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The Healthy Congregation - Part 2
What God's Grace Accomplishes
Titus 2:6-15
June 7th, 2015, Jeff Germs

Last week we looked at Titus 2:1-5. This week we are going to quickly run through verses 6-10 and then continue on to 11-15. Paul, in this passage, has been dissecting the various age demographics that make up the church and describes what maturity looks like for each. In verses 1-5 Paul addressed older men, older women, and younger women. In the last part he addresses younger men and slaves. And we need to keep in mind that the qualities of maturity Paul is describing for each group crosses over to the other groups as well. So, let's continue on.

[2]

Titus 2:6–15 (ESV)

⁶ Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled.

Self-control seems to be the bedrock of maturity. Paul talked about it for the older men, the older women, and now for the younger men. The more mature a person is the more they will be able to control their behaviour and their tongue. Immature people do what comes naturally. They haven't developed the ability yet to control what comes out of their mouths, or to say no to things that are not healthy for them.

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, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.

Good works are another theme that weaves its way through the book of Titus. We are going to talk about this more in subsequent sermons, but for now, suffice it to say, if the Gospel really has taken root in the heart of a Christ-follower good works will follow. That's what Jesus' brother James said.

[3]

James 2:17–18 (ESV)

¹⁷ So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ¹⁸ But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

You will see this theme coursing through the book of Titus. And we are going to see it loud and clear in the passage we'll look at today. If the Gospel has taken root in your heart it will lead to works of righteousness. It will show in your character.

[4]

And then, as Paul says in verse eight, our reputation, which translates to the reputation of Jesus will not be compromised, because as Paul says elsewhere, we are his ambassadors.

[5]

Next Paul talks about slaves. We, of course, don't have slaves in our culture in Canada. It's a dirty word for us. In that day and culture though, slavery was the norm. And the kind of slaves Paul refers to here were bondservants. They were slaves who willingly stayed on as slaves of their masters after the obligatory seven years of serving were up, because they loved their masters.

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, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

The closest thing we can apply this to in our context is our work situation. Christians should be the best workers in the world. We should get to work on time. When we are at work we should realize that it's not our time, it's our employer's. We shouldn't waste our employer's time. Slacking off at work is an act of thievery. And everything we do should be done to the best of our ability. Why?

Here's how the NLT translates verse 10.

[6]

Titus 2:10 (NLT)

10 ...but must show themselves to be entirely trustworthy and good. Then they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive in every way.

This is what our lives should be all about. We are ambassadors of Jesus. We are his representatives in the world. People will judge Jesus by our behaviour. Our actions should make Jesus attractive to others, not repulsive.

[7]

Colossians 3:17 (NLT)

17 And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

[8]

Colossians 3:23–24 (NLT)

23 Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. 24 Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ.

We should remember this every time we are at work or school, or just being citizens. We do it all in the name of Jesus. How we behave reflects on him.

Ok, let's carry on to verse 11. There is so much here. If there was only one passage in the whole Bible that we had, to understand the Gospel and God's plan for us, this would be it. Paul not only describes the essence of the Gospel, grace, and salvation, but he also expresses what will be the result in the heart and life of someone who has rightly appropriated the grace of Christ.

One of my mentors had a question he used to ask me if he thought that my behaviour didn't line up with what should exemplify a mature Christ-follower. He would say, "Jeff, what part of grace do you not understand?" If I expressed anger and unforgiveness towards someone he would say, "What part of grace do you not understand?" If I got impatient, "What part of grace do you not understand?"

When we fail to display the fruit of the Spirit, or act in ways that dishonour God or people it shows that we have not fully comprehended the grace of God. The grace of God will continually change us, if we let it.

[9]

Titus 2:11–15 (ESV)

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,

Now, this is the part that we, as Christians, usually grasp pretty well, at least intellectually. We have salvation by grace through faith. Ephesians 2:8-9 says that. We know it. It's been engrained in the minds of evangelical Christians. We can in no way merit God's favour based on anything we do no

matter how good or noble it is. Salvation is a gift of God's grace. That is so fortunate for us because if it wasn't for God's grace, and we were left to depend on our own goodness, we would all be lost.

But, Paul doesn't end there in Ephesians.

[10]

Ephesians 2:8–10 (ESV)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

We know about verses eight and nine, but we typically gloss over verse ten. Why did God save us? He saved us to do good works. We are his workmanship, his masterpiece. He is refining us so we can do good works. If we aren't using our lives to do good works in the name of Jesus, we have missed the point of our lives. Read what Jesus said in Matthew 25 where he tells his listeners what we are supposed to be busy doing while we are waiting for his return.

