

The Gospel Adorned

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- [0 : 0 0] Please turn in your Bible to the book of Titus, Titus chapter 2, preaching through this wonderful little book of three chapters. Today, Titus chapter 2, verses 1 through 10.
- And the title of today's sermon is, The Gospel Adorned. The Gospel Adorned. Let me define that word, adorn. According to the dictionary, to adorn means to decorate, to ornament, to beautify, deck, or garnish.
- It's to enhance something by adding something that is beautiful in itself. That's what it means to adorn. So the gospel itself is beautiful.
- And the gospel put on the people of God now produces something else on top of that that's beautiful, which is a life of gratitude. The gospel adorned.
- Here's why this matters for you. If God has opened your eyes to the glory of the gospel in Jesus Christ, does that happen to you? If so, you need to know that by the power of that same Holy Spirit, God promises to adorn you with the gospel.
- [1 : 1 0] You are made right with God through Christ. And that happens freely. Christ earned it all. His work is finished for you. That right standing with God then is beautified by the Holy Spirit.
- So justification comes first, just like an acorn seed, an acorn. Inside that acorn contains the sanctification, the beautification, the entire power of the gospel in this tiny acorn.
- And that sanctification will grow in your life naturally because the gospel has been planted in your soul. You have been regenerated. And now the Holy Spirit wants to grow you into a mighty oak tree that is adorned with the fruit of the Spirit.
- That's what Paul gets at in the book of Philippians as well. Chapter 3, our citizenship is in heaven and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body.
- That future glory is coming. By that power that enables him even to subject all things to himself when he comes back to restore the world and make all things right in his full glory with the angels of God.
- [2 : 2 3] What does that mean for you now though? You're already a citizen of heaven by justification. And Paul turns it, chapter 4, he says, Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.
- Let that gospel truth work its way out into your life, into the life of the church that you will be adorned. The church is the glorious body of Christ and will be adorned for Christ by the Holy Spirit.
- Let's read our text. Titus 2, 1-10 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 behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good and so train the younger women to love their husband and their children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind and submissive to their 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.

- [3 : 56] So then 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 Savior.

This is the word of God. Well, the church is the glorious body of Christ. The church is called to adorn herself for the king.

All right, we'll see the Father delights to see the church grow. He wants to see you grow, church, into the adoption that Christ accomplished for you. And the Spirit comes along and perfects and beautifies, and he will one day glorify the church.

So know that your glorification is promised. And now grow into what you will one day become. Jesus said, Make disciples of all nations, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded.

So that's what we do as a church. We train one another. We teach each other to become more and more like Christ. So we can show Christ to the world and be prepared for him when he comes back in glory.

- [5 : 21] But how does this happen in the life of the church? How do we make disciples? How do we teach? And how do we train ourselves to be obedient and to grow like Christ?

In these 10 verses, Paul breaks it down. I've got three headings. Verses 1 through 5, we could say, It's instructions for the church on how to disciple. There are three parts to that.

One is under the oversight of the elders. Secondly, it's the older discipling the younger. And then the categories of men and women. So that's the first one.

How to disciple. Verses 1 through 5. The second heading is how to teach. How to teach. Verses 6 through 8. And two parts to this. It's both with your life and your doctrine.

How to teach. Verses 6, 7, and 8. And then finally, how to serve. Verses 9 and 10. So how to disciple. How to teach.

- [6 : 19] And how to serve. Because by obeying Christ in this way, the church adorns the gospel. Our first heading, how to disciple. Look at verses 1 through 5.

The first point here is verse 1. So this is in contrast to the false teachers that Paul has warned Titus against in chapter 1. And he starts chapter 2 by saying, Don't be like that.

As for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. As for you, teach. Teach what accords with sound doctrine.

Paul is telling Titus and these leaders of the church, Do not be passive or permissive. That was the point of chapter 1. The end of chapter 1. Look what happens when those who God has raised up are passive or permissive.

Because what happens is false teachers begin to spread lies like poison. They try to take over. And it's toxic. It's not healthy for the church. Don't be passive.

- [7 : 22] You, you teach. You, you're carrying out the role for Christ. Christ is the prophet of God. He has fully revealed God in the gospel. And now you are his mouthpiece, his spokesperson to this congregation.

