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Titus – Making Things Right

Chapter 3 - (vs.15)

You oftentimes come to these small books in the Bible, and I guess because they are small, the perception is that they're not as important as maybe others, but you realize that each book has an important emphasis. Well, if you turn in your Bibles to Titus 3, and as we look at this particular book, we realize that when something is in chaos or just disorder then we would run to the book of Titus because it's going to clarify to us the cure for disorderly conduct. So, the emphasis of this particular book, as he writes to Titus to set things in order at the church at Crete, is also a book that is relating to us how to set things in order in our own house. We realize like the book of Timothy, that we're dealing with the household of God. So, as you're dealing with a pastor dealing with a church, you're dealing with a household. So, many of these principles we're going to be talking about really are correlating to the issues within our own home. So, as we begin to look at this, hopefully we'll begin to draw those parallels in this particular passage.

When we think about disorderly conduct, I think oftentimes we think about the overt actions that take place that bring about rebellious acts and clearly a lot of destructive things in people's lives. However, there are also disorderly emotions. It is interesting when you consider psychology and the way that they define certain things when they talk about psychological disorders or emotional deprivation; what they're talking about is things are not in proper order. So, people aren't thinking right; they're not doing the right thing. It's one of the reasons why you see homes in upset and disarray. As we look in Titus 1, this was one of the great concerns that Paul had. Those that were coming in were causing all kinds of disruption within the house; more specifically, even the homes and the families within the church.

(Titus 1:10) "For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision,

(Titus 1:11) who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain."

Fundamentally, the point of the passage in that particular verse is that when you give bad doctrine, bad things happen. Once again, the perception is that everybody can just basically do whatever they want to do, everybody has their own philosophy or theory, but you have no idea

the ramifications of those decisions that you make. You think about the extremes that people go by, on one set you have legalists that is all about rule and order and the oppression that can come out of that. Then, you have on the other side, everybody just goes by what they feel is right. They'll oftentimes perceive themselves as spiritual people and as they go their merry way, they create a lot of dissonance and disorder with them. In this example, we have people that are teaching whatever their philosophy is but it's not truth. It's one of the reasons why you and I have to be anchored in something that's true. So, the passage will start off with establishing that fact: the truth in accordance with godliness. He will even make the inference that it's impossible for God to lie at the very beginning of the chapter. He's establishing that there is an absolute truth that you have to start with. Without that, there really isn't an anchor. When everybody just basically does what is right in their own eyes, no matter how spiritual they perceive themselves to be; there are people that actually think they're doing the right thing according to Proverbs, but the end thereof is death.

I think that's one of the reasons why in Psalm 139:23-24, the psalmist goes, "Search me and try me...See if there be any evil or destructive way in me." His point is that he doesn't know. I mean, there's just no way that he can know because we deceive ourselves. I know that there is an injunction in Scripture that says, "Walk in the Spirit." I understand that; I get that, but walking in the Spirit, if it's not aligning with Scripture, is not spiritual walk. We can deceive ourselves by going into that particular realm, but once again, it can create a lot of dissonance within the household.

It's interesting when you look at Hebrews 12, it talks about "who the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son." He says that when you were growing up, you had the discipline of your father, and our parents disciplined us as seemed right to them. I like that particular phrase. However, the Father of spirits disciplines knowing what your heart is and what you really need. That's fundamentally the point here. We're going to see Titus putting the church in order and the realization that people oftentimes go their own way, come up with their own philosophy, and it only just brings more chaos. So, we're going to go back to truth. We're going to go back to doctrine. We're going to establish those things.

I was thinking, when I was going through this, of how this relates to households and how parents will oftentimes do specific things in their households that really cause a lot of confusion and hurt. I mean, we're living in a day and age where there are a lot of psychological disorders. I don't know if you noticed that, but people are buying a lot of pills nowadays to try to find some sort of fix. As I was going down the list of the different kinds of disorders, and looking at specifically what parents oftentimes do to encourage these disorders; I'm not saying that they necessarily willingly or wittingly do these things to harm, but because they're not walking in

truth, they're doing things as seem best to them. Oftentimes, what seems best to us is very destructive to us as well as to those around us.

