room. For some reason, my coach and I were the last to go back. The bench we sat on was trashed, and so being the last ones, we picked up some trash and set the chairs back. Then we went back to the locker room, our coach gave us the speech and we went back home and tried to move on. I was going to play in this small college, so I started setting my attention on that. About four weeks after the game, our coach got a letter in the mail. The letter was from the coach of the team that had beaten us in the semi-final game. What he had written in the letter was essentially, "After the game, I was watching as you and Beau did this. I just wanted to write and say that I noticed and was encouraged by what you did and how you represented both your school and the gospel." The lesson that I took from that is that people are always watching. Whether we know it or not, people are always watching. They're noticing how we live.

That is exactly the point I think Paul wants to get across in Titus 2. That's the framework by which he's operating as he's going to give a list of commands here to Titus on how to instruct these young churches. He knows that the non-Christians on the island of Crete are watching the Christians. They're watching the church. In fact, many of the people on the island of Crete had never seen a Christian, much less seen a Christian community begin to be organized and begin to grow up around them. So they are watching the young Christians on this island. They are watching these young developing churches on this island. And as they are watching, they are drawing their entire understanding of the Christian God, of the gospel and of the Christian life based on what they're seeing these young Christians on the island do, based on their behavior. So they're looking at these Christians and basing everything they know about Christianity on them. And so what Paul going to tell Titus in this chapter comes from the fact that he knows people are watching the church so the church needs to live in such a way that it's teaching these nonChristians who are watching what's true about the God of Christianity, what's true about the gospel. In other words, their lifestyle needs to match up with their message. And this is Paul's burden as he writes to Titus in chapter 2. Essentially he's saying is, if the church wants to mature and become a healthy church, it must recognize that the non-Christians are watching, and it must feel a sense of burden of responsibility and privilege in this. Now as we become Christians, we have an opportunity, a responsibility and a privilege to make God and the gospel attractive to those who our non-Christians who look in on our lives. And that's exactly what Paul is going to say here in Titus 2.

So let's pick it up in verse 1. He says to Titus, "But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine." So he's contrasting what he wants Titus to do with the false teachers mentioned in chapter 1. In Titus 1, he talks about the false teachers, how they were teaching wrongly and how it wasn't a good thing. But now he's saying, "But you, Titus, I want you to teach what accords with sound doctrine. I want you to teach the true gospel, and also I want you to teach the church what it means to live in light of believing the true gospel." That's what he means when he writes, "Teach what accords with sound doctrine." In other words, "What accompanies right belief is right living." If you really believe, if you really understand the gospel, it compels you to live in a certain way. And that's what he's saying here. He's saying, "I want you to teach the young Christians how they should live in light of the gospel."

And then he goes into telling Titus who he needs to teach what to. Fittingly, he starts with telling Titus what he needs to teach the older men in the church. And when Paul says “older men,” I think he’s talking about men who are over 50 years of age. I’ve studied and looked at the history. That word that he uses for “older men” really talks about men who are in their last stage of life, so I think that’s who he’s talking to. The older men on the island of Crete are those who may be in their 50’s or older. But as we talked about a couple weeks ago, if you’re over 30 years old in our church here, you’re an older man/woman here. I know that’s crazy, but it’s true. Older here starts at 30. 60% of our covenant members are under the age of 30 years old. 40% are under the age of 25 years old. So when he says “older men/women” here, if you’re older in terms of what it means to be older here, I want you to hear it for you. So don’t just dismiss it for the 50 year olds. He says, “Older men are to be sober-minded. . .” So this is what the older men should exhibit. One commentary I read said that Paul is basically telling the older men in the church is that they are to exhibit a certain gravitas, a certain seriousness or soberness, which is both appropriate to their seniority within the church and also expressive of their inner self-control. It doesn’t mean that they’re a stick in the mud, but it means that they are sober-minded. The word “self-control” is a word you’re going to hear again and again in chapter 2. Paul uses it four times. He means to get a point across by repetitively using this word. So self-control is one of those virtues that the Christians on the island must exhibit in order to distinguish themselves from the culture around them. The culture around them was not self-controlled in terms of what Paul has in mind here. “Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness.” These are three words that Paul uses together often in the Scriptures. The word “steadfast” here carries with it the same idea as the word “hope” that Paul often marries to the words “faith” and “love.” Steadfastness carries with it the same idea as the word “hope,” except it also connotes an added emphasis on perseverance that the word “hope” doesn’t always do. Many think these three words to be the cardinal virtues in Paul’s mind of what it means to live out the gospel. When he thought about the qualities that displayed the gospel and made it attractive, he thought about faith hope and love. He’s telling the young men here, “If that’s true, you older men in the church need to exemplify for everyone else the cardinal virtues and characteristics of our faith. You should walk in faith and trust and depend on God. You should exemplify what it means to love, to serve and care for others. You should exemplify what it means to be steadfast and persevere in hope through the circumstances, situations and persecutions that threaten your faith along the way. You endure through that and finish the race.” It’s unbelievable how many male leaders in the Bible do not finish the race. Most of them do not finish the race well. So what Paul is saying here to the older men is no small thing. He’s saying, “I want you to exemplify the Christian life. I want you to be sound in faith, love and steadfastness and walk with a soberness, self control and dignity about you. Exemplify the Christian life.”