Teach them. Be Christ's mouthpiece. Speak the truth to them. Teach them. Not just anything. You have to make sure what you're teaching is sound.

A different translation for that word that we get on the ESVS sound could be healthy. So teach what is healthy for sound doctrine. What is healthy to the church and what lines up in accordance with the doctrine that we know of God.

So teach them sound, healthy knowledge of God. Feed the church. Don't let them starve. We'll just pause right here first. Why is it that churches can so easily fail at this?

Is it because we're so committed to meeting a budget or getting so many butts in the seats that we compromise the clear teaching of Christ to teach and to feed and don't be passive?

[8 : 25] Don't be permissive. Don't be permissive. Right? If people are pushing their way in and trying to usurp the rule of Christ over his church, it's the job of the elders to address that and to not sit back and try to be people pleasers.

Instead, proclaim the gospel, teach and guide and set the theology for ministry. Set that for the church. Oversee discipleship. So how are we to disciple?

Well, the first point is that discipleship ought to be under the oversight of elders. Set in order what remains, Paul had told Titus. Set it in order. Elders, you are looking over the order of the church.

And as we disciple one another, as we seek to learn God's word, the elders are responsible for establishing that. What do we understand from scripture to be the green pastures that will feed this congregation?

It needs to accord with the doctrine of God. So doctrine is another word for truth or belief. We need to know God's word. And when we approach one text, we need to see how that fits with the whole of God's counsel.

[9 : 30] We need to know the Bible. And we need to learn from the church throughout all the centuries. The spirit has been with the church. And the church never usurps the Bible or the word of God itself.

But we also don't get to come along now and thinking we're much wiser. We're more advanced. We're in the information age. We are not much wiser. We are fallen sinners.

And the depths of God, we will not be able to discover fully if we start from scratch for ourselves. We need to build upon the shoulders of giants. We need to learn from our rich heritage of believers who have gone back time and time again to the word of God, digging in for this true doctrine.

So that's what it means to seek out the doctrine, the truth of God in Christ. And he says, make sure that it will accord with the truth.

To accord with means to align with or to bring yourself in alignment with the doctrine of God. Make sure that what you approve of and what you instruct, make sure that that's in accordance with Jesus Christ as he's been revealed in the Bible.

[10 : 40] Make sure that what you are teaching and saying is healthy for this church. What is the green pastures? Make sure that you are not veering off of the path, that old ancient path where you can find rest for your soul.

You want to be in line with the gospel ministry as it's been carried forth one generation after another, guided by the spirit through the word in the church. You want to be part of orthodox, historic Christianity.

That's what we're called to be. Well, Romans 6 verses 5 and 7, Paul gives the same appeal. And he says, look, the urgency of how you need to live out your faith, make sure that that comes after your union with Christ.

In other words, if you start trying to impose a certain religion, a certain conduct upon your church, without it being anchored, first of all, in that acorn of justification, the gospel first needs to change you on the inside before you want to try to make it work its way out on the outside.

So that's the picture of baptism. It's your union with Christ. And Paul said, if we have been united with him in his death like this, like in baptism, going under, being raised with Christ, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like this.

[12 : 00] We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

For one who has died has been set free from sin. So how to disciple? It ought to be under the oversight of the elders in response to the gospel, not as a way of earning salvation, but as a response of gratitude for the gospel.

So with the oversight of the elders, with the motivation of showing gratitude to Christ, here's how Paul then gives very specific instructions on how to disciple. Let's look at verses 2 and 3 first.

Verse 2. Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness.

So he begins with older men, then he goes to older women. It's like a chiasm, so it's going to work toward the center and then back out. So older men, older women. Next come younger women, and then back out to younger men.

[13 : 08] So older men, well, this is in contrast to other older men who are still slaves to Satan. You know, men that you see who have been in bondage to Satan their whole life, those habits and vices are deeply ingrained.

And you can see that from far away. You can see in such older men who are slaves to Satan, the enemy of God, their thinking is undisciplined. Their words are shameful.

They are immature in their attitude. They tend to be impulsive and self-indulgent. You're not like that if you are no longer a slave to sin.

You're united with Christ, remember? Your faith must have substance to it. Paul says, your love must be healthy. It must be a solid love.

It's full, a heart that's full, filled with the presence of God with his spirit, filling your life. Something solid in there, in the content of your soul. You must be unwavering.

