

Sermon to the Saints of God assembled at Topeka, KS: Sunday, May 4, 2025

Sober, Sober, Sober – Titus 2
Part 7

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

Today we will conclude our examination of Paul’s instruction to “speak thou the things which become sound doctrine”, ministering continual and specific provocation to practical godliness within the church, according to each member’s need and circumstance.

Titus 2: 1-10 *“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.”*

Our goal is to examine and apply the practical instruction that the Holy Spirit provided for each of the demographics in the passage. As a reminder of what we have covered so far:

- Aged men – Sermon 5/12/2024
- Aged women – 12/8/2024
- Young women – 1/26/2025
- Young men – Sermon 6/30/24 + 10/20/24
- Preachers – Sermon 3/16/25
- Servants - Today

Today we conclude our examination of Titus 2:1-10, by considering Paul’s instructions to servants. We have spent 7 sermons now, over the course of a full year, inquiring into these grave and sober instructions about our practical walk, as we bear about in these bodies of our humiliation - daily, hourly, continually - warring against this awful flesh,

and the sins that so easily beset us. This has been a sober period of time for this little flock, suffering affliction as appointed by our loving Father, designed to glorify Him, and to purge, purify, and prepare our souls for our eternal home. We praise Him for it all, and ask Him to make us fruitful in every good work, and to increase in the knowledge of God.

Servants

- **Titus 2:9,10** *“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.”*
- Servants:
 - If we are to consider these instructions with a right view of ourselves and our God, then we have to be clear about this:
 1. Headship and authority exist, and are appointed by God, at His will, and for His purpose. This is a core part of the human creation, and shows forth His headship and authority.
 2. We, as depraved humans, hate the fact of headship, and rebel against it throughout our lives.
 - We have to see this reality of headship, and therefore servitude, fully embracing it, because God has appointed it. We can't just acknowledge it with our lips, we have to settle it in our hearts, and bring forth behavior that reflects our submission to God in the matter. Rebelling against earthly authority is tantamount to rebelling against God.
 - Today's passage refers to our "own" masters. By God's providence, we each are appointed various masters in this flesh, which makes these instructions to "servants" directly apply to every soul in this room. From the moment of our birth, we are under the headship of our parents, and we owe them obedience. Throughout our lives we come under the various authority of many other masters, including parental delegates, the body of Christ, governmental leaders, law enforcement officers, teachers, employers, etc. We are servants to each of these masters, at least within the specific context of our lives that they impact.
 - Consider the definition of "servant":
 - Strong's - 1401 "doulos" (doo'-los)
 - a slave
 - One who gives himself up to another's will
 - One who is devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interests
 - First and foremost, we are servants of God. Charles gave us some helpful words about the nature of that servitude in 2013:

- *“Our will is in service to God’s Will, unable to perform anything that is not in strict accordance with His ... God’s Elect are not bound slaves but willing servants. The willing servant gladly endures the brief pain of having their ear pierced with an aul at the doorpost (see Exodus 21:6), while a bound slave constantly chafes at their chains, seeking escape and vengeance against the captivity imposed upon them by their master.” (excerpt from sermon on 3/31/2013)*
- Indeed, our God has made us willing – *“work[ing] in [us] both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” (Philippians 2:13)* He has constrained us by His love, and by His grace, we wouldn’t have it any other way! If it were up to our flesh, we would flee from His service.
 - Our servitude to the various masters of our flesh is not so clean, because of the never-ending sin from both master and servant. However, we still owe the same level of fidelity, because ultimately our service to the God-appointed masters of our flesh is a part of our service to God. We can’t actively kick against our fleshly masters and claim proper service to God.
 - To modern ears, any form of servitude is falsely equated to oppressive, barbaric, chattel slavery. Modern Americans, in particular, live a life that must fairly be described like that of ancient Sodom: “pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness” (Ezekiel 16:49), and yet they caterwaul as if they are the slaves of Egypt, whose brick quota was just increased. It’s very simple - humans do not want to submit to headship of any kind, and we don’t want to work, even though that is the portion that God has given us; the difficulties of that work were directly appointed by Him when He issued the curse upon our first parents in the Garden. The fact is, that untold billions of people have been subjected to oppressive chattel slavery, and yet their duty to serve those hard masters with fidelity and contentment before God didn’t change.
- Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things:
 - **Obedience** –
 - The Bible contains 176 instances of either instructions to obey, or the consequences of disobedience. Obedience is a basic concept that seems so blessedly simple. Obey God, obey your parents, obey your masters in this earth. Obedience produces countless blessings. We plead with our fellow man on the streets of this nation to obey God.

flattery. It is to be done with sincerity, and borne of a reverence to our heavenly master:

- **Colossians 3:22-25** *“22 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: 23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; 24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.*
 - This means that we are aligning our will to our master’s will, so that we can internalize and faithfully execute their instructions. Where we have opportunity, we should try to understand their goals, which helps us to ensure that we focus on the right things on their behalf. Where we have become competent, and trustworthy, we are often presented with opportunities to respectfully and circumspectly seek to improve their position, thereby more fully employing the gifts that the Lord gives us. This is true obedience from the heart – with joy and thanksgiving for our lot. This is the sincere and hearty behavior that the slave Joseph brought to the table, such that Potiphar, and then Pharaoh entrusted him to be the keeper of all that they owned! That’s what we owe unto God.
 - Put another way, masters are happy, when they **trust** that their servants have embraced them and their goals, and are faithfully executing against them.
 - Consider how God speaks of His servant Abraham: *“And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; ... For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.” (Genesis 18:17,19)* That is the trust that we want to earn from our earthly masters; more importantly, these are the words that we want to hear from our heavenly Master.
- “Not answering again”:
 - We are not supposed to be arguing with or railing against our masters. Full stop. This is a particular danger to us when we feel like they have mistreated us, talked down to us, “fussed” at us, disciplined us, made rules to govern us that seem unfair or overly restrictive, etc. The standard doesn’t change, just because we feel like we have been mistreated - we are still required to control our spirits, and submit ourselves.

- Talking through issues, and even respectfully challenging their perspective, can be appropriate, if done with a right spirit to God, and for their good as much as yours. We have to stay vigilant, so that we don't become overly familiar, and slip over into answering again with a haughty and puffed-up spirit.
- If there is some egregious, or unlawful behavior from a worldly master, and there is an appropriate way to seek relief, then we are certainly able to make use of that recourse. But even at that, our spirit cannot be one of vengeance, but rather it must be to seek peace.
- **1Peter 2:18-25** *"18 Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. 19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. 21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: 24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. 25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."*
- We are to render respect to our masters; as Peter just laid out, we are to exhibit proper fear before them. Part of that fear is that we recognize the authority that is assigned to them, and therefore the accountability that will be required of them by the Lord who granted the authority. We do not know the particular burden of our masters, and often give no consideration to their burden, and what is driving their presentation with us. Those with authority must give account – we ought to make that process easy on them – supporting them in their work, that they may give that account with joy.
 - **Hebrews 13:17** *"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."*
- Masters ought not to be righteous over much, or entrapping their servants. We are not about chasing down and avenging every idle word, which would be an exercise in ultimate hypocrisy and human worship. We are about glorifying God, whether master or servant.

what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. 5 So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? 6 And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. 7 Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore. 8 And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. 9 And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. 10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. 11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? 12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? 13 No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

- To be clear the vast majority of this man's behavior is roundly condemned by Christ who labels him an "unjust" steward. Christ is in no way endorsing this man's sinful conduct. Christ commends him, but only for a very specific thing. He wisely sees the danger ahead, and uses the resources currently in his hand to make provision for his future. He commends the concept, not the content of his behavior. Consider the other ways that the scripture speaks to this same concept: the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31 is not afraid of the coming winter, because she has prepared proper clothing for her household; likewise the industrious ant of Proverbs 6 gathers and stores her winter food at the harvest time. This is a thing that every human with a modicum of self-preservation does. Think retirement planning. Of course the actions of this unjust steward were not only corrupt, but short-sided, as his only consideration regarded his temporary, earthly home. Our primary focus should be on our long home, when we consider preparation.
- In this steward's predicament, we see ourselves. Our hearts have been brought low by the gracious hand of God, and caused to understand that our sin has condemned us to be put out of our stewardship; every earthly resource that we hold, up to and including our bodies, and our very lives, will decay, and ultimately be taken away. It is the cause of our deepest grief and sorrow when we consider how we have sinned and offended our Master. Seeing our sin, we look around and consider

our options, and see that we can do nothing by our own hand to save ourselves. But alas! We have been called into the wondrous salvation of Christ. We see our risen savior – our dearest friend - ever-living, and making intercession for us at the right hand of God on High!

- Having been called into Christ, and enlivened with such glorious hope, what should we do with our limited, rapidly fading earthly resources? Use them to prepare for eternity! This sin-tainted mammon of unrighteousness – is what we have in hand. In wise consideration of our future, we invest it in a way that pleases our heavenly friend(s), who alone can bear us up when this life inevitably fails. The persons of the Trinity of God are the friends that we must have, and the only friends that we need.
- *Benjamin Keach: “Some wicked men are more wise how to provide for themselves, or in contriving how to live in this world, than the saints and people of God are to contrive and seek ways how to advance the glory of God, and their own spiritual interest and comfort here, and happiness in the world to come. O how subtil and crafty are the children of this world, what ways will they contrive to enrich themselves, or to prevent want, poverty, and extremity, they will not leave one stone unturned; if one way fails them, they study another; and think no time, no pains, nor any danger or difficulties too great to enrich themselves, or to prevent perishing for want of bread, and other earthly things, they see an absolute necessity of while they are here, (for the things of eternity, or of another world, they mind not) but earthly things they will have, though it be by cheating or base and horrid injustice. But that which was knavery in this unjust steward, is honest enough in those who are stewards of our heavenly Lord’s good, for no man can improve his parts, his riches, his honour, his health, his time, or his abilities, or his whole life to his own true spiritual advantage; but In so doing, he advanceth the real interest and glory of the true spiritual advantage; but in so doing, he advanceth the real interest and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, their interest being not divided, or two, but only one and the same.”*
- That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things:
 - Our behavior directly adorns and reflects upon the doctrine that we preach. If we walk before men as humble, honest, faithful, industrious servants, who do good and not evil to our masters, and our neighbors, then we give tangible testimony to the goodness and truth of the doctrines. No matter how humble our circumstance may be, our obedient walk as a servant beautifully adorns the Gospel.

- Gill: “[Doctrine] should be adorned by a suitable life and conversation; for this is what becomes the Gospel of Christ, throws a beauty upon it, and is ornamental to it; and in this way the doctrine of Christ may be, and ought to be, adorned by servants, as well as others: to adorn the Gospel, is first to believe and receive it, then to profess it, and hold fast that profession, and walk worthy of it.”

Thank you for bearing with me as we have delved into these sober matters, my beloved friends. It is terribly convicting to the soul to look squarely at the standard of behavior that we owe to our Holy God. At the end of the day, I thank God for His mercy, and pray that He continues to lead us, and teaches us by each providential experience to better serve Him; to loosen our grip on the things of this world, and thereby prepare us for the coming of our Christ, and His kingdom. *“So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.” (Luke 17:10)*

I love you all. Amen.