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The Church and Sound Doctrine

Titus 2

If you come into my office at the church one thing you notice is that there are a lot of books in my office. That would be interesting to you if you knew how I lived my life before coming to know the Lord. One thing I did not have growing up was a passion for reading. The only book that I can remember reading all the way through was a Hardy Boys book in the third grade and the only reason I read it was because there was a girl in my class who I didn't really care for at the time who was winning all the reading challenges. I only read a book because I didn't want her to keep winning.

My real passion growing up was sports. Because I loved sports, no one had to force me to go to practice. No one had to force me to work at being a better athlete. I loved sports. I loved watching sports and I loved playing sports and I loved anything to do with sports. **Reading never gave me the same level of excitement as playing sports growing up.**

Then something weird happened. I actually read something that I found interesting. It was my third year of college and I was reading a book called *The Knowledge of the Holy* by A.W. Tozer. I think it was for one of my classes at the time. Tozer writes in the introduction of that book, "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us." That statement was one of the very first things I read that really caused me to stop and think. I knew that if Tozer was right I was in big trouble because even though I had gone to church my whole life I had never really made it a personal ambition to know God personally.

After my conversion to Christ, sometime in the fall of 1995, I had a mentor who told me something that has really stayed with me close to 20 years later. He would tell me, "Blake, doctrines received, believed and practiced determines your character, behavior, and destiny." Doctrines are truths from the Bible - You receive them, you believe them and you practice them - that is what determines your character (who you are), your behavior (how you act) and your destiny (where you will spend eternity). **I learned early on that sound doctrine is the foundation on which the whole Christian life is built on.** Sound doctrine is vital for the Christian life.

If sound doctrine is so important, what is it? Let me read two quick descriptions of sound doctrine. Bobby Jamieson, **"Sound doctrine is a summary of the Bible's teaching that is both faithful to the Bible and useful for life...Sound doctrine is God's road map for living faithfully in the world. Sound doctrine tells you who you are, and who God is, and how God has saved us from sin and enabled us to**

live lives that are pleasing to him.” Kent Hughes describes sound doctrine this way, **“The words “sound doctrine” are used by Paul to refer to the teachings passed on and approved by Christ’s apostles, teachings meant to guard and guide the church.”** So, sound doctrine is necessary for our salvation, our sanctification and it both guides and guards the local church.

Tonight I want to remind you how important sound doctrine is for the life of the church. Please open your Bible’s to Titus 2. **In Titus 2 we see how Sound doctrine is the thing God has designed to course through the veins of the local church and to nourish every aspect of our lives.** Let’s read Titus 2:1-15.

Titus 2:1-15

“But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. ² Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. ³ Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, ⁴ and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, ⁵ to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. ⁶ Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. ⁷ Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, ⁸ and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us. ⁹ Bondservants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, ¹⁰ not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior. ¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹² training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³ waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.”
Let’s pray and ask the Lord to help us as we study His word together.”

Paul wrote this letter to a young pastor named Titus who was ministering on the island of Crete. You’ll see where the island of Crete is up here on this map. Crete is an island in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea. That sounds nice, doesn’t it? **Pastoring on an island in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea with the apostle Paul as your personal mentor writing you letters and encouraging you in your Christian life.** Sounds nice, doesn’t it? It’s easy to look at this map and think of some of the special blessings God gave Titus and to be envious of his life and ministry, but as we read through this letter we learn that ministering on the island of Crete was not an easy task.

Crete was an island known for two things - sexual immorality and false teaching. One man writes that “Ungodliness would have found a welcome home on the island of Crete.”

Titus had challenges to deal with both inside the church and outside the church. Inside the church you had false teachers who professed to know God but denied Him by the way they lived their lives. Outside the church you had Cretans who were described by one of their own as liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons. Sounds like a catchy slogan for the Crete chamber of commerce, doesn't it? Come to the island of Crete where you'll find a bunch of liars, evil beasts and lazy gluttons and a smattering of false teachers. No thanks.

