

“Doing What Is Good” (Titus 2:11–3:8)(3.20.22)

Titus 2:11–3:8 (NIV84)

¹¹For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. ¹²It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, ¹⁴who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, **eager to do what is good.**

¹⁵These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.

3 Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to **be ready to do whatever is good**,² to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.

³At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. ⁴But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, ⁵he saved us, not because of righteous things we had

done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,⁶ whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior,⁷ so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.⁸ This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to **devote themselves to doing what is good**. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.

Titus 3:14 (NIV84)

¹⁴ Our people must learn to **devote themselves to doing what is good**, in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives.

The word of God for the people of God.

LET US PRAY.

Title: **"Doing What Is Good"**

INTRODUCTION:

How is it that I picked another scripture that lifts up the return of Jesus Christ? In my efforts to preach the whole counsel of God, I have been tracking any books of the Bible that I have failed to preach about. 2 Thessalonians was one, which we

looked at the last couple of weeks. Titus is another. Paul was intentional about emphasizing Jesus' return. The fact of Jesus' resurrection and then His promised return from Heaven were instrumental in the sustaining and growth of the Early Church.

Why did the early church keep harping on Jesus' Second Coming? Think of Jesus' return as the North Star of our lives. They used it to keep their bearings through the sea of their trials and tribulations. It was their hope to which they held and it pointed them in the right direction. This hope helped make sense of the world. We too should use it to navigate our lives on this Pilgrim Journey.

Of course, without the first coming there could be no second coming. In fact, the two comings of Christ are inextricably connected. You can see that demonstrated in our text as chapter 2 verse 13 and verse 14 are one sentence. It is not just a matter of chronology.

Jesus came to do the work of the Father, a wonderfully good work indeed. Verse 14, very succinctly, summarizes the mission of God executed through the work of Jesus. He died for us to redeem us from **all** wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

Are we? Are we separated from all wickedness? Have we been purified? Do we belong to Jesus? Is that clear to an outside observer? Are we eager to do what is good? Why should we be? Because when Jesus comes again, He will be looking for faith on earth (Luke 18:8). And, as the book of James emphasizes James 2:26 (NIV84) "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead."

BODY:

Titus is a young pastor serving on the island of Crete. Who do you find on the island of Crete? Cretans. Titus 1:12 (NIV84) Even one of their own prophets has said, "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons." Titus held a special place in Paul's heart and called him my true child in a common faith. He had a big job and Paul wrote this pastoral epistle to guide him and the many churches in Crete.

Pastor Titus is to teach. He has God-given authority. Not only is he to encourage Christians but he must also correct beliefs and behaviors inconsistent with the Christian life. He is to remind the people.

The Christians on Crete had already been taught the truths of the faith, but they needed to be reminded. We too need to be reminded. The things

of this world are like a chipping hammer. Ping, ping, ping: little by little, almost imperceptibly attacking the Christian life. Ping, ping, ping: Distractions, distortions, entertainment. Yes, we need to be reminded.

We need to remember who and what we were before we came to a saving faith in the Lord Jesus. Now, I know that some of you were brought up in the Christian faith and gave yourselves to Christ at an early age; you are blessed. I am not talking about a cultural Christianity with all the trappings of religion and rituals without the power of God. I am talking about the kind of faith described here in Titus.

Paul remembers: At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. AND, the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age. To truly appreciate what the grace of God has done in our lives, we must know, really take hold of the fact, that we needed a Savior.

In Romans 3:10-12, Paul is quoting Psalm 14 and Psalm 53:¹⁰ As it is written:

“There is no one righteous, not even one;

¹¹ there is no one who understands,
no one who seeks God.

¹² All have turned away,
they have together become worthless;
there is no one who does good,
not even one.”

Mark 10:18 (NIV84) “Why do you call me good?”
Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God
alone.”

The grace of God works in many ways to bring us to a saving faith. We may be drawn to God by cords of His love. We may wonder, why am I so “lucky?” What did I do to deserve this? In a great trial, when we have no place else to turn, we turn to God. Maybe through a miracle – a healing of a loved one for instance – we see the hand of God upon us. It could happen through deliverance from addiction. The Lord Jesus could appear to a person in a dream, vision, or other manifestation for which we don’t have words.

The grace of God may soften our hearts so that we finally are able to receive the TRUTH of the gospel

message. Romans 1:16 (NIV84) I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it [the gospel, the good news of Jesus] is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

The reason I have spent so much time developing this point is that it is the key to Titus. In my Logos Bible Software, I am able to look at the scripture through a filter called a Propositional Outline. It makes it easier to drill down to the core issue not only of this pastoral letter but of the whole of Christian life:

“When the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.” AND, Our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, is the ultimate grace of God. John 1:14 (NIV84) The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, **full of grace and truth.**

God the Holy Spirit effects (not affects but effects) our salvation; through the washing of rebirth and renewal. John 3:3 (NIV84)

³In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”

John 3:5–6 (NIV84)

⁵Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. ⁶Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit."

Most people think of salvation in terms of heaven and eternal life, which they should. But, there is so much more. The kingdom of God is near; it is at hand. We must remember that we are not just saved FROM, we are saved TO. We are saved to a "life IN Christ."