Then he turns his attention to the older women in verse 3. “Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior,. . .” The word “reverent” here means “holy;” and even more specifically it may carry with it the idea of acting like a priestess. So it is a word that would have been used in connection with the life of a priestess. So what he may be meaning to communicate is, “You need to live like a priestess. You need to practice the presence of God in your daily lives, in your daily activities, in your daily interactions with people.” He goes on to add, “. . .not slanderers or slaves to much wine.” Both of these things, in the culture of the day, would have been things that older women did and were esteemed for doing. It was a popular thing to just join in with the slander. It was a well thought of thing that you could hold your own in terms of drinking wine. Paul is saying, “As one who has been saved by grace, you don’t do that any longer. In fact, you live radically counter-cultural to those around you who aren’t Christians.” Christians live differently, and these are two areas that Paul picks out for the older women. He continues, “They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women. . .” The word “teach” here doesn’t mean formal teaching. Paul is not talking about formal teaching. Rather what he’s talking about is the type of teaching that happens on a day to day basis when you’re around other people and you’re teaching them by your example and through your conversations. It doesn’t mean that the older women are to be leading formal Bible studies within the church, although I’m sure he wouldn’t have been opposed to that. But that’s just not what he’s trying to get across. He’s trying to say, “Part of the healthy discipleship culture of a church is that the older

women are intentionally involved in the lives of the younger women and they're teaching and training them by their lives and by their example." That's what he means to get across to the older women here. "By your conversations, by your inviting younger women into your life, you are to be teaching and training." The word "train" means to urge or encourage. I just loved John Stott's commentary on this chapter. He said, "It is noteworthy that, although Titus is himself to teach the older men and older women, and later the younger men, it is the older women who are given the task of teaching the younger women. . . There is a great need in every congregation for the ministry of mature women, whom The Book of Common Prayer calls "holy and godly matrons." They can share their wisdom and experience with the rising generation." This is what Paul is calling the older women of the church to, to help nurture this culture of discipleship within this church so the church would grow and mature as both of them mature together.

And then Paul actually tells what he wants the older women to be teaching the younger women. The list that we're going to go through is not exhaustive. This is not everything that Paul wanted the older women to teach the younger women. These are just things that he's had on his mind. Also, Paul is going to assume that the younger women on the island of Crete are married and have children. So you'll see everything on the list that Paul writes here is geared toward the home, geared toward marriage and geared toward family. So Paul is assuming that the younger and older women are all married and have children. So because he's writing to people who are married with children, he's naturally going to list out those things. But most of you who are younger women in our church are not married and don't have children. I'm a little bit nervous that you would realize that he's speaking to people who are married and have kids and since that doesn't have anything to do with you, you would turn him off. I think that would be a mistake. Some of what he's going to say currently does not directly bear on you because of the stage of life you're in, but as you listen to what Paul is saying here, you can think through the implications for the stage of life you are in. So don't turn him off. Just contextualize what he's saying for your life. The reason that he's writing to wives and to mothers is because that's who the younger women were in the church he's writing to. But for us, we're not a church with a bunch of young women who are married and have children. But just listen to what Paul is saying and draw implications for your own life. The same goes for you older women. Just because Paul doesn't give you any framework for how to teach the younger women in our congregation who aren't married and don't have children, that doesn't mean you don't need to be doing it. The idea is that, regardless of stage of life, the older women should be teaching the younger women how to live in the light of the gospel and to face the unique challenges, opportunities and circumstances that come with their particular stage of life.

