

# Keynotes from Tim Gamston's am Sermon on 24/10/2021

Text: Titus 2 v 1-16

Series: "Living godly lives in a godless culture"

Part 6: "Faith on display"

## Scripture references from the ESV

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

After every sermon, we need to ask ourselves some questions.

- What are you going to do with the teaching of the sermon?
- How do you need to change in order to be a good steward of what you've just heard?
- What difference will this message make in your life this week?

It is possible to listen to sermon after sermon and not be changed, and to know in your head all the rich theology of the Bible, but never know and love the God of whom the theology speaks. Pastors are to teach sound doctrine (**Titus 1:9** see p4). That sound

doctrine is the truth about God and what he has done for us in coming in the person of his Son to rescue us from sin (vv11-14 above).

Elders are to teach the good news that sinners can be put right with a Holy God through Jesus alone, but, as Paul instructs Titus (v1 above), they must also teach the kind of behaviour that is appropriate for those who believe this sound doctrine. Paul goes on (vv2-10 above) to show how the gospel is to be lived out by the church community.

As Christians we have the life of God in us. A Christian is a person who has received the Spirit of God so that they are now a new person. They are no longer controlled by their human passions. Instead, they are controlled by the Spirit of God living in them. Sound doctrine teaches us that, but we also need to be taught how this is meant to change us.

- It is to lead to a life of self-control – vv 2,3,5 and 6 (above)

The sound doctrine of the gospel teaches us that Christ lives in us by his Spirit, so we are not at the mercy of our human passions but are under the control of the Spirit. The life that is appropriate to this doctrine is a life of self-control.

- Does it matter if elders don't teach this or we don't live up to what we're meant to be?

It matters to the mission of the church. The world needs to see that knowing Jesus makes a difference. So we see that:

- Younger women are to be **self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands** in order that the word of God may not be reviled (vv4-5 above)
- Pastors are to show themselves **to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned** in order that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us. (vv7-8 above).
- Slaves are to be **submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not pilfering,** but showing all good faith, in order that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour (vv9-10 above)

We live our lives in the arena of a watching world and those watching us need to see that

### **knowing Jesus makes a real difference**

We can so easily damage the witness of our lips by the way we live our lives. We might tell people that Jesus loves sinners and died to save them. We might say that we love him and our lives have been changed by him, but if we don't live those lives of love, then everything we have said looks like empty talk.

**What we claim to believe must be made visible within the home, the church and our culture**

**Titus 2:1-10** highlights four requirements that are needed for that to happen.

**1. We must understand healthy doctrine** to be able to build right lives

In **Titus 1:10,14** (see p4) Paul describes the false teachers and points out that they are teaching human commands and traditions, not what comes from God. The result is that they are unsettling whole families (**1:11** see p4). He gives his judgement on them in **v16** (see p4) and emphasises the need for sound doctrine (**2:1** above). There are two foundations on which we can build our lives:

- Empty talk – teaching with no substance or truth about God (**Ch 1** see p4)
- Teaching that comes from God and reveals God to our hearts and minds (sound doctrine)

### **What we listen to will impact our lives**

If we continually listen to empty talk and lies of false teachers, we will become those people who **profess to know God, but ... deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work (1:16).**

In contrast, if we make it our aim to listen to the sound doctrine that is revealed to us by God's Spirit in the Bible, then we will become a people who,

**showing all good faith, adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour (2:10 above)**

We need to be taught sound doctrine, and, as well, we need to get and keep hold of it. Sound doctrine is the teaching about who God is, what he has done and how he relates to us. It is the message of the whole Bible and we need sermons that teach this. We will never build right lives unless we build on a foundation of right truth.

**2. We need to be taught personal application** so we know how to live in response to what we know about God

In **2:2-10** (above), Paul tells Titus what it looks like for the different groups of people to live out the gospel. Parents, husbands, wives, pastors, elders, home group leaders, youth workers, Sunday School teachers or indeed

**anyone who teaches the Bible must not assume that the people who listen to them know how to personally apply the teaching of the gospel.**

Regardless of our age or position in the church, we all need to be taught how to personally apply the sound doctrine of the gospel. Paul is speaking to Titus (the pastor) who needed to hear this! Bible teachers need to understand the culture and what challenges we face today, doing the hard work of thinking through what this teaching would look like for people. Jesus did this in his teaching, particularly in the Sermon on the Mount (**Matthew 5ff** – please read in your Bible).

