

8/16/20 - Titus 2:1-10 - "Adorn the Doctrine of God our Savior"

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[0 : 00] Just kind of as a reminder, if you haven't been keeping up with the Titus series, this is a letter, a pastoral letter that was written by Paul to Titus to encourage him and to edify him in establishing elders at the church in Crete.

And Paul began by going over the qualifications of an elder and then contrasted this with the unsound teaching of the circumcision party and the lifestyle of insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers who were teaching for shameful gain.

So as we move into chapter 2, I'm going to focus today on verses 1 through 10. And Paul, in these verses, is contrasting the lifestyle of the Cretan culture with a lifestyle that should be in accordance with sound doctrine, that is, teaching and instruction, so sound teaching and instruction.

And so Paul's expectation was that the lifestyle of these Christians in Crete was to be countercultural, at least based on how he described the Cretan culture, or Cretan culture, sorry. I always pronounce it Cretan, but it should be Cretan. I'll try to correct myself if I do that again. But he wanted the Christians to be countercultural in Crete and to set an example that would hopefully reshape the culture.

[1 : 27] So as we move into the text, let's read Titus chapter 2, verses 1 through 10, which should be up on the screen, but please follow along in your Bible.

I'm going to jump around the New Testament a lot today, so I'll try to give you time to flip to the verses, and hopefully they'll be up on the screen. But let's read Titus chapter 2, verses 1 through 10.

As for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. Older women, likewise, are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine.

They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.

Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.

[2 : 34] Bond servants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything. They are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

So let's open with a prayer. Father, thank you for this opportunity to worship you through the teaching of your word.

I pray that you will open our hearts to understand and to receive from your word, to grow in our wisdom and understanding and love of you, Lord, to be a model church, to shape and influence the culture around us in a godly way that glorifies you.

Thank you for this time. We give you all the glory and praise. In Jesus' name, amen. So on reading these verses, some of the first verses that came to my mind were Galatians 3, 26-29, and then also Colossians 3, 9-14.

And in Galatians 3, a book written earlier by Paul, he says, And similar to the church at Colossae, he wrote in Colossians 3, 9-14, And so something that stands out to me comparing these different teachings of Paul is that in some of them he seems to say that these distinctions,

[4 : 51] Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female, have been abolished through Christ, through his gospel, right? But then here in Titus, he is clarifying these distinctions, these roles for the various people.

And so perhaps this may appear a contradiction if we read them in that context, but the reality is when he's writing to Galatians Colossae, he hasn't abolished these roles.

Rather, he's celebrating the equality we all have in salvation through Christ, right? We all have equal rights to salvation through Christ.

But he's not abolishing these roles, right? The grace of God has been revealed and brought about salvation for all people, as Paul wrote, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who, well, now I'm getting into Brent's verses for next week, right?

But Christ did not abolish social gender or familial roles. Rather, he elevated them. But that's what I want to focus on today, how Christ elevated all people of various distinctions and roles and empowered us to live self-controlled lives, submissive to rulers and authorities, embracing our God-defined roles, all while bringing glory to God the Father and showing him to be truthful, right?

[6 : 24] So out of this text written to Titus as he established the church in Crete, I want to focus on that. So the first section, how I broke up the text, is a little bit unbalanced.

I'm going to have the first section on verse 1, the second section on verses 2 through 10a, and then the last section on verse 10b. So we're going to spend a lot of time in that middle section.

But before we jump into there, I want to focus on this first verse. Teach what accords with sound doctrine, right? What is in accordance with sound doctrine or sound biblical teaching?

So let's start out by looking at what it means to teach what accords with sound doctrine and why this was important in Crete and in general. So in contrast to the false teachers that we spoke about in chapter 1, the circumcision party, Titus was called by Paul to teach, train, and model things that accord with sound doctrine.

Paul offers wisdom on how all believers should live in relation to one another, and that's what these verses really focus on, and how we should interact with non-believers and the culture around us.