So this is what he says the older women should be teaching the younger women in these churches. He says, "They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, . . ." Because this is the primary responsibility of those who are married and have children. He goes on to say older women are to teach younger women how, "to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, . . ." There is quite the dialogue that has happened historically about what this little phrase "working at home" actually means. Many take working or busy at home to mean that the woman's job is not to be out in the marketplace or in the professional world, but to be home. They teach that all women who are married and have children should be working at home. That's their job. They are to be stay-at-home moms, all of them. In our culture that is heavily influenced by feminism, by achievement and by individual freedom, this has been met with quite the controversy. I've actually heard it from women in our own church who have differing opinions about this. I feel like it could slowly become a point of division among our own church where we have disagreement about what this verse is teaching. For that reason, I just felt compelled to stop here and teach for just a minute about what he's saying and what I don't think he's saying. I want to quote Stott again, because I agree with what he said. In regards to what "working at home means, Stott says, "It would not be legitimate to base on this word either a stay-at-home stereotype for all women, or a prohibition of wives being also professional women. What is rather affirmed is that if a woman accepts the vocation of marriage, and has a husband and children, she will love and not neglect them." That's the main point Paul is trying to get across. What he is opposing is not a wife's pursuit of a profession, but rather the habit of being idle and going from house to house. So I personally don't think that Paul is commanding all mothers and wives to be

stay-at-home moms and wives. I don't think that you can be dogmatic about that. I don't think you can say that and draw out that implication. However, what I definitely think Paul is teaching here is that the women who have entered into the vocation of marriage and children have been given as a primary responsibility before God to love and not neglect their husband and their children. They are to be busy taking care of them and taking care of the home front in a unique way. This is for the wife and mother the primary responsibility that they now have before the Lord. And nothing should get in the way of this responsibility, not a profession, not idleness, not laziness. So although Paul is not commanding all women who have children to stay at home, he is saying and putting a lot of weight behind, "This is your primary responsibility. So important is this that older women need to teach and train the younger women what this looks like." We're all going to give an account before the Lord for how we've raised our families. That's a weighty, beautiful thing. So if a profession or anything is getting in the way of this primary responsibility before the Lord, it's worth a discussion, not just for women but for men as well. I think Paul is saying, "Older women need to teach younger women how to love their husbands and children, how to be busy at home, how to be busy doing this work, which is primary before the Lord." It doesn't necessarily mean they can't do this or that.

He goes on to say that the older women should teach the younger women to be kind. What Paul may have in mind here is kindness to guests who are in the home. The wives and mothers need to be kind to those who are staying. And then he rounds out his list by saying, "Teach them teach them to be submissive to their own husbands." So he ends by saying that the women are to do their part to model the gospel in a marriage. He's saying that men and women should be treating their spouses and responding to their spouses in such a way that people, both Christians and non-Christians, are able look in on their marriage relationship and learn about Christ's relationship with the church as Paul talks about in other letters. So this is what Paul says to older women. "You need to be teaching and training the younger women how to do these things." And this is the nonexhaustive list that he gives.

There is so much more we could dive in to detail wise, but what I want to do is take you above the details and intricacies of the list and help you to see that he's saying that if a culture of discipleship is ever going to exist among our church, the older women are going to have to pour into the younger women and the older men are pouring into the younger men. Now men, I know he doesn't specifically say, "You need to be training and teaching the younger men," like he did for the women here, but I think based on other Scriptures and common sense, you could say the same for the men. The older men and women in our congregation, for us to be a healthy church, need to see it their responsibility to pour into, care for, teach and train by their example, by their conversation and by just welcoming the younger people into their lives, teach them how to live in light of the gospel. This is something that I hope stick with us as a church. If we ever want to continue in the health that God has established here by His grace, this has to continue. The reason that we're as healthy as we are right now is because there have been older men and women within our church who have felt this burden that God places on them through the Scriptures like this and others to be doing this. So we have had so many faithful older men and women who have engaged the younger here, brought them into their lives, into their homes and just poured into them. And that's the reason I think we're in the place we are where we are healthy. But I think there is still a long way to go, because there are many of you in here who are older who are still so bent on being ministered to by others (which is not a bad thing) that you've never even given any thought to doing this. You're so busy looking for a mentor for yourself that you've never stopped to think about the fact that maybe you should be mentoring somebody else and being yourself what you're looking for in other people. I think this is a good word for us. Whatever it is that's stopping you, if it's fear, if it's feeling inadequate, join the club. I feel fear and inadequacy every single day. We are inadequate. If we try to engage people the way Paul is outlining here, we're going to fail. But part of a healthy discipleship culture in a church is when the older pour into the younger and the young are receiving that. You who are younger need to position yourself in a way that you can receive that. I'm not going to go into how this looks here, because it could look a hundred different ways for a hundred different people. I'm just saying that Paul is putting a

command on the older within the church to live in this sort of way, and it's really beautiful. So I'm just praying that God would continue to do this among us as He's done.