How would Titus survive and thrive on this island and how would the local church Paul left Titus to serve not only survive but thrive in such conditions? Notice the verses that bookend Titus chapter 2. Titus 2:1 and Titus 2:15 contain the same greek word that is translated speak. Titus 2:1, "But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine." Titus 2:15, "These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you." **Titus would survive and thrive on this island and so would the church as long as they remained faithful to sound doctrine.**

Before Pastor Jack Hughes left Grace Bible Church he helped me set up a Bible software program on my computer called Logos. He set it up where you have the English text in the middle of the screen and on the right side of the screen you have what is called a Greek interlinear Bible. The cool thing is that Jack color coated all the Greek words so that the verbs are in red and the nouns are in blue and the adjectives are in green, but the words that really catch my attention are coated in something called On Fire. They are words with big red letters highlighted with a yellow highlighter. Those words catch my attention because of the font they are in and because those are imperative verbs. Titus 2:1 and Titus 2:15 are full of on fire imperative commands. Paul left Titus on the island of Crete and commanded him to speak the things that are fitting for sound doctrine and to reprove and exhort God's people with all authority to do what God says.

Let me read a couple of quotes that remind us how important teaching sound doctrine is for the health of the church. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, preacher of Westminster Chapel London, stated, "The most urgent need in the Christian Church today is true preaching; and as it is the greatest and the most urgent need in the Church, it is the greatest need of the world also." Philip Schaff writes, "Every true progress in church history is conditioned by a new and deeper study of the Scriptures." Charles Haddon Spurgeon said, "I would rather speak five words out of this book than 50,000 words of the philosophers. If we want revivals, we must revive our reverence for the Word of God. If we want conversions, we must put more of God's Word into our sermons."

Tonight I want us to look at this chapter together under two headings:

1. The Example of Sound Doctrine - Titus 2:1, 11-15
2. The Effect of Sound Doctrine - Titus 2:2-9

Let's begin looking at the example of sound doctrine. We've already considered verse 1 and verse 15 which bookend this chapter around Paul's command to Titus to speak and to lay the foundation of sound doctrine in the church. What I want us to focus on for a few minutes is the example Paul gives to Titus in Titus 2:11-14. This chapter is interesting because Paul not only commands Titus to speak what is fitting for sound doctrine, **but he gives Titus an example of what it looks like.**

Titus 2:11-14 is an example of the kind of teaching that nourishes and strengthens the local church. The kind of teaching that nourishes and strengthens the local church is rooted in the grace of God as it has been revealed in the Person and work of Christ. Look at Titus 2:11-14, “¹¹For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹²training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴who 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.”

Notice how Paul connects the grace of God in this passage to the Person and work of Christ. Paul reminds Titus who Jesus is (Our great God and Savior) and what His coming means for our daily lives. Kent Hughes, “When the apostle describes the coming of grace, he so intertwines who Christ is with what Christ provides that the two become inseparable. Grace comes as Christ does. Grace is as personal as he is. In fact, Christ is grace. The unmerited favor of God is what Jesus is about, but it is also who he is. *We should thus see grace as a personal action by a personal God who saved us from our helpless condition out of pure love.*”

Several years ago a storm called El Nino brought large amounts of rain to Southern California. The potential dangers of mudslides became a real nightmare for one family. While the family was still in their home, a wave of mud tore through the house, severing it and sweeping a sleeping baby out into the night. The parents began to search through the darkness for the child. Tromping through the mire that had descended upon their whole neighborhood, they searched, dug, and called for their child throughout the long night—without results. When morning came a rescuer, himself covered in mud, came to the parents with a mud-caked bundle in his arms—the baby, filthy but alive.

That story really describes salvation. **Jesus entered into the filth of our sin and redeemed and purified us.** Look at the end of verse 13 and then verse 14. Titus 2:14, “our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴who 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.” We all once lived lawless lives. Even our best works were filthy rags in the sight of a holy God. What did God do for His people? Our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, gave Himself for two purposes - To redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify a people for His own possession.

I want you to notice how Paul is helping Titus when it comes to sound doctrine. He is simply reminding Titus who Jesus is and what He came to do and what all of that means for our lives. If you know Christ as your Great God and Savior that means you're both redeemed from all lawlessness and you are His purified possession. He breaks the power of cancelled sin and sets the prisoner free.