[7 : 39] And he says later on, proper Christian behavior is based on the fact that, and in Paul's words, the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people. And so because of that, those who believe in Christ are to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives as they await his return.

So I want to take a moment to kind of set the context, right? Not all of us are familiar with Crete. If you are, that's awesome.

I've never been there. It's an island in the Mediterranean, south of Greece. And Paul visited it.

Actually, he was a Roman prisoner, if you recall back in Acts 27.

He visited the island as a prisoner. They took shelter there during a storm. And then at some point later on, on one of his missionary journeys, he left Titus there in Crete to establish elders.

Some scholars believe that the Christian church may actually predate Paul's missionary journeys there because, as recorded in Acts, some Cretan Jews actually were present at Pentecost and likely brought the gospel back and helped to found some of these smaller churches in Crete.

[8 : 50] But at this point, Paul felt it necessary to leave Titus there to really establish these churches. So as noted by Paul earlier on in chapter one of Titus, the culture in Crete was perverse and it was out of agreement with sound godly doctrine.

And Paul was worried that the Christians were living more in line with the culture than sound doctrine. And so they had abandoned or strayed from their God-defined roles and they were embracing spiritual equality that extended beyond God's intention.

So he, Paul, felt the need to redefine and reestablish these roles for them. And so he confronted each group based on age and gender and then also social standing with specific instructions to combat what was going on in the church.

And Titus, as the first elder, was sent there to establish elders to oversee these churches in Crete. And he was instructed in verse 1-9 of Titus, hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

So, something else, kind of a side point I want to focus on in this epistle, this pastoral letter, is the importance and the emphasis on teaching.

[10:16] So I think that's something really important throughout the Bible, not just the epistles and pastoral letters, but also the books of wisdom written by Solomon. The epistles written by Paul, Peter, James, John, and even perhaps Luke offer practical application to everyday life based and founded on the gospel.

And so we see throughout many of the epistles this focus, this emphasis on teaching. And it wasn't just given to certain elders to teach, but actually the expectation was that all Christians, regardless of their role, were to model godly living for those who observed them to follow.

So, in 1 Timothy, verse 1, or chapter 1, verse 9 through 11, Paul says, understand this, that the law is not laid down for the just, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

Right? So, all of these practices are contrary to sound doctrine and must be removed from the church in order for it to be pure, as Lex spoke on a few weeks ago, right?

Christ is purifying for himself a people. In 2 Timothy 1, verse 13, Paul encourages Timothy to follow the pattern of sound words that you have heard from me, again, modeling for Timothy as he did for Titus, in faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

[11:59] For the time is coming when people will not endure, sorry, I skipped down to chapter 4, verse 3 of 2 Timothy. The time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

And this is what Paul was worried about in Crete as he equally was in Ephesus. So, in combating this unsound doctrine, he carefully instructed both Titus and Timothy the practical, social roles and responsibilities that accord with sound doctrine.

Right? I believe Paul, he wrote this later on in his life as a prisoner, having written many epistles before it, that he learned through combating false teaching in Corinth, in Ephesus, and in other places, the importance of emphasizing these roles.

And so he took the time with the elders Titus and Timothy to reemphasize these for them as they began their ministry, using his own experience to pass this on as he had modeled it.

So as we move through the verses, I want to look at the instructions given to older men, younger, or rather older men, older women, younger women, younger men, and then slaves, and to focus on how these accord with sound doctrine.

[13:30] So, section two is where we're going to spend the bulk of our time. I'm titling this one A Countercultural Life and how we can show God's word to be true through our lives.

So Paul sets his sights first on older men. He says they are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness.

And we see similar expectations given to elders, right? To Timothy and to Titus themselves, the qualifications for elder. But the first attribute that Paul focuses on is sober-mindedness, right?

Which could be translated as sensible and serious. That doesn't necessarily mean you have to be like me and always talk, level, sensibly, seriously.