There is a hundred year old hymn titled, "Saved, Saved!", written by Jack Schofield:

"I've found a Friend who is all to me;
his love is ever true;
I love to tell how He lifted me
and what His grace can do for you.

Chorus: Saved by His pow'r divine,
saved to new life sublime!
Life now is sweet and
my joy is complete,
for I'm saved, saved, saved!

He saves me from ev'ry sin and harm,
secures my soul each day;

I'm leaning strong on His mighty arm
—I know He'll guide me all the way.

Chorus: Saved by His pow'r divine,
saved to new life sublime!
Life now is sweet and
my joy is complete,
for I'm saved, saved, saved!

When poor and needy and all alone,
in love He said to me,
"Come unto Me and I'll lead you home
to live with me eternally."

Chorus: Saved by His pow'r divine,
saved to new life sublime!
Life now is sweet and
my joy is complete,
for I'm saved, saved, saved!

You see my friends, our salvation is not making the "old man" that we were better. Our Christian life is not putting on a fresh coat of paint or a new veneer. It is not taking down the old wallpaper and putting up new wallpaper. 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV84) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

Paul gives here in Titus a clear evidence that will demonstrate we are saved. Chapter 2 verse 14 – We will be **eager** to do what is good. Chapter 3

verse 1 – We will be **ready** to do whatever is good.
Verse 8 – We will **devote** ourselves to doing what is good. Chapter 3 verse 14 repeats verse 8 - We will **devote** ourselves to doing what is good. Notice that verse 14 says Our people must learn. And, verse 1 says to Remind the people. All of us must learn this. All of us must be reminded.

Before I go on, I need to make something perfectly clear. We are not saved BY works. Remember our text says, “he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.” We find a parallel passage in Ephesians 2:8–10 (NIV84)

⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹**not by works, so that no one can boast.**
¹⁰For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to **do good works**, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Our good works should flow out of our gratitude in love for what God has done, is doing, and will do. While on the one hand, it seems like it should be a spontaneous response, Paul tells Titus that Christians need to be taught to do good works and reminded to do good works. There is a tension here that is also expressed in Philippians 2:12–13 (NIV84)

¹²Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—**continue to work out your salvation** with fear and trembling,¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

To be eager is to be marked with enthusiasm and moved by a strong and urgent desire or interest. Also, with an ardor or keenness with a quick responsiveness to action. The Greek word, here translated as “ready,” means to be willing; to be prepared; to jump and be the first to diligently serve the community. To be devoted is to commit by a solemn act; to give over or direct to a cause, enterprise or activity. And, it implies a compelling motive.

My friends, you have heard the expression, “to learn by doing.” I remind you we can learn to be eager, ready, and devoted. Isn’t that the way we often teach children. We give them a task, with the right motivation; then guide, encourage, and exhort them along the way. Certainly, you have seen this in coaching. Better yet is when we join them in the doing and model the desired behaviors.

Let me exhort you with a few more scriptures so that you may be eager, ready, and devoted:

Jesus preaches in Matthew 5:16 (NIV84) **“In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven”**

Hebrews 10:24 (NIV84) And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

1 Peter 2:12 (NIV84) Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

Well, what are these good works to which I am referring? They are good deeds that glorify God, that point people to the Father and cause them to praise Him. It would include work within the church, the body of Christ. It would include ways of serving in the life of the church. It would include acts of charity out in the community.

Alexander Maclaren preached, “To make ourselves Christ-like is our first duty.” This happens when we totally submit to God the Holy Spirit in every aspect of our life. We need to be serious and diligent about an intimacy with our Creator. We must **embrace grace**. Spend time in prayer. Spend time in worship. Gather in the assembly of Saints. Participate in Holy Communion. Read, study, and meditate on God’s word. When we do

these things, we naturally will be eager, ready, and devoted to do whatever is good.

At the same time, the context of Titus is that Christians are to be good citizens. We are to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient. We should not slander anyone, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men. Our actions should in no way reflect poorly on our Heavenly Father, or the Lord Jesus, or cause anyone to blaspheme the Holy Spirit.

Do not divorce your occupational duties from this concept of doing good. Colossians 3:17 (NIV84) And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. 1 Peter 4:11 (NIV84) If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, **so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.**

Your workplace or where you volunteer, may be the most fertile soil for you to do good works (eagerly, readily, and devotedly). That may be the place where your light may shine most brightly. It may be the place where the grace of God is needed most.

CONCLUSION:

Paul's last thought in this pastoral letter to Titus, before the closing, is an admonition not to live unproductive lives. In fact, it is set against being devoted to doing what is good. He is not saying we should not rest. He is not saying to forgo honoring the Sabbath. Charles Spurgeon said, "[A Christian] will preach, not with his mouth always, but with his life. The use of good works is, that they are a Christian's sermon."

2 Corinthians 9:8 (NIV84) And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

In response to the grace of God that saved us through the redeeming work of Jesus Christ, may we be eager, ready and devoted to do whatever work brings glory to God the Father, as we are empowered by God the Holy Spirit.

Amen and amen. Let us pray.