

Truth and Godliness

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[0 : 00] us. This morning we focused in on one particular verse, but this evening we're going to take a wider view of this portion of Scripture. We're going to range across the three chapters of this short pastoral letter, but we'll read the first two chapters just now.

The letter of Paul to Titus, chapter 1. Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior. To Titus, my true child in a common faith, grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order and appoint elders in every town as I directed you. If anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. For an overseer as God's steward must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party. They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach. One of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, said, Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons. This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, not devoting themselves to Jewish myths and the commands of people who turn away from the truth. To the pure all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure. But both their minds and their consciences are defiled.

They profess to know God, but they deny him by their words. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work. But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine.

Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. Older women likewise are to be reverent in behaviour, not slanderers or slaves to much wine.

[3 : 50] 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. Bond servants 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 Saviour. 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 the glory, for the, sorry, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, 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. And so on. May God bless this reading from his word.

Now again, let's turn to Psalm 34, and we're going to sing the last few stanzas from verse 15 to the end.

[6 : 02] The Lord's eyes are upon the just. He listens to their plea. The wicked he rejects and blots from earth their memory. The righteous cry. The Lord responds and frees them when distressed.

The Lord draws near the broken heart and rescues the depressed. Let us worship God as we sing these verses.

The Lord's eyes are upon the just. He listens to their plea.

The wicked he rejects and blots from earth their memory. The wicked he rejects and blots from earth their memory.

The righteous cry. The Lord responds and frees them when distressed.

[7 : 09] The Lord draws near the broken heart and rescues the depressed.

From all the troubles of the just, the Lord will set them free.

The Lord protects, the Lord protects, the Lord protects, the Lord protects, the Lord protects, the Lord protects, the Lord's broken heart and will be.

The wicked are condemned to death. All wounds who hate the just.

God saves his home, man of God, for in the Lord they trust.

[8 : 10] God saves his home, man of God. So please turn in your Bibles to Paul's letter to Titus.

Those of you who are eagle-eyed and sharp of mind will probably have already noticed that there is a theme that runs through this letter to Titus.

Titus. It appears very early in the letter. In fact, it appears in the very first verse. In chapter 1, where we read, Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth which accords with godliness.

Paul unites together these two things.

Knowledge of the truth and a godly way of life. In the opening words of chapter 2, the apostle charges Titus with these words. But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine.

[9 : 37] The very words he used in the opening line of the epistle. And you will also notice that this charge is repeated, in effect, in the closing words of the same chapter, where he tells Titus to declare these things, exhort and rebuke with all authority.

Let no one disregard you. And then in chapter 3, we again see the unbreakable link between sound teaching and good works or godly living.

After supplying the reason and the motivation for such godly living, he adds in verse 8 of chapter 3, 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.

And if we drill down a little further into this letter of Paul to Titus, we will see that the action Titus is to undertake on the island of Crete, particularly the action of appointing elders in every town, chapter 1, verse 5, is to be done with a view to making sure that sound doctrine is taught, that false teachers are silenced, and that godly living is both exemplified and encouraged.

[11 : 05] Who is to be appointed to the office of elder? Well, look at the qualifications. One who is above reproach. A one-woman man.

A father who knows how to rule his own household. A man who is above reproach. Mentioned a second time in this list of characteristics. Then follows a string of negative remarks.

A man who's not arrogant. Who's not quick-tempered. Who's not a drunkard. Who's not violent.

Who's not greedy for gain. And then a string of positive characteristics are mentioned.

A man who is hospitable. A lover of good. Self-controlled. Upright. Holy. Disciplined. And as well as all of that, one more thing is mentioned in chapter 1.

He must hold firmly to the trustworthy word. So that he will be able to give instruction and sound doctrine to others. And also, will be able to rebuke those who are teaching something contradictory to sound doctrine.

[12 : 13] So in short, elders, according to the apostle Paul, must be men who are both godly in life and in teaching. Now, why is Paul so insistent on this to Titus?

Well, the big picture reason is that God has a plan which relates to the promise of eternal life that was made before the ages began.

Isn't that what he says in the opening remarks? Chapter 1, verse 2. He takes Titus back into eternity to show him God's plan.

God's great overarching purpose. And this purpose is to give a people to his son, Jesus Christ.