You know, you can enjoy life a little bit, too, but I think what Paul is really emphasizing here is sensible, serious decision-making, right?

[14:30] Godly decision-making. And so he's not restricting us to always being sober-minded in that sense, but in the sense that we should make sensible, godly decisions.

He said to Timothy in 1 Timothy 3, 2, an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, and able to teach, right?

And so there's this strong emphasis on sober-mindedness and self-control. He also says here in Titus that he must be dignified, meaning worthy of respect and not a clown, right?

That's what one of the commentaries said, not a clown. So I know as younger men sometimes we like to clown around a little bit, but I think there's a line where clowning around becomes sophomoric, right?

And it destroys the reputation of the church. I even saw a news article about a leader of a prestigious evangelical university this week who got caught clowning around and lost his position and discredited his university, right?

[15 : 40] So we need to be dignified in order to keep the reputation of the church and the community above reproach. And so I believe that this is something that's expected of older men, but it's also expected of younger men as the older men model it.

In being dignified, I also believe it means that respect is earned, right? Men of God have to be dignified, they have to be hardworking, and they have to be disciplined in order to earn the respect of their families, their communities, and their fellow churchgoers.

So the next attribute he focuses on, Paul focuses on, is self-controlled, which could mean upright, holy, and disciplined, living in a way that ultimately glorifies God through the hearing and doing of his word.

And for many of the roles that he focuses on later on, he's going to go back to this idea of being self-controlled, right? The individual being disciplined, spiritually disciplined, and also literally self-disciplined.

In Titus 1.8, Paul says of the qualifications of an overseer, as God's steward, an overseer must be above reproach, he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered, drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined.

[17 : 07] So there's a strong emphasis on self-controlled, right? Not being subject to the passions of the flesh and the world. And so something I want to emphasize as we see with many of these qualifications is they're expected of all Christians, not just elders, right?

The elders, the older men as well, are to model and to be good stewards of God's word. But the rest, we are to follow in that example, right?

The example set by Christ, followed by Paul, followed by Titus, Timothy, and those who followed them for generations, there to set an example for us to follow. Older men are often elders of a family unit, right?

The base unit of God's kingdom, the family, the husband and wife. The older man serves as the elder in that role. And so the Christian home must also point to God, to his faithfulness, his truthfulness, and his long-suffering-ness.

I added a niss just to make it fit, right? Based on the description of Cretan culture, the expectations set for older men were meant to set Christians apart and to show that God never lies.

[18 : 21] There was a strong emphasis of Paul in writing this letter to show the truthfulness of God. And so the Christians, especially the Christian man, should stand out as faithful, productive fathers and leaders in their home and in their community.

And rather than being, as the rest of the culture was known, liars and evil beasts, lazy gluttons, these men would stand out, not living for dishonest gain, but faithfully contributing, productively contributing towards a better church and a better community, right?

So Paul draws a very practical application here from the gospel and applies it to biblical living. And then finally, for older men, they're to be sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness.

Paul likes to use these three in unison, faith, love, and often he uses hope. But in steadfastness, I see a progression towards or based on hope in this endurance, right?

And so I see two models of faith, love, and steadfastness given in Romans. Romans 5, verses 3, and then also in Romans 15.

[19 : 34] So in Romans 5, verses 3 through 5, Paul says, we rejoice in our suffering, knowing that suffering produces endurance, endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

And in Romans 15, 4 through 7, Paul says, whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the scriptures, we might have hope.

May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another in accord with Christ Jesus that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And so from this, I would say that the older man is expected to be sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. And through a lifetime of growth, which may come about through suffering, or it may come about through studying and finding encouragement in the scriptures, either way, it should produce character and ultimately the hope of perfection, right?

So with that, I want to move on to, as Paul did, the exhortation given to older women for godly conduct that accords with sound doctrine.

[20 : 54] Now notice he says, older women, this is in verse 3, are likewise, or older women likewise, are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine.

