

# Our Good Works And God's Global Mission

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[0:00] Well, if you'd open up your Bibles to Titus chapter 3, we are going to finish up our study in the book of Titus. It's been wonderfully interrupted by some time in Psalm 62, 63, courtesy of Associate Pastor Billy Knight.

Thank you, Billy. So let's wrap this up. I consider myself a missional shopper.

A shopper with a clearly defined objective. So let's say in the Salvati house, it becomes apparent that we are missing, we are out of coffee creamer.

At that point, I raise my hand and say, here am I, send me. And I make a beeline to festival. I say no to the bakery. I say no to the fresh meats.

I don't care what kind of fish are in there. I'm on my way to the dairy section and I collect one of those gigantic things of coffee creamer.

[1:06] And I bring it home to a well done and good and faithful husband. But to be honest with you, I'm not a missional shopper all the time.

Like when I go to Lowe's, all of a sudden, I think I need a riding lawnmower, a massive 20 burner grill, and a chainsaw that can take down redwoods.

That's, I get sidetracked there. To be missional is to have a singularity of focus. And to be missional in a biblical sense starts by having a clearly defined objective.

And Jesus gives us just that at the end of Matthew in what's called the Great Commission. He says, go make disciples of the nations.

And so we as a church have been called to make disciples of the nations. The apostle Paul had his objective to go make disciples of the nations.

[2:10] Titus had his objective to make disciples of the nations. And that's why we have the book of Titus. Titus is about making disciples on the island of Crete.

Establishing a local church there. It's about mission. And we've been given a clearly defined mission through Jesus Christ.

As we wrap up the book of Titus this morning, I want to draw out for you mission. So if you'd turn to Titus chapter 3, I'm going to read through chapter 3 verses 12 through the end of this epistle, 15. Listen. When I send Artemis or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I've decided to spend the winter there. Do your best to speed Zenos the lawyer and Apollos on their way, see that they lack nothing.

And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works so as to help cases of urgent need and not be unfruitful. All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith.

[3:32] Grace be with you all. Brothers and sisters of Christ the King Church, God has given us good work to do.

He's given us good work to do in advancing the Great Commission. So that His transforming grace radically changes the lives of people in this city and in our region and around the world.

God saved us for the good works of fulfilling the Great Commission. He saved us for mission work. So five exhortations this morning from this text.

Let me tell you what they are. First, see the mission. Second, embrace the change. Third, get to work. Fourth, anticipate the warm greetings.

And five, rely on His grace. God has given us mission work to do together. Father, it's a good work and it flows out of the grace of God that He's poured out on us.

[4:40] So let's see the mission. In verses 12 and 13, When I send Artemis or Tychicus to you, do not do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I've decided to spend the winter there.

Do your best to speed Zenos the lawyer and Apollos on their way. See that they lack nothing. It's not unusual for a first century letter like this to close with some travel plans and then some greetings.

And we see that going on right here. And so in verse 12 and 13, we see on what on the surface looks like future travel plans.

So in verse 12, Paul tells Titus to meet him in Nicopolis, which is about 200 miles north of Athens from Greece. And before Titus is to go, he needs to wait for either Artemis or Tychicus to arrive in Crete to release him to go to Nicopolis.

Paul hadn't decided who he's going to send, Artemis or Tychicus. He hadn't decided yet. But he said, when they get there, meet me in Nicopolis. And why Titus had to wait for one of these men to arrive was to care for all these young churches on the island of Crete, filled with young believers.

[5:52] And in verse 13, Paul tells Titus to do everything he can do to speed Zenos the lawyer, probably a lawyer of Greco-Roman law, and Apollos on their way.

Now, in this section, this is the only place in our New Testaments where we hear the names Artemis and Zenos. They don't show up any place else in the New Testament.

Both Tychicus and Apollos, these guys were regular preachers of the gospel in and around the Mediterranean basin. They were well known. And what Paul tells Titus to do is, hey, speed Zenos and Apollos on their way.

See that they lack nothing. It was probably by the hands of Zenos and Apollos that Titus and these churches in Crete received this letter from Paul.

And what Paul is telling them is, telling Titus is, hey, these guys are coming through. Make sure you give them everything they need to continue on their way. More travel plans, or so it seems.

[6:58] We could read these two verses and breeze over them and miss the big picture behind it.

Have you ever walked into like O'Hare or Mitchell Airport or some airport, and you walk in and you're met with the departure and arrival screens?

Do you know what I'm talking about? And you know what planes are coming in. You know what planes are going out. And you're like, oh, there's flight 737 going to, you know, Boise, Idaho. Great, yeah. We can read these verses and we can read them as kind of the arrival and departure boards in an airport.

But there's more going on. This is about mission. When you see plans, plans reveal purpose. Artemis, Titus, Titus, and Paul.

[7:58] They were all men who had been saved by the grace of God. These men were men who have encountered the living Jesus, been forgiven of all their sins, been cleansed, made new, and they had devoted themselves to the good works of fulfilling the great commission.

Zenus and Apollos aren't going on their way somewhere to experience the first century Walt Disney World. They're going somewhere to preach the gospel.

So these travel plans that we're looking at, these are gospel mission plans. These are go make disciples of the nation travel plans.

There's more to the story. We learned from 2 Timothy 4 that Tychicus ended up being sent to Ephesus to relieve Timothy. So that Timothy could come to Paul.

Which means it's reasonable to conclude that Paul actually decided to send Artemis to relieve Titus in Crete. But we also learned from 2 Timothy 4 that Titus, after going to Nicopolis, ends up in Dalmatia.

[9:16] And he's not there to train dogs. He's there to proclaim the gospel of God's saving grace, the sound doctrine. And in that proclaiming, as those responding, he is to establish them in the grace of God and help them to live out this sound doctrine of grace in good works.

To bear the fruit in keeping with God's grace. So here's what you need to understand. That when these original Cretan Christians heard this letter read, they would have been reminded that there

was a greater global work of God's grace going on.

These are mission plans. See the mission. Christ the King Church. What God is doing in and through us is only one aspect of God's bigger work of grace in this city.

There are faithful churches proclaiming Jesus in this city. We're part of, just a little part of God's bigger work in Kenosha, in Wisconsin, Midwest.

West, North America, all throughout the world today, right now, the God of all grace is doing a work in and through his church, making disciples of Jesus all around the world today.

[10:55] There's a bigger work going on. I've been listening to J.D. Greer, a pastor on the East Coast, and he's compelling.

And one of the things he makes clear is that God did not save us in order to give us our own little mission. God saved us and welcomed us into being a part of his mission.

To make known his grace and glory among the nations. To make disciples of Jesus Christ. We are going to be about good works.

But they're good works that are involved in his mission. They're mission aimed. Making disciples of the nations.

So see the mission. Embrace the change. Second point, embrace the change. Now, could you imagine being one of the young Christians in Crete and hearing this letter read for the first time?

[12:03] And you're in the same room with Titus. And as this letter is being read and they're coming to the end, it's dawning on you that this man, Titus, who has been faithfully pouring his life into yours so that you could follow Jesus, that this man, his time with you is limited.

I can imagine people saying, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. You're not going to stay here, Titus? You're not staying here long haul?

You're leaving? What does this mean for our church? Who's this guy, Artemis? Who's Titicus?

When you hear the word change, what happens in your soul?

Some of you in this room hear the word change and you're like, oh, melt. Others of you in the room, when you hear the word change, you're like, yeah, I want to change around the furniture in my family room again.

I did it two weeks ago. I love change. Some people love change. Some people hate change. And then there's everyone in between. What we see going on here is gospel personnel change.

[13:21] Under the lordship of the risen Jesus Christ, the apostle Paul is deploying and redesigning his apostolic gospel team.

He's sending them to different places for mission purposes to make disciples of the nations. Gospel personnel change was a normal part of God's first century mission work.

And so it's going to be a normal part of God's 21st century mission work. Our risen and reigning Lord Jesus Christ will be assigning his blood-bought saints as he sees fit.

Which means we should expect change. We should embrace change. And even encourage change. Encourage people to step out in faith.

Encourage people to go and do things. Attempt great things for God. Because we believe great things about God. Now, we all know that this kind of personnel change isn't easy.

[14:39] When you've shared life with somebody, and you love somebody, and that person, they love you. And you've shared a lot of life together. You've gone through hard things together. And God calls that person somewhere else for his purposes.

There's going to be a deep sense of loss. Especially if that person leaving has made a significant contribution to your life or the life of a church. And so Ben and Lindsay Crawford, you're leaving is bittersweet.

We love you guys. We've gone through a lot of stuff together. You've served your church well. But we also see God at work sending his people for his purposes, in their case, to Florida.

To help a young church there get established and worship the living God. And to make disciples of Floridians. John and Terry Tittman.

They're here this morning. We love you guys. John and Terry are raising support to go with a ministry called Family Life, which is part of Campus Crusade. And they're seeking to bring the gospel to singles and married couples and families and blended families in this nation and around the world.

[15:53] And chances are they're going to have to move and go to Little Rock, Arkansas. But for the sake of the mission, we say go. We're going to miss you.

It's bittersweet. But in light of God's global purposes in Christ, go. Jiwon and Caitlin Rye. Jiwon just finished his first year at Trinity.

And in four years, if the Lord should Terry, he and Caitlin and their children are going to go back to Nepal. And we get the opportunity to send them back with great blessing.

I don't want them to go. But the Lord Jesus does. And so we send them. They're willing to go and we're willing to send them.

If there comes a time when we get to send out Billy Nye or Matt Sear or even myself to plant a new church somewhere, are they going to leave a hole?

[16:59] Yes, they will. Will God provide to meet that? Yes, he will. Will it be sad to see them leave? Oh, yeah. Will there be joy in our hearts knowing that the Lord Jesus is expanding his mission around this region?

Absolutely. Embrace the change. We must be a church that not just embraces the change, but encourages change for mission.

Encourages risk-taking. See, what it boils down to is God is making his grace in Christ known to the nations, and he's called us to be a part of that.

Could you imagine if Titus, when he hears this letter, says, Sorry, Paul, I hear what you're saying, but I love the beaches in Crete.

I'm staying. No, Titus was willing to go. Because he had devoted himself to the good works of the Great Commission.

[18:02] He went. We must be a church that is willing to let people go and send them with blessing.

We must embrace the change. In 3.14, we read of the call to do good works. And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works so as to help cases of urgent need and not be unfruitful. In 12 and 13, he's focusing on travel planes, but it's really mission. And then in verse 15, he greets people, which is still about mission. And in verse 14, Paul takes the opportunity to reassert the central theme of the book of Titus, to do good works and let our people learn to devote themselves to good works.

What are good works? Well, good works are the result of God's grace at work in a Christian.

It is the effect of God's undeserved mercy and kindness in the life of a believer. God graces me, and the result is good works.

[19:26] Grace internalized results in good works externalized. Think of the tree. A tree is rooted in the nutritious soil, and it bears, as a result, good fruit.

When a believer is planted in the nutritious, healthy soil of sound doctrine, the grace revealed in Jesus, he or she is going to bear good fruit.

A healthy root bears healthy fruit. Titus is a book that emphasizes good works.

Titus, and before I say anything else, I just need to make sure we're all clear in the room on something. Good works can't save you.

You don't have enough time, nor are there enough good works to dig you out of the hole that your sin has put you in. Only God's grace can deliver you from your sin.

[20:44] Only what Jesus did on the cross is able to forgive all of your sin, pull you out of that mire, and set you on the firm ground of God and what he's done for us in Jesus.

Good works can't save you. But we were saved for good works. There's no such thing as a Christian who's not bearing good fruit.

Because God's grace necessarily results in good works. Obeying God, blessing others.

In Ephesians 2, 8, and 9, this is where Dave Barnard started this morning, called us to worship.

We read this. For by grace you've been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing. It's the gift of God.

[21:48] Not a result of your works, so that no one may boast. Verse 10. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Good works don't save us, but we were saved for good works. We even see that in Titus, in verses 5.

He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

All throughout the book of Titus, we have this emphasis on good works. It begins in 1.1, where Titus talks about, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness.

That's one way of saying, because you've believed in the doctrine of grace, it's going to result in a changed life. And then when we look down at the qualifications for elders, what it's all about are these men who've been so transformed by the grace of God, their lives are characterized by good works.

[23:16] This good fruit born of being rooted in sound doctrine. And they're so qualified that they are then called to proclaim these good things to the church of God and to shepherd God's people.

2.1, Titus is to teach this church, these churches, that good works, the good works that accord with sound doctrine of grace. And it applies to older men, older women, younger women, younger men. In that first century, in the slaves, it applied to them, it applied to everybody in a household. And then in chapter 3, it goes from household out into the community.

And in 3.1, remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work. It's God's grace resulting in good work in relationship to our ruling authorities. In verse 2, to show perfect courtesy to all people. 3.1, be ready for every good work.

[24:27] 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. 4.1, be ready for every good work.

4.1, be ready for every good work. And then now we're back to verse 14. 4.1, be ready for every good work. And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works. And Paul has a particular kind of good work in mind.

Remember in verse 13, he was just talking about speeding Zenos the lawyer and Apollos on their way so that they lack nothing. He's thinking mission. He's thinking logistical help in advancement of the gospel.

And he says, Titus, make sure you're teaching the church to devote themselves to these kinds of good works. Helping people, missionaries, those taking the gospel out when they have urgent needs.

What we can draw from this is this reality. There are all kinds of urgent needs that we encounter as a church. But based upon what Paul is telling Titus here, we've got to be at least committed, devoting ourselves to helping urgent needs among people going to the nations with the gospel.

[25:50] At least that. So what are those kinds of needs? What kind of urgent needs are those? Well, there's always the need for money, right?

Missionaries need money. When they come back, they need hospitality. Chelsea Zeman, one of our mission partners, is going to be here next week. We get to help her.

Help her. Show her hospitality. Help with logistics. Robintown's going to be going to China this fall to relieve workers in an orphanage, a Christian orphanage.

To relieve them. She gets to step in and help. Helping in cases of urgent need. Another way to help is encouragement.

People in the mission field, all over the place, man, they can get discouraged pretty easy. Encourage them.

[26:54] Pray for them. People need praying for. Those going around the world, locally, regionally, internationally. Praying Ephesians 6.

We pray in the spirit that God would open up doors. To make known the gospel. It's warfare. But all of these assume that you're in some kind of close proximity to people like this.

Are you helping out? Do we have any NASCAR fans in the room? I was at a NASCAR race, the Pepsi 500, 20 years ago.

And I was sitting at that part in the pit, pit road, where they're coming out and they're accelerating. And it was awesome because I can feel the acceleration in my chest.

Well, for me, NASCAR is kind of boring until there's a crash or the cars come into the pits. And when the cars come into the pits, something amazing happens.

[28:03] The pit crew. The pit crew jumps on this car like a panther. They are there to help this case of urgent need.

You've got people assigned very specific roles. You've got the jack person. Gets that car up. And you've got the pneumatic drill guy.

You've got the wheel guy who pulls the wheel off and rolls it and gets another one and puts it on.

You've got the windshield guy. You've got the gas guy. And then there's more to the team.

You've got a spotter. You've got an owner. You've got a driver. It's a team working together to address needs in order to win the race.

Brothers and sisters, God has gifted each of you. He's gifted you uniquely with gifts and burdens in order for us to work as a team, as a church, addressing urgent needs for global missions.

[29:11] We have different roles. What Paul is clear here is that we are to learn it and let our people learn to devote themselves to good works.

Do you know how you grow in giving? By giving. Do you know how you grow in hospitality? By being hospitable. Do you know how you grow in logistical assistance?

By stepping out and being logistical in your help. Do you know how you grow when it comes to relieving people internationally or locally?

You step in and volunteer. Do you know how you grow in encouraging others? By encouraging others. Do you know how you grow in praying for people?

By praying for people. That word learn to devote themselves to these good works? That word learn is not a classroom learning. It is a hands-on learning.

[30:12] Like learning to drive a car. You learn by doing. And Paul is saying, hey, you learn to support global missions by doing it.

Be on your pit crew. Your gospel pit crew. And get to work. There are needs. So the question isn't if you should be participating in Great Commission.

The question is where and with who. You must learn to devote yourselves to the good works of advancing the gospel of grace around the world.

It will keep you from being unfruitful. Unproductive. Not making a difference. The worst thing is to do nothing. Step in.

Grab a jack for the gospel. We need to get to work. Fourth point. Anticipate warm greetings.

[31:17] 315. All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Paul's come to the end of this letter. And he wants Titus to know that everybody who's with him sends their greetings.

We're not told who. We're just told that they greet them. Immediately Titus would have been like, yeah, I got backup. Yeah. Yeah. And then Paul extends his greeting through Titus to all who have been truly converted by God's saving grace.

Greet those who love us in the faith. As we become more and more involved and invested in God's global work, do you know what's going to happen?

We're going to get more and more of these kinds of greetings. We're going to be hearing from people all around the world. Locally, regionally, internationally. Next Sunday, I have the privilege of preaching at a church in Milwaukee.

It's called Imago Dei. Billy preached there a few weeks ago. And my first move in preaching is going to be this. Brothers and sisters of Imago Dei, I greet you on behalf of the blood bod of Christ the King Church.

[32:32] Warm greetings. You know what we're going to hear back? Greet them in the Lord for us. Do we know what's going to happen in our relationship with Imago Dei?

I don't know what's going to happen. I'm kind of hoping it's going to be a sweet friendship in the mission of Jesus is what I'm hoping for. Our lives will be enriched by it.

As we become more and more involved with God's global mission, the work of the Great Commission, we should expect warm greetings.

Brothers and sisters from around our region and world. saying hi because they're blood-bought and we're blood-bought too. I've been invited to go to Nepal early next summer to help encourage and equip local pastors serving in the foothills around Everest.

Jiwon has extended the invitation to me, and I'm really looking forward at least to the opportunity. But do you want to know what I would want for us as a church to come from this kind of investment of time and energy?

[33:43] Do you know what I'd want for us? I'd want for us to experience the treasure and the richness of international relationships with Christians on literally the other side of the planet who are doing the good work of the Great Commission.

Brothers and sisters seeking to make disciples of the nations. This kind of camaraderie in the gospel, it's not limited to international relationships.

It happens in the city. As we rub shoulders with other Christians from other churches who are seeking to advance the gospel of grace, as we get to know them and we greet them, there's a richness in that.

And it's not just limited to that. When you serve on a ministry team here at Christ the King Church, you get to go shoulder to shoulder, week after week, with brothers and sisters in this church laboring in the gospel.

And so when you see them, you're like, Hey brother, hey sister, greetings in the Lord. We're co-laboring together. There is sweetness that is born together as we serve, doing the good works of this mission.

[34:56] It's like being on the gospel pit crew. You're working together and working together, and there's good things that happen relationally as a result. Are you on mission?

Are you doing the good work? Are you looking for a place to serve and to serve with? We've got needs here as a church. Come find me. I'll direct you. I'll make some connections for you.

And so you can shoulder in and begin to labor. Let me finish with the last point.

We're to expect warm greetings as we labor in the gospel, but we all must five rely on God's grace. Look at where he closes, the benediction.

Grace be with you all. Grace be with you all. It's where Paul starts in 1-4, grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior, and it's where he closes in 15, grace be with you all.

[36:05] Do you know why? Paul closes with these words, grace be with you all. It's because we are all in constant need of God's grace for what he has called us to.

Notice, he doesn't close with the words, seminary degrees be with you all. He doesn't close with the words, ministry experts be with you all.

Piles of money be with you all. Physical health be with you all. Convenience and comfort be with you all. He doesn't close with any of that. He closes with grace be with you all.

We're on mission. And we need mission power to do mission work. Grace be with you all. God's grace is his undeserved posture of kindness and blessing towards sinners.

That's God's grace. And God's grace saves us. God's grace trains us. And God's grace sustains us in the mission.

[37:18] It's a powerful presence. 2 Timothy 2.1, Paul says to Timothy, Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, Timothy.

Because you need it to endure, to persevere, to press on in doing the good works of the Great Commission. 2 Corinthians 12.9, Paul quotes Jesus.

Jesus says, My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Do you see what he just did? Jesus equates his grace with his power.

You need it. So for us, this is what it means. We bring the weakness, he brings the grace. So we're constantly calling out for his grace.

Oh God, give us your strength to get done what you've called us to do for your glory. So when it comes to elders, brothers, you need God's grace.

[38:18] We're going to install Eric and Brian in just a minute. Eric and Brian, you need God's grace. Grace be to you. Older men in the church, you need God's grace to be self-controlled and dignified.

Older women, you need God's grace to be reverent in your behavior. Younger women, you need God's grace in order to manage your household well. Young men, you need God's grace to be self-controlled.

As citizens, in order to submit to our present rulers, we need God's grace to do that well in order to bear witness to Jesus. In order to show perfect courtesy to all people, we need God's grace.

And when it comes to playing our role on the gospel, Pitt grew in getting the gospel out, we need God's grace. John 15, 8, Jesus says, By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and prove to be my disciples.

Do you know how we bear fruit? We abide in Jesus. We root ourselves in the source of grace. Jesus.

[39:37] We've covered some ground. See the mission. Embrace the change. We've got work to do. Anticipate warm greetings.

And rely on His grace. And rely on His grace. And you know what's going to happen? God's going to use us. He's going to use us in our faith-filled work.

And we're going to see more and more people come to Jesus and experience His transforming grace. It's by His grace. It's for His glory.

And the good of all mankind. We've got work to do, brothers and sisters. And God has the grace to do it by.

Let's pray. Lord Jesus, we want to be a church that You are using for Your purposes here in this city, in this region, and around the world.

[40:39] God, would You put us to work empowered by Your grace. We get to proclaim the gospel of grace for all in need of grace.

Lord Jesus, pour out Your Spirit upon us to that end. And it's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.