Remember? Jesus said when he returns in his glory he is going to separate the sheep from the goats. The sheep will inherit the Kingdom, and the goats will be sent to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons.

How did he say the sheep would be recognized? The sheep, he said, are the ones who were serving those who were in need. They gave a cup of cold water when needed. They clothed people who needed clothing. They fed the hungry. They visited those in prison. They cared for those who were sick.

[11]

And then Jesus said, "***As much as you have done it to the least of these you did it to me.***" (Matthew 25:40)

I want to commend all of you who are being purposeful about stepping outside your comfort zones and reaching out in various ways. I hear more and more stories each week about people and groups from CRBC reaching out and loving their community in very practical ways. You are serving Jesus. You are doing what Jesus has called us to do while we actively wait for him to return. Your theology did not get stuck in your head. It moved to your heart and to your hands and feet. Friends, that is what the gospel does. It moves us to serve. It moves us to give and love beyond our human capabilities.

[12]

Titus 2:11–15 (ESV)

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹² training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,

Can you see how clear this is? The grace of God, rightly planted in a soft heart will produce fruit. It's active. It does something. The gospel shouldn't be lying dormant in our hearts. Jesus is not a theological idea. His Word is active and vibrant and it should be bubbling away making changes in our lives so we can live more like him. Nobody is mature simply because they know certain things about God.

When you see the word, "training" here what things come to your mind? Does it sound passive or active? When an athlete trains for her sport she don't just read the manual. Can you imagine someone entering one of the events in the Olympic never having trained, only reading a how-to book? They wouldn't get very far. And likewise, godliness, righteousness, and growing in the fruit of the Spirit all

take cooperation from us. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees and the religious teachers for thinking their biblical knowledge was enough. Training implies hard work and cooperation. The language of training weaves its way all through the New Testament. Let's take a look at a few passages.

[13]

1 Timothy 4:7–10 (ESV)

7 Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; 8 for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. 9 The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. 10 For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God...

Does that kind of faith sound passive in any way? Absolutely not! It is as active as can be. We cooperate with the Holy Spirit. We toil. We strive. We train. There is nothing passive about it. If we don't train, toil, and strive, we will remain immature, fat, and spiritually, and emotionally flabby.

[14]

1 Corinthians 9:25–27 (ESV)

25 Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. 27 But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

[15]

Philippians 3:14–15 (ESV)

14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.

[16]

2 Timothy 3:16–17 (ESV)

16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness. 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

[17]

Hebrews 5:14 (ESV)

14 But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

[18]

Hebrews 12:11 (ESV)

11 For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Do any of those passages sound like our faith is passive? You cannot read the Bible thoughtfully and come away with the idea that we can grow in maturity by being a passive Christian.

And it's not just Paul and the writer of Hebrews who taught this idea of training in righteousness. It was the very model that Jesus used to teaching his disciples. His disciples fully participated in the process of becoming like him.

[19]

Luke 6:40 (ESV)

40 A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.

Let's read the first part of our passage in Titus again.

[20]

Titus 2:11–15 (ESV)

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,

Do you want to beat that sin that continually tempts you? You will never do it if you think it can be defeated simply by an act of the will, or — by praying for God to change you while you continue on your merry old way. The grace of God will change you, but you must actively cooperate with Jesus.

The first thing you need to do is own your sin. If your temptation is to stretch the truth, what would you call yourself? A liar. If your besetting sin is looking at pornography, Jesus said you are an adulterer. You have to name it. AA is famous for it's participants naming their addiction. "Hello, my name is so-and-so, and I am an alcoholic."

There is power in naming your sin. I have an anger problem. I have a lust problem. I have a lying problem. I have a problem with being lazy. I have a problem with gossip. Whatever your sin, name it. Confess it not only to God, but also to someone else you trust, and then ask them for help. Be accountable. Don't think you can do it alone.

And then, make sure you stay in the Word. Read it meditatively. Don't just read it to gather information. Read through the Gospels. Marinate in them, and ask the Spirit of Jesus to use them to change you. And as the Holy Spirit brings an area in your life that needs to change, confess it, not only to God, but to someone else you trust. And then practice responding differently. These are ways that you can train yourself in righteousness. It will not happen by chance. You will never coast into Christ-likeness.

[21]

13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

Wow! There is a whole bunch of good stuff there. Earlier I mentioned the passage in Matthew 25 where Jesus told us what we are supposed to be doing while we await Jesus' return. The waiting is not passive, like we are waiting at a bus stop for the next bus to come by. It's an active kind of waiting.