Not only that. Look back at verse 13. You not only have a new identity - You also have hope. You have something to look forward to every day of your life. Titus 2:13, "waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." We have something to look forward to in this life. Remember how Jesus comforted the disciples when their hearts were troubled the night before the cross? John 14:1-7, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ²In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. ⁴And you know the way to where I am going." ⁵Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" ⁶Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him." The night before the cross Jesus comforted the disciples with a reminder that He was going to heaven to prepare a place for them and that He would come again and take them to be with Him one day.

What does God's grace through Christ mean for our daily lives in the present age? If He gave Himself to both redeem us and purify us and He has gone to heaven to prepare a place for us, what difference should His grace make in the way we live our daily lives? Notice the end of verse 14 says that we are to be zealous for good works. Later in Titus 3:8, "The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people." Ephesians 2:8-10, some familiar verses connect salvation with good works where Paul writes, "⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." Before God made the world He planned both our salvation and He planned a life of good works for us to walk in.

What does a life of good works look like practically? Let's look at our individual lives and then our corporate lives in terms of how to walk in good works. Titus 2:12, "training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age." **Please notice how saving grace in verse 11 leads to transforming grace in verse 12.** You cannot have one without the other. All whom

God justifies He also sanctifies. The grace that saves goes to work in the lives of those who are saved. Grace teaches us. The verb “teaches” comprehends the entire training process—teaching, encouragement, correction, and discipline.

The grace of God trains us both negatively and positively. Look at verse 12. Grace trains us to renounce the way we lived before Christ purpose of grace is to train us to renounce our past by saying “ ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions.” “Ungodliness” describes the impiety and irreverence that characterizes person who does not know Christ. “Worldly passions” are cravings characteristic of the world that is alienated from God. Those are the things grace trains us to say no to.

What does the grace of God train us to say yes to? God’s grace trains us “to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives.” Self controlled and upright have to do with learning to control your passions. Righteous constraint on your own impulses and righteous conduct in dealing with others. Notice the third word, godly. “By adding the word *godly* to the ways grace teaches us to live, the apostle reminds us that the Christian life is one of dependence on God. Godliness is not a consequence of human resolution or willpower. It is a relationship with God that results in a life honoring to God. Thus, taking the three positive characteristics taught by grace in order, we learn that the life of grace is comprehensive—involving oneself, one’s relationship to others, and one’s relationship with God.”

How long must we live like this? Until Christ returns or we go to be with Him. One man writes, “Godliness remains our obligation until Jesus returns.” Let me ask you something - When you think about God’s grace how quickly do you connect grace with the Person and work of Christ? I think its easy to try and define grace or even describe grace without mentioning Christ. That’s dangerous. **When we think of grace our minds should immediately turn to Christ.**

John 1:14-18, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ (John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’ ”) ¹⁶ For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.” When you think about grace, think about Christ.

Here’s another question - Are you connecting saving grace with what that grace is meant to accomplish in your daily life? When the grace of God came to you, did it ever start training you to say no to sin and yes to righteousness? God’s grace always does that in the person who really receives it in Christ. Justification always leads to some form of sanctification because where there is spiritual life there will always be some form of spiritual growth and it is the grace of God that does the work.

Titus 2:11-14 is an example of the kind of sound doctrine Paul left Titus on the island of Crete to speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. It shows us what it means to be saved and sanctified and it reminds us where our hope in life must be found.

What about our corporate lives, our family life lived together as the body of Christ? How does the grace of God, how does sound doctrine change the way we relate to one another corporately in the life of the local church? Titus 2:2-10 reminds us that there is a specific role to play for every age group in the local church.

2. The Effect of Sound Doctrine - Titus 2:2-10

Notice back in Titus 2:1 Paul tells Titus to speak the things that are fitting for sound doctrine. What goes with sound doctrine? What goes with sound doctrine is sound living. In Titus 2:2-10 we see how the grace of God received leads to a specific focus in every age group in the local church. These verses connect what is fitting for sound doctrine.

Last week we had our annual church picnic and we got to dress a little more casual for church. I had some pants on that I had never worn to church before and I had some shoes on that I thought looked pretty good. Then my wife saw me on my way out the door. She immediately asked me - Are you going to wear those shoes with those pants? I had them on so that might have been her first clue that, yes, I intended to wear the shoes with the pants. Evidently, my wife didn't think the shoes went with the pants very well and so I changed because I love my wife.