God's great overarching plan is taking effect. And he is a person who will be brought into Christ's kingdom and transformed into the likeness of King Jesus himself.

[13:15] And through the preaching of the gospel by the apostles, including Paul, men and women in places such as Crete are being called out of the world and transformed by the Holy Spirit.

Paul speaks about this power of the grace of God in those thrilling words of chapter 2 and verses 11 to 14.

Let's read them again because they're so wonderful and their significance is so far reaching. For the grace of God has appeared. Now, Paul is, of course, here referring to the appearance of the grace of God in the coming into the world of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And this grace of God that has appeared is bringing salvation for all people. Such as Saul of Tarsus, who became the apostle Paul from a Jewish background.

And also for people like Titus, the Greek, who is now one of Paul's lieutenants, putting the gospel into effect in Crete and ordering the church accordingly.

[14:40] But not only Jew and Gentile, but rich and poor, young and old, male and female, slave and free. The grace of God that's appeared in Christ is bringing salvation to all kinds and all sorts of people.

And when it does so, it trains us, Paul says, like an old-time schoolmaster to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions.

That is selfish and worldly desires. And to live self-controlled lives with respect to ourselves. Upright lives with respect to those around us.

And godly lives with respect to the Lord. Waiting for our blessed hope. The appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us.

For what purpose did he give himself for us? To redeem us from all lawlessness, Paul says. And to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

[15:58] And then again in chapter 3, Paul speaks about this saving and transforming work of God in terms of the appearing of the goodness and loving kindness of God. Look at verse 4, chapter 3.

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, again, he's referring back to the coming of Christ into the world. 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, so that being justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

What glorious things has God done for sinners such as we are? So we can say that God has a plan and God has a purpose.

And that plan and purpose, as revealed in these passages, is to draw all kinds of people to himself through his Son, Jesus Christ.

He does this, as I say, through the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, who by his life and death on the cross, paid the penalty for our sins. He secured for us the gift of the Holy Spirit's in dwelling presence and work.

[17:28] And he secured for us the Holy Spirit's in dwelling presence and work. And he secured for his church, not only the gift of the office of pastor, elder, overseer, but also, more gloriously, the men to fill that office.

Men who will exemplify godliness in their own personal walk, who will teach sound doctrine, and who will teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.

In other words, the practical outworking of the sound doctrine. And who will also protect the church by rebuking those who contradict sound teaching.

Now, as you read this letter to Titus, you can't help but think that Paul wrote it with a sense of real urgency. Churches have been planted in Crete.

And it is amazing, isn't it? We really ought not to live in such a way that we think what we experience today is the way things have always been and always will be.

[18:32] There were times of refreshing sent from the presence of the Lord. And the New Testament era is remarkable. For these, what we might call today, awakenings or revivals.

When God sent forth his word with great power. Now, we hear of church planting on a regular basis.

And it is a slow and difficult process, according to what we see. But the gospel spread in the days of Paul and Titus on the island of Crete with great power, with great speed, with great transforming

effects.

Churches were planted. God had blessed his word in a remarkable way. And by the time this letter was written, it had already spread to a number of towns on the island.

And there were many believers who needed to be cared for and looked after spiritually. But as we already mentioned, there were also those who were contradicting the sound doctrine of the gospel. [19 : 58] And seeking to lead many of these new converts astray. See how these people are described in chapter 1. They're spoken of as being insubordinate.

Empty talkers. Deceivers. And among them were the circumcision party that we're familiar with from other passages of the New Testament.

And see what these people are doing, according to chapter 1. They were upsetting whole families. They were teaching for gain.

In other words, a bit like Balaam, for financial reward. They were peddling Jewish myths. They were giving commands that were not part of the gospel itself.

They were people who professed to know God, but through their actions, were really telling people, I don't know God at all. And see what they are as a result of their false teaching.

[21 : 06] Paul describes them as detestable. Disobedient. Unfit for any good work. So there were these false teachers whom the church had to be protected from.

Which is why Titus was sent with the primary aim of appointing elders in every town. Who would have the character and the qualifications to protect the church.

To teach what was right. To exemplify what was right in their own living. And to counteract and silence these false teachers.

But there's another enemy of the truth. And one that is found closer to home. And therefore more insidious. And ever present with us.