One of the examples of this, I'm sure that some of you are familiar with compulsive disorders; not that you yourselves are having problems with that. It's interesting that many compulsive disorders come from households in which the children are being spoiled. So, when a child basically learns that by getting his way all he has to do is pout and cry and the parents give in, then they're actually feeding into a compulsive disorder with the child; in which the child will ultimately lean towards a histrionic mentality. This means that if things are not working well in his life, then he gets very dramatic and he begins to live his life this way and patterns begin to form. Oftentimes within these homes, parents actually praise their children's looks rather than their character. So, children begin to be narcissistic in those kinds of settings. There is a sense in some houses that they reward kids for being sick. You have to take care of a kid when they're sick, but don't reward them for being sick because it's actually encouraging them to think a certain way. Histrionics have a tendency to be like hypochondriacs because it's a way of getting attention. I mean, it works, doesn't it? So, fundamentally you're dealing with parents that have taken order out; there's no sense of standards. So, "Let's just let the kid do what he needs to do" and "Let's just make the kid happy." They're damaging the kid because there's no order. Now, what's interesting on the other side of that spectrum is the compulsive disorders that come from a home in which the parents are perfectionists. So, when you think about it, it's pretty interesting how the one is just like "Well, whatever the kid wants to do, I'll just let him do it." Then, the other parents are very much like "Well, you have to have these strict standards and performance" and love is always conditional based off of performance. So, the person becomes very compulsive in the things that they do. Why is that? Well, because there's no love. So, it's pretty interesting that in one household, you're going to come up with compulsive disorders because there's no order and then the other one is because there's no love. Really, fundamentally, there's no love in either of them, but the point is the way that it's shown; the fact that you're putting demands on people.

I was looking at passive aggressive disorders, if you know what those are about. Basically, fundamentally, you're dealing with anger that's being suppressed and eventually will come out in horrific ways later on. That oftentimes comes from parenthood in which the parents are over-protective. So, the parents not only over-protect their children, but they have mixed reactions towards their children. They create a sense of helplessness in the child; in other words, the child doesn't feel like they can do anything because they always need to come before the parent. "You always have to rely upon me. You can't do anything. You're not that good." So, it creates a sense of hopelessness and a clinging mentality that is in the child. It actually stifles a kind of independence, and it causes them to expect others to make them happy. If they're not happy, it's everybody else's fault; it's not their fault. If I could describe

that, it would actually be bad love from their parents. So, you have an interesting thing that comes out of no order; you have an interesting thing that that comes out of basically no love. Then, an interesting thing that comes out of bad love.

I would say one of the worst disorders is antisocial and sociopathic behavior. Strangely enough, these people will oftentimes go to drugs and alcohol abuse because of the fact that they're looking for some form of escape. It's usually in a home of emotional deprivation; in other words, there's no sense of relating or caring. I mean, they may have some rigidity in the house, and they may have some sense of standards and law, but there's no connection of the parent with the child. That emotional deprivation causes the child to be distant and have no social relation with anybody; because of that, things begin to get confusing to the child. Besides that, in homes that are oftentimes emotionally detached, you're dealing with parents who give an inconsistent example. In other words, they may put some sort of demands on the kid, but as far as the way they live their life, and we would use the phrase "hypocritical," it's very different from what they're telling the kid to do. This interestingly enough will cause sociopathic behavior, they have found. So, when we're talking about disorder, and we're reading in Titus and he says something like, "We've got to start with truth," he's telling you that if there is this inability to make a connection between reality and what people say, then it causes confusion. Really, we're not only dealing with disorder, but confusion within the church where there's no sense of truth. We think at times, "Truth, what's the big deal?" People need to see and feel some sense of continuity. A child growing up needs to know that the parent has a sense of right and wrong and that there is such a thing. Here again, we live in a day and age where we seem to have erased all of these things, and our perception is that it's a non-issue. It's creating all kinds of psychological disorders and it's causing confusion.