At the end of verse 5, Paul say why this is so important. ". . .that the word of God may not be reviled." So he's saying, "Older women, teach and train the younger women how to live godly lives. Why? So that the Word of God may not be reviled." So as those who are not Christians look at the church and see the younger Christians being poured into by the older Christians, their reasons for reviling the faith are dissipating because the church is maturing in such a way that they're living faithfully. They're not giving non-Christians any reason to look in on their lives and say, "See? They say this with their mouth, but their lives look like this." So even here his mind is toward those who are outside not being able to look in and revile the word of God.

And then in verse 6 here, Paul actually turns his attention to address the young men in the church. He says, "Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled." Paul has one word for the young men of the church. That one word is "self-controlled." It is amazing to me how little has changed in 2000 years. It's amazing to me that the one word Paul chose here still cuts right to the heart of the primary struggles of young men today. It's unbelievably relevant. Not a lot has changed. So he's saying, "Young men, you are not to be controlled by your stomach and your appetites. You are not to be controlled by a lust of the flesh, a lust for comfort, approval, notoriety, control, power or glory. These things cannot control you. You are to live a life that is different than every other young man around you who is not a Christian." Now our culture is the opposite of this. So Paul is saying something radical here. He's saying, "Young men, if you want to show people what the gospel is like, live self-controlled. And when you do that amid a culture that does not live self-controlled, you make much of God." The implication for the rest of one's life that comes from being faithful in just this one thing Paul says here is unbelievable. If by God's grace, through the power of His Spirit, with the encouragement and help of the church, we could learn to live self-controlled, the ramifications of the rest of our lives would be unreal. That's why he only needs to put one word. Young men, I have just a few thoughts about this verse. I think from this verse we see that self-control is possible, even for you, if you're a Christian. I know you don't always feel like that, but it is possible. Otherwise, Paul would never instruct Titus to encourage the young men toward self-control. If it were an impossibility, why would he instruct him to tell the young men to be self-controlled? He wouldn't. So in Paul's mind, this is a possibility. Also, what helps lead to this is encouragement. So encouragement helps you be selfcontrolled. That's why he tells Titus, "Encourage them." Encouragement is a means of grace God gives us to cultivate and nurture self-control. That's why it's so important for you to be part of a church and walking with other men who can encourage you. I don't know if you can be self-controlled if you're not doing that. I'm not going to say it's impossible, but it is far less probable. Which is why being part of a church so you can be encouraged in your self-control is so crucial. And it's not just encouragement you need, but it's also an example. That's why he has already said it to the older men, and it's why he's going to say it again in verse 7 to Titus. He tells Titus, "Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works. . ." In other words, Paul is saying, "What I'm telling you to encourage the younger men in, you should exemplify for them what this looks like. Imperfectly? Yes, but you do that. Because they need encouragement, but they also need an example in this."

And then he goes with specific instructions for Titus. He's transitioning now to the lifestyle of the pastor/leader of the church. He says this, ". . .and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned. . ." He's telling Titus, "As you're teaching, know what you're teaching about. Be articulate, intelligent and winsome. Don't be the teacher who has no idea how to articulate the faith." And here's why. Again Paul is looking and thinking of outsiders. He says, ". . .so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us." So that no one would be able to look in at the pastor's life and, by his haphazard living and teaching, say, "Well that faith isn't viable. Look at this guy. He's the one leading the whole church. Look at how he's living. The man can't even articulate his faith. Look at this." Paul is saying, "It's so important that you are sound in your speech and character, so that those who are outsiders look in,

even though they would want to condemn us, they'll be put to shame and have nothing evil to say about us." So he talks about the leaders of the church and their lifestyle there.