And that is our own sinful, fallen, corrupt nature. We ought not to think that the Apostle Paul was being especially harsh or nasty to the people of Crete.

[22 : 16] When he quoted the words of one of their own 6th century BC poets. A man called Epimenides. Who famously said of his own countrymen.

Cretans are always liars. Evil beasts. Lazy gluttons. Now this is of course a generalization.

But sadly there was enough truth in it to shine a light on the less savory side of the national character of Crete. Now every nation is made up of fallen, sinful people.

And not one nation is better than another when it comes to our standing before a holy God. For as Paul teaches us in Romans. Romans all have sinned.

And fall short of the glory of God. But it is true also that sin manifests itself in various personal characteristics. In various national characteristics.

[23 : 17] And I think part of the urgency in Paul's encouragement of Titus to put in order or to straighten out the church in Crete. Is surely related to the fact that the people of Crete tended to show something of these infamous national characteristics.

Always liars. Evil beasts. Lazy gluttons. There were those on the island who had been converted to God by the power of the gospel.

Who must, in Paul's words, be sharply rebuked. Chapter 1, verse 13. Why must they be sharply rebuked? So that they may be sound in the faith.

And not devote themselves to Jewish myths or the commands of people who turn away from the truth. That is why also Paul instructs Titus in chapter 2 to teach various groups of people who made up the church on Crete certain things.

The old men. They were to be taught to be self-minded. To be dignified. To be self-controlled.

[24 : 38] To be sound in faith, love, and steadfastness. The old Crete women were to be taught to be reverent in their behavior.

Not to be slanderers. Not to be addicted or slaves to much wine. To teach what is good. To give themselves over to the training of the younger woman.

The younger woman of Crete, who were Christians, were to be taught to love their husbands and children. Imagine that. To be self-controlled.

To be pure. To be hard-working at home. To be kind. To be submissive to their own husbands. And the young men were to be taught.

To be self-controlled. Titus and his fellow elders were in all respects to be a model of good works. Their teaching was to be marked by integrity, sound speech, and dignity.

[25 : 40] And even the household slaves were to be taught. Those who had become Christians were to be taught to be submissive. To be well-pleasing.

Not argumentative. Not pilferers. Showing all good faith so that they could be trusted at all times. And what is the purpose? What's the point?

What's the goal? What's the end of all this effort on Titus' part to be? Well, the church was to stand out from.

And to be a stark contrast to. To be a Christian. To be a Christian. To be a Christian. To be a Christian. To be a Christian. To be a Christian. That culture was marked by deceit.

By a violence of evil. By a self-pleasing. Lazy.

[26 : 41] Overindulgent. Overindulgent. Lifestyle. The church. In contrast.

Will live in such a manner. That in everything. Here's a beautiful phrase. It will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

Their lifestyle. Will put beautiful clothes. Upon the doctrine. Of the gospel.

The doctrine of God our Savior. Chapter 2 verse 10. Or skip just a few verses earlier. That the word of God.

May not be reviled. Or a couple of verses. Later than that. Chapter 2 verse 8. That an opponent.

[27 : 41] May be put to shame. Having nothing evil. To say. About us. Is this not one of the tragedies. Of the church. In so many places.

The way the church has lived. Has been. Out of joint. With the teaching. It confesses. And as a result.

Instead. Instead. Of. Adorning the doctrine of God. Our Savior. In all things. We have.

What's the word? We have polluted it. We've. Taken a bucket.

As it were. And gone to the dirtiest stream. We can find. Filled it up. And we've chucked. A bucket. Of dirty. Filthy. Stinking. Smelling. Water.

[28 : 45] All over. The doctrine of God. Our Savior. And the word looks on. And says. I don't want any part of it. Or we've lived in such a way.

That people. Outside. Revile. The word of God. Does it not upset you. When you're walking.

Down the street. Or past the school. Playground. And you hear little children. Taking the name. Of God. In vain. Why do they do that?

Is it. Partly because. The way we have lived. Or behaved. As. A church. And I'm speaking generally. Of the church in general. We've lived in such a way.

That they think. That all the word of God. Is good enough. Is to be reviled. Despised. Profaned.

[29 : 49] And blasphemed. Or we've lived in such a way. That an opponent. Instead of. Blushing. And being put to shame. Because he's got nothing evil.