[14 : 10] He said, steadfast. Be devoted to Christ, to his church, and to your family. What great words to older men. Older women, verse 3, So verse 3 focuses on the older women and the impact it will have on those they are training.

So women, women, if you have maybe experienced an injury or even an abuse, an abuse of power, it can be understandable how an older woman who's had some life experience and is no longer idealistic, but has been through some hard knocks, how such a woman would become cynical, and how that cynicism could easily develop into habits.

Maybe on one hand, trying to escape the pain of life. He warns against drunkenness here, being a slave to wine. Or it could be an escape, you know, toward not opening your heart up or trusting authority ever again.

It could be an attitude then that shows itself within the church as irreverence toward God, or even distrust of the authority within God's church.

Paul writes, If the gospel is truly penetrated, and your heart is no longer heart toward God, then that needs to show up in how you act in the church.

[15 : 44] You are to revere God. Don't let your tongue start fires in the church, he says. Be reverent, not slanderers. Don't be a slave to your vices or to escape.

Instead, women are to teach within the church and train the younger women to love what God says is lovely. Older women, will you allow Christ and his forgiveness of you for all your sins?

Will you allow him to soften your heart? And to train you once again by trusting Christ alone to love what is lovely? And seek what God views as lovely for your life, for however many days and years you have left.

Will you allow God to lead you in that way? And then he moves on to give instructions for the younger women and younger men, verses 4 and 5.

Let's look at verse 4 again. Younger women are to be trained by the older women within the church. It's the word train. It's the picture of being tutored and assisted.

[16 : 53] You could almost picture training wheels on someone learning to ride a bike. And riding a bike is counterintuitive. You want to always be putting your feet down. The children's bikes you have to pedal backwards to brake a lot of times.

These are things that are not intuitive. You're going to have to have someone hold you and prop you up and support you when you want to waver and fall. That's the picture. Young women. And how is it that you're learning to live in a counterintuitive way?

Well, listen to the specific applications Paul drives home. Younger women love their husbands and children. They are called to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.

Younger women, you can see the brokenness of the home. Younger women, you can see the brokenness of the home. Maybe growing up you had divorced parents. Or you work in a place where you get to see this on a regular basis, how broken so many homes can be.

And many are. And the natural reaction would be to say, I want nothing to do with that. Christian discipleship includes training that will go against what your fallen human nature wants and even thinks is right.

[18 : 11] And Paul is saying you can learn sanctification even through marriage and parenting. God can use marriage and parenting as hard as both of those are.

He can use those to prepare you for eternity with Him. And this is so important that the church hold up the sanctity of marriage in the Christian home.

Because God created and gave it as a gift. He created marriage to be a picture of the union between Christ and the church. Every time that the Bible interprets the meaning of marriage to us, it's always describing the relationship between Christ and His bride, the church.

So when the gospel is adorned in the home, our purity, kindness, mutual submission, and Christ-like love, what they do.

The home that's like that, oriented around Christ and His love fills us and we're constantly forgiving one another. And learning to show the love of Christ to one another more and more, never perfectly but always increasingly.

[19 : 12] What that does is we are preaching the gospel through the home. Isn't that a wonderful vision? And to despise God's design for the family is to revile or rebel against God's word.

Isn't that what he says? So that God's word may not be reviled. Verse 4. And then younger men, your turn next. Younger men, you, let's see, verse 5.

Be self-controlled, he said. Verse 6 for the younger men. Be self-controlled. Verse 7. Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works and in your teaching to show integrity.

Be a model of good works, young men. Self-controlled. Well, we know that it takes younger men much longer to mature. We grow up slower, don't we?

We delay in forming that executive brain function. We're very bad at that. We might be in our 30s. Now, here's the thing, that when you are filled with the Holy Spirit, that's not an excuse.

- [20 : 22] You do not have an excuse anymore. A person who does not discipline himself, you're just asking for a higher authority to come discipline you instead. Isn't that true?
- He says, be self-controlled. Discipline yourself. You must be disciplined, young men. You must study. You must keep a good job. You must learn how to serve in your home.
- You must be the best at doing dishes and folding the laundry and mowing the grass and taking out the trash and changing diapers. I mean, you need to be a servant in the home.
- Self-disciplined. No one should have to come and tell you to do these things. You also have to be serving in the church. Men, you are not above serving in nursery or looking over the kids.
- You ought to be doing these things. You ought to plan meaningful discipleship with other men and other young men and boys. You ought to find opportunities to exalt Christ in your life.
- [21 : 20] You ought to find ways to contribute with what you enjoy, what you're gifted with, and put that to the use of making discipleship within the local church. It's not about the programs.
- It's about the people of God being held by these principles, this truth, this doctrine, and understanding this is real. This is what God calls us to. Christ is the king, and he's coming again, and that changes everything.
- So young men, be disciplined. Get up early. Study God's word. You should be tired of having smooth knees. Be disciplined. Be a man of prayer as you go.
- Make a list. Keep it in your pocket. Pray. Pray through the Psalms. Know God's word. Be always taking it into your mind. You need to grow in Christ's likeness.
- And that takes us up through verse 5. How to disciple. This is getting practical. This is how we carry out the Great Commission. Make disciples of all nations, teaching them.
- [22 : 21] So we saw how to make disciples, how to do that, broken into categories. Next, Paul says, here's how you teach. He's unpacking, really expositing the Great Commission. So how to teach, verse 6, 7, and 8.
- Paul's going to teach us here. You teach with your life, number one. And you teach with your speech, your words. So let's read verse 6, 7, and 8. All right.
- You'll be self-controlled, young men. Verse 7. Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works. Well, this applies not just to young men.
- This is now instructions for all those. Remember, the older women are teaching the younger women. All of God's people. The whole church is to be growing in Christ's likeness. And our life is going to proclaim the gospel.
- And it's an army. This is an army metaphor. He says, we have opponents and enemies. There are those of the world. There are wolves. There's Satan and the demons looking who they can devour.
- [23 : 34] They want to accuse you to one another. They want to accuse you to the world. And they want to accuse you before God. And Paul says, no, you belong to Christ. You are his army.
- Make sure that your life and your words and your speech are going to exalt Christ. Jesus Christ expects every member of his glorious body to learn Christ.
- This is also how Paul describes the growth and knowledge of God. It's learning Christ. That's how we mature. Christians have always and only grown in spiritual maturity according to the God's design.
- And this is how it happens. Ephesians 4. It's as they have heard about Christ and were taught in him as the truth is in Jesus. So the army of King Jesus gains strength not on the milk of newborns, but rather as believers put off the old self and put on the new.

And they are renewed in the spirit of their minds. Ephesians 4, 22 through 24. You see that? The pattern. It's your mind accepting the truth of the doctrine.

[24 : 43] And then it changes. It changes your life, how you live. The old self is put off. And then your speech is transformed as well so that you're teaching and you're speaking Christ.

When God truly regenerates. Regenerates means God gave you a new heart. You no longer are an enemy of God. But he put his love in you. And now you love Christ.

And you want to follow him with your whole life. When God does that in your heart, this is what a new creation desires. You desire to become like Christ more and more. And it will happen. The spirit will carry you there.

Now even after death, this is what you as a Christian will get to enjoy. You will get to continue growing in the knowledge of our infinite God for all of eternity.

Let me repeat that. Even after death, true believers will continue to enjoy growing in their knowledge of our infinite God for all eternity.

[25 : 41] And so as a church, we're really getting a jump start on that. We're practicing it. And it's the delight of the church. And it's also our duty. It's what we're created for. To know God in Christ more and more each day.

That's how we are to teach. Your life will line up. The enemies will be silenced. And your knowledge of God will grow so that it overflows.

It just spills out from your words. A pastor who is a Puritan, 1600, said, his name is William Grunau. He said, knowledge does not make a heart good.

Too many have tried that, right? Knowledge does not make a heart good. But, Grunau said, it is impossible that without knowledge it should be good.

In other words, you can only have a heart that is good and becoming more and more holy if you truly know God through Jesus Christ. And such a knowledge is always growing in the Bible.

[26 : 46] Well, Paul has walked us through how to disciple. And we see now how to teach. We teach with our life and with our words. And now, finally, how to serve. How to serve.

Let's look at verses 9 and 10 last. The next category Paul addresses is bond servants. These will be slaves, probably belonging to different households that are also members of the church.

It could be that their masters were in the church as well or their masters were not. So, verse 9, he says, 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 Savior.