There is another one that I've listed here, and that is paranoia disorders; which goes into the realm of paranoia schizophrenia. The interesting thing about this one is this is where basic trust has been broken in the house. In other words, the child doesn't feel like they can trust anybody. Maybe the parent was abusive in some way or maybe there was even a separation of the husband and wife in the household. The child somewhere along the line picks up, "I can't trust anybody." In that particular setting, the child begins to form his own reality, and he goes into the realm of making up his world. When he does that, he goes into a sense of "I'm going to create an imaginary world in which things are safe and secure." Once again, we're seeing people losing contact with reality. A lot of it, of course, we see people in gaming and a lot of things, virtual reality and whatever, but fundamentally that's what schizophrenia is. It's just losing contact with reality and going into another reality. You can't relate to what is actually happening because you've gone into another world and that's the life that you're living.

So, all of these detachments are really coming out of a sense of disorder. This is one of the reasons why this book is so necessary when we consider that the house has to be in order; there have to be some fundamental things going on. So, let's list them as we review, and we're going to close with this last phrase in which he says to make sure you greet certain ones and embrace them. That's where he's going to end. As we go through this book of Titus, we begin to realize that there are certain ingredients that have to be a part of setting the house in order.

The first thing is that there has to be truth; there can't be any compromise with this truth. This truth has to reveal itself in life in an exemplary way. In other words, if you say something needs to be, it has to be played out as an example. That's one of the reasons why it starts off with "Ok, truth is God" and the truth is demonstrated in Christ. Christ said that He loved us. We go, "Prove it." He proved it. In this is love, not that we loved Him, but He loved us, and He gave His life for us. We're seeing consistency and continuity; a reality of what somebody says. So, when they say this, that's exactly what they do. We can pull it together. This brings stability.

So, what was happening in the church? Well, obviously there were people who were doing things that were just opposite of what they were saying was true. This is why one of the first things he tells him to do is "get overseers and elders that are living this life." If you remember in chapter 1, he goes through "an overseer must be above reproach." Why? Because you're asking them to follow the life of Christ. So, it has to align with the life of Christ. So, he has to be "above reproach, the husband of one wife." Why? Because Christ is faithful. We're teaching and proclaiming faithfulness. If you teach fidelity and you teach faithfulness, then you go and do the opposite, you're telling the kid there's no such thing as standards. You're saying, "Yeah, I taught them the standards." The kids going, "They're just words. There's no reality to this." So, he's able to invent his own reality. "My parents invented their own reality." So, the church is fundamentally saying everything that Christ is has to be in that leadership. If it's not true, then you're sending a message that is confusing to the church in this particular case.

(Titus 1:7) "For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine..."

Addiction is one of the ways that people deal with their problems, but not in this setting because once again, we're dealing with truth. So, you're dealing with this sense of truth; no double standards and exemplified order. When you think about things like hypocrisy, you're talking about a person that's not real about what they say.

According to 1 Timothy 4:1, "But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons".

"Deceitful" is an interesting word which would be another word for "lying."

(1 Timothy 4:2) "by means of the hypocrisy of liars..."

So, it's almost like he's repeated this word of lying in different ways, "deception," "hypocrisy," and "liars."

"By means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron".

In other words, one of the most damaging things you could ever do to a child is say one thing and do something else. Psychologically speaking, you could actually be an abusive parent and do less damage than a person that is duplicitous or hypocritical in the things that they do; because the child never knows where the right side is. At least if the parents are just mean, they have clarity. There's mean, then they can find somebody that's nice. However, where there's confusion, that's where they can't seem to settle. Here again, I know I'm talking about children, but we're dealing with the church and people as well. So, the necessity for this is that there has to be that consistency. There can't be double standards, and it has to be exemplified first. That's why he starts off by saying that you need to put people in there that aren't sending double messages. When that begins to happen, that's going to be the first thing that will become destructive in the church. I've lived long enough and been in churches long enough to know how damaging that is. I want anybody and everybody to walk through the doors of the church. Sinners, good. I want you to come in. We just don't want your leadership because it sends a confusing signal. You see that in churches and how people will oftentimes walk away when the leadership is so distorted. The people in the pews are going, "What do I believe anymore?" They don't know what to believe, and it's understandable that they're confused. So, there has to be the continuity of the example within there. There can't be any conflicting results.

