

Sermon Series: The Book of Titus

Sermon title: Putting Good Works into Order (Part 2)

Scripture reading: Titus 3:1-8

Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church

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I began this series in the book of Titus on May 19th. There's no way I could have foreseen the events that would unfold in Hong Kong over the last few months. In fact, I didn't choose this book for any reason whatsoever having to do with chapter 3, which we get to today. I chose to preach on Titus because of it was in the New Testament and we had been in the Old Testament for a while...and the fact that this book focuses on establishing Elders, sound doctrine and good works.

It's important for you to remember that I planned this back in May as we look at the passage today. I am simply preaching this text today as I would if the events in our city had never happened. My job as a Pastor is to preach the word of God and I want to do just that today even though it may seem like I am doing it because of the events in our city.

But please know that I love you and I simply want you to hear what God's word says from this text.

Let's pray.

Turn in your Bible to Titus chapter 3. I will begin by reading in verse 1.

1 Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, **2** to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people.

3 For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.

4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, **5** he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, **6** whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, **7** so that being justified

by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

8 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. These things are excellent and profitable for people.

My main point today is this and this is what I want you to remember....

God's grace towards us fuels us for good works.

And we are going to see this in relation today to:

- 1. [the] Government**
- 2. [the] General public**

And then we are going to look at the reason why we *should* and *can* do good works in the society in which we live, and that is:

- 3. God's goodness and grace**

Chapter 3 begins with the words 'Remind them'. This phrase actually means in Greek to 'keep on continually remind them'. Keep on continually remind the people in the churches on Crete to do what?

“be submissive to rulers and authorities and to be obedient, to be ready for every good work.”

This is in relation to:

1. [the] **Government**

Now, these phrases do go together. The phrase ‘be obedient’ isn’t just a general phrase meaning to be obedient to anything and everything but it is related in the original language in grammar to the first phrase, ‘be submissive to rulers and authorities’and be obedient.

As I mentioned in a sermon on June 16th titled, “*Prayer is mightier than the brick*”, the New Testament mentions in Romans, Titus and 1 Peter in the 3 passages on Christian’s relation to government....that Christians are to be people who submit to the government, *unless* the government is telling us we can’t obey God.

And in all 3 of these passages it also mentions that we are to do good or do good works in relation to the government. In fact, the good works that we do toward the government are ‘being submissive and being obedient’.

Let me show you the consistency in these passages.

Romans 13:1-3

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval,

1 Peter 2:13-17

13 Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, 14 or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. 15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. 16 Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. **17** Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

So, how can Christians do good works in relation to **Government?**

We are to “be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work”.

What about the next phrases in Titus 3:2?

- to speak evil of no one.
- to avoid quarreling.
- to be gentle.
- to show perfect courtesy toward all people.

Are we to think of *these* in relation to the government? Well, it’s not clear whether Paul means the government specifically in some of these or not, but it’s likely that he is now telling Titus how to relate to the General Public—as well as the Government.

2. [the] General public

The phrases ‘no one’ and ‘all people’ tell us that he means these things to apply to everyone in society in General.

Let’s take a look at them one by one.

- **to speak evil of no one-** now we know that Paul doesn’t mean that we can never speak evil of anyone or else Paul is a hypocrite with a short memory.

In chapter 1 he called the False Teachers on Crete “liars, evil beasts and lazy gluttons.”

So, what does he mean?

I think one commentary says it best. It said, “*restraining their natural inclination to say the worst about people.*”

That’s true isn’t it?

Isn’t it most of our natural inclination to say the worst about people?

I dare say that if our righteousness extended just that far; if we could wholly obey God in this single way, we would shine like stars in the universe!

How would our city be transformed if all of us Christians were known as people who ‘speak evil of no one’??

Next we have....

- to avoid quarreling.
- to be gentle.

I put these together because they are both mentioned together in 1 Timothy 3:3 as well.

What do they mean?

Literally, ‘*not fighting*’.

But instead we should be ‘*gentle*’ or we should have a

'sweet reasonableness' about us.

When I read that I feel very far away from being like Christ!

- to speak evil of no one.
- to avoid quarreling.
- to be gentle.

and as if they other ones were not convicting enough, we are also to.....

- **to show perfect courtesy toward all people.**

This literally means that we should demonstrate all courtesy to all people.
All people! Everyone!

These Christian ethics are staggeringly weighty!
Listen brothers and sisters, here is something to strive for!

What does it look like for a group of people in society to be so zealous for good works..... in such a way that everyone knows we belong to Jesus Christ?

- submit and be obedient to the government and authorities.
- speak evil of no one.
- to avoid quarreling.

-to be gentle.

-to show perfect courtesy to all people.

This is how Christians are to do good works toward the Government and to the General Public.

Well, what's the fuel?

How can we get there?

How can we be so transformed that our conduct in society reflects our Lord in such a way?

I think we have the answer in this text.

3 For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.

4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, **5** he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, **6** whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, **7** so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

8 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. These things are excellent and profitable for people.

God's grace towards us fuels us for good works.

The key words are: FOR...we were once just like them. I'm not sure if we really believe that sometimes.

Maybe part of the reason why we aren't devoted to good works in society is because we don't have a clear understanding of what we were.

Most of us think we were pretty good people and then we made the right decision to accept Jesus and he made us a little better.

BUT.....we saved us by pure mercy...by his goodness, grace and lovingkindness..... when we were gross and rebellious and filled with hate...he poured out the Holy Spirit on us and changed us....and all of this was accomplished by the good work of Jesus Christ, who died for our sins.

So, now that we understand that good work done for us by Jesus Christ and having received all the blessings that come from him,...there...and only there do we find the fuel for good works.

God's grace towards us fuels us for good works.

"**For**" in verse three is key. It points us where we get the fuel for good works in society. And "**But**" showing us the transition from who we once were and who Christ made us to be.

But there's one more key word in this text I want us to see. It's the word "**Heir**" in verse 7.

so that being justified by his grace we might become **heirs** according to the hope of eternal life.

Hmmm. Heirs! What is an heir? A person inheriting and continuing the legacy of a predecessor.

Who is our predecessor?

What will we receive?

A kingdom.

That's why we can obey an earthly government.

That's why we can be zealous for good works on this little marble floating in space. We shall receive a kingdom.

God's grace towards us fuels us for good works.