They are to teach what is good. And that sentence continues on as we focus on younger women, but for now, I want to end there. They are to teach what is good. So the first thing we draw from this is that she's to be reverent, meaning she's to have a deep respect for others.

And this is meant to combat slander, right? Rather than slandering others' reputation, she's to have a deep respect for them. We see similar expectations given by Paul in 1 Timothy 3.11.

Their wives, or as some translations say, their women likewise, must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. And so Paul's wording here, combating slander, would indicate to me that in the culture in Crete, slander was pretty prevalent, right?

And so he's combating it by saying that God's people should not be known for slander. And the reason being that gossip of any sort was destructive.

[22 : 08] It was destructive, right, to the reputation of all those involved, not just those who are being slandered, but also those who are slandering. It's difficult to trust someone who is known for slander because ultimately you will become one of their victims, right?

As with slandering, there seemed to have been an issue with addiction to wine in Crete because that's what Paul focused on next. Similar instructions were given in 1 Timothy 3.8.

Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, or greedy for dishonest gain. And so I think these instructions regarding addiction to wine are meant to bring about purity in the lives of the Christians in Crete.

And I think the issue, addiction, not necessarily wine, was that it was destructive. It led to, most likely, slander, as well as gluttony and laziness, right?

So Paul was combating this, and his reasoning being that he wanted the people of Crete, the Christians of Crete, to model a countercultural, a productive lifestyle rather than spending their time in drunkenness and slander.

[23 : 21] And so next, the older woman is exhorted to model countercultural, reverent behavior, to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live a self-controlled, upright, and godly life.

The reason being that Christ came to purify for himself a people for his own possession, as we'll read about later on in this book of Titus. And rather than liars and lazy gluttons, the Christians were meant to model good works, to be faithful and productive within their family first, within their church, and then also within their community.

And so finally, he encourages the older women to train the younger women, to model for them godly living, living that accords with sound doctrine, right? The key point here is to live in accordance with sound doctrine.

But again, we see this focus on teaching, right? The older woman is to teach what is good, to model what is good. And Paul specifically urges them to train up the younger women.

So let's look next at what exactly they're to be teaching these younger women. Continuing on, in Titus, Paul says, train the younger women to love their husbands and children to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husband, that the word of God may not be reviled.

[24 : 42] And so the topic of teaching here that Paul is referring to is that of godly living in accordance with sound doctrine.

The older women were to live out an example for the younger to follow. And in that example, the younger woman is, as Paul wrote, to love her own husband.

And I don't believe that means that every younger woman has to be married or will be married and therefore love their husband, but what I think he's meaning is that he's regulating the idea in marriage that the marriage relationship is to be monogamous as opposed to having adultery and fornication that were likely known in Crete and also in Ephesus, right?

These were likely rampant. But in the Christian home, the marriage relationship must be above all pure, holy, and illustrate to the world the relationship between Christ and his church.

And so that's why he begins by emphasizing this love of her own husband. And next, she's to love her children. And I believe, again, not every woman will have children, but for women who do have children, this means in a nurturing and a training way.

[25 : 57] Again, the woman's role is that of teaching and modeling for their children. She's to be focused on the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of her children. And this implies that the mother's primary focus is to be on raising godly children.

So, that said, I don't think Paul is prohibiting women from working outside of the home. And often, in our culture, as it was in Crete and in Israel, I believe, this was necessary to support this focus on the home.

I think Proverbs 31 models this well, right? But perhaps equally important, or perhaps more important, these words in no way exempt a father and husband from championing these responsibilities, right?

As in Ephesians 6, 4, Paul says, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. And we see this teaching based on Deuteronomy 6, verses 6 through 7, where fathers were commanded to teach the Scripture diligently to their families.

And so, something I would draw from this, a conclusion perhaps, is that the Christian faith is generational, right? It goes from generation to generation. And in such, it must show the steadfastness of our God who never lies, the emphasis of Paul in this letter.