And then in verses 9-10, he turns and talks about slaves, what it looks like to live in a distinctively Christian way if you're a slave. Before we read what Paul has to say, I want to say a couple things about slavery. As you read here about slavery or if you read other letters that Paul wrote about slaves, you might think that Paul is condoning slavery. I did a series (part 1, part 2) last year on the book of Philemon. That letter is actually a letter about a runaway slave who Paul is sending back to the master. Both the master and slave are Christians. So Paul has profound things to say about the institution of slavery. I think what he says in Philemon are the seeds that undermine the entire institution of slavery altogether. So if you want to read those, I go into detail there about slavery. But I just want to say a couple things about slavery. Slavery in the 1st century was different than slavery in the early American colonies. They are not the same. Slavery in the 1st century was not based on race like it was in the early colonies. When we think of slavery, we think of colonial America and we think immediately of race, and we should. What happened there was horrible, despicable and sinful. But that's not the same type of slavery. It wasn't based on race in the 1st century. It also wasn't based on social class or intelligence. In fact, Aristotle was actually a slave of Alexander the Great. One of the most brilliant men in the history of the world was a slave, but not the type of slave that we think of obviously. He was a teacher, and he would provide a function for this family and Alexander would be taught by him. So it wasn't based on intelligence or social class. The treatment of slaves in the 1st century varied as well. Some slaves were treated really, really well to the point where they were almost treated like family, so much so that some slaves, once they paid off their debt, would actually want to stay on as slaves because they were treated so well. Their role there was better than any job they could get out in society. So it ranged from that to what we do think of in the early colonial period where there was just despicable and horrible treatment of those who were slaves. So I don't want to overstate how different slavery in early colonial America was compared to slavery in the 1st century, but it was different. So just know that as we read this. And then also know that these commands that Paul makes to the slaves is not Paul endorsing slavery. Nowhere does Paul condone or endorse slavery. So don't hear it that way. In fact one of the historians I read this week said, "The commands to slaves in Titus 2:9-10 are to be seen, of course, in the setting of ordinary daily life in the first century. Slavery was a fact of life and there was no point pretending it wasn't. You could no more abolish slavery overnight in the first century than you could invent space travel. The fact that you might hope it would happen one day, and wished it would, wouldn't justify giving slaves the impression that now they were Christians they could disobey their masters." So Paul is not here endorsing slavery. Rather what he's doing is looking in the face of the reality of 1st century life and saying to these men and women who were slaves, "Listen, you have an unbelievably powerful opportunity in the way that you live and function as a slave to display the gospel."

And it is powerful what he says in verse 9. He says, "Slaves are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith. . ." So essentially he's saying, "Don't argue with your masters and don't steal." These two things would have been the primary temptation for slaves in the 1st century. Can you imagine, when you're being persecuted and mistreated by your master, the temptation there would be to respond in anger, frustration and insubordination? Paul is saying, "Don't do that. You suffer well." And of course, Jesus Christ is the example for having suffered well. Even though He was reviled, He did not revile back. But He entrusted Himself to the Father. Paul is saying the same thing. "Don't argue. Be peaceable. Don't argue with your masters. Non-Christian slaves do that. As Christians, it changes the way we live in this area. You don't argue. And you also don't steal," which is super common in the 1st century. You can imagine these slaves would be sent off to the market or wherever and they would be given money to go buy goods for the household and bring them back. So the temptation for them to steal the money or the goods they were sent to purchase would be great. And Paul is saying, "You don't do that either. I know all the other slaves around you are doing that, but you, informed by what it means to be a Christian, live differently in this area." And again, here's why he says that they're to this in the end of verse 10. ". . .so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior." Why is he instructing slaves to live this way? Because it makes God look good.

Can you possibly imagine how powerful a witness to the watching world for slaves to live like this? People who were not Christians would have looked at this behavior and thought, "What in the world has gotten into these people that they're not stealing and they're not insubordinate? Why in the world? How in the world are they doing this?" The answer of course would be that what's gotten into them is the God of Christianity, and He has radically and powerfully transformed them to the point where they can endure suffering if it means that it makes God attractive to those who are watching. That is unbelievably powerful.

So three times in verses 1-10, Paul speaks about the effect and witness that Christian living has on the watching world. That's obviously at the forefront of his mind as he is instructing these Christians how to live in light of the gospel. He's knows that the world is watching and they're making judgments about Christianity. And so how these young churches and young Christians function, live and behave in light of the gospel is crucial. As we mentioned earlier, the same is true today in Denton just like it was in Crete. As Christians, we are the minority in our city, especially in this neighborhood. And the nonChristians in our city are watching whether we know it or not, and many of them are drawing conclusions about Christianity based on how we live. And I wonder, what are we teaching them? What are non-Christians learning about Christianity by watching how we function in our homes? What are they learning from the way you talk to and treat your spouse? What are they learning by watching the way that you treat your children? What are they learning from the way you interact with your parents or sibling? What are they learning from the way you care for or serve your roommate? What are they learning from the way you interact with your neighbors? What are they learning about the gospel by how you live? What are non-Christians learning about the Christian God from our actions in the workplace or classroom? Paul's instruction to slaves, even though it's radically different, still has a lot of implications for how we work and function as employees and students. So how do you respond to your supervisor, teacher or coach? Are you argumentative? Are you peaceable? Are you a hard worker? Are you lazy? Do you fuel the gossip around the office? Are you quick to speak well of others even if they have wronged you? Do you stretch the truth? Do you cheat on your homework? When no one is looking, do you quit working and surf the web? Do you tell the truth? Do you work honestly? Do you tell the truth even if it costs you a bonus, a grade or your reputation? What are non-Christians learning from the way we function in the office and in the classroom? What are they learning about the gospel by watching how we hang out with our friends? How do you handle the freedom that you have in Christ? Are you selfcontrolled and sober-minded or do you cheapen grace and abuse grace by doing what the Scriptures say Christians ought not to do? Do you profess with your mouth that you're a Christian and then live in a way that would absolutely preach the contrary to everyone around you? When you're at the dinner table, do you join in with the slanderer when they're talking about this person or that friend? Or are you the one who actually stays silent or possibly turns the conversation to a more positive direction? What or who controls you? "Make no mistake," Paul is saying, "the world is watching." The nonChristians in our city and in our neighborhood are watching and drawing conclusions about God from us.

Just by way on confession, I've been reading and rereading this letter, and I have been extremely convicted as I have done so, particularly as I have read this chapter and this section. On so many fronts, as an older man in the congregation, as a leader of the congregation, as a husband and a father, I've had to look at these verses, and it's like a mirror. And as I have looked into the mirror, I have been reminded of what it looks like to live in light of the gospel in these different roles. And I've also just been clearly shown how much I am failing. And I am failing to obey God and failing to make Him attractive in these various ways. Now I'm not wholesale failing, but as I have read this, I've been really convicted about the ways that I am failing. There have been times where I've been studying and I've had to put it down and just pray.

As I've been convicted and sought to repent, I have been unbelievably grateful that Titus 2 doesn't end in verse 10. I have been overwhelmed for verses 11-14. Because in those verses, Paul lays out the gospel, the good news, the central message of Christianity. In these verses, I have found a few things. I have found forgiveness for the myriad of ways I personally and our church corporately have failed to obey God. And as we have failed to obey Him, we have failed to



make Him attractive to the watching world. I have found forgiveness for that in guilt and failure. I have also found all of the reason, motivation, strength, power and grace that I and we as a church need to obey God and to live in such a way that makes Him attractive. So I've found forgiveness for the ways I'm not doing that and the strength and the motivation that I need to do it in verses 11-14. So you might say that verses 11-14 are the fuel to do what Paul says in verses 1-10. The fuel for living in light of the gospel is the gospel, and that's what he says in verses 11-14. Let's read them together and thank God for them. "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works." The degree to which our hearts are changed continually by verses 11-14 is the degree to which we as individuals and as a church will be able to do what Paul tells the churches to do in verses 1-10. Paul is saying is, "The grace of God, personified in the person of Jesus the Christ, has appeared. He came in response to all of our sin, all of our failure and all of our rebellion, and on the cross, through His substitutionary death where He stood in our place for our sins, He gave Himself for us to ransom us, to buy us back from slavery to sin.

So we don't live in bondage to sin anymore. He came to rescue us from the wrath of God. He's coming back. One day this Christ will return. He will reappear. And this is where the Christian's hope is set. And until He returns, we, trained, motivated and sustained by His grace, live as His people in the city. And in light of what He has done for us, in light of Him laying down and giving Himself for us, we now make much of His grace by living selfcontrolled, upright and godly lives together in the hopes that our neighbors will be attracted to our God through our lives. And this is what His life, death and resurrection have saved us for." We've been saved from a lot, but we've been saved to something as well. And what we've been saved to is to increasingly display His glory and character to those around us until He returns. And as Paul said to be a purified people who are zealous for good works. And that is where we will pick up next week. Let's pray together.