

Living That Accords with Truth

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[0 : 00] Okay, Titus chapter 3, have a look at it, we'll read it out and we'll have a look at it together. Titus chapter 3.

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[2 : 36] Titus chapter 3.

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[10 : 46] Titus chapter 3.

Titus chapter 3. It doesn't. It's a supernatural work of God's Holy Spirit as he renews our hearts and as we submit to his word.

And Paul gives us the reason for this reminder in verses 3 to 7, right? And he reminds us of just how bleak life was at one stage and how beautiful life is because of God.

Have a look at this reminder of what we were like. Have a look at it. verse 3.

[14 : 37] Verse 3. We ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.

There but for the grace of God go I. We ourselves, notice Paul includes himself in this list along with Titus.

None of us have ever been better than anybody else. It's all by the grace of God that we are who we are.

Look at what this lostness looks like. Look, foolish, foolish, that is, not intelligent, dull-witted.

You can have a PhD in nuclear physics and be a fool, right? I can't help but think of the rich fool in Luke chapter 12.

[16 : 02] Apparently an intelligent farmer who worked out how to store up lots of food in his barns, but ignorant in what the matters of life are all about and bankrupt before God.

And Jesus says, you fool. The fool says in his heart, in Psalm 14 verse 1, there is no God.

They are corrupt, they are abominable deeds. There's no one who does good, Psalm 14 says.

Brothers and sisters, the atheist is a fool.

The person who does not submit to Jesus as Lord and Christ is a fool. Paul doesn't mince his words, God doesn't mince his words.

That's the reality of our world. Those who are outside of Christ are fools. And disobedient, that is, rejecting authority, not submissive.

[17 : 13] Of course that's how you would live if you're the ruler of your life. Who has the right to tell me how to live? Essence of sin. Led astray. Wandering like planets across the sky.

Following various teachings. Looking for meaning. Looking for satisfaction. Can't think of that song. You know, you can't get no satisfaction.

Looking for it in the wrong places. In the passions and pleasures. Only become slaves to the passions and pleasures.

Mastered by the passions and pleasures. It's not God who is our master. It was seeking after our lusts, our desires, our pleasures.

That dictated how we spend our money. How we spend our time. Let me ask you the question. How is our time being spent today? We're in the right place this morning.

[18 : 15] Passing our days in malice and envy. Hated by others and hating. What a horrible way of life. Mutual hatred. What a horrible society to be part of.

But, brothers and sisters, that's what is scratched below the surface. And that's what our society is like. And scratched below the surface.

Don't have to scratch below the surface. That's what our world is like. Why are the hundreds and thousands of people being killed in Ukraine, in Sudan, in Congo and in Gaza today?

Because they are hated and hating one another. Because without God, that is the natural way of mankind.

And you know what? The Apostle Paul says that he was the worst. In 1 Timothy chapter 1 verse 16.

[19 : 23] He says he was the worst of sinners. Deserving of God's wrath. But while he was in that state, he was in bad trouble and didn't realise it.

He thought he was okay with God. He was a very religious man. Never missed a Saturday at synagogue. He was a very moral man. All the Ten Commandments he would keep.

He was a very Pharisaical man. Every possible rule he had to keep to be outwardly righteous in the Pharisaical system. He did it. He wasn't a dummy. He was super, super intelligent.

He was a Pharisee. He learnt under Gamaliel. He was very, very clever. Very, very knowledgeable man. But still the worst of sinners and still a fool.

For he disregarded Jesus. He opposed Jesus and refused to recognise him as Lord. And caught up in his self-righteous religiosity. He hated others and was hated himself.

[20 : 24] That was his life before God saved him. And that would be our natural way of life. Unless God saved us. It's bleak.

It's very self-destructive life. No happiness. No joy. No meaning. No hope. Just dog eat dog. And pray that you're not the lowest on the food chain.

And previously for the Cretans and all believers, life was one of hopeless godlessness. And at one level it's impossible to realise unless God's Holy Spirit shows you that you're living in a life of godless hopelessness.

Might have the appearance of being okay but actually it's far from it. Desperate looking for meaning and hope. Desperate looking for meaning and hope but not finding it. But.

Have a look at it with me. But's one of the nicest words in the Bible. Verses 4 to 7. But. See there. But. When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared.

[21 : 35] He saved us. Not because of works done by us in righteousness but according to his own mercy. By the washing and regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.

Whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour. So that. Being justified by his grace. We might become heirs.

According to the hope of eternal life. But's that great word that it means that whatever came previously is no longer the case.

It kind of wipes out what happened before. Remember what God has done. But. When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared.

That's a beautiful way of saying the grace of God. Jesus Christ appeared. His life. His death. His resurrection. And he saved us.

[22 : 39] That's the language of the Christian. Notice it's something that's happened to us. He saved us. He did it all. Notice it's because.

Not because of our works done in righteousness. Far from it. That is doing works required by Jewish law. Sabbath keeping.

Circumcision. Law. Food laws. Ceremonial. No. According to his mercy. Giving us what we don't deserve. God has acted very graciously towards us.

In Christ Jesus. He saved us out of his mercy. We deserve wrath. What do we get? Forgiveness. We deserve death. What do we get?

Eternal life. He washes us clean. Gives us a fresh start. Which comes about by regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit of God.

[23 : 38] Verse 5. Washing is that inner washing. Right? No longer a heart of rebellion. No longer a heart that's black. A heart that's hard towards God. But an inner cleansing that makes us acceptable to God.

You're thinking of Ezekiel 36. I'm sure. You're thinking of Jeremiah 31. I know. A new heart that God places within us. When Jesus met Nicodemus.

In John chapter 3. Nicodemus was the teacher of Israel. He didn't get it. Even though he was the teacher of Israel.

He didn't get that he had to be born again. Born anew. Of water and of spirit. Washed clean by God. But when we are renewed.

We are no longer the same. We are regenerated. We have an experience of regeneration. It's a new birth. It's the experience of a complete life change.

[24 : 39] A new birth. A fresh start. The old life is over. The new has begun. We have a new master. Who is the Lord Jesus Christ. No longer the God of this world.

And he changes us. Notice it's all of God's work. It's God the Father. Who chooses us before the foundation of the earth. It's God the Spirit's work.

Who leads us and moves us. To believe in Jesus. Nothing of our own doing. Romans chapter 10 verse 9 says. If we confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord.

And believe in our hearts that God raised Jesus from the dead. We will be saved. But it's only by God's Spirit. That we will ever confess Jesus Lord. No one can confess that Jesus is Lord.

Except by the Holy Spirit. He is the one who gets in and works in our hearts. To recognise our folly. And to come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It's God the Son.

[25 : 40] To bring about the possibility of salvation. By his atoning sacrificial work. It's God the Spirit. Who brings us. To submit to Jesus Lord and Saviour.

As he did with Paul. Changing from being a violent man. Opposed to Jesus. To being a gentle man. Serving Jesus. So it's God who's at work.

Changing us. Pouring out his Holy Spirit upon us. Richly. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Those of us who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. We have the Holy Spirit.

We can't have more. Than we've already got. We have been filled with God's Holy Spirit. It's been poured out upon us. Generously. We already have him.

And God the Father gives the Holy Spirit to his people. Through God the Son. There's some deep theology behind that one. But we'll let it go.

[26 : 39] And having confessed Jesus as Lord and God. As Saviour and Judge. We are heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Heirs of those who are going to inherit.

Inherit. Given the treasure. Being given the status. We are heirs with Jesus of the kingdom of God. How about that?

Heirs with Jesus of the kingdom of God. James chapter 2 verse 5 teaches that. It's because we have this hope of eternal life.

That we are heirs. Without eternal life. There'd be nothing to become an heir of. There'd be nothing beyond the grave. The certainty of eternal life.

The certainty of the hope in the kingdom of heaven. The certainty of being in the kingdom of God. And sharing with Jesus of all the inheritance saved up for us. Is worth having.

[27 : 39] Far greater than any earthly treasure that we can store up in barns. That we could ever receive. Now verse 4 to 7 is a trustworthy saying.

That has been given to Titus. And has been given to us. It's worth memorising. Getting hold of it. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared.

He saved us. Not because of our works of righteousness. But according to his own mercy. By the washing and regeneration of the Holy Spirit. Well.

All this means that Titus has a job to do. He has to be exercising oversight. And getting the people in Titus. In Crete. To exercise oversight as well.

And so here we see this oversight at work. In verses 8 and 9 and 10. He is to insist. On what Paul has written to him. Titus is to be a model to the overseers.

[28 : 42] Of what they are to do. And how they are to look after the churches in Crete. So that in verse 8. Those who are trusting God. Might actually.

Respond. And devote themselves to doing good things. Not the destructive things. We heard about in verse 3. He's to insist upon sound doctrines.

Having. Believed the truth. Sound doctrine. We are to devote ourselves. To good works. Have a look at it. The saying is trustworthy.

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. I'm sure you've noticed.

As we've gone through. The book of Titus. How many times. The word good. Comes up. In the letter. Chapter 2. Verse 3. Chapter 2. Verse 6.

[29 : 41] Chapter 2. Verse 12. Chapter 3. Verse 1. Chapter 3. Verse 8. Chapter 3. Verse 14. It's only by having the. The truth of the gospel. Shape us. That we are fit.

For any good work. Disobedient. Unbelievers. Are unfit. For any good work. Back in chapter 1. Verse 16. Now. It would be remiss.

Wouldn't it. Of me. Not to commend our church. On the good works. That we do. So many of us. Are involved in doing good works. And it's a real joy.

To know of. Individuals. Going about things. Quietly. Behind the scenes. Loving others. Behind the scenes. And they wouldn't want to have their names mentioned.

In a group like this. Looking out for one another. Who are. Caring for people when they're sick. Fixing things for others. That needs fixing. Providing meals for people who need meals.

[30 : 41] Looking after aged parents. Caught in the sandwich generations. Operation Christmas Child. Food gives. Brothers and sisters.

It's commendable. It's wonderful what we do. And I guess what God would say. Is continue to do so. More and more. So that we're ready to engage.

In every good work. You see verse 14 of chapter 3. Let our people learn to devote themselves. To good works. So as to help cases of urgent need. And not be unfruitful.

There are always opportunities. For us to do good. To those around about us. Especially the household of faith. So he's insist on what is good.

And continually encourage people to do what is good. And. Resist what is wrong. Verse 9. Have a look at it with me. Verse 9.

[31 : 38] But avoid foolish controversies. Genealogies. Dissensions and quarrels about the law. For they are unprofitable. And worthless. As for a person who stirs up division.

After warning him once and then twice. Have nothing more to do with him. Knowing that such a person is warped and sinful. He is self condemned. Some.

There's that word but again. Some things are excellent and profitable. Yeah. Some things aren't. We're talking about church discipline here. And this is.

Tough. Right. Which is why authorities. Are established in churches. And why we need to submit to the authorities. That are established in churches.

That's oversight at work. There are things that are a real waste of time. There are things to avoid.

[32 : 38] And there are people. Who actually. We're to have nothing to do with. Which don't promote godliness. And which don't promote order.

Which don't promote truth. The things mentioned. Controversies. Genealogies. Dissensions. And quarrels about the law. Are not going to promote.

The gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Jews love their genealogies. Tracing their lineage. Back to Abraham. And which family I was part of. And my family is better than your family.

I can't. But think of Gus the Greek. In my big fat Greek wedding too. You love it. Don't you? You've seen it. He wanted to prove. That he was a descendant.

Of Alexander the Great. A particularly. Wonderful fellow. And he said. I am of Alexander the Great. And he wanted to get a letter. Saying he was.

[33 : 37] That was the whole story. Well it's a particular Jewish issue. To have this heritage. Back. To Abraham. And prove it. Quarrels about the law.

Squabbling about what makes you clean. Or unclean. The list goes on. Dissensions and strife. Are not going to promote order and harmony in the church. Time.

Titus is to guard the flock. And to guide the flock. Away from those kind of conversations. And the possibility is that some people may deliberately stir up divisions.

And they need to be spoken to carefully. In fact. The word behind it. Is where we get the idea. The word. Heresy.

Heretic. People introduce teachings. Doctrines. That are not sound doctrines. But are. Other. Doctrines.

[34 : 40] Actually false doctrines. Dangerous and deadly doctrines. That will lead. Whole families astray. And. Out of the kingdom of heaven. Putting people at odds with each other.

Dividing the church. These people need to be warned. That there are consequences. If they don't stop. If they don't. Then they will be isolated.

They will be ignored. And the rest of the church. Is to have nothing to do with them. Now brothers and sisters. I'm just going to go off script for mineral two here.

It's why. In some denominations. Corruption has crept in. Right. Because. People didn't guard the truth.

And then now. There are. Heresies. That are. Running those churches. And the very. People. Who were the faithful ones. Have had to leave those churches.

[35 : 51] So if you think. That a pastor. Is being hard nosed. When they guard the truth. Think again. They are doing exactly.

What God says. They should be doing. Exactly. And we should be. Thanking them. For it. Rather than. Resisting them. And resenting them.

For doing it. And so. I want to put it out to you. That. We need. To continue. To do. What we are doing. Preaching God's word.

Faithfully. And truthfully. And telling people. When they are. In error. That they are. Wrong. And to. Warn them once. And then. Warn them twice. No. You don't do it in a hurry. Right. You. Take time.

[36 : 46] Take energy. Speak. Confidently. Speak calmly. But in the end. If those people. Want to continue.

To teach. Heresy. Or to hold. To territory. Or advocate. For heresy. We need. To separate. Ourselves. From them.

It was interesting. Wasn't it? In one. King's reading. This morning. Very interesting. Very interesting. Indeed. All right.

We'll come back to my text. But anyway. It's not just here in Titus. But James chapter 2 verse 10 says. Don't receive them into your own house. Now notice though.

Have a look at this. And see here the verse 11. Notice. It's not Titus. Who condemns.

[37 : 47] The divisic. Heretic. In the end. It is that person. Themselves. Who condemns. Themselves. They are self condemned.

By continuing in their sin. And distorted corruption. And God. Himself. Will shut them out. From his presence. For eternity.

God will do it. So then brothers and sisters. If we're to live according to the truth. We'll be submitting to rules and authorities.

And we'll be good for our church. Good for our society. Good for our families. We'll be speaking to one another. Out of all courtesy. And we'll be remembering that God is one who saved us.

And remembering that he's one who saved us. We would be enslaved to a way of life that was utterly destructive. If it wasn't God who'd done his work in us. And now as God's people we're to be devoted to doing what is good.

[38 : 52] So on that note. Let me pray. Let me pray. Let me pray. Our Lord and Heavenly Father. Thank you that you saved us by your mighty mercy.

Thank you that you've washed us and renewed us by your Holy Spirit. Please help us to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives. While we wait for the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray that you would help us to submit to the authorities over us. To speak to no one other than with words of courtesy. And to engage in good works.

Which we know are excellent and profitable for all people. Please help us to remember these things. Help us and protect us from dissensions and divisions. And help us to feed on your life-giving word.

So that we might be sound in the faith. In love and steadfastness. For we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.