What fits well with sound doctrine? What goes well with sound doctrine is sound living. We've already talked about the role sound doctrine is meant to play in our personal lives. Tonight, I want to finish our time looking at the role God's grace is meant to play in our corporate lives. In Titus 2:2-10 we see how the grace of God changes our relationships in the local church and we learn that knowing your role and fulfilling it is what nourishes and strengthens the local church. Let's read Titus 2:2-10 and as we read through these verses think about the role God's grace is meant to play in your specific state of life.

Titus 2:2-10, ² Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. ³ Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, ⁴ and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, ⁵ to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. ⁶ Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. ⁷ Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, ⁸ and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us. ⁹ Bondservants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, ¹⁰ not pilfering, but

showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.”

Notice our unique roles in the body of Christ. Older men have their role to play, as do older women, younger women, younger men and Titus’s role is magnified as well as bondservants which could be used to describe our relationships at work. **Everyone has a specific role to play in the body of Christ that is fitting for sound doctrine.** One author referred to these verses as community grace. These verses show us the difference the grace of God should make in our Christian community.

Where do you fit in these verses? Do you know your role and are you striving to live it out with the enabling power of God’s grace? Older men, as you’re receiving the teaching of God’s Word are you striving to be sober minded, self controlled, sound in the faith, the love and the steadfastness? Do you still take your Christian life serious in terms of your conduct and your focus in life?

Older women are you taking what you’re learning and applying it to your life? Are you reverent in your behavior? Do you guard your tongue from gossip? Are you in control of your passions? Are you hogging all the teaching you’ve received through the years like a basketball player who always has to have the ball and be the one to shoot or are you meeting with younger women to pass on the truth and to help them fulfill their God given responsibilities to love their husbands and children? Notice in verse 4 it says the younger women need training in this area.

A young woman focusing the bulk of her energy on her home and her family wasn’t popular in Titus’s day and it’s not popular in our day. Younger women need the help of older women to maintain the right priorities. Why do the young women need to learn these things? Not just for the joy of their husbands and their children. They are to live this way “so that the Word of God may not be reviled.” When young women live this way it gains credibility for the power of the Word of God.

Kent Hughes, “As opponents in the church and potential faith seekers in the culture examine “what is in accord with sound doctrine” through the behavior of the young women in the church, the Word of God gains credibility. The wonderful message implicit here is that what happens in the home as a result of a woman’s care is a powerful tool for the progress of the gospel.”

What about the role of younger men? What role do they play in the local church that is fitting for sound doctrine? What attire looks good on a young man who is receiving right teaching? Titus 2:6, “Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled.” Paul includes Titus in this description in verses 7-8. Titus is to be an example to the younger men because he is a younger man. “Paul instructs Titus himself to instruct the younger men both by word and by example. Thus, just as the older women are to instruct the

younger, the influence of Titus's life is to spread among the less mature men. Paul first tells Titus to "encourage the young men to be self-controlled" (v. 6)."

It was evidently up to the older men to be the rocks in the church. It was up to the older women to lay the foundation for the younger women and it was up to Titus to lay the foundation for the younger men. Since the young men are to follow the example of the speech and conduct of Titus, Paul makes it clear that **godly responsibilities apply to all members of the Christian community.**

So, do you see how important sound doctrine is for the local church? Kent Hughes, "Prayer, praise, instruction, fellowship, and the service of the church do not fulfill their purposes if we do not function corporately and in community. There is always the temptation to privatize and individualize our faith experience. We tend to make decisions about whom to hear, what to do, and where to serve largely based upon what will be good for us personally. Paul's instructions to Titus thus prick our consciences in order to make us sense the importance of being responsible for others and living our lives in community. The hope we possess and pass in community should force us to consider the interests and needs of others more than our own."

Tonight I hope that you have been challenged by this reminder of the importance of sound doctrine in the life of the church. I hope our pastors and elders would continue to do what God's Word says. That we would be able to be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. And as we do that I hope and pray that the grace of God would transform our community so that the world around us would have a high view of God and a high view of His Word because of the impact of the Word on Grace Bible Church. Let's pray.