

A NEW HUMANITY: Devote Yourself to Good Deeds

Titus 3:12-15

Introduction:

If you need a **Bible for this service**, please raise your hand.

- Praise reports on Youth & Young Adults
 - Youth: New dynamic, verse-by-verse study, we just did a 2 hour training for our volunteers and they seriously got pumped up for how they will be able to play a bigger part in your children's lives in discipling them by pointing them not to themselves but to the Word of God, to Jesus, but we still need 7 more small group leaders.
 - YA: August 19th we start our new dynamic by meeting weekly for the next 10 weeks as we will be going through the home group curriculum and meeting at 7:00pm in the Multi-Purpose Room; the area where Awaken Kids is at.
 - We also are looking for small group leaders but specifically seasoned, mature leaders. By that I am actually referring to millennials and older. I'm telling you right now there is a deep need for you guys to be present because our Young Adults are screaming, "pour into me" and young adults are pouring into young adults and that's great, but we need seasoned, mature believers to be mentoring this generation.
 - If this is you, please stop by the Next Steps area to get more information so even before we get into our message, there's a challenge for some of you guys. Please pray if this is something you want to take a step of faith in.

If you are able, please stand with me to read Titus 3:12-15. We stand as a sign of respect and reverence to God's Word.

Hook/Question of Reflection:

I want you guys to reflect on this question: What kind of story is your life naturally telling? What kind of story does your life declare? What would your friends say about you based on how you live your life? What would your children say about you?

- The point I'm trying to get across is, **are you building a life that points people to Jesus.** What if your life became the evidence to the people around you that Jesus is absolutely real and alive.

Background Context:

This is actually what Chapter 3 encompasses. Paul presents the current reality and struggle that a Cretan who claims to be a Christian lives a lifestyle that is contrary to the Gospel. They're giving a bad reputation to what it means to be a Christian and the Christian message is not as effective and attractive. So, Paul gives Titus a strategy, a final plan on how they are going to reach Cretan culture with the Gospel.

- But since this is the last study in the Book of Titus, I wanted to give you a whole overview of the book so you can see Paul's linear thought process in writing this epistle and ending with his final claim.
- I actually compiled a list of all of our statements of why church matters (which is our sermon series name) and what defines a healthy, spirit-led, God-fearing, Gospel-centered **good church** should embody. So, **I encourage you to pull out your phones and take a photo** so you remember the key points in this sermon series while I summarize this epistle.

What we know is that Crete was a large island off the coast of Greece, and Cretans were known for their lies, violence, and sexual corruption. The apostle Paul sends this letter to Titus to restore order to a network of house churches. We saw in Chapter 1 Titus' assignment to appoint new leaders and Paul gives the qualifications of what kind of leader you should appoint, then Titus needs to confront the corrupt leaders who are ruining the churches and are using the gospel as a means to make money. These corrupt leaders have completely affected the society & culture of Christians where their personal lives and their homes are a total mess.

- This is where Paul paints a picture of what a healthy household should look like in Chapter 2. He says the older men and women who have integrity and self-control need to model what it means to be like Jesus to the young people. Paul essentially is saying everyone needs to learn to be productive, healthy citizens of Cretan society.
- For this to work people need to put their faith on display in their community! They need to get to a point where Christianity is actually compelling when it meets the needs of the culture, but is rooted in a different value system -- not in the Greek god Zeus whom they worshipped, but in the one and only God, YHWH. The biggest value that will separate their belief in Zeus from God is God's generous grace. If you listened to Pastor David's message on grace, I know you were extremely blessed by the Word God delivered through him.

This is where we land right in Chapter 3. Christians MUST be known as the ideal citizens who are peaceable, obedient to their authorities, and known for pursuing the common good. The only way somebody can sustain this kind of lifestyle is through Spirit-empowered faithfulness to Jesus as we declare His generous grace for what He did on Calvary to the entire world.

Main Points:

This is where we land in verses 12-15, and the main idea for this morning is **for us to devote ourselves to good deeds**, not because we are trying to work our way up to salvation, but because this is the apostle Paul's final claim: *we can create a new humanity by living countercultural lives through Spirit-empowered faithfulness to Jesus declaring His abundant grace of sharing and living out the good news.*

- If you're taking notes today, write this down: *A good Church prioritizes missional living & supports those called to carry out the Great Commission.* The simple definition of missional living is to make Jesus known in everyday life.

Illustration: This weekend I went on work trip with some of the staff members to Phoenix Arizona, and while we were driving, I was sitting in the front with Pastor David and I asked him, "What would you do if we weren't pastors at a church?"

- He's like, "I'd probably be a leadership director, coach, or a mentor for businesses. Probably places that focus on leadership development. What about you?"
- Me wanting to be a firefighter so I could use it to work anywhere around the world and reach the hardest places to reach like the middle east, central and southeast Asia, or northern Africa and preach the gospel.
- He was like wait I thought u meant not doing ministry.
- I never said that, I said what would u do if you weren't at a church — I don't have to work at a church to do ministry.
 - o Pastor David is completely passionate about Leadership development because leadership directly reflects God's heart and order, and I am completely passionate about the 10/40 window that even if I wasn't a pastor I'd still find my own way to get there no matter what.
- Then he's like, "dude I wish more people thought like that. That people's mindset were their lives were so focused on Jesus that anything they did was considered ministry."

This is the whole idea, that your life has been so touched by the love of God that your life story will proclaim that you are a Jesus follower and everything about you points to that. That

whether you were on staff at a church doing full-time ministry or you are working on the strip, you see that you are on equal grounds on both levels being the hands and feet of Jesus.

Here's the thing, living missionally is a lifestyle that is learned. Let's read verse 14 again. "And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful."

- The Bible says "let our people learn" learn to do what? To devote yourself to good works. When would you devote yourself to good works? During cases of urgent need!
- Let me define good works for you: You are serving the Lord through serving the people in your community.
- For you to Live Missionally is for you to learn to devote yourself to serve the Lord through serving the people in your community.

I actually love the word "devote" used here. It comes from the Greek word *proskartereo* (prahs-kar-teh-reh-oh) and it means to attend to, remain strong, to endure with an extra emphasis on the time element involved. It is more than don't give up and push through during crisis, but it portrays the kind of strength that is ready for action for the long run.

- Think about it, look at the circumstance Titus is in. Living in Cretan culture was no easy task to try and give the Gospel, and living as a Christian was difficult! Amidst adversity and when your culture doesn't even care about Jesus, Paul is saying even more should you devote yourself to good works, even more should you devote yourself to serving the Lord through serving the people in your community, so that people can recognize the power and love of Jesus! I don't know about you but I don't think it's always the easiest task giving and living out the Gospel in Vegas either! We're not being persecuted or at least I don't see lots of physical affliction, but that doesn't mean our ground is any easier. People's hearts are hardened, they're naïve, they are so stuck in their sin living in sin city, that we are called to rise above that.
- [Philippians 2:12-15, Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.](#)

In other words, it takes intentional effort to still sacrificially love and serve people despite your circumstances not looking the most ideal, but when you learn to live this kind of lifestyle, the Word of God tells us you will be fruitful. You will be more effective for God's purpose here on

this earth. We see this lived out in the Bible, and a really good example is the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Illustration:

Explain the story of the Good Samaritan.

- Man going down to Jerusalem, beaten and robbed by thieves. Priest sees, levite sees, walks away. Samaritan comes, has a heart of compassion, takes care of him, brings him to a inn, gives more money to the innkeeper to take care of him, and it shows this random stranger showing love to a person in his community.
- The Good Samaritan who stopped by to help the man who was beat and robbed stopped to do good works not for the sake of being morally righteous, not to look good, but because the Good Samaritan was a faithful and loving servant of God.
- I want you now to put yourselves in the shoes of the man who was robbed.
 - o Wasn't that at one point all of us? Weren't we robbed from the enemy our joy from the Lord? Weren't we robbed from our purpose and our identity? Didn't the world just start bashing and beating us up that we laid on the road feeling hopeless, feeling alone, feeling like nobody notices us, feeling unimportant and insignificant?
 - o Was there not a person in your life who loved on you with a love that felt supernatural? Was there not a person who God provided in your path who ended up leading you to learn more about Jesus? Was there not a person who helped you in your most desperate need and pointed you to Good News of Jesus that helped you make a decision to give your life to Christ?
 - Listen if you didn't have that person, it's because one, people are not being obedient to God, and two, because that person is supposed to be you! You are supposed to be the Good Samaritan serving the people in your community because they are beaten and bruised spiritually. Their hearts are far from Jesus and they need help but nobody will stop in their busy schedules to actually care for their physical condition being their hearts!
 - What if the man who was beaten was an atheist, do you think he wouldn't have stopped to consider "why in the world would this person help me when the others didn't?" I bet that if there was a time for this person to give his life to Jesus, this moment was a deciding factor because the Word of God says it is YOUR LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER that people would know you are followers of Jesus.
 - Do you remember when you were once in that spot? You might be saying, "well nobody came to tend to my needs." Do you know why? Because Christians aren't living out their God-given purpose to fulfill the royal law! If people were taking serious the call of God, then somebody would've most likely met you in your deepest and darkest moment but we live in a fallen world! **So how about, we don't repeat the same mistake? How about we step up and love people, especially those far**

from Jesus, especially those lost in a world where they have no idea where their life is headed, especially those who are difficult to love so that people can see Jesus' love is real and living through His children!

- That's why I'm so grateful we have LV Reach where we connect with the people in our community who have deep, urgent need, who come from broken families and wake up seeing people shot from down the street and are impoverished, where children see people shooting needles up their arm like that's a normal thing to see and we ENGAGE those people and give them the love of Jesus because that's what we're called to do.
- If you love the Lord your God with all your heart soul mind and strength, then you will also love your neighbor as yourself! If you live out the royal law, then you will also live out God's commandment to you which is to go make disciples of all nations and how are you going to teach anybody to observe what Jesus has commanded if you don't even know how to connect with your neighbor.
 - **Amy Carmichael**, a radical missionary from India says this beautiful quote, **"You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving."**

If you really have the Love of God in your hearts, it should compel you to serve the Lord by devoting yourself to good deeds, by helping you serve urgent needs in your community so that you would not be unfruitful because the Word of God says in [Matthew 7:19-20](#) "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits." and I don't know about you, but I would not want that to be thrown into the fire. Again, the question I asked in the beginning, do you know how you can tell if the story your life is telling points to Jesus? You can tell based off of the fruits you bear. Are you a diseased tree, or are you bursting with life to give to those who are hungry?

I don't know if you guys recognized this, but Paul was trying to get Titus to come meet him at a new destination in Nicopolis so in the process of Titus trying to transition, Paul sends him two faithful companions of his, Tychicus who was mentioned 5 times in the Bible working alongside Paul and though Artemas is not mentioned before, we can assume Paul is sending another faithful and capable servant. Then Paul tells Titus to do his best to speed up the process of getting Zenas the lawyer and Apollos to get to the island of Crete and see that they lack nothing.

- For Titus to get to Paul, Titus needs support to fulfill what God has called him to do, which is advance the Kingdom of God and fulfill the Great Commission!

A good church prioritizes missional living and **supports those called to carry out the Great Commission.**

- I actually completely resonate with these verses here. As many of you know, I will be leaving soon to go to Japan and prepare to plant a church, but before I leave I am desperately wanting to make sure I end this season strong. I want to make sure the

student ministry has built a solid foundation so that I can leave in peace and walk confidently into my next season. For me to be able to do that, I am asking you guys, where are my Tychicus' and Apollos, and Artemas' at? Where is the support that the church needs so that we can collectively fulfill the Great Commission?

- Titus didn't just leave Crete in a terrible spot and then said "sorry guys! See you later! The Lord needs me in Nicopolis so good luck!" No! He is being sent support and Titus is working hard to bring two more people so that he can go leave in peace knowing that the Lord has provided all he needs! I cannot go to Japan in peace if I don't end this season strong.
 - o Also, I just want to take this opportunity to give an update and thank all of you who have been sacrificially giving to the Japan budget. I am over 50% funded on monthly giving and the Lord keeps bringing me new people to connect with so I really just want to deeply thank you guys because you guys are completely living out what a good church should embody.
- Anyway, this is why we keep communicating the needs because you guys should not only be living missionally but also coming alongside the local church that you call home so that we can work and serve in all of the areas to fulfill the mission and vision of our church.

This is Paul's strategy for reaching the island of Crete with the gospel of Jesus. He says wisely be a part of Cretan culture, but don't be of it. Embrace what's good, and reject what's corrupt. Listen, at the end of the day, we should believe that we can change the culture of Las Vegas, we can create a new humanity of flourishing Christians when each and every one of us plays our role, plays our part in being loving witnesses of the abundant grace of God. That when we learn to devote ourselves to good deeds, people will witness through your life the beautiful message of our saving, transformative power of Jesus.

- **"Light yourself on fire with passion and people will come from miles to watch you burn." – John Wesley Theologian & Evangelist**

Closing/Takeaways:

I want to remind you that God has so much more planned for you. So much He wants to use you for because he made you for good works — but too many Christians settle for a life of mediocrity.

- Share the story of the eagle and the chicken.