[27 : 21] And so, we as families must show his word to be true. We must hold to the truth of Scripture. And so, we must raise children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, because when we neglect this calling and allow the culture around us to raise our children, we fail to uphold the counsel of God, and the word of God is reviled because of it.

Right? When our children grow disobedient and do not obey their parents, when they do not honor their father and mother, the word of God is, if possible, made void.

God is forgotten, and the culture slides into destruction, as we saw again and again in Israel, especially in the book of Judges. When we're forgetful and we forget the word of God, this is often the slide that we face.

So, I would say, in general, our children show the reality of our ability in the home to model godly living. And if they grow up and reject the faith, the reality and perhaps hypocrisy of our faith and works are laid bare.

Right? And so, we must be encouraged and reminded that the word of God shall be on our heart, we shall teach it diligently to our children, and shall talk of it when we sit in our house, when we walk by the way, when we lie down, and when we rise.

[28 : 48] And so next, the young woman is encouraged to be self-controlled, disciplined, or obedient, a follower of God. She is to be known for self-discipline, having crucified the flesh with its passions and desires, as in Galatians 5.25.

Fourth, she is to be pure or clean from all defilement and sin. I love the verses in Ephesians 5.22-30, which I summarized here, that she is to be pure by the washing of water with the word, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, holy and without blemish, because she represents the bride of Christ who we will present to himself in splendor.

So, in my notes here, I kind of, as a joke to myself, put a trigger warning here. But, as we move on, I don't want to trigger anyone, but I'm going to teach the word of God as I read it, and hopefully you will see that it is in a loving way.

God says, she is to be busy at home, as found in 1 Timothy 5.14. He would have younger women or younger widows marry, bear children, manage their household, and give the adversary no occasion for slander.

And so, I think Paul's intention here is not to make the wife or the woman into a slave, into Cinderella, who's toiling away at home, taking care of the house and the matters of the home while the husband is out living it up on the town.

[30 : 26] He's simply saying that her focus should be on the needs of the family rather than being influenced by the culture, or rather than being distracted by the culture.

Her focus needs to be on modeling and successfully training up children if they have them in the way of the Lord. He wanted to be certain that the Christian household was focused on godly living and therefore leaving no occasion for temptation.

And so next, she's to be kind, considerate, or gentle and loving, to stand out from the culture due to her kindness. And then finally, she's to be submissive to her own husband so that the word of God may not be reviled.

And so I think Ephesians 5, verse 22 through 33 speaks more on this topic. And if this sermon were on that topic, I would spend more time on it.

But I believe the wife's submission here as in Ephesians is set in the context of the husband's sacrificial love, right? Self-giving of one to the other.

[31 : 36] And when either submission or sacrificial love are abandoned or compromised, marriage often suffers and ends in collapse. And perhaps most tragically of all, the word of God is revealed as hypocrisy and makes God out to be a liar, right?

So I have in my notes here a sidebar or a note that I want to emphasize before moving on. This idea of submission, I believe, is tragically misunderstood in our culture today.

I believe the issue in Crete was that of usurped authority, right? Indeed, the wording submission to her own or to their own husband would imply that they were in some sense submitting to false teaching or rejecting biblical headship.

And that's what Paul was focused on here as he was in the many other verses that speak on this. And he found this to be contrary to sound doctrine. I believe his intention was to remind them of their God-ordained role within the family.

The role of the young woman was to be elevated through Christ as she has equal standing in Christ. However, headship, biblical headship in the home or church was not to be abolished.

[32 : 49] Biblical headship was never the result of sin or consequence of the fall. Rather, it was meant to illustrate the relationship between Christ and his bride, the church.

And so I don't believe headship was a curse, as some might make it out to be, but rather a blessing. I believe in Crete, this idea was under attack and eroding. And so Paul sought to encourage the young women to embrace this role and continue in submission to her own husband out of, as Ephesians puts it, reverence for Christ.