Listen to what's happening here. Here's the question Paul's answering. How does Christ's kingdom come on earth? That's the Lord's Prayer, right?

[27 : 48] Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. So, how does Christ's kingdom come on earth when the gospel takes root in a lawless, penal colony that practices slavery?

That's what Paul's trying to show here. So, here's this island of Crete. And for centuries now, it had been a place where criminals and those with massive debt and those who could no longer be considered a citizen of these different nation-states in Greece, they would all be banished to the island of Crete.

And this is a penal colony. So, it's a colony used for punishment. That's what the word penal means. Penal colony. And that's what Australia was. So, the British Empire would send those in the British Empire, in the kingdom, in the United Kingdom, they would send those with debt and those that were criminals, those they wanted away from England and Ireland and Scotland, they would get arrested and they would send them on a boat to Australia.

And it became a land that was lawless and was just, you know, a culture that you would not want to be around. These are all people who were banished from their own land. And now they're made to live together.

And that's what Crete was founded upon. So, slavery is in practice. The slaves that are able to pilfer and rob, that's viewed as a virtue in this island where all the morals are upside down, where they actually worship the vices rather than the virtue.

[29 : 12] And so, Paul is addressing that question. When the gospel takes root in such a place, wow, what happens? How does the kingdom of God come in that place of such darkness?

And it's very interesting. Verse 9, he says, Be submissive. He's telling slaves who are in a position to be abused and to be considered the property of those who own them, be submissive to your own masters in everything.

Now, we know elsewhere that Paul, Peter, John, you know, the apostles, they make it very clear that the higher law, the law of God, the moral law, trumps all man, all of man's law.

But it's also important that we notice the mission of the church on the island of Crete is not to topple over the institutions. It's not to take over the culture in some powerful way.

It's not to win the elections and have the dominant political party. No, Paul says, Even if you're a slave, but you're part of the church, remain in the place you live.

[30 : 19] Labor right there as an ambassador of Christ, where he has planted you. See, nothing escapes God's providence. You are there by God's design and for his purpose.

serve within the existing structures, Paul says. Know that even in a broken and potentially abusive institution, you, Christian, you are representing Christ, your only true master.

Let that suffering, let your position in society, make you long even more for the coming of Christ Jesus and devote yourself to discipleship within the church.

Rather than trying to overthrow all that's broken politically and culturally. No, just show the world by your life. Show that you are already living as a citizen of heaven right now where you are.

You're in that overlap of the ages. You're in this age, which is coming to an end. But you also know your soul is united with Christ, who is returning in glory in the age to come.

[31 : 24] Christ rose supremely in the hearts of true believers, and he rules there. If he has ascended the throne of God on high, let him take that place in your heart, because he rules over his church, despite the brokenness of the world.

And he will preserve the world until he's ready to return, so you can trust him. Your submission, even in hardship, is part of God's providence, and it's for your sanctification.

Romans 6, Paul says, Thanks be to God that you who were once slaves to sin, you have become obedient, not by force, but from the heart, to the standard of teaching to which you were committed.

And having been set free from sin, you're no longer a slave. You have become now a slave or a servant of righteousness. So Paul's telling them, Remember, your identity is not in who you work for, or who your employer is, or even if you're a free person in society or a slave, that's not your identity.

You belong to Christ. Christ rules over you as your king. You are no longer a slave to the bondage of sin and Satan. You are now a slave to righteousness, meaning the Spirit of God in you.

[32 : 48] He has put it in your heart, the standard of teaching that you are now committed to. You desire that. Nothing can rob you of the desire to walk with God anymore.

Romans 6. So remember, church, in these verses, chapter 2 of Titus, just as the Father ordained your salvation by the gospel that was accomplished by the Son for you, Father ordained, Son accomplished, now, church, participate in the adorning of the gospel as the Holy Spirit works out in your life and in the life of the church the beauty of the gospel for the glory of the triune God.

Praise be to the Lord, we can say with Psalm 149. Praise be to Jehovah, the covenant-keeping God, Father, Son, and Spirit.

We look back now as a church and we sing to the Lord a new song. We sing His praise in the assembly of the godly when we come together every Lord's Day to be strengthened once again.

Let the people of God praise His name with dancing, make melody to Him, for the Lord takes pleasure in His people and He adorns the humble with salvation.

[34 : 10] Praise the Lord. Amen.