We oftentimes talk about the fact that Jesus said, "You will know them by their fruits." We proclaim this truth. Yet sometimes our teaching is that you can do the right thing, but you might not have the right results. That's not what Christ says. "You'll know them by their fruits." The key is that when you do the right thing with the right heart, God will bless. Now, it doesn't mean that you'll be wealthy or whatever because that's not necessarily what blessings are about; though it will be that God will bring joy, unity, and peace. All of these will be a part of because He has promised this. See, these are promises of God. People can go out and do something for somebody, and they can say, "I'm trying to make you happy." Then, in their pursuit of trying to make them happy, you can just see that they're not happy. You almost have to come to the conclusion, "Well, it's not working. Whatever you're doing is not working." So, if there are different results from what is being said, then there's going to be confusion and dissonance.

One of the problems as we look in Titus is that we have deceivers coming in; as we were talking, we have both ends of the spectrum coming in and bringing a lot of confusion. We have the Jews coming in with their legalism. Here again, the perception is “I don’t want to have anything to do with legalism. So, let’s go to the other extreme; let’s just throw away the laws and the bones of structure.” No, God has ordained order and structure. So, how do we handle this? Well, we do it God’s way. That’s why you always have to align with the way that God says to do it rather than, “Well, I think it needs this” or “I think it needs that.” There is a sense of obedience.

“Whatever God says, we’re just going to do it that way.” So, how would you start? Well, you would start off with godly leaders. Then, you would stop the teaching in which people were coming in with legalism and ritualistic things of habits. As God says in Isaiah, “You know your people come and they give Me lip service, but everything they do is by rote; there’s no heart in it.” So, when you have that, then you don’t have the results. If anybody’s ever been in a legalistic church, you walk away, and you just don’t feel loved. They can actually talk about the love of God, maybe on the sideline or something like that, but when all is said and done, you walk away feeling empty. You go, “Why do I feel empty?” Well, the results aren’t there.

So, there was a lot of confusion happening because of the circumcision which were the Jews coming in “who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families.” Why? Because they’re telling them, “You have to do it this way.” Here again, I think that within families there are parents that put down the law and rigidity, then they don’t understand why their kids aren’t falling in line. I would say, “You’re not doing it God’s way.” Yes, you have to have order, but you have to do it the way God says it.

Then you have the other extreme, if you’ll look at the passage, that you have those that are “rebellious,” “empty talkers,” and “deceivers” in verse 10.

In verse 14, we also know “not paying attention to Jewish myths,” and the flip side of that, not to listen to the “commandments of men”.

I had a standing joke with my parents about how I was traumatized when I was a child because I was supposed to get my tonsils taken out, and my parents bought me this little book; the book was about going to the hospital and having your tonsils taken out. It was a great book. The reason I liked the book so much is the end result was that after you get your tonsils taken out, you can eat all the ice cream you wanted. I guess some of you had read that book too, and your parents lied to you too. So, I can’t tell you how many times I read the book before I went to the hospital. I’m thinking, “Piece of cake. I’m looking forward to this. This is going to be a great thing.” I got the operation and apparently, they said they had more problems with me than normal. Whatever, I’ve heard that before, but I couldn’t even swallow. I couldn’t eat anything for what felt like two weeks. I don’t know how long it was, but it seemed like it was two weeks. What kept going on in my head was, “They lied to me.”