Right? So next, Paul turns his attention to the younger man of whom Titus was to be an example. He was to set an example. He himself was a young man.

And so Paul says, likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works. And in your teaching, show integrity, dignity, sound speech that cannot be condemned so that an opponent may be put to shame having nothing evil to say about us.

So firstly, again, we see that he's to be self-controlled. Primary importance is self-control.

[34 : 04] That means disciplined, not subject to passions of the flesh. He must, as Colossians 3.5 puts it, put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you, sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

And so in so doing, he is to show himself, Titus being one of the younger men, a model of good work. And this aligns with 1 Timothy 4.15.

Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress, right? Living as an example. Titus himself being a young man is instructed to model this life in accord with sound doctrine.

A similar charge, an additional charge, is given by Peter in 1 Peter 5.2. Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you, not for shameful gain, but eagerly, not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

So again, we see this emphasis that was established in Christ, as we'll see later on, of setting an example, of modeling godly living for others to follow.

[35 : 20] And so he must teach through encouragement, right? Through encouragement rather than through domineering. He must treat older men as father, younger men as brother, older women as mother, and younger women as sister.

And he must do this all in purity. He must not let anyone despise him for his youth, but set an example in his speech, in his conduct, and all of this through faith and through purity, as was written to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4, verse 12.

So the next attribute, he must have integrity, right? To have integrity would mean to have a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. And he must not be deceived, right?

He must hold fast to what is good and be trained in the word of God so that he might rebuke the enemy and also false teachers. Fourth, he must be dignified, right?

Paul says he must be dignified, leading, as I would say, a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way so that God would be glorified and shown truthful in keeping his word.
[36 : 32] 1 Peter 2, 12, Peter says, keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

Right? And so the purpose of all this is that God would be glorified through our good deeds. And finally, he must, the young man must be sound in speech with teachings that cannot be condemned.

Right? And so that doesn't mean he has to be a great orator like Brent. He could be a passable one like me. As long as his speech is sound in that it cannot be condemned or called into question.

Right? He must walk in the fear of our God so that the Cretan culture cannot speak evil of God or evil of his word. He must be above reproach so that all opponents will be put to shame and nothing evil to say and have nothing evil to say about us.

And I believe this is the solution to slander. Right? We must be above reproach. There must be no sin hiding in the dark for those around us to slander about.

[37 : 49] And the young man, he must model the hope of eternal life through the proclamation of the gospel followed by obedience to the word of God or in addition to obedience to the word of God.

Right? He must be devoted to good works so that his actions fall in line with his words. His actions must not reveal hypocrisy. Right?

It would be easy for someone to speak of sound doctrine all day and then their life to live opposite of that. And how much would the word of God be reviled at the revelation of that hypocrisy.

Just think of the pastors, right? The many pastors we can think of who failed at this very calling and marred, if possible, the image of our Lord and Savior. Right?

So, another sidebar before we move on to slaves. I would urge you something, I like to do word studies in the Bible, but as you study your Bible in the future, note the language that Paul, Peter, Jesus himself and others use regarding Christian leadership both in the home and in the church.

[39 : 03] Note that they always speak directly to the individual. Right? They don't speak directly to the one who would have authority to force or domineer over others, but rather they speak to the individual.

He speaks to the old man, he speaks to the older women, he speaks to the younger women, and he speaks to the younger man, explaining what is expected of them. They don't charge another with domineering over those in their charge, rather they expect an elder, a father, a husband, a mother to model, to train, and to teach, but ultimately it's up to the individual to listen, to obey, and to follow. Right? Now sometimes spiritual discipline is necessary, sometimes people live in outward disobedience and so strong rebuke as Titus is instructed to do later on in the book of Titus are necessary.

However, the leader is chiefly to model, to serve, but not to exercise authority. And this comes from Christ's own words in Matthew 20, 25 through 28.

