

Introduction:

As we continue in the book of Titus, we are moving into Paul's second charge to Titus for establishing the church, in Titus 2:1-10. As we will see, this is a charge loaded with truths and application for us to walk in. Because we have a lot of ground to cover, we are going to dive right in to see what the Lord has for us in His word today. These verses start with one main command to Titus, and by extension elders who follow him in leadership, which is

A CALL TO SPEAK, TEACH, AND ENCOURAGE THINGS CONSISTENT WITH GOSPEL TRUTH

Notice how verse 1 of chapter 2 connects with what we looked at in the previous chapter, 1 But as for you. Paul uses terms of contrast and personal address to emphasize that Titus, and elders, do the opposite of what the false teachers were doing. This points to the significance of this charge, which should cause us, as his readers now, to lean in and pay attention. Note the charge of verse 1, 1 But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. The term for teach here is different than what has been translated teach in chapter 1. This term involves speaking without restraint. And it is contrasted with the need to silence false teachers in Titus 1:11. False teachers are silenced, but Titus should speak up and speak often. The command involves more than occasional teaching here. It is a command to constantly speak up, using speech that involves teaching, exhortation, and rebuke. You can see this even more clearly in verse 15 of this chapter, where Paul says, 15 Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you. Now, notice again the things Titus should teach in verse 1, it is 1 ... what accords with sound doctrine. The idea is that the teaching Titus gives is fitting or proper to sound doctrine, and, in this chapter, Paul gives clarity to what he primarily has in mind when he says sound doctrine. Pay close attention to how verses 11-14 begin, he says "For." If you remember last week, the word "For" is used to give reasons for what was said before it. Look at the overarching flow of this passage with me. Verse 1 gives the main command. Verses 2-10 function as the ways this command is walked out. Then, verses 11-14 serve as the reasons for the command of verse 1. This shows us that verses 11-14 holds the sound doctrine that the exhortations in verses 2-10 are consistent with. We will look at verses 11-14 more closely next week, but we can't miss what they ultimately point this week. Look there with me. Notice verse 11 points to God's grace in salvation, verse 12, God's grace in sanctification, verse 13, the hope of the glory of Christ, and verse 14, the redemption of God's people provided through Christ's death. Verses 11-14 are a beautifully designed reminder of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is vital for us to see because it shows that the encouragements of verses 2-10 are grounded in the very gospel of grace, and consistent with gospel truth. Titus, and all elders, are called to speak, teach, and encourage things consistent with gospel truth. With this point in mind, let's move through verses 2-10, which walk out this point, addressing 5 typical groups existing in the churches in Crete, starting with the first group in verse 2. Look there with me, 2 Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. Most place this group in the age range of 40 or 50 years and older. These traits for older men, and the groups that follow, shouldn't be viewed as the only traits they should have, but traits that each age group may wrestle with more than others. These aren't the only things older men are supposed to be, but aspects of life they should especially focus on. Let's consider each of these together. Paul starts with older men being sober-minded. The term carries the idea of being free of intoxicants or wine. The idea is that their mind should always be thinking clearly about life's situations, producing sober judgement. They are able to discern the things of most importance and be alert to what may be keeping them from those things.

Next, he says they are dignified. They should be worthy of respect because a godly dignity shines from their character. Paul continues, saying they are to be self-controlled, or sensible. Where sober minded refers to having one's mind think clearly, this refers to the mind having control of impulses and actions. The final three traits are anchored to the word sound. Older men should be sound in faith, sound in love, and sound in steadfastness. Sound faith is a healthy, unshakable belief and confidence in the work of Christ on the cross as our only hope in life and salvation. Sound love is a strong love for Christ and others. This is the Greek love called agape love. It is the love most consistently attributed to God and is unconditional, sacrificial, and often undeserving. Commentator Albert Barnes says the older man's "mind should be subdued into sweet benevolence to all mankind." Finally, sound steadfastness is remaining faithful under trials and afflictions. The weight of the trials and troubles of life should never cause older men to surrender to circumstances. This is persevering faith. Think of the stories we heard of Wycliff and...presented earlier. They were men who remained steadfast in the faith while under significant trials. Let me speak directly to the older men in this room. Do these traits characterize your life? Or are you giving into the temptations that hinder them? Do you think and respond with sober judgement and self-control? Does godly dignity shine in your life? Are you sound in faith, love, and steadfastness? You are encouraged towards these things because the ripple effect of your life will permeate the entire church as how to live in a way that's consistent with gospel truth. Let's continue with the next 2 groups, which the passage links together, showing us something important. Look at verse 3-5 with me, 3 Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, 4 and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, 5 to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. Before we dig in, notice a few things. First, notice the word "likewise," in verse 3. This points to a connection with verse 2. Titus is called to speak, teach, and encourage things for older women like he does with older men. However, pay attention to the absence of this word in these verses. Paul uses it in verse 3, saying Titus should encourage older women to be certain things, but doesn't use it when addressing young women. Then, in verse 6, he uses it again, calling for Titus to urge things for younger men. This shows that Paul doesn't call for Titus to teach young women these things directly, rather Titus teaches older women who teach young women. There is an implication from this that I believe is necessary to draw out today for men, particularly husbands. Men, while there are things here that pertain to biblical roles of wives and husbands, the scriptures never call for you to ensure your wives or others are following them. Each time the scriptures call for wives to do things like submitting to their husband, there is no hint that husbands have any right or warrant to demand or enforce that submission. In fact, every time these things are encouraged, it is followed by the call of men to love their wives with a servant hearted love modeled by Christ. Let me speak pointedly, men, your call is to love your wife and give your life for the sake of her faith flourishing, submitting your desires for her good. Ensuring they follow these truths is not your calling. So, I don't want to hear that this led to a conversation about how your wife is doing with this after church. With that framework, start with me in verses 3-4 with the exhortations to older women, 3 Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, 4 and so train the young women. The term for reverent is linked to the concept of a priest. The idea is that the older women should carry themselves like priests, constantly living in the presence of God. There is a sense of God's presence that influences everything they say or do. Next, in the same way he did with older men, Paul gives his encouragements around temptations older women may particularly face. They are encouraged not to be slanders, or malicious gossips. Their reverence is shown through their fight to avoid gossip and slander, never wanting to damage anyone with their speech. Further, they aren't slaves to much wine. The point is clear, alcohol shouldn't enslave them. This may have been a particular problem in Crete. The thrust behind this exhortation, though, is that their cravings for things do not enslave them. Church, as we embrace the gospel of Christ, sins rule over our thoughts, tongue, or cravings, should be losing its grip.

At the end of verse 3 and into verse 4, we see how older women hold an important discipleship function inside of the church. 3 ... They are to teach what is good, 4 and so train the young women. Teach and train could seem heavy handed, but that isn't the sentiment. The idea is that as they are teaching young women, through encouragement and advice. Before unpacking this section, it is helpful to note that of the 7 traits listed for young women in verses 4-5, 4 of them relate to marriage and the home. This is could be because young women were often married in those days. It could also be related to how the impact of the false teaching, in Titus 1:11, was upsetting or overturning whole households. This doesn't mean there are no encouragements for single women. We can appropriately conclude these 4 traits are encouraged for young women who were married, and the other 3 are valuable for both married and unmarried young women. Let me unpack what verses 4-5 are saying while balancing Paul's wisdom that the things are primarily taught and encouraged by older women. Look there with me, 4 and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, 5 to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands. Paul starts with a strong push for love within the home. The words for husband and children are actually compound words together with what is called phileo love, a brotherly affectionate kind of love. Older women are encouraging young women to walk in true love with their husbands and children, and ways in which they can press into that love. Next, young women are encouraged to be self-controlled, and pure. Self-controlled again is keeping one's passions and desires in check. And the term for pure is used throughout the New Testament to refer to chastity, innocence, and excellence in ethical matters. The next trait is a difficult phrase to understand, older women encourage young women to be 4 ... working at home. It has been suggested this is binding women to only be housewives, leading some to conclude it was only a cultural teaching for that day because most young women didn't work outside of the home. There is simply not enough evidence to suggest it is only a cultural accommodation, and Paul grounds these things in gospel truth, not cultural relevance. The best help for understanding this phrase, is to recognize it is a positive encouragement and not a negative restriction. Robert Yarbrough appropriately comments, The Paul of the New Testament knows women moving about in public is normal and conducive to social order and church growth (as in Lydia's case [Acts 16]) and ministry (as in the case of fellow workers like Euodia and Syntyche [Phil 4:2-3])... it is unwarranted to press this definition to mean that women must go nowhere else and do nothing besides this. The noble wife of Prov 31 is socially and commercially active as she "watches over the affairs of her household" (Prov 31:27). This phrase is encouraging diligent management of household affairs, not restricting women to only working in the home. After this, we see the encouragement to be kind. This is not a simple call for kindness but being characterized by an excellence of that virtue. Now, undoubtedly, the last phrase may make some uncomfortable. Look at verse 5 again, older women should encourage young women to be 4 ... submissive to their own husbands. A faithful understanding of what this means and doesn't mean is required. First, we should understand that there is a different Greek term for obedience when referring to a relationship of an inferior to a superior, than the one Paul uses here. Paul uses a compound word that signifies coming under something in an orderly manner, pointing to the ordering of roles within the home, where the husband is called to lovingly lead, through a sacrificial servant-hearted leadership, like Christ loves and leads the church. When speaking of this submission, John Stott comments, This 'subjection' contains no notion of inferiority and no demand for obedience, but rather a recognition that, within the equal value of the sexes, God has established a created order which includes a masculine 'headship', not of authority, still less of autocracy, but of responsibility and loving care. Older women encourage young married women to place themselves under their husband's leadership as God's good design. To be clear, this is not submission to every whim and will of the husband. In fact, there are times when the Bible would call you to lovingly not submit, like if the leadership violates a biblical principle, or compromises your relationship with Christ. You also should not submit if it is abusive and compromises the call to care, nurture, and protect the children God has given you, or enables your husband to indulge sin.

If any of these things are currently happening in your home, share them with the leadership here, so we can step in and protect you from harmful leadership. Coming to the end of these traits for older women and young women, Paul interjects a purpose connecting this back to the truth of the gospel in verse 5. 5 ... that the word of God may not be reviled. This is the same word Paul spoke of God manifesting through his preaching in verse 3, and the trustworthy word as taught in verse 9. When women lean into these calls, the word of truth is upheld to be the glorious truth that it is. It is shown to give the freedom to strive for virtues the gospel provides, and the power to live within God's designed order for the home that reflects Christ and the church. The next group Paul calls Titus to address is one Titus finds himself within. Look at verses 6-8 with me, starting in verse 6, 6 Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. The age group here is probably mid-teens to forty or fifty. Paul uses the same word for urge that he used in Titus 1:9 calling for elders to give instruction. Titus is to walk alongside these younger men and encourage them to be self-controlled. This verse always has a humorous aspect to it for me. It's as though young men struggle so much with this that they can't be called to work on anything else, just be self-controlled. What is interesting though, is how the term is slightly different than the ones for self-controlled in verses 2 and 4. This one points to both thinking and living in control over one's desires and passions. One pastor called it self-mastery over the tongue, ambitions, appetites, sexual urges, temper, and pride. When seen appropriately this way, we see it is an extensive call. For the younger men in the room, like myself, are you constantly seeking self-control, self-mastery, in all avenues of your life? Or are you allowing your tongue, ambition, pride, temper, and craving to rule you? Immediately following this, Paul shifts to encouraging Titus to be a model, primarily for these younger men, but also for all. Look again at verses 7-8, 7 Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, 8 and sound speech that cannot be condemned. Paul wants Titus to be a form or pattern for imitation or replication. Titus is to be this model in all respects of his life, as one who shows how to pursue good works. And, church, I hope you're seeing how good works primarily involve character traits, not simply things you do. Because of his role, one aspect Titus, should particularly focus on, is his teaching and speech. His teaching and speech are to be full of right motives, healthy and true content, and delivered with the appropriate level of seriousness. And at the end of verse 8, Paul gives another purpose statement showing why this care is valuable, 8 ... so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us. Similar to verse 5, the purpose is to uphold the truth of the gospel, by giving opponents no reason to combat the teaching by pointing to the faults of Paul and Titus. The final group is another typical group within a household. Look with me at verses 9-10. 9 Bondservants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, 10 not pilfering, but showing all good faith. Bondservants were slaves who remained with their master, often given responsibilities for various aspects of the household. Note how each exhortation relates to their station of life. He calls them to place themselves under the authority of their masters, seeking to be well-pleasing to them. The idea is that their masters are consistently happy with their service. They also shouldn't be argumentative or pilfering. They don't speak against their masters, steal from them, or hold back what is owed. Paul addresses pilfering because bondservants often handled financial matters. Finally, they are to show all good faith. The idea is that everyone confidently sees them as being faithful in all they do. Notice again the purpose behind this, connecting this back to upholding gospel truth. Look at verse 10 again, 10 ... so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior. The verb for adorn was often used to describe how care is taken to arrange jewels in order to magnify their beauty. Think of how much time is spent on the setting for a jewel, because the setting itself can magnify to the intricate beauty in it. Bondservants live in these ways to magnify the doctrine of God our Savior like a setting does for a precious jewel.

Conclusion:

We have seen how Paul commands Titus to teach others certain things consistent with gospel truth. I want to end by thinking through the why. Why focus on the ways we should live? Church, this is not simply because we need to know how to live rightly in this life. God is after more than just you living your best life. We need to see the truth that,

GOD CALLS HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE TO LIVE LIVES THAT MAGNIFY THE GOSPEL

Do you see how the gospel shapes every avenue of instruction Titus is to give? Look at the consistent way Paul keeps pointing back to the purpose of magnifying the gospel. Paul tells Titus to teach what accords with sound doctrine, doctrine we saw is gospel truth. Then, three times Paul brings the purpose back to upholding and adorning the gospel of Jesus Christ. And verses 11-14, which we will reflect on next week, highlight this gospel in a beautiful way. God's people should long for the truth of the gospel to be received, not reviled. We should desire for our lives to give no reason for anyone to question the validity of our message. And we should long for everything we say and do to be like a setting that holds up the treasure of the gospel, pointing to the beautiful intricacies of God's grace. Next week, we are going to take some time to look closely at the gospel because God calls his chosen people to live lives that magnify the gospel. This week, the questions for us to wrestle with, are do we long to magnify the gospel with our lives? And, if so, how evident are the traits we see this passage in each of our lives?

Would you stand as I pray this over us?