- He stated the truth, the sound doctrine, and then illustrated it so that people knew what it looked like.
- He applied it to the people listening so that they knew how to apply the teaching on a personal level.

**3. The foundation of healthy doctrine needs to be applied in close community.**

In the list of people in **Titus 2**, Paul is thinking about the traditional Roman household, a community in which:

- There were old and young, men and women, together with the servants they employed
- The older men exercised headship over the household, women were responsible for the day-to-day management of the home and young people were taught by older people.

Paul is calling for the gospel to shape those household communities, so that they are healthy households - built on and living out that healthy doctrine. The health of a culture depends on the health of homes.

- When home life is ordered rightly, that will lead to churches and communities that are ordered rightly.

In this way, the whole neighbourhood will be impacted.

### **The life of Christ is shaped in us as we bump against other people.**

- It is as we engage with other people that the rough edges of our character are honed
- It is as we rub up against people that the mess of our disordered hearts is exposed

### **We discover the sin in us as we bump up against other sinners like us.**

- It is in this messiness that Christ works to form us in his own image

As an example, Paul says we are to be dignified. That is easy when you are on your own and there is no one around to annoy us! When others disrupt our peace (that person who talks too much or our children fighting), then the concept of God's love, and our love for others seem academic. We just want to throttle those people!

- Is it possible, however, that the frustrations we feel in community are the means that God uses to expose our hearts so that we realise we don't love God and others as much as we thought we did?

As we confess that to God, we experience his forgiveness and love in a way that we wouldn't have done otherwise.

- As we experience the reality of God's love to forgive us, so our hearts are softened and we begin to love the people who disrupt our lives.

We learn how to live out the gospel in communities where people both bless us and annoy us, help us and hurt us,

love us and hate us. If we spend our lives hiding from people, we may be running from the very means that God wants to use to make us more like Jesus.

**4.** We live before a **watching world** and our households are on display to our culture. Paul expected that the Gospel, rightly taught and applied, would lead to changed households, and those households would be on display to the pagan culture. **He is concerned about the mission of God.** The church is a people saved by Christ, changed by Christ, to become like Christ and they are to show that to the world about them. We are to be people who live Gospel lives in our communities so that they will see the beauty of Christ in us and glorify God as Jesus taught. (**Matt 5:16** see p4).

**What difference will this message make in your life this week?** As believers, we have the light of Christ in us – his life and his mind in us, but we are in a hostile world that doesn't know or want to know Jesus.

Our task is to let the light of Christ shine brightly from us so that:

- People will see the beauty of Christ, and especially his grace to save us from sin
- Those same people will come to faith in him and gain safe passage to heaven

Jesus said '**Apart from me you can do nothing**' (John 15:5) and the light of Christ will only shine from us as we have fellowship with Christ in every moment of every day:

- as we take his word and listen to what he says to us by his Spirit
- as we talk with him, confessing our failure to live as we ought, trusting in his mercy to forgive us and

**asking for his grace to live the life he calls us to live  
so that we live for his glory.**

**Titus 1:** Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ to further the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness— <sup>2</sup> in the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, <sup>3</sup> and which now at his appointed season he has brought to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Saviour,<sup>4</sup> To Titus, my true son in our common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.<sup>5</sup> The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint<sup>[a]</sup> elders in every town, as I directed you. <sup>6</sup> An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe<sup>[b]</sup> and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. <sup>7</sup> Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. <sup>8</sup> Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. <sup>9</sup> **He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.**<sup>10</sup> For there are many rebellious people, full of meaningless talk and deception, especially those of the circumcision group. <sup>11</sup> They must be silenced, because they are disrupting whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach—and that for the sake of dishonest gain. <sup>12</sup> One of Crete's own prophets has said it: "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons."<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>13</sup> This saying is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith <sup>14</sup> **and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the merely human commands of those who reject the truth.** <sup>15</sup> To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. <sup>16</sup> **They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.**

**Matt 5:16** In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.