

Remind and Remember

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[0 : 0 0] Oh, I can't preach up here. Sorry, I just got to move too much. What's that? Yeah, it's only a suggestion. That's right. So I don't mind praying back there, but I want to open the word up here. So we are looking again at the book of Titus. We've been working our way through the book of Titus. And this morning, we're going to look mainly at three verses. We're going to read together a little bit longer passage, but we're going to look mainly at three verses. But I feel the need to look at what we've covered already to review so that when we share the passage this morning, we can link it to what the whole meaning of the book is about. So we'll understand what's happening in these three verses that we're going to look at together this morning. Let me just ask this. If you've got your Bible, I would encourage you to open it because I'm going to be looking at multiple words and phrases and we'll be going through this book. It's helpful in my thinking if you've got it open before you and you can look at it. And I would ask you even now to look at chapter one, verse four and five to understand what the letter is about, to understand what the book of Titus is about. What we'll see is this. To Titus, Paul says, to Titus, my true child, meaning that Titus came into the kingdom through the ministry of Paul. And Titus would view Paul as a spiritual father, one that God used to tell him or share with him the truth.

And he received that truth to the point at which he became a believer. So his salvation happened because of the ministry of Paul. And so therefore, Paul calls Titus his true child.

And we see something interesting here. As we see in verse five, this is why I left you in Crete. So we understand that what's going on is Titus came into the kingdom because of the ministry of Paul. Paul and then Titus joined Paul and he spent much time with Paul. And not only was he saved through that interaction with Paul, we would believe that he matured. He grew because he was engaged in life, doing life on life with Paul. And he was with him in ministry as they traveled around the ancient world, sharing the gospel. And it's interesting. This is just an aside that would be pertinent to all of us.

Isn't it interesting that even in those two little verses, we can understand this truth? And that is that salvation happened in the life of Titus and growth happened in the life of Titus through the ministry of Paul. And isn't it interesting what Paul does in the life of Titus? He says, Titus, you've come to faith because you've heard the word of God and you've believed that Jesus is the only way to salvation. You've placed your faith in him and you've been changed. You've been made a new creature through the indwelling Holy Spirit that's come to dwell within you. And you've grown. You've come to understand God's word. You've come to understand your sinfulness. You've come to understand the impact that God's word has. And now, Titus, it's time for me to leave you to lead on your own.

[3 : 3 5] It's time for you to step into ministry on your own. It's time for you to begin to disciple others. It's time for you to shepherd. Do you see it? He's saved. He's matured. And at some point, it's time for ministry. Church, do you realize that's the same cycle that's true for each one of us?

You know, the moment of salvation is not the end of it all. It's not, I've got my ticket. I'm good. I can live life any way I want to live. That's not the picture of the gospel. You know what salvation does? It changes our desires. We become a new creature according to Romans chapter 6. We've been made a new creature and we've been called to walk in newness of life. That means we walk differently than we used to walk. We don't live the same way we used to live. Things have changed. And Paul is saying to Titus, Titus, it's time. It's time for you to break relationship at least day by day by day. But I haven't left you. I'm always here. You're always my child in the faith.

But I want you to trust in God as you minister, as you give your life away for people. Church, is that true for you and me? For those of us this morning that are born again, has that maturity taken place? Has that growth, spiritual growth taken place in your life?

Have you got to the place, have you come to the place where you say to God, God, I'm scared. I don't know what it looks like. I don't even really know how I'm gifted. I don't know what you're calling me to do, but I'm willing. I'm willing to be a tool in your hand. I'm willing to be used as a minister in any way you desire for me to be used. Church, are we there?

[5 : 30] You know that's what God is showing us through this? In this pastoral epistle, understand that Paul didn't hand the letter to Titus and say, hey, here's a letter. Here's my instructions. You hang out. I'm gone. He didn't do that. You know what he did?

He prayed with him and he committed him to ministry on the island of Crete. And I just want you to remember who these Cretans are. That's a weird sounding word. And actually, some people use that as a derogatory term. You're just a Cretan. Well, we see in the text that Cretans didn't really live for God, did they? They were widely known for their dishonesty, for their slothfulness, for their laziness, for their gluttonous lifestyle, for their pride, for their selfishness.

And even in the text, it calls them evil beasts. That's not something you really want to be known for. I don't think. But isn't it interesting that they still are not someone Paul would push to the sideline and say, you know, they don't deserve the gospel. You know what Paul would say? Not only do they need the gospel, I'm going to leave my child Titus on this island to lead, even though he's young.

He's young in years, but he's not young in maturity. God has done a work in his life. He's grown him spiritually. Titus, you're ready to minister to the church. And Paul prays for him, and he asks for God's blessing in his life. And then Paul leaves to the ministry God's called him to. He leaves Titus there to lead the church on the island. And then later, Paul wants to stay connected, but you know they didn't have internet back then? I don't know how they stay connected. I guess if you've got a fast boat with a Yamaha on the back, you can stay connected a little better. But in that day, they used these cloth sails, and it took a little longer to get there, and not many people owned them. It was much harder to get words back and forth. But at some point, Paul probably heard some of the information that was going on in the ministry of the churches on Crete, and Paul wrote a letter, and that's what we're reading. It's this letter that is specifically to one person, Titus, his child in the faith. It's a pastoral epistle. And he says to Titus, Titus, I want to encourage you, and I want to remind you. I want to encourage you, and I want to remind you. And that's what we'll look at here in a minute. But before I pray for our time in the Word, I want to read the text to you.

[8 : 24] This morning, we're going to read a little bigger passage, but we're going to concentrate on verses 1 through 3 in chapter 3. So if you will read with me, starting at chapter 3, verse 1, we're going down through verse 8 this morning. So if you would open your word and read along with me. And the Word of God says this, remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy towards all people. For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 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. 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. These things are excellent and profitable for people. Let's pray. Father, thank you for your word, and as we open your word and we hear this message that Paul gave to Titus, this instruction that he gave, this reminder that he gave, Father, I pray that you would remind us.

Remind us of what you've done on our behalf. Father, what we could not do on our own, we could not get to you. But it's what you did for us that you showed mercy on us, God.

Father, you've blessed us with salvation because of your great love. And you've drawn us into your kingdom, called us by your name, made us heirs of the king of all kings. Father, you've given us a hope that we'd be with you one day, fully with you one day, apart from the temptation of this world in our flesh, apart from the enemy that is the dark kingdom that would come against us, apart from all those things. We'll be with you in glory, with you where you are, with you in the very mist, and we will see you in all your glory. Father, we long for the day. But until then, God, I pray that you would do work in our hearts, that we would desire to present ourselves as it were a living sacrifice, not

doing what we want to do, but willing and offering myself to do exactly what you want to do through us. And God, I pray that you would cause the spirit to pour forth fruit from our life.

[11 : 39] And I pray that the world would be blessed by what you do in and through us. God, humble us, use us, glorify yourself through us. Father, we ask for your blessing and your strength, and we pray in your name. Amen.

We start here in verse 1 with this word, remind. So you've got this father in the faith, Paul, saying to his son in the faith, Titus, remind them, remind them. But you know he uses a lot more words than just this one. Have you noticed that as we've been working our way through the book of Titus, he uses many instructional words?

As a pastor, Paul, saying to a pastor, Titus, brother, remember these things. Let me remind you, let me share with you this instruction on how you should lead. And here are some words that he uses. Put into order, rebuke, reach, oh, excuse me, sorry, teach. Probably say reach too. Teach. And he uses this word urge. And he uses this word show, declare, exhort, rebuke, remind, insist, avoid. Do you hear the fatherly influence of Paul? Do you hear him sharing to the shepherd of the church? Do these things.

Don't neglect these things. Don't forget to rebuke where rebuke is needed. Don't forget to teach his word. Don't forget to urge them to be faithful in their walk. Don't forget to show them you be a leader.

[13 : 32] You be a servant leader, and they should see the gospel as you live it out in your own life. Declare these things. Don't hold back. Exhort them. This exhortation, come on, brothers. Come on, sisters. We need to live for him. We need to live for the king. We need to go chase hard after God.

Church, isn't that what we want to do? You know, that's what I hope God uses me for here, is to just spur us on and say to y'all, come on, let's go. Come on. Let's go hard after him. Let's turn away from all these temptations and these idols and stuff, and let's be dedicated to chasing hard after God. That God might be glorified and that people might be impacted. You know, that's what we need to be about, church. And I hope that we spur each other on to that very thing.

Well, this morning, we're going to focus on two of those words. This word, remind, and we'll also see in verse 8 this word, insist on it. But starting with the word remind, I just want to share with you a story that is pertinent, that helps us understand a little more about what is woven into that word. So when I grew up as a kid, one of the sports that I played was golf. And I was, from the time I was 10 on up in through high school, played on the high school team, went to college, played on the college team, and got out. And of all my kids, none of them wanted to do golf because they didn't want me barking at them and tell them how to do it. But I did have a daughter finally in junior year. She came, now it was end of sophomore year. She came and said, Daddy, I want to play golf. Now we had hit a par three course and we had done a little bit. And I'm like, oh, praise you Lord. I got a reason to go to the golf course. My wife was telling me, honey, can you go to the golf course? I mean, it's a great life, right? So I had a daughter and a reason to go. And you talking about a good time to spend, a good way to spend time together? Savannah and I spent hours and hours and hours and hours together on the golf course playing. And when she started, literally, she couldn't break a hundred. And that's understandable. Probably if y'all never played, you couldn't either.

[15 : 42] It's not, it's not an easy game. But as she kept playing, I told her, I said, listen, I will teach you everything I know. I will help you. I will tell you the way that I know how to play and I'll do my best. And so once you break into the seventies, if you make it to the seventies, I'll get you a real coach. But what the, the, what I noticed and what happened in her life and is true for others that, that attain a high level of being able to play golf, you know what? She would swing and I'd be like, oh no, no, no, no, no, no, don't do that. No, no, no, no. Put your foot here, put that foot here.

And no, no, no, no, don't do that. And I kept having to remind her, no, don't do it that way. You've got to get your hands up here and you've got to keep that knee stiff and you've got to, I'm not giving golf lessons by the way. I'm just trying to say that you've got to repeat the same thing over and over and over and over and over again. You know, some people say, if you'll hit a thousand golf balls, you're good to go. No, I think it's more like a million. And even after you hit a million is still hard because it's such a technical game, not to let some movement enter in, but in order to be good at golf, in order to hit the ball good, you've got to repeat the same movement every time in order to be accurate, in order to be really, really good, in order to be on tour.

However, so what was fun about it is Savannah, she, she kept, you know, over years, a couple of three or four years, two, three, how many was that? I said, one, two, you know what?

Truth is, it's only two years before she got a new coach because this coach ain't very good. And, and she made it and she shot 79. You had never seen a girl so excited. All that work to get there. And she got there and I said, all right, I promised you I'd get you a real coach. And so I went and talked to my buddy who I played junior golf with. And she got, but here's my whole point is that I had to keep reminding her over and over and over and over again. Keep your head down. Keep your head down. Hey, hey, keep your head down. No, don't move that foot. No, let's do this. I had to remind her because why naturally what we're going to do, we're going to venture and stray and stuff, right? You know what Paul does here?

Good thing I got a tab. Here's what Paul says. Remind them, remind them. They need to be reminded.

[18:04] Matter of fact, I wrote this letter to you so I can remind you on the things that you need to do as you minister in the lives of people. We need to be reminded, don't we, church?

church. You know, that's one of the reasons we come on Sunday morning is that we would be reminded by the word, not by Treg, not by Jonathan, not by somebody else that might be teaching the class.

You know what we need reminding of? The truth, the word of God. And we want to be faithful to lift up the word of God as a central thing of what we do here, because the word of God is equated with Christ and the Father, right? It's the very words of God. And so he says, remind them. And what does he say and remind them of? Before we step into that, I want you to see this. I want you to see the ministry of Paul to Titus. And it's the same message that Paul had to the Ephesian church. And it's this, in verse three and four, it says, we were, Titus, you and me, we were, and in verse five says, but God. Have you heard that before? You remember in Ephesians when we did this? We were, but God. You know what, Titus? You were just like those people in many ways. Selfish, prideful, chasing after your own things, tied into the world. You had idols in your life.

[19:33] We were just like that. So don't beat them up. Exhort yes, encourage yes, remind yes. Don't beat them up because you and I are just like that. But what happened is God's done a work in our life, Titus. We were foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions. You know that he's talking about Titus himself? He's saying to Titus, hey, Titus, you remember when you used to say foolish stuff? Man, I had to correct you all the time, man. It's hard even to be around you.

And you kept being disobedient. You know, I told you over and over, this is the way a Christian lives. You kept doing your own junk all the time, man. Led astray. I couldn't keep you on the straight path if I had to, man. I had a big rope tied around you and I still couldn't keep you in line.

We were slaves to various passions. Titus, do you remember when you used to chase after that and chase after that and chase after that and chase after that? Do you remember, Titus? We passed our days in malice. In other words, we were hating people, trying to destroy people, trying to lift ourselves up and push everybody else down. Do you remember that, Titus, when you did that? And we envied people. We were hated. Do you remember, Titus? We didn't have all that many friends. We didn't have all that many people fought much of us. They were trying to trick us like we were trying to trick them. Do you remember when we lived like that, Titus? Hey, I was the worst of all, Titus.

Man, I was persecuting the church. I laughed and ridiculed when Stephen was stoned to death and I raised up my fist. That's who I was, but God's done a work in my life. Church, is that true for you?

[21:19] Have you come to the point where you realize that's you? Every single one of us, that speaks to each one of us, is that all of us are sinners.

sinners. Now, some might be more openly sinful, more outwardly sinful, but let me say, if you've got pride in an attitude, guess what? That's just as sinful as the open stuff. I don't know that we see sin for what it really is. We just think the big things are sin and the little things are white lies and we don't have to worry about those small things. It's really big things we've got to get under control. You realize that all of them are an offense to God? Do you realize that's who we were?

But God. Brother and sister, are you in the kingdom? Are you born again? Are you a believer?

You know what? If but God's not there, if the work of God is not in your life, you know where you are. You're right there where it says, just like Titus and Paul, they once were like that. That's exactly where you still are. If but God hadn't happened in your life. Has God touched your heart?

Has God opened your heart to see your sin? Has God moved in your heart to make you uneasy about your sin? Have you gotten to the place where you recognize that apart from the repentance, apart from the gift of God, apart from the forgiveness of God, there's no way you'll ever be in

heaven with him. There's no way you'll be accepted by him. And you're not a believer.

[22 : 54] You know what? Everyone in this room who has come to be born again used to be not born again. Sean shared this morning that by the grace of God, when he's seven years old, because he was in among the truth, the truth was all over his household and his friendships and his neighborhood and his church. And what a blessing of God, Sean, that you didn't have to go experience the ways of the world that, you know what? It makes it so much harder to unwind from those things. By the grace of God, he blessed you because of the faithfulness of your parents. Man, I celebrate that.

But you know, unless we have this in our life, but God, then we're not in the kingdom. Has God come to you, brother and sister? Has he come to you and says, listen, if you will bow your knee in acknowledgement of your sin, and you will confess your sins before me, and you will understand that I'm willing to forgive you and provide for you a payment, because you know our sins yield death, eternal separation. And unless those sins are paid for, we will be judged, eternally judged. But God has provided his son. He sent his son to live a perfect life and die on a cross. And when he died on that cross, he shed his blood, a perfect man, a perfect Messiah, shed his blood so that if you would trust in the perfect pure blood of Jesus to be substituted in your place, to cover you in a sense with this cleanness, it's, you know what the blood represents?

It represents the life of Christ. And if you will recognize that God has provided a way that is the way that Christ lived perfectly will be substituted for the way that you live sinfully.

Jesus will take on your sins as he hangs on the cross, and he'll give you his righteousness so that you can be born again. Oh, it's my prayer today that everyone in here is born again. It's my prayer. And Paul is saying to Titus, remind them, Titus, that those characteristics are characteristics of the world. That's the way the world lives. But Titus, I want you to remind them that's not the way Christians live. That's not the way we're supposed to live. And so we look back at verse 1, and it says this, remind them what? What does he say in remind them? And who is them?

[25 : 21] Christians. Remind the Christians, remind the church in Crete, remind them of this, to be submissive to rulers and authorities. To be submissive. To be submitted, to live this submitted life.

You know what? That's an attitude, isn't it? I recognize that I have an authority over me. You know, if we think about it from a worldly way, I've got a dad. And while I'm under his authority, I'm in his house, I should be submitted to my dad. And I've got an employer. And truthfully, I've chosen to be employed there. I should be submitted, and I should live in a righteous way under my employer. But you know what? Those are all earthly. The greater authority is God himself, that we are under the authority of God. Therefore, we should have the attitude of being submitted. We should say, yes, Lord. We should have the heart to say, whatever you say, yes, Lord's answer. And he goes on to say this, remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, and to be obedient. What does obedience look like? It looks like the next phrase, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work. And I'm going to camp here for a couple minutes. To be obedient. Let me just say this. The decisions we make, would we classify those as obedient to the Lord? You notice I use that word Lord very specifically. You know what Lord means? That means he's an authority. And if he really is Lord, how could we ever say no? Those moments where we say, where the Lord says, I want you to live this way, and we say, no, no, no, no. I'm not living like that. What are you talking about? You know he's not your Lord. Now he might be your savior, and you might be in the kingdom, and you might have the hope of heaven, and you might be a new creature. But when you say no to the Lord as he leads you, he's not your Lord. By definition, he's not your Lord. You know, it's to our advantage for him to be our Lord. It's to our advantage to say, yes, Lord, in every single way, in every single aspect. You know what it's called? It's called dependence. He says, listen, child, if you will depend on me, and you will place me as your Lord, and you will say yes to me, I'm not saying life's going to be easy for you. But I will say this, you'll be full of peace. You'll be full of contentment. You'll be full of me.

You'll be full of joy. You know what? We seek for joy in all kinds of places, don't we? But he says, if you will be obedient to me, if you will be ready. He didn't say create. Notice the good works. Good works is a phrase that I'm afraid the church doesn't define very well. And what I'm going to do is take a couple of minutes and define it. But I want you to notice what it says about good works. Be ready for good works. Be ready to say, yes, Lord. And it does not say, I want you to create something that's good and then turn back to God and say, hey, God, look what I did for you. It's good, man. Can you bless it? That's not the way we live. Unfortunately, that's the way the church

thinks is that we're going to create some good thing. And because it's good, God's going to be happy with us.

[28 : 47] And God's going to bless it. And God's going to do great and amazing things through the good thing that we created. Let me just talk about the word good real quick so that we understand what good works are. Church, this is so important because it's incredibly subtle. And it affects the way we live moment by moment, day by day, if we don't understand what this concept is of good works.

So listen, the natural man, according to Corinthians, is not capable of good. Romans 3 says it this way. No one is righteous, no, not one. And some translations put the word good there. No one's good, no, not one. Because biblically speaking, the word good is righteousness. No one's righteous, no, not one. No one understands. No one seeks for God in their natural state.

All have turned aside. Together they have become worthless. That means without any value. No one does good, not even one. So biblically speaking, this concept of a good work, it can't happen in the lives of a non-believer, can it? From the eyes of the world, we look at somebody helping a lady across the street and carrying her groceries for them. We say, man, that is good.

Look at that kind, good act. And yes, that's possible to do from the eyes of men something good.

But from the eyes of scripture, he's talking about righteousness.

And our motivation for helping the lady across the road can be self-focused. I want people to think good of me. I want her to think good of me. I want to feel good about myself. I want to present all these things that I've done to God and say, look how good I am, God. It's sinful if it's driven by self.

[30 : 43] The flesh is not capable of anything good. Can I get amen? Do you all agree with that? The flesh is not capable of anything good. How can I make that statement? Well, the word of God makes it.

In Romans 7, it says this, for I know, Paul speaking, that nothing good dwells in me that is in my flesh. Nothing good dwells in my flesh. And Christian, this is speaking to Christians, what I'm about to read.

Christian, do you realize you can walk by your flesh and you can make decisions by your flesh?

And that none of those are good? Not one of them? Because the word of God says it this way, the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile toward God. Do you realize that every decision we make that's driven by the flesh is hostile to God? There's no way to do a good work if it's flesh driven.

Now, if we take that out and extrapolate it, understand that touches everything. So if in my flesh, for selfish reasons, I come up with this creative way to do a good work, do you realize that's sinful? Do you realize this hostility toward God because it's not yielded or led by him, it's led by you for whatever purpose you're doing it? And I'll go a little further.

Father, God is the source of all good things. Do you all believe it? Yeah. Turn to James 1 and you'll see it. God is the source of everything good. There's nothing good apart from God. Think about that. Apart from God, you can't do a good thing. You can't do a good act. You can't. From the eyes of the world, you can. But from the eyes of scripture, it's not possible to do a good work. I want us to understand what Paul is saying to Titus. And I want us to understand what Titus is going to relay to his church is that Christian, this is the way you ought to live. Not by self-effort, not by fleshly dreams that you make up and you create yourself. That's not what you need to instruct them to do because the flesh never does anything that honors God. Never does anything good by the biblical definition. Righteous. And so I ask this question, can a Christian do good apart from God?

[33 : 00] I'll ask it again. Can a Christian, a born again believer do anything good apart from God? It's not possible. But you know, many of us are trying.

The word of God says it this way. In the context of spiritual fruit, in the passage of the vine and the branches, there's a statement made, or there's this verse that says, abide in me and I in you as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine. Neither can you unless you abide in me. I'm the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit. Do you think spiritual fruit is good? What's the only means for spiritual fruit?

And all of scripture is only one way to do it. There's only one way that spiritual fruit is going to come out of your life. There's only one way that things good are going to happen in your life. It's called abide. And when we abide, we're not influenced by outside sources. We're not influenced by the flesh. We're not influenced by Satan. We're influenced only by the Holy Spirit.

That's why it's called abide. Apart from me, you can do nothing. Apart from me, you cannot produce any good fruit. You cannot produce any good work. It's not possible. You feel like I'm beating you

up?

I'm not. You know what I'm doing? I'm trying to reveal the depth of this passage and how incredibly important it is for us to understand it. Church, we're not called by God to go out and create good works. You know what we're called to God to do? Be faithful. How are you faithful when God says, Trey, I want you to go down that road. And when you get to the end of the road, I want you to go that way. And I say, no, God, it's a shortcut if I go this way. He said, I didn't instruct you to take the shortcut. I said, I want you to go down this road and I want you to take that road. You know what he wants us to do? He wants to do exactly what he told us to do because all along the way, there's things that he's using me for. He wants to spill his fruit out of my life because I'm willing to be obedient. And then when I turn the corner and go the other way, guess what? He's still spilling fruit out of my life because I'm choosing to be obedient. I'm choosing to walk by his leadership.

[35 : 26] I'm choosing to be led. It's an attitude. So I read the passage again and I want you to hear, church, what we need to be reminded of as a church, as individual believers, as born again ones.

Listen to what we need to be reminded of. Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities. Are you submitted to God? Are you ready to obey? Is your attitude truly there? Are you kicking and screaming against what God wants to lead you to do? And then he says, and be obedient. When God says go, don't, don't say no. He says, be obedient to be ready for every good work. And I just want one more thing about good works. If y'all ever notice in Ephesians 2 10, this incredible little phrase that talks about good works. Listen, listen to this. And I think it adds a little gravity to what I'm saying here. So in first eight, nine, and 10 is 10 that I'm pointing to, but I want to read eight, nine, and 10, because it's the same reminder that Paul gave to Titus. It's for by grace, you've been saved, Titus. It doesn't say Titus here. Okay. I'm reading in Ephesians, but I'm inserting his name as if he's talking to him. For by grace, you've been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing. It's the gift of God. Did we hear that in Titus? Yes. Not a result of works, Titus, so that no one may boast, including you. For we are his workmanship, Titus. We have been transformed by him. He did it all. We didn't do any of it. By the grace of God, we're his workmanship. And listen, this beautiful phrase, created in Christ Jesus for what? For good works. Do you realize we were created for good works, church? I'll say that again. We are created for good works.

But I want you to listen to the next phrase because it really shows us how that process can possibly take place. Listen at it. Good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. It's almost like God said, I've got this road out here and I'm going to roll out the carpet and it is the good work. And all I want you to do is go walk in that way. If you'll walk that way and obey, guess what? The good work is going to happen. I've already prepared it. I've already rolled it out. I've already planned it. All I need you to do is be obedient. All I need you to do is say yes. And you know what?

[37 : 58] I'll make it happen. Listen at this phrase again. We were created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand. You know that we didn't prepare them and we didn't create them and we didn't make them up and we didn't conceive of them and we didn't get other people to be involved. You know what? If that all that is true, then it's flesh is sin. The good works he's talking about are things that he already has planned in his master plan. You realize God's got a master plan and the sovereign God's master plan will not be thwarted.

Satan can't do a thing to thwart God's master plan. And you know what his master plan is? He's got his thread of history and you know what he's doing to me? He's saying, Trey, come on, come on. I want you to experience my plan. I want you to walk in my plan. And when you walk in my plan, you're going to experience the living water flowing through you. And it's going to, there's going to be an electricity of relationship between you and me. And it's going to cause you to experience my glory. And it's going to cause you to bow your knee and worship. And it's when you worship from the heart that you know me.

Church, I'm taking some extra time here because this is powerful. My words aren't powerful. If my words come out, I hope they'll just fizzle away. But if the word of God comes through and it's truth, I hope it'll cement itself in your heart. To walk in good works is to obey. It's called to abide.

It's called to say, yes, Lord. Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord. And so we check ourselves. When's the last time you heard yourself say, no, Lord, I'm scared. No, Lord, I don't have that gift. No, Lord, I don't think they like me. No, Lord, I don't cook good.

No, Lord. You know how practical this thing is? It's right down to the very simplest and smallest things of life. You know what God says? I want you to bring everything to me in prayer. Everything. I want you to talk to me about the smallest of things. It doesn't have to be this grand decision about whether I leave my work or not. I want you to just talk to me about you getting ready to step in a door to a customer. Why don't you talk to me before you go in? Why don't you ask me to do something through your life when you interact with that guy? And why don't you be open to me putting my words in your mouth and you just be bold enough to say what I put in your mouth? [40 : 20] I mean, it's the day-to-day, moment-by-moment, small things. He says, I want you to depend on me for everything. I want to tell you, church, it is the most peace-filled place you'll ever be.

You know how much you have to control if you depend on him? Nothing. Zero. And our flesh screams, wait a minute, that's stupid. What do you mean? I don't know. I can't just be irresponsible. It isn't anything about being irresponsible. It's about being dependent. It's about committing every little thing to him and being led in every little thing.

It's called abiding. You want to know what in John 15, that passage I just read about the vine and the branches and the fruit and abiding, you know what the end of that passage says? Verse 11, it says, these things I've told you in order that you might have life or have joy and have it to the full. You want to know where this bubbling joy comes from that we've tasted on and off here and there, that bubbling joy comes through abiding. It's the only way. There's no true joy apart from abiding. Let's pray. Father, I'm sharing your word. I hear the call to abide. God, I've heard it for years now. [41 : 44] God, I've heard it for years now. And the paradox of it, God, is that I found that I can't do it. I try to abide and I try to abide and I try to abide in my own effort and I just crash and burn.

God, and I'm sure it's true for all of us. It's such a high goal. It's such a high and lofty call to abide. God, yet Father, you say I've given you everything you need for life and godliness to rely on me and not on yourself.

It's the power that is at work within you that's going to give us, God, the ability. I hear it, God. I hear it. It's not our strength and it's so hard to beat down my flesh and tell it no and crucify it like Paul said.

God, I just confess that this humanity is difficult. I hear your high call, the high call of God in Christ Jesus. I hear it. And God, I desire to abide and I think it's true for many of us here that we've gotten to the place in our walk where we desire to abide.

And God, we confess that left to ourselves, we can't do it. So we ask for your power in a way that maybe we've never known before to take us to this place of abiding, that you might be glorified and we might know you fully. And I pray in your name. Amen.