You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you, but whoever would be great among you must be your servant and whoever would be first among you must be your slave.

[40 : 23] Even as the son of man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. And so in this we see the expectation to lead by example rather than by force.

So Paul moves on to bond servants as he lays out the expectations for Christians to exercise their spiritual equality and freedom in a way that glorifies God.

So Paul writes to Titus, bond servants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything.

They are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith.

And so the first thing he writes to bond servants is to be subject to their own master in everything, to try and please their master, not simply to obey them. And so we see that they are to go above and beyond in service.

This similar instruction was written to Timothy in 1 Timothy 6. Let all who are under a yoke as bond servants regard their own master as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled.

[41 : 29] And so we see that the bond servant is to serve Christ, the one who will vindicate him in the end, which I think is most clearly put in Colossians 3, 22 through 25.

I said I was going to have a lot of cross-references, so I know I'm jumping all over the Bible. In Colossians 3, 22, we read, bond servants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye service as people pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord, whatever you do, work heartily as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward.

You are serving the Lord Christ, for the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done and there is no partiality. And he is to be well-pleasing, meaning not argumentative, as in 1 Peter 2, servants, be subject to your master with all respect, not only to the good and the gentle, but also to the unjust, for this is a gracious thing when mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.

Finally, he's not to steal, but to show all good faith, for as Peter wrote, it is better to suffer for doing good if that should be God's will than for doing evil.

You will notice throughout the epistles and pastoral letters that Paul and Peter often speak of slaves, right? And the issue they were combating primarily was this doctrine of spiritual equality that was often misunderstood.

[43 : 02] Slaves who had become Christians were liberating themselves on the grounds of spiritual equality. However, as Paul clarified, each one should remain in the condition in which he was called.

Were you a bondservant when called? Do not be concerned about it. But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity for he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freedman of the Lord.

Likewise, he who was free when called is a bondservant of Christ. You were bought with a price. Do not become bondservants of men. So, brothers, in whatever condition each was called, then let him remain with Christ.

And we see this in the very next letter if we move on to the book of Philemon, right? Paul wrote this on behalf of Onesimus, a slave that had left his owner, Philemon, and stole from him, come to meet Paul and was converted to Christianity.

And Paul wrote this letter asking for forgiveness, reconciliation, and ultimately for Onesimus' freedom. But he first sent him back not knowing what Philemon might choose, right?

[44 : 12] And so I believe Paul's reasoning for this seeming harsh teaching was he didn't want to inspire rebellion among the slaves, and he didn't want Christians to be known for theft or the gospel to be reviled.

instead, he thought it would be better for slaves to remain as they were, knowing that the gospel would ultimately elevate their role.

so despite this taking thousands of years to accomplish, right, slavery has been abolished throughout the world.

However, if you look up the statistics, there are still about 40 million people who remain bondservants today. However, the gospel has continued to elevate people and will continue to do so as long as Christians continue to live in sound doctrine to the glory of God.

Although slavery was common practice in Crete, Paul encouraged these slaves to serve their masters well as service to the Lord in everything they would adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

[45 : 34] here. All right. Difficult topic to speak on. It eventually lead to the freedom of billions and the salvation of millions.

But Paul's focus was eternal rather than temporal. And although he himself was a prisoner in Rome, he knew a little bit of servitude. He still thought as in Romans 8, 18-21.

The sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.

So, another sidebar. The ESV translates the Greek word *doulos* to bond servants. I believe John MacArthur recently wrote an entire book on this very word *doulos*.

Because it's become common practice to translate this word *doulos* and to use it in the context of our day. But I think the most appropriate meaning was that of a slave.

[46 : 56] Right? So, I'm opposed to applying this concept of *doulos* to our lives today and to use it in the context of an employee and a supervisor.

Right? We are not as employees enslaved to our supervisors. We are all in fact free to leave our jobs tomorrow and go somewhere else. Right? But that's not true of those who would be called

doulos.

They were enslaved usually through debt to their master. And so, I believe it would be an injustice to those who suffered as slaves into the word of God to lessen this word to meet our cultural context.

But an application we might draw from this is that as Christians we too are called to do all things to the glory of God as in Colossians 3:17 and 1 Corinthians 10 so that in our workplace we might adorn the doctrine of God.

Right? And another side note, I don't believe in any way that Paul was implying that slavery was good. Right? That it should be continued.

[47 : 58] I believe he was simply saying that they should continue in their place in which they were called to the glory of God because ultimately he believed it would as it did lead to the abolition of slavery.

Right? So, section three, as we move into the closing, Paul says, adorn the doctrine of God our Savior. And so, I believe the motivation behind this passage, this letter, was primarily to offer encouragement to Titus as he established elders in Crete.

of primary importance is a life which accords with godliness, with sound doctrine. And this life is meant to adorn the doctrine of God our Savior, and to train up a people for his possession, a people zealous for good works, right?

A people who are zealous for obedience. And it also serves to reiterate godly teaching and to establish the roles of men, women, and slaves in this newly established Christian community. The culture in Crete was perverse, and it would have been impossible for the church to survive or thrive. However, Paul laid out a foundation for Christians to reject the evil and corrupt ways of the Cretans by living a countercultural life, embracing the good aspects of the culture, all to the glory of God.

[49 : 21] I believe they were called to live as lights in the community and to reshape the culture, and I believe they were successful. If you study the history of Crete, Christianity flourished there, and Titus is honored there to this day, in churches, in monasteries, in villages.

So, I believe this falls in line with Paul's teachings to the Philippians. We are called to be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish, in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom we shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ, he may be proud, that he did not run in vain or labor in vain.

So, I know we're running a little bit long, but I want to leave you with three things that we can take away from this and apply to our lives. people. I'm not sure, I've only been in Youngstown for three years, if there would be negative traits that a poet might write about Youngstown that would define Youngstown as the poet did Crete.

However, I believe as Christians we can live a countercultural life here in Youngstown, and that we can adorn the doctrine of God our Savior. I believe as a church we do this well.

I know most of you who have been members. I know that we model this Christian life in our homes and in our lives. However, I want to leave you with these three ways that we can emphasize sound doctrine in our lives today.

[50 : 54] So first, living in line with the blessed teachings of God our Savior, we must follow the roles set for older men, older women, younger women, and younger men.

Yes, the gospel has elevated social and gender roles in many ways. However, it does not abolish those that were instituted by God. He created men and women, he created marriage, he created biblical headship in the home, and he created these in the image of himself, in the image of Christ, and in the image of the church.

He created marriage, I believe, as the most effective and blessed familial unit in which godly children are to be raised in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

God's love. He created man and woman to support one another in this way through sacrificial love and God-honoring submission. Created with this all with the glorious purpose to illustrate the sacrificial love of Christ for his bride, the church, and the submission of his bride to the will of God the Father.

He similarly gifted the older generation children, with wisdom, and life experience, so that they might show themselves to be a model of good works to the younger. Second, I would say we must remember the call to teach and to train up followers of Christ.

[52 : 20] Regardless of our role or our distinction within the church, we're called to model what accords with sound doctrine. We're to be lifelong learners, reading, praying, and meditating on the word of God, and so growing in godliness.

Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the scripture, we might have hope. May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The third, we must remember he created the family as a model for the church. If we as a church are to show the world a God who never lies, there's no room for hypocrisy.

We as a church, as families and as individuals, must model life that accords with sound doctrine, and we must never bend to the culture and witness the destruction of our families and our churches.

We must establish encourage elders, deacons, fathers and mothers, men and women who uphold the word of God and show him to be true. So finally, I'll leave you with this.

[53 : 43] In the same way, let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Let's pray.

The same thing. Let's pray.

Let's pray.