Look, fantasy, I understand. Imagination is a wonderful thing, but God gave us an imagination to think about Him. It wasn't necessarily to go into escapism. I think a lot of what we encourage in our households and even in the thinking of people is things that aren't true. One of the things that you see with Jesus when He's dealing with His disciples, He says, "Look, I know you want to follow Me, but foxes have holes, birds have nests, and sons of man don't have a place to lay his head. It's not going to be easy. There are going to be people that aren't going to like you when you follow Me." You hear a lot of these fantasy stories and people write books about how great things happen; waters being parted by talking to it or whatever. Some miraculous things are happening, and it puts people in a fantasy world. It gives an open door for people to think from a fantasy. Can God do anything? Yes, He can do anything. We understand that. We get that. God can do anything. With God all things are possible. However, much of what we do is fabricate things and write stories. People begin to wonder, "Why isn't my life like that?" Then, they try to adopt that kind of life. Then, they wake up one day and they're sorely disappointed because things aren't happening the way the book says that they're supposed to happen. You're reading the wrong book. The point is that wrong doctrine is being pumped. People oftentimes ask me, "Do you like to read other spiritual books?" And I said, "Well, they can be helpful, but why? You have the Bible that's the word of God, and everything He says is true; everything He says you can bank on." This isn't true with so many of these other books that are being written.

So, houses were being upset because there was both legalism; people were being too hard, and there were both myths that were being propagated. By virtue of these things, people were confused, let down, and disappointed. When people are let down and disappointed, guess what? They get mad. Then, they start fighting and pursuing whatever. Look, once they begin to realize that there's no such thing as truth, then they make up their own truth. They make up their own philosophy of life. So, you have conflicting results and conflicting examples. There can't be ambiguity in roles. This brings a lot of confusion and it's one of the reasons why he's very specific when he says, "Look, have some older men teach the younger men these things." Then, "Older women, teach the younger women these things." Well, if you'll look at what is being taught to the younger women and the things that are taught to the younger men, they're different. The men and the women are different. So, when there's not clarity on what to do, "What am I supposed to be doing? How am I supposed to be acting?", it brings about a dissonance; people are fighting for their rights and position. They don't even know what they're going after fundamentally.

So, what you see in Titus 2 is him really defining the roles and making clear where and what people are supposed to be doing; identifying the things that need to happen. In all of this mix, there needs to be not only the truth and clearly defined roles, but there has to be the Spirit of God. Unless there's the Spirit of God, there's not going to be the change of the heart. Once

again, we could all go to our psychoanalyst, but he's not going to change our hearts. It might even change your behavior, but you're not going to change your heart. So, there's still going to be the dissonance in your heart. So, what has to happen? As you come into Titus, we see him bringing in that the grace of God appeared for this reason.

(Titus 2:11) "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men".

Once again, the fact of the matter is that we've all basically made a mess of our lives. Has anybody here had the perfect father or mother? Even when people think that the person has the perfect father or mother, they don't. They not only make mistakes, but oftentimes irreputable damage not even knowing; maybe even by doing good. I mean, who would've thought that coddling somebody could hurt them? You would think that would be such a nurturing thing to do. So, the things that we oftentimes do really mess things up. We need a Savior. The wonderful thing about the gospel is it literally is a do over; a changing and renewing of the mind, as Paul would say.

(Titus 2:11) "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,

(Titus 2:12) instructing us to deny ungodliness..."

Now, oftentimes you're dealing with, in this particular case it was true, bad patterns; in some cases, lifetime patterns that have been formed. However, this is why the gospel is so wonderful. Our salvation is so powerful that it can literally instruct us into godliness and cause us to let go of the things that are harmful. As the psalmist would say, "I didn't even know I had that problem." You begin doing the right things and desiring the right things for all the right reasons.

"Instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires..."

"I have a world of escapism, and nobody can hurt me in this world." What would cause somebody to let go of that? It would have to be a place where they would feel like they could trust somebody. It would have to be a place in which they feel like whatever they say is going to be true. "I can bank on it." The wonderful thing about the gospel is it causes you to release all of these defense mechanisms that you've had all your life, and ultimately say, "I can trust Him. I can't trust everybody else, but I can trust Him." Then, you begin to put your trust in Him and He frees you from all these things. I mean, it's one of the reasons why Galatians says, "It was for freedom Christ came to set you free."

"Instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,

(Tit 2:13) looking for the blessed hope..."

You have something to look forward to. I think one of the reasons why people are depressed is that they don't have anything to look forward to. We have something to look forward to; something that we can bank on. Why? Because we found somebody that keeps His promises.

Isn't that why He says in Titus 1:2, "in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised..."

Why do you think he states that? You'll hardly ever read that anywhere else, but in Hebrews maybe. Why state that God cannot lie? They needed to have somebody they could trust because things were being said and people were telling them to do certain things; it wasn't working. They just threw everything up in the air and they go, "Well, I can invent my own reality." Then, they realized that it didn't work. So, now they've found somebody that they could trust who won't lie to them. Isn't it important to know that? It causes us to live godly in this present age and to have a sense of hope.

They say one of the greatest causes of anxiety is change. People have a hard time handling change. Even a woman that has an abusive husband would rather stay than deal with the change of leaving him. In staying, there's a sense of predictability; at least she knows what makes him mad or how it happens. It's that change in our lives that brings that sense of anxiety. When the world is so unpredictable, truth is so unpredictable, and right is so unpredictable, this is why it's so important that the church has to uphold standards and not flip back and forth. When people begin to see the flipping back and forth, what is that? Change. So, there's no rock that they can hold onto. There's no anchor for their souls as Hebrews would say. So, the same thing is true within this particular passage. You're dealing with ambiguity in roles oftentimes in the world and a dichotomous message; that is to say, an opposing message. People are saying one thing, then doing something else and there's no real clarity. However, where there is clarity, we have this blessed hope and it's in Christ that we find this. This is what actually changes everything.

The way that it's put here in Titus 2:13, "looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,

(Titus 2:14) Who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed..."

I would say those "lawless deeds" that are being done are disorderly conduct; whatever that is in the sense of deprivation mentally, emotionally, and the things we're doing to deal with our problems.

"... and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds."

The magnificent thing about this is that not only do we have someone and something that is real to embrace, but we now can focus on doing good. If you take a person that's well adjusted,

they can think of others; when you take a person that's not, they can only think of themselves. One of the reasons why we run into so many people that are depressed is because they're always thinking about themselves; so introspective. Basically thinking, "What about me?" Life revolves around them and how they think. However, when in fact you know that God has got you, you don't have to think, "What about me?"

That's why Matthew 6:33 says, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness". God is saying, "I'll take care of this. You don't have to worry about you. I've got you." Then, you go, "Well, if you've got me, then maybe I can help somebody else." That's what gives us the energy to do that because we have this blessed hope and a desire to do it. I don't want to get into "Maslow's hierarchy of needs," but that's fundamentally what he's saying without the sense of God in the picture; when your fundamental needs are met, it frees you to care about somebody else. That's what God does. You and I have truth, an anchor for our soul. By the way, that's one of the ways you can tell that somebody has made a decision to receive Christ. It's also the reason why when someone receives Christ, the first thing they want to do is tell somebody else. Isn't that interesting? They come to you going, "Woe is me. My life's in a wreck." Then, they bow their head, and ask Jesus into their heart, and they go, "I've got to tell somebody else." You go, "What about your problems?" "What problems?" All your burdens have been lifted.

So, he takes us from all these lawless deeds and the emphasis is that this is the source of power; the change of heart. Now, he says this without diminishing the sense of order. Once again, I think the perception is that you can now throw order out the window. No, wherever the Spirit of God is there is order. You'll see people willingly submitting to authority. You say, "Well, aren't you worried?" "No, God's got the authority. I'm not worried about that. I'm not really doing it because of them; I'm doing it because God told me to and I know that if I just follow what He says, He will take care of it." So, it's abiding by His order in faith. When you have somebody that you can trust, then you can do the right thing.

So, as you go into chapter 3, it's interesting that he defines in verse 3 that we once were foolish and had all these problems. When you think about it, "disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts..." Why are people disobedient? Why are they rebellious? So many times people rebel against authority, why? Because they lