

9/5/20 - Titus 3:9-15 - "True One-Another Living"

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[0 : 0 0] Last week we had an opportunity of understanding the qualities and the characteristics of transformed people. People who have been saved by God's grace, that have been transformed from the inside out.

And specifically we observed those being Christian virtues. And those virtues help to display who we are, but also our history holds kind of a negative approach where we don't have any reason to boast about who we are or our good works because of who we once were.

We are nobody. We are sinners saved by God's grace at the end of the day. And specifically to refresh your mind of the sermon last week, we observed three different sections in what is known as a chiasm in the Bible.

And the first section was observing the virtues of a Christian being submissive, being courteous. Remember that last week? And also we observed the vices that give us no reason to boast as Christians.

And that was in verse 1 through 3 in chapter 3. And we also saw the source and the means of being transformed. That is nothing of our own doing.

[1 : 1 4] It's nothing that we can ever work to do. We can't earn our salvation. It is all a gift from God. It is by faith alone, by God's mercy, receiving God's mercy.

And that if we have any works in light of that, it's an expression of what we've received. It's an expression of Christian living, all sourced by God's transformative power with our hearts.

And then we saw in the last section last week, in verse 8 of chapter 3, we saw in the last section last week, in verse 9, and I ended the sermon for the sake of time.

But the content in last sermon actually continues today. Because where we are in chapter 3 at verse 9, where we're starting today, Paul applies a contrast in the text.

The passage begins with a contrast. The evidence from the evidence of transformed people with those who sort of reveal themselves as questionable.

[2 : 1 8] Are you a Christian? You're among us. But are you a Christian? Based on how you behave. Are you transformed? So it's a comparison between the two, a contrast.

And these people are vividly identified to aid Titus in distinguishing his flock, separating the sheep from the wolves, essentially. Titus has a checklist to know truly if his sheep have been transformed with a heart of flesh or a heart of stone.

So we know what's at stake. If the glory of God is at stake in his church, and that each individual member represents a single flame of revealing that great, vibrant, hot glory of God, when we come together as all single individual flames, if that is our purpose, we ought to take caution of who might not actually be among us.

Because then we truly need Jesus to grant us discernment to purify his bride and his church. Titus was called to deal with a very difficult task.

I'm just going to lay it out there. It was a really difficult task. A task which examines the sheepfold, often resulting in extending his shepherd's crook out and pointing and calling a person out who is actually damaging the identity of that church.

[3 : 46] Quarrelsomely, no. Titus isn't to handle himself quarrelsomely. But obediently, according to God's word and Paul's instruction, yes, he is.

If only Titus could maybe just sort of let people get along and just ignore things and turn the other direction and simply just tolerate some of the issues that he might see in the name of peace.

I mean, after all, everything rests in God's hands. Anyhow, he probably could have been like, Well, God, you're sovereign, so I'm just going to, you know, go to my lunch. I got a meeting with a church member. But you can deal with those nasty situations that are kind of messy in the church.

Remember that the calling of a pastor, this is sermons previously, the calling of a pastor is not a calling of passivity, but an activity. So the pastor is actually called to address these things, which distinguishes that this role is not for just anybody because it is very difficult.

And today, we will observe the red flags of factious members of the church. Specifically, we're going to be looking at their attitudes and our response to such people who are factious.

[4 : 57] And the aim today in this passage, and as this letter closes, I hope that we can lay aside our reservations that we may have when we discuss this relevant issue of addressing the sin in each other's lives in accordance with Scripture.

Because we have to understand, church, that this is the most loving thing that we can do for one another, is to address the sin in each other's lives. So I'm going to break this up into a couple different sections today.

And the first section today is going to be, I think I'll have it up on the screen, the problems of the church. Specifically, the landscape of Crete.

And these things to insist upon and things to avoid. And we need a little bit of context in verse 9, because this is the second half of a contrast. So look in your Bible at verse 8 in chapter 3.

It says, 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.

[6 : 03] These things are excellent and profitable for people. But, in verse 9, avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they're unprofitable and worthless.

In Paul's letter to Titus, he provides a contrast of things to insist upon and things to avoid. Literally, just one side to another.

Insist on these things. Avoid these things. What is he talking about? The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist upon these things. Well, in context with what he's speaking about, he's going back to verse 4 through 7.

Insist on these things. Insist on the goodness and loving kindness of God appearing. The beginning of our salvation. The whole essence of our salvation.

Insist upon him saving us, not by works, but according to mercy through faith. Insist upon God washing us and renewing us by the Holy Spirit within us. And the object of that washing is poured out abundantly through Jesus Christ.

[7 : 08] Insist upon that we receive our righteousness from God. We don't have a righteousness of our own. Insist upon that we will become heirs of God in eternity.

And we see here things to insist upon, but now things to avoid. Avoid in verse 9. Look with me.

Foolish, unprofitable, and worthless controversies. Foolish, unprofitable, and worthless genealogies. Foolish, unprofitable, and worthless dissensions. Foolish, unprofitable, and worthless quarrels about the law.

In other words, our identity, being that of doctrine, of sound doctrine, should be marked by the good work of God in our lives. It should be expressed in devotion to him.

And so these types of attitudes should be avoided. Our witness as Christians are at stake depending upon what our lives insist upon or avoid. So we sort of have a little bit different of application with what Paul's actually addressing here.

[8 : 17] But there's very similarities with today's day and age. Because are we often foolish as we waste precious time on this earth in controversies?

Meaning like disagreements with one another. And entering into arguments. Come on, this is a political season. I think this right now is probably the most divided this country can be at times.

The election year. But are we foolish and waste precious time on this earth with controversies? In disagreements with one another.

And entering into arguments constantly of who's right or who's wrong. Are we focusing on genealogies? I don't think so in your perspective.

But thinking of how that applies today, do we think that we might be better than one another based on our past history? How many Bible studies do you know? How many scriptures do you have memorized?

[9 : 15] Do we think we're better than one another? Do we have factions of elite Christians who these people understand? Go see these people if you have a question. Or do we have unity in those matters?

How about dissensions? Do we have foolish dissensions? Having bitter conflicts with others without reaching some type of resolution? And how about quarrels about the law?

Fixating our attention on maybe works-based salvation? To be forgiven rather than fixating our attention upon grace. Because after all, the context of Paul instructing Titus is in reference to the Judaizers who are saying, yeah, Jesus is great and all, but you still have to do these works in order to obtain your salvation.

Here's your checklist, Titus. I know my stuff. I'm a Jew. I've been doing this for a long time. I know you're young, but hopefully someday you'll learn, essentially.

Forget about this. It's grace alone through faith that we're saved. And church, honestly, we can be ruthless at times. If only we could truly fixate our attention upon who we are and who we belong to, this election year wouldn't really make too much of a difference in your life.

[10 : 32] It wouldn't bring you great depression turning on the TV because you have a heavenly forward-focused mindset on things that matter, things that last.

Maybe we could finally invest our time, not foolishly, but wisely. And this is not just a historic issue in Titus' day, but this is a human problem.

This is human mankind at its finest of things to avoid that often we're drawn to. It's marks of fallen mankind. How are you investing your time in this life toward being a Christian witness in this church?

Paul continues in his contrasts with those who have been truly transformed. And he actually zooms in upon one common denominator and the attitude of toxic people to avoid.

And he zeroes into the attitude of this one type of person. And this is a toxin that exists not outside the church. You think the bad guys are outside the church?

[11 : 41] Well, no. He actually focuses his attention inside of the church. Things to avoid with inside the church. And specifically how to deal with them.

Please hear me this morning as we go into section two. Of identifying and handling factious members. We see in verse 10 through 11.

It says, As for a person who stirs up divisions, 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.

Paul makes a clear character mark of toxins within the church. And the aim of these people is to stir up division. It's a word stirring up division of herotikos in Greek, which literally means factious individuals who form dissenting parties or groups.

These are people who the transformed and evident church body is to literally divorce themselves from. Because such a person is warped and sinful, they are self-condemned in their divisiveness.

[13 : 05] And being self-condemned, it's by their own ungodly behavior. A factious believer brings judgment on themselves. They're literally, they have a shovel in their hand, for instance.

And church, the Lord desires to the purity of his church, the unity of his church, the witness of his church, so much that he calls at times pastors to deal and go to severe measures of protecting that glory that belongs to him.

Costi Hinge just recently wrote on social media, similar to this. He says, wolves in the church are not always the laughably obvious heretics.

Meaning that, we read the Bible often about like false teachers and wolves and things like that, and we get this image of like somebody who's obvious. Like that is, they might as well just hold a red flag as they're coming in the church.

But, it's not always that laughably obvious. It's sometimes subtle in the church. And he continues, that wolves in the church are not always the laughably obvious heretics, but rather, those who create private factions, undermine leaders, make railing judgments based on preference, and assign motives to others without proof.

[14 : 29] And Costi concludes, we need Jesus to grant discernment and purify his bride. Right? About two years ago, if you asked me what key distinguishing characteristics of the church are, I probably would have said something along the lines of, number one, preaching and teaching, obviously.

The other thing would probably be the ordinances, observing ordinances. That distinguishes us from another assembly, a secular assembly. They're not preaching the word. They're not doing ordinances.

These distinguish the church. However, being a young 33-year-old pastor who's still learning and growing, very flawed, mind you, I advise many older and wiser individuals up until their 70s and 80s who have been through this further down along the path, and they attest that I'm actually missing something.

And this is why this sermon is actually a cultural conviction sermon for our church moving forward. Because they say something is missing, and it's known as church discipline. John MacArthur comments on this.

He says, anyone in the church who is unsubmitive, self-willed, and divisive should be expelled.

[15 : 52] Two warnings are to be given following the basic pattern for church discipline set forth by Christ. This is a, church discipline isn't something that actually kind of makes you feel well.

It's kind of a dreary sort of term, but it has great glory to be revealed within the church body, and it's something that we ought to strive towards. This is a modern term with historic biblical meaning.

Modern word, obviously you don't see church discipline occur in the pages, but it is a biblical meaning, and specifically, it's a process which the Bible never lays out with a term.

The Bible never mentions it as a term, but they always, the Bible is intertwined and woven without scriptures as a process that reoccurs in the early church.

And this is also linked with the existence of church membership being in the Bible as well. Church discipline simply is, in summary and overview, is a restorative process.

[16 : 52] When somebody is in sin, in blatant sin, you address it one-on-one with them. If nothing comes out of that meeting with them, then you bring one or two with you to help so that they can't rail charges against you.

And if still, there's no restoration in it, if you're still laying the evidence of what is going on, then you're to bring it to the church. This is where church membership comes into full circle.

Obviously, if you're a newer member of the church over the past couple weeks and you're not a church member, you probably don't have much insight into the actual situations or the individual's life. This is where church membership comes in because then you meet with the church membership.

And if still at that time, there's no restoration, there's no repentance from that sin, then they are to be excommunicated from that church for the purpose of hoping that that person will someday confess their sin and come back into the church.

It's something that I know as tough love. We see this as not a human ideal and I want to prove that to you today. So if you desire to flip through a couple cross-references of where church discipline isn't actually explicitly mentioned, but it's the process that is observed, I have three, four passages.

[18 : 12] The first passage, if you're taking notes, is Matthew 18, verse 15 through 17. It will not be up on the screen. I ran out of time this week.

But it says, if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.

If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

Give them over to Satan. We also see church discipline in Romans 16, 17 through 18, where they talk about avoiding such people. Where Paul says, I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught.

Avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery, they deceive the hearts of the naive.

[19 : 29] We also see it in 2 Thessalonians 3, verse 14 through 15. That last reference was Romans 16, 17 through 18.

This one is 2 Thessalonians 3, verse 14 through 15. It says, If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person and have nothing to do with them, that he may be ashamed.

Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother. And we finally see in 1 Corinthians 5, 1 Corinthians 5, verse 4 through 5.

It says, When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus, Lord Jesus, and my spirit is present with the power of our Lord Jesus, you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

This is tough love, church. But you have to see that the Lord desires the purity of his church, the unity of his church, and the witness of his church.

[20 : 43] And he desires it so much that he calls at times pastors to go to severe measures of tough love to protect it. So we may ask at this point, if church discipline truly is woven throughout scriptures, if you're skeptical, sitting on the fringes, maybe you've experienced church discipline in a manner that, in your past, that it actually was very painfully done, because often church discipline is not done very well, according to scripture.

There is no restoration. It's actually just, people just step out, and anybody who gets in their way, they just kind of throw out the door. Now, the aim of church discipline is restoration, to bring a brother back.

And if it's ever done in this church, that will be the aim of unity, of purity, and of the witness of this church. So you might ask, if church discipline is woven in the scriptures, and was something common to be observed in the church, why don't we see this today?

Why is this not even talked about today? Well, there is an interesting observation into church history. Greg Wills noted that church discipline began to wane in Southern Baptist life, in particular, in the 1870s.

1870s. It started to wane at that time, and rapidly decreased thereafter, and literally, he says, quote, in his book, Southern Baptist, by the 1930s, it was quite rare.

[22 : 13] Most reported exclusions from the church merely by cleaning church rules, merely by names of members who are long inactive and forgotten.

There is no tending to people who, I'm going to be held accountable for in a day of judgment, that the Lord will bring to my mind and to my presence at that day of judgment, and he's going to bring Zach to mind.

How did you shepherd him? What did you do? He struggled with this, and you never addressed it. You decided that it was easier to go over here and deal with this situation because you desired it more.

You didn't want to get your hands dirty, but I've called you as a pastor to get your hands dirty. He will recall every name on our church membership rule, and I will be held accountable, according to Hebrews 10.

Daniel Aiken also, we might ask why this doesn't exist today, why we don't hear about it. Daniel Aiken mentions four reasons as to why this might be waned and uncommon in the modern church today.

[23 : 17] And I actually liked it. I actually added a fifth as well. He says, first, think about these reasons. as the culture has kind of invaded the church.

First, we have lost our theological nerve, the courage to confront as well as comfort, to admonish as well as exhort, to encourage and correct.

Out of fear of offending people, we have slunk away into a false security of silence, tolerance, in the name of peace. Let's all just get along.

That's not that bad. It won't have damaging effects if it goes unaddressed. The second reason he gives is he says that we have been overcome by a moral compromise in the church.

Our churches look and act so much like the world, we hardly know where to begin if we were to restore church discipline. The church looks awful like the world.

[24 : 18] Third, he mentions, we are simply and sadly biblically illiterate. Lay this deficiency at the feet of preachers who have been jettisoned and expository model of preaching and thereby allowed us to avoid and neglect hard doctrines of scripture with church discipline.

Sort of like I addressed with you if you're new with us today, we don't go topical. We don't just ignore context in scripture. We go through the message as written as the Holy Spirit inspired.

The message you get today is an inspired message based on the original context that the Lord intended of his word. So often, preachers who kind of abandon that model and just go flip through of, oh, giving's down.

Let's find something to get some cash flowing in this place. Oh, people are down and out. Let's find something to lift them up. Yeah, there's ways of doing that expositionally, but many preachers have avoided the expository model of preaching and they've turned to sort of feel-good topical messages.

And in that, you miss pages like Titus 3, verse 9 through 10 that hold very interesting and severe methods of shepherding the church.

[25 : 34] And fourth, he mentions often we don't see church discipline done in the church because there's personal ambitions that play all too important in our roles.

Thinking that man, if we just let these issues slide, if this church just, you know, has a mark of peace, you know, we'll have more people sitting in the chairs if we just allow things to go.

Bigger membership means bigger bragging rights. Look at what's going on in Youngstown Metro, all these people flooded in and out. Yeah, we won't worry about church discipline because that's going to upset people.

It affords a more attractive platform to make them move to a larger and more influential pulpit and denominational points. And Victor Masters actually mentions the reason this has abandoned the church today and is often uncommon is sentimentality.

And I believe this is very, very true. Sentimentality is an enemy of the church and administering discipline to members. Sentimentality is the love of man being greater than the love of truth.

[26 : 48] It cloaks a big hypocrisy and moral decay. Sentimentality usually responds in tolerance. Meaning that, man, I can't address this.

I love that person. Well, if you really love somebody, you call them out when they're at fault. You meet with them one-on-one. If they're still in blatant sin and not repenting, you bring another.

And you keep trying and trying and trying, just like a good shepherd does with his sheep. For the glory of God, and out of obedience to Scripture, the church must be marked out by not only the preaching and teaching of the Word of God, or observing the ordinances, but also church discipline.

This was God's design, and we have to uphold this design and trust Him with whatever that looks like. Bonhoeffer said, I just, in the newsletter, I recommended a book.

I encourage you to look at the newsletter, purchase the book. It's a small 122 pages long, and he quotes, Nothing can be more cruel than that of leniency, which abandons others to sin.

[27 : 56] Nothing can be more compassionate than the severe reprimand which calls another Christian in one's community back from the path of sin. Church, we have our duty, and God has His.

Yes, He is sovereign, but we participate in light of His sovereignty. We don't use it as a get out of responsibility card in the name of peace.

Doesn't Scripture call us to live in accordance, in accord with one another, in unity with one another? I mean, look at who we used to be. Remember last week when we talked about the work of the Holy Spirit, and who we used to be, vile and disconnected from any hope.

If we had anything to attribute to salvation, it was the sin that we bore. It was the path of running from God, and God's role was capturing us and saying, you're mine.

This is our nature, this is our tendency in life, is to run away from God, and how often it's the most unloving thing that you could do is to place yourself in a community where you can hide, or you can be comfortable without being challenged in your sanctification and where sin abounds in your life.

[29 : 18] You ought to receive the reprimand, the correction from a pastor with open arms saying, I know I need this because I know who I used to be. Thank you, Brent, for loving me.

Or thank you, a church member, a church member addresses anything in your life that they're observing. Say thank you and repent. This is the most loving thing that we can do for one another.

We need this. Consider the beauty of the following accounts. This is church discipline done so beautifully.

Mark Alberg wrote a few years ago that he had to discipline a man by removing him from membership for repeated and unrepentant adultery.

And they followed the following guidelines in Matthew 18. So, to paint the pictures plainly, there was a man who was having an affair with somebody outside of his marriage.

[30 : 20] His response was, he quoted the man who had the affair, I know what you have to do, so do what you must because I don't care. I plan to never darken the doors of this church again anyways.

Meaning that his shadow will never be on the doors. He doesn't want to return. So, why should he care? He proceeded to divorce his wife in civil court. His wife, the one who was cheated upon, his wife continued to attend that church.

At group meetings, they prayed for God to do whatever was necessary to open this man's eyes and bring him back into a right relationship with God. More than two years later, this man called me, the pastor at this time, and asked if they could meet.

In his office, he broke down this man who had the affair, who divorced his wife, who was in sin, who was excommunicated from the church. He said, quote, the hound of heaven had been on his trail for nearly two years, and he couldn't take much more.

He wanted to confess his sin, turn from his wicked ways, and renew his marriage. Even his wife, who had said she probably could never trust him again, was amazed at the change in his life.

[31 : 34] After his divorce, this man who was in the U.S. Army Reserves, had been sent overseas with his unit to process the bodies of soldiers who died in Iraq. Daily, he was confronted with the brevity of life and the permanence of eternity.

But after returning home, church, here's, he met with the elders at the church, confessed his sin, and asked to be forgiven for his arrogance and the impact of his sin on the church.

What a joy it was to later announce to the congregation that discipline against this man was lifted and he was restored to full fellowship of the church. When we do things God's way, he does not always respond quickly.

With quick results that we desire, but his ways are always right, they're best, they're true. With praise, the whole church got to see God at work in this man's life, in this marriage, restoring both the man and his marriage.

This is the gospel. This is persevering. This is church discipline done well with restoration in mind. And truly the aim of church discipline is that, it's restoration.

- [32 : 52] And here it is again, the heart of church discipline is perseverance and also prayer for individuals. I often think when we talk about discipline, I think of obviously children. Having four very young children at our house, obviously only one of them can usually receive discipline and be something that's fruitful in the very beginning.

Our middle child, you know, often continues in various ways at his young age. But it's tough to discipline your child. We have parents of very many here.

It's tough to discipline in your child at times. It's not fun. If church discipline is fun for you, you've got the wrong person administering church discipline. If church discipline, if discipline in your family is fun for you, man, you better check yourself.

Discipline should be very difficult because we don't often want to do it. We don't want to have to administer tough love to somebody that we love so dear. But we know that it's going to have long-term effects.

You're focused on the future. And just as the church discipline and administered the same discipline, we have the future of restoration in mind, in hope and prayer of that restoration.

- [34 : 08] Truly, there is nothing more loving one another than doing this. And as we get to section three today, the last section of this passage, we see section three being the rally of God's people and the call of living in unity with one another.

Verse 12 continues with this great rally call for Titus. It says, when I send Artemis and Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I've decided to spend the winter there.

Do your best to speed Zenos, the lawyer, and Apollos on their way. See that they lack nothing. Care well for these individuals. They're coming to aid you.

Verse 14 is key. And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works. So as to help cases of urgent need and not to be unfruitful.

Verse 15 concludes, all who are with me, send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.

- [35 : 25] We see something important. We see lots of names that we know nothing about often. We see a couple names that have appeared in various epistles. But the call of protecting the church is not a solo endeavor.

Think back to Titus chapter one, where we saw the qualifications of an elder, of an overseer. It was for Titus to establish elders. Plural.

A plurality of men to oversee. Because it was never to be a solo endeavor. There is no lone ranger, also in terms of church discipline either.

This would be a suicidal endeavor. One man versus them all. The best advice over the past year, the past year has been interesting in this church.

The best advice a church member here today gave me a year ago was to surround myself with trustworthy men, faithful men, who truly know who I am and truly desire the unity of the church, who will look out for the church at large.

- [36 : 33] Surround yourself with these men. And in this passage, we see quite a rally of respected individuals called to aid Titus in his endeavor in Crete, lest Titus be carried out of the church doors and crucified for stirring up, for calling people out of their sin, especially people who are highly respected within these churches in Crete.

The aim of this battle cry is seen in verse 14. Verse 14 is crucial. It is literally the fiber that intertwines so much context within the pages of the letters of the page previous to chapter three.

It is literally the fiber. Verse 14. And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works. The title of this series, remember, is Doctrine and Devotion.

This is where this comes into view. Let our people learn to devote themselves to good works. Devotion to God. Because we know something, our doctrine is driving our devotion.

Based on who we are, what we know of our past and our sinful tendencies, it drives who we are in good works. And we see what's at stake.

[37 : 53] So as to help cases of urgent need and not be unfruitful. The church is to come in to people with need. This isn't just supposed to be some social club.

This isn't supposed to be some just ritual sort of thing. We're supposed to go out to people in need. And if we can't get what is going on inside the church in order, so we're not creating different private factions of elite Christians, of this going on over here, and this closed group, and this happening, and this happening, just these private factions of divisive members and cliques in the church.

If we can't get this in order within the walls, we're going to have such disorder outside of the walls. We don't even know what we're supposed to be doing. The call of the church is to let the people learn to devote themselves to good works so as to help cases of urgent need and not be unfruitful.

church, this is our call. This is what's at stake. That is the aim of our battle, the battle cry, and what Paul saw at stake.

And literally, he rallies Artemis Tychicus. And we don't know much about Artemis, but we know Tychicus was a traveling companion of Paul in Acts 20. He's a dear brother and faithful servant of the Lord in Ephesians 6 and Colossians 4 with Paul.

[39 : 16] And he's also Paul's personal representative to the churches in 2 Timothy 4. Tychicus was a man who's highly respected, who basically, if you're in Titus' shoes, knowing what's at stake, knowing that you have to go in and put what remained into order in these churches in Crete, and you hear Tychicus is coming to help, all of a sudden, you've got some confidence that you have trustworthy men who are going to rally for the call of purifying God's church from divisive people, from factious people.

And this rally of faithful, like-minded men to aid Titus brings so much encouragement, even to me, and we ought to corporately be encouraged when you have similar like-minded men looking out for you as well, or women.

This passage draws upon my mind of that war zone scenario. I love war movies. I love Saving Private Ryan and things like that. I love those movies that depict the battlefield and war.

And literally, Titus is that soldier out in the battlefield who's literally up against a barrack. His hometown has been taken over by the enemy, and he's literally sitting there probably shaking.

I'm young. I haven't been doing this for years. I know I've been called. I know Paul's giving me apostolic authority to do this task. But man, I can't do this alone.

[40 : 48] And in his mission, he hears on the radio, as his back is against the barrack, his sergeant calling out saying, hey, Titus, I'm bringing help for you as well.

And he can hear the planes coming in as Tychicus is zooming in to help him in this endeavor. Of Artemis, these faithful, trustworthy men to help him. I'm getting goosebumps, church. Because this is a rally cry.

This is the corporate endeavor of bringing the unity not only to leadership, but also to corporate fellowship with one another. Church, I hope you can see through the word of God the natural design created by God for the church life.

This has multiple layers of exposure. It's not the same situation, cookie cutter scenario of adultery or maybe gossip. But this has multiple layers of exposure and dynamics from situation to situation.

Friends, as we close today, I pray that we can be dedicated to the rally of God's people. To be looking out for one another and often in tough love of calling one another out when we're maybe saying something we shouldn't say or doing something we shouldn't do or maybe treating your kids with a little bit too much physical aggression that we find out about.

[42 : 10] Or maybe speaking poorly to your wife. Maybe not spending enough time with your wife. When we call these things out with one another, it's not because we hate one another. It's because we love one another. Can we be dedicated to the rally call of God's people, both in leadership and corporate endeavors?

Not operating as factious groups or operating along the fringes, sort of like on the sidelines where Youngstown Metro is in the center of the field, man. They're in battle.

The swords are going. The shields are up. They're going and you're just kind of out on the sideline just like, whew. Oh, so this is what we're supposed to do.

I just kind of wanted to blend in a little bit. I just wanted to sit down, have a little feel-good message to lift me up the rest of the week. I'll come back as like we do in a gas station with an empty tank and get filled back up.

Well, you've got your own Bible too to lift you up as well. And I've got to say, can we strive to lay aside our personal agendas within the church?

[43 : 11] And maybe even our personal ideas, maybe even factious ones, and help make pastoring a delight and not a burden to even, say, Rick and I, the deacons as well.

Can we assemble ourselves in submission to the Word of God, not the latest church fad or growth strategy? Let's consider why we should practice church discipline from time to time.

Mark Dever actually gives us five seasoned reasons why. He's one pastor who has seen a lot. He's been a pastor for about 40 years. If you don't have a Mark Dever book on your bookshelf, we have some out here.

You can probably grab one on our resource table. Please get one. He says five seasoned reasons of why the church should practice church discipline from time to time.

He says, number one, it is for the good of the person being disciplined. Number two, it is for the good of other Christians as they see the danger of sin.

[44 : 12] Number three, it is for the health of the church as a whole. Number four, it is for the corporate witness of the church. And lastly, five, for the glory of God as we reflect his holiness.

And when Paul tells Titus at the end of this book, grace be with you all, we need to acknowledge that when he says you, that is plural.

So not only is he talking to Titus, he's also talking to the other churches who are to read this letter and to teach this letter. He is also talking to us today.

Grace be with us all as well. Some may think Paul's letter is addressed to him, but it is intended to be a step-by-step instruction to be shared within the churches of Crete and us today.

So from here forward, when we say it's sort of church discipline or something like that, think Christian discipleship, church discipleship, because this was God's intention. Tolerating sin is not a gracious thing.

[45 : 15] It's a dangerous thing. Addressing sin is not optional, but it's essential. Addressing sin is not judgmental, it's remedial. Correcting sin is not carnal. Correcting sin is spiritual.

And hopefully we'll be able to see the glory of God shine brighter as his church family here, as we rest upon obedience to the word of God, regardless of how that looks or maybe feels.

Thomas Oden says, Only those who take sin seriously take forgiveness seriously. And Jesus did both. Let's heed his example. I believe that we heed his forgiveness in this church.

So we also should take sin seriously as well. And as we move forward, let's reveal what we know informed by what we do. To be devoted to good works and not works of the flesh.

And I know that we have a couple people who are not members of our church here, that are visiting from other locations, you know, back for the Labor Day holiday and the long weekend that we've all been looking forward to.

[46 : 24] But take this back home with you as well. If you're from a different church within this area that you're visiting, if your church, if this is something not common in your church, this should be something that you're looking for.

Because you want your church to be loving you well. If your church isn't doing this, and this is uncommon that you're going into your church, kind of looking for a feel-good, little jolly, little goosebumps a little bit, and then go on your way, and you forget what the message was about all week, that should be a problem.

This should be something that you should be seeking and identifying within your church. Ask your pastors at whatever church you're from. Do we do church discipline? It's in the Bible. We should be doing this, right?

But Youngstown Metro, let's allow our devotion to demonstrate our doctrine. Let our doctrine, what we know, become something what we do.

That it's not useless mental capacity of like, okay, right from wrong, right from wrong. But this actually molds and shapes what we do, our devotion to God.

[47 : 34] This series has truly been a joy. And I trust that it will prove to be faithful in the life of our church moving forward as we press toward and onward in our walks, individually and corporately.

It has been a joy of doing this series with you. Let's pray as we go to a time of communion and dwelling upon God's grace as we observe the Lord's Supper.

Let's pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.