

Sermon to the Saints of God assembled at Topeka, KS: Sunday, May 12, 2024

Sober, Sober, Sober – Titus 2

Part 1

Titus 3:14 *“And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.”*

In recent months, I delivered a 3 part sermon regarding the duty and office of elders in the church, with a substantial part of my text coming from Titus 1. Let us now follow Paul’s train of thought in his letter to Titus, by moving on to a more thorough consideration of practical godliness for every member of the church. Specifically, we will focus on Titus 2 for my next 2 or 3 sermons, Lord willing. As context, we will begin by reading the entirety of Titus.

Titus 1

“1 ¶ Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; 2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; 3 But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour; 4 To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour. 5 ¶ For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: 6 ¶ If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. 7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; 8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; 9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. 10 For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: 11 Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake. 12 One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. 13 This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; 14 Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth. 15 Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. 16 They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.”

Titus 2

“1 ¶ But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: 2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. 3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; 4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. 6 Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. 7 In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, 8 Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. 9 Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; 10 Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. 11 ¶ For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. 15 ¶ These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.”

Titus 3

“1 ¶ Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, 2 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men. 3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. 4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. 8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men. 9 ¶ But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. 10 A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; 11 Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself. 12 When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter. 13 Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them. 14 And let ours also learn to

maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful. 15 All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen."

Our focus will be on chapter 2, specifically considering the instructions that Paul gives by demographic:

- Aged men
- Aged women
- Young women
- Young men
- Preachers
- Servants

"Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine":

- The doctrines of the Gospel are sound – they are full of health and life. It is the duty of any preacher to speak provocations becoming of those doctrines – in season and out of season; when it's comfortable and when it's not. It can feel difficult, but it is needful. We see by what follows that we are not to speak those doctrines only in conceptual generalities, but rather specifically applying them where it is needful for each person.
 - *Henry: "Ministers must not stay in generals, but must divide to every one his portion, what belongs to his age, or place, or condition of life; they must be particular as well as practical in their preaching; they must teach all and each their duty."*
- We are to provoke a servant of God to bring forth works that become the doctrines that we profess. It's not becoming for the king's children to present themselves in the attire of a whore.
 - **Tim's Sermon (4/28/24):** *"Expositor Thomas Watson, in his work 'The Great Gain of Godliness' spends a good bit of time on how the elect in this life should walk with the bearing of royalty to reflect their active citizenship in the Kingdom of Christ and God. True royalty doesn't brood. They're not petulant and surly. They don't express themselves in petty squabbles with fellow citizens. They move with grace and affection for all of the fellow members of the kingdom. They have continual thoughts of how they should (and might) honor the King with all they think, say, and do. Saints understand their citizenship in that kingdom, so they quit themselves like the King's subjects."*

Aged Men

- Our first two categories deal with aged men and women; these are people whose senses have been exercised by reason of use. Therefore they are able to teach younger people what God requires of them, by their words and their deeds. Aged

people are often those who have been given authority to one extent or another, and must employ it unto God, and without hypocrisy. Learn – Do – Teach. You can only teach what you have learned and put into practice.

- **Sober**

- Nephaleos (3524)

- **1Timothy 3:2, 11** *“A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, **vigilant**, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach ... Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, **sober**, faithful in all things.”*

- Nephaleos is an adjective that is derived from the verb nepho (3525)

- *“To be sober, to be calm and collected in spirit; to be temperate, dispassionate, circumspect”*
- **1Thessalonians 5:6-10** *“6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and **be sober**. 7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. 8 But let us, who are of the day, **be sober**, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. 9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.”*
- **2Timothy 4:5-8** *“5 But **watch** thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. 6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”*
- **1Peter 1:13-16** *“13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, **be sober**, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: 15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.”*
- **1Peter 4:7-10** *“7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and **watch** unto prayer. 8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. 9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging. 10 As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”*

- **1Peter 5:8,9** “8 **Be sober**, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.”
 - Clearly then, we are to be watchful, vigilant, focused, and in our right mind; we are not to be driven by the winds of our passions. Watchful of our own thoughts and behavior; watchful of the example that we set; watchful of our brethren; watchful for Satan’s assaults.
 - Modern usage of sober takes the mind directly to drugs and drunkenness. That’s low hanging fruit in this analysis. Certainly we are not to be physically intoxicated. In a broader sense, we are not to be spiritually intoxicated by overly indulging the allurements of the world, and thereby making us useless watchmen. Intoxication of any form is earthly, sensual, momentary pleasure. We are to be alert, aware, watchful, pulling our gaze up from the momentary desire of the flesh and placing it upon the glory of our Husband, and the promise of our eternal habitation.
- **Grave**
 - Webster’s: “Having a serious and dignified demeanor”
 - Semnos (4586) - Strongs: “august, venerable, reverend, to be venerated for character, honourable”
 - Root word means “to revere, to worship; devout”
 - **Philippians 4:8,9** “8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are **honest**, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. 9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.”
 - Aged men of faith should behave themselves in an upright, respectable manner. Reverence and veneration of God should never be far from their heart, lips, or hands. That character in them should be respected and emulated.
 - **Job 1:1** “There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.”
 - **Calvin:** “Nothing is more shameful than for an old man to indulge in youthful wantonness, and, by his countenance, to strengthen the impudence of the young. In the life of old men, therefore, let there be displayed a becoming gravity, which shall constrain the young to modesty.”

- **Temperate**

- Sophron (4998) – Strongs: “of a sound mind, sane, in one’s senses; curbing one’s desires and impulses, self-controlled, temperate”
 - Made up of two words which mean “to keep safe” “the mind”.
 - Elsewhere translated as “sober” and “discreet”.
- Spiritual temperance is moderation, self-control, self-command within the mind, heart, and life, as it regards the things of this world. It is the right state of the thoughts, affections, and behavior, toward the things of this world. We must be able to take, or leave those things, being always content with what the Lord has provided us. The temperate Christian sees that the possession of wealth, honor, and worldly pleasures cannot make him happy, nor can the lack of those things make him miserable. We ought to have a loose grip on all of the things that we use in this world, willing at a moment’s notice to let go of it entirely, without remorse! Remember Lot’s Wife!
- All that we have in this life has been lent to us by our gracious God. It all belongs to him! Our gifts are not our own. Our wealth is not our own. Our time is not our own. Our children are not our own. Our health is not our own. Our very lives are not our own! The Lord God who loaned us these things, with an expectation that we would employ them in service to him, can recall that loan at a moment’s notice. We must have a temperate spirit about ALL of those things, such that we can truly be content and thankful toward God, when we have them, or when he takes them away.

- **Sound in faith, love, and patience**

- Sound: whole, complete, hearty, healthy.
- As the body and mind become less sound, we must seek God to build us up in these the principal graces of the Spirit of God. These graces should be healthy and thriving in aged men such that the constancy of their example is nourishing to their family and to the church. There is difficulty here, as the cares and duties of aged people are often greatest when the strength of their body and mind is declining. This makes it a daily need to seek God to keep our hearts in faith, love to God, love to our neighbors, special love to the brethren, and patience both to endure all, and to wait upon our Lord to deliver the fruit of our hope.
- **1Corinthians 13:13** *“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”*
- **Henry:** *“Sound in the faith, sincere and steadfast, constantly adhering to the truth of the gospel, not fond of novelties, nor ready to run into corrupt opinions or parties, nor to be taken with Jewish fables or traditions, or the dotages of*

*their rabbin. Those who are full of years should be full of grace and goodness, the inner man renewing more and more as the outer decays. **In charity**, or love; this is fitly joined with faith, which works by, and must be seen in, love, love to God and men, and soundness therein. It must be sincere love, without dissimulation: love of God for himself, and of men for God's sake. The duties of the second table must be done in virtue of those of the first; love to men as men, and to the saints as the excellent of the earth, in whom must be special delight; and love at all times, in adversity as well as prosperity. Thus must there be soundness in charity or love. **And in patience**. Aged persons are apt to be peevish, fretful, and passionate; and therefore need to be on their guard against such infirmities and temptations. Faith, love, and patience, are three main Christian graces, and soundness in these is much of gospel perfection. There is enduring patience and waiting patience, both of which must be looked after; to bear evils becomingly, and contentedly to want the good till we are fit for it and it for us, being followers of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises."*

Lord willing, we will continue in Titus 2 the next time I preach.

I love you all. Amen.