Jesus *will* one day return. The Bible is very clear on that. When we lived in Tsawwassen I met frequently with a neighbour who was seriously investigating the claims of Christ. I so enjoyed meeting with him because he takes his faith journey seriously. He wants to know the truth. And so we talked about the Bible and about Jesus. We talk about his doubts, and I owned up to some of the doubts I had, and we are on a faith journey together. He said that one of the things he appreciates about me is that I don't shove the bible down his throat. We are in an ongoing conversation, seeking the truth of Jesus together.

Well, he said that one of the stumbling blocks he has to coming to faith in Christ is the idea that Jesus will return one day to take his people to heaven with him. I admitted that it does seem a bit bizarre, but, I said, if we have come to the place of believing there is a God who created the heavens and the earth

out of nothing, it wouldn't be too much of a stretch to believe this same God could do some other pretty miraculous things.

"The next place you need to go in your faith journey", I said, "is to wrestle with the idea of the resurrection. Because if that didn't happen nothing else matters. And if Jesus really did rise from the dead, the idea of his return is like a walk in the park."

The Bible teaches very clearly that Jesus is going to return one day, and that we are to watch and wait from him, but it is not supposed to be a passive kind of waiting. We are to wait, watch and actively participate with him as he works through us to redeem humankind.

[22]

13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

Jesus did not die for us so we could sit passively by and wait for his return. He gave himself to redeem us and to purify us so we would be zealous for good works. What could be clearer than that?

[23]

15 Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

Paul encourages Titus to speak boldly about these things and to not let anyone discourage him or knock him off his stride. There will be those who just want their ears tickled. Some will even be well meaning. They will think that it's ok to just sit around and study the Bible and get fat heads without having it affect their heart or move them to join God in his work.

When God's grace gets hold of our hearts it will move us to action. You cannot get away from that truth when you read the Bible. And let me tell you, life really does get exciting when we join him in what he is doing.

I have to tell you again how proud I am of you, with a godly kind of pride. I see more and more of us getting on mission. We are joining God in the work of the kingdom. More and more people are seeing Jesus through the work of CRBC each day. Sometimes it might seem like it's just busy work. And you might wonder what eternal value it has, but believe me it does have eternal value. Jesus said when we serve others we are serving him. Paul said when we train down here in righteousness, it somehow prepares us for our life in heaven.

Thank you so much for partnering with us to reach our city for Christ. And if you feel led of the Lord to get involved somehow why don't you talk to Adrian. We always have many opportunities to get involved in serving in various ways. You will be so blessed if you do.

We are going to celebrate communion together now. Before the servers come forward I want to read this passage again. And then let's have a couple minutes of silence preparing our hearts. Ask God to speak to you from his Word.

[24]

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, 13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.



***From the Head to the Heart to the Hands:
The Healthy Congregation - Part 2
What Grace Accomplishes
Titus 2:6-15
Week of June 7th, 2015***

Objective of this study: To understand more clearly what it means to train as a disciple of Jesus.

Worship (5 – 10 minutes)

1. Spend five minutes in silent prayer asking God to prepare your heart for how he wants to speak to you.
2. After the five minutes of silence have someone interrupt the silence and read Psalm 25 meditatively to the group. Then pause for about a minute and let it sink in.
3. Sing a song or two of praise and thanksgiving to God.

Welcome (5 – 10 minutes)

Describe a daunting task you did in the past that took courage, perseverance and discipline.

Word/Work (60-90 minutes)

1. What stood out from the sermon?
2. Read Titus 2:1-15
3. In verses 11-14, What does God's grace do? What are the results of his grace? Search. Find as much as you can. Dig for treasure.
4. In verse 12, Paul says that we, as followers of Jesus, have a role to play in our growth. What can we do, as apprentices, to cooperate with Jesus?
 1. Read the following verses: What does each verse say about training and its outcome?
1 Timothy 4:7–10; 1 Corinthians 9:25–27; Philippians 3:14–15; 2 Timothy 3:16–17; Hebrews 5:14; Hebrews 12:11; Luke 6:40.
 2. Couple these verses with Titus 2:12. What kinds of things does training with Jesus accomplish?
 3. Discuss together what training might look like for an apprentice of Jesus.
5. In verse 13 Paul talks about waiting for Jesus to return. What does that waiting look like? How should we occupy ourselves while we wait? (Refer to Matthew 25. The whole chapter.)
6. Paul said in verse 14 Paul that Jesus redeemed us and purified us for what purpose?
7. What difference should all of this make in your life? What difference should it make in how you meet as a Growth Group? How can you work together to cooperate with Jesus' mission for you? Be specific.
8. What changes do you as an individual and you as a group need to make to get on mission with Jesus?
9. Take some time to pray with each other about these things.