And bad to say about us. Oh. He says. Where do you want me to start? Like. That famous interview. With. Rafa Benitez.

When Sir Alex Ferguson. Had got under his skin. And he pulls out a. Sheet of paper. With a long list of. Mr. Ferguson did this. Mr. Ferguson did that.

It's what the world could say of us as a church. I believe. I believe. Paul's letter to Titus.

Shows us. God's blueprint. For how newly planted. Churches. Are to be established. Built up. And extended. It's to be done through these.

[30 : 48] Very simple. Straightforward means. There's nothing. Sort of magic. In the formula. So basic. So. Straightforward. Through the preaching of the apostolic gospel.

Or in Paul's words. In chapter 1. Verse 3. Through the preaching. With which. I have been entrusted. By the command of God. Our savior. If you know that God.

Has commanded you. And entrusted you. With this message. This gospel. And has told you to preach it. This is what you will devote yourself to doing.

You will not look for other means or methods. It is God's word. It is through the preaching. With which. I have been entrusted. By the command.

Of God our savior. Says the apostle Paul. This is what. Brings men and women. To a saving faith in Christ. This is what.

[31 : 52] Leads. To the regeneration. Of a human being. Who's fallen and sinful. And depraved. This is what transformed. Him from a sinner.

Into a saint. This is the truth. That Paul preached. It is the truth. That he says.

Accords with godliness. You can't have godliness. Without the truth. And you ought not to have the truth. Without. It leading.

To godliness. The two are interconnected. And what God has joined. Let not man. Put asunder. This is also. The trustworthy word.

To which the elders. Must firmly hold. This is the sound doctrine. That Titus was to teach. The people of Crete. In order for it. To shape their thinking. And to mold.

[32 : 46] The way they lived. That's the first thing. In God's blueprint. Higher churches. Planted. Established. Strengthened.

Edified. Prepared for works of service. And lives of good works. It's through the preaching. Of. The gospel. The apostolic gospel.

The gospel. As it was taught. By the apostles. And then secondly. Through the appointment. And proper functioning. Of godly elders. The church. Is.

Established. And built up. And prepared. For works of service. As Paul. Teaches. Particularly in chapter one. They are to exemplify.

The godliness. They teach. To. And encourage. In. Others. And they are. In all respects. To be. A model.

[33 : 41] Of good works. Chapter two. Verse seven. And in their teaching. They are to show. Integrity. Dignity. And soundness. Of speech. That cannot. Be condemned. Chapter two.

Seven and eight. Thank God. For elders. And as we look. In the future. For a pastor.

To fill this pulpit. It doesn't matter. Whether he is tall. Or short. Or speaks with an accent. Or his blue eyes. Or brown eyes. Believe it or not. These are some of the things.

That churches split over. The qualifications. Are staring us. In the face. We want. A man. Of God. Who will teach.

And preach. And serve. According. To the blueprint. In God's word. The other minor things. Will look after themselves.

[34 : 38] God uses all sorts of people. To do his work. Let us not. Narrow it. Down further.

Than God. Has prescribed. Let us. Keep the big. Things. In mind. And pray that God. Would send us. Such. A man.

And then the third. Means. If you like. By which God. Establishes. And. Strengthens. And. Equips. For service.

And the life of good works. The local church. It is through every member. Of that church. Daily. Actively. And devotedly. Giving themselves. To God.

As his servants. To do his will. And if you were to say to me. Well. Can you sum up. What God's will is for me. In very.

[35 : 35] Stark terms. What is God's will for me. I. You know. Young people especially. Oh. Wonder what the will of God. And there's this kind of. Mystical approach. I remember. Feeling it myself.

When I was in my teens. And yet. God's will. Is staring us in the face. When we open his word. What you will be. Is in God's hands.

It's not for you to worry about. What you're to worry about. Is what kind of a person. You are to be. Where you will be. What you will do. Those things will look after themselves. Providence will open. Avenues up to you. That you can't even. Think about at the moment. And. God's providence will surprise you. In so many different ways. When I was at school. And my careers teacher asked me. What was I going to do. It wasn't to be the editor. Of the banner of trust. I assure you. So what is God's will. What should we be concerned about.

[36 : 36] We should be concerned about. The kind of people we are. Not where we are. Or what we will do. The kind of people we are.

This is the will of God for you. Says Paul. In another passage. Even your sanctification. God's will for you. Is to be a holy young man.

Or a holy young woman. And if we were to sum up. You know. In just a few words. What God's will is for us today. You could do no better.

Than look at Titus. Chapter 2. For the grace of God. Verse 11. For the grace of God has appeared. Bringing salvation for all people.

And look at this word. Training. If you've experienced the grace of God. You've got. Like a personal trainer. Who's.

[37 : 32] Who's. Directing you. To be a certain kind of person. By God's grace.

And it trains you. I remember my old. Former pastor. Who Heather and I grew up under. He preached on this. Very memorably. Now. He left the church.

After a 20 year ministry. So that. This is pre 1985. So my. I don't remember a lot of things. But this is stuck in my mind. The grace of God.

God. Shows us. Or teaches us. A way to live. How are we. To live. We're to live.

By saying. No. Renouncing. Ungodliness. And worldly passions. That's the first thing. You want to know. What God's will is for you.

[38 : 33] Here it is. In black and white. Every day you live. You're to get up. And you're to say to God. Lord. Lord. In your presence. I hear.

Renounce. I hear. Say. No. To ungodliness. In any shape or form. And to.

Worldly. Passions. The lusts. That we're constantly told. Are raging. In young people. Not just in young people.

By the way. Young people. Older people too. The Christian. By the power. Of the Holy Spirit. Is able. To do God's will.

As spelt out. In this verse. God's grace. Trains us. Daily. To say no. To ungodliness. And to say no. To all forms.

[39 : 29] Of worldly passion. That's the first thing. God. God. God. And then the second thing is. It teaches us to live self-controlled. Upright.

And godly lives. In the present age. The present age. Stretches from the. First coming of Christ. To the second coming of Christ.

It's. The here and now for us. And we are being trained. By the grace of God. To live.

Self-controlled.

Now that's. With regard to. To ourselves. To ourselves. We are not people. Who are dominated. Or tyrannized.

By our own desires. For passions. By the grace of God. And by the power of the spirit. And according to the direction. Of his word. We have been given.

[40 : 31] The grace. The power. To control ourselves. I suppose that's the outcome.

Of saying no. To ungodliness. And worldly passions. Lord. You have given me. The power. The strength. By your spirit.

To put to death. Whatever belongs. To my old. Fallen. Sinful. Nature. And to yield. These hands. And these feet. And this body. To good works.

To the service of God. For the benefit of others. For the glory of God. Self-controlled. If you want to know what.

Self-control looks like. Read carefully through the book of Proverbs. You'll find. Illustrations. And applications. Of the doctrine of. A self-controlled life.

[41 : 32] On almost every page. Upright. That is. In relation to. Those around us. We are taught.

To live upright. Or. Righteous. Lives. Straight up and down. With no. Crookedness. No deviation.

No. Deceit. Remember. This is being written to Cretans. Cretans are always what? Liars. That's the culture that this church was.

Was. Was living in. But the church is different. The church is righteous. The church is upright. The members of the church. Always tell the truth.

Like these. Bond servants. Mentioned in the earlier part of chapter 2. They are to be submissive to their own masters. In everything they are to be well pleasing. Not argumentative.

[42 : 28] Not pilfering. But. What? Showing all good faith. They are to be trusted. Their word is their bond. That's the kind of people.

The church. Ought to be. And then godly. This surely is in reference to. Our relationship with the Lord.

We are to live. Godly lives. God is in our thoughts. Our lives. In the morning.

Of each day. Are devoted to him. Afresh. Presented to him. As what? A living sacrifice. Holy. And acceptable to him.

Which is our reasonable service. Our spiritual worship. This is how the gospel. Works itself out. In day to day. Living. And then.

[43 : 29] This little. Passage. Concludes with. A reminder. That while we. Say no. To ungodliness. And worldly passions.

While we live. Self-controlled. Upright. And godly lives. There's something else. And it's in the future. That we're told. To keep an eye on. To keep a lookout for. To wait for. With eager anticipation. Because this world. Is not our home. Our home. Our citizenship. Is in heaven. And it's from heaven. That we await. The return. Of our Lord. And Savior. Jesus Christ. Who is described. In such glorious. Language here. The appearing. Of the glory. Of our great. God. And Savior. Jesus Christ. One of the great. Statements. Regarding the deity.
[44 : 24] Of Christ. In the New Testament. Scriptures. Our great. God. Is coming. And we are waiting. We are eagerly.

Waiting. For his return. And Paul. Cannot speak. About his return. Without. Reminding himself. And Titus. And through Titus. The Cretan Christians. Of the purpose. Of his first. Coming to this world. This great.

God. And Savior. Jesus Christ. When he first came. Gave himself. For us. For what purpose? And this is critical. For our understanding. And application. Of the gospel. To our daily living. To redeem us. To set us free. Just like.

[45 : 22] The Old Testament. Israelites. Were redeemed. Out of Egypt. The house of bondage. We have been redeemed. From all lawlessness. And by the way. The implication.

The implication. Of this surely. Is. That if we've been redeemed. From all lawlessness. Then our lives. Must. Follow. The shape. And the pattern. And the contours. Of God's moral law. The Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments. Because Christ has redeemed us. From all that is not the Ten Commandments. That is the opposite of the Ten Commandments.

And to purify. And to purify. And to purify for himself. A people for his own possession. Who are zealous. For good works.

Did Jesus Christ accomplish the purpose for which he came. For which he lived. For which he died. For which he rose again. For which he ascended into heaven. Of course he did.

[46 : 16] There is no ifs or buts with regard to Christ's salvation. He achieved and accomplished his mission. Mission accomplished.

He did in fact redeem a people from all lawlessness. And he did in fact purify for himself a people for his own possession.

Who are zealous for good works. He did do it. He did accomplish it. And that gives us great encouragement. To give ourselves to the will of God as spelt out in this passage.

How do I know that I'm a Christian? Do I believe in Jesus Christ? How do I know that I've really believed in Jesus Christ?

One of the telltale signs surely will be. That I will have an increasing desire to please him.

[47 : 30] To walk in his ways. To live a life. To live a life. By his grace and help.

According to the teachings of his commandments. Because he says if you love me you will keep my commandments. And since he redeemed me from all lawlessness.

I want to walk in the way of his commandments. And since he purified for himself a person like me. That I might be for his own possession. And do the things that he would want me to do.

Not to earn my salvation. That's putting the cart before the horse. But because he has saved me.

[48 : 40] Because he has saved you. You want to please him in all things. And that's how the church.

I believe in Crete. Grew. Became strong. And perhaps planted. Other church. And took the gospel. Maybe to other islands and places.

They preached the gospel. They had godly elders. Who were able to teach.

Who exemplified the teaching in their own lives. Who taught what was in accordance with sound doctrine. And who kept the church free from false teaching. And every member under that kind of ministry.

Became strong. Clear headed. Grasp the doctrine. And having grasped the doctrine. Were led to live.

[49 : 48] In accordance with. The doctrine. Some people say. Ah doctrine doesn't matter. That's not what I read. In the word of God. I think Paul.

Would have hounded such people out of the church. If they continued to maintain. Such a note. In their teaching. Doctrine is vitally important. Because it leads.

To a godly life. And may the Lord. Help us. To understand his word better. And to. Grow. In our appreciation. Of his truth. So that we might walk. In all his ways. Blameless. Let us pray. Let us pray. Our gracious God. And loving heavenly father. We thank you for. The truth of the gospel. And for making it known to us.

[50 : 45] And for those who patiently taught us. Week in. Week out. Year after year. Laying line upon line. Instructing us. Instructing us. In the things of God.

And showing us. The way of God. More perfectly. Help us. Oh Lord. Not only to grow in our understanding. But to.

Develop. And become mature. In living the Christian life. In being able to renounce. All ungodliness. And worldly passions.

May our lives be marked. Increasingly. By self-control. Righteousness. Godliness.

And Lord. Help us. Not to be so taken up. With the things of this world. But to look forward.

[51 : 46] To the coming of our great God. And Savior. Jesus Christ. Who gave himself. For us. May we give.

Ourselves. To him. And live for his glory. As a thank offering. For all the grace.

We have received. Through the gospel. Hear us. We pray. And bless this church. And its witness. In this area. Bless our elders.

In the important roles. That they have. In the congregation. And we pray. That you would provide. For us. A man. Whose life. And teaching.

Is characterized. By the things. We have heard. This evening. For we ask. These things. In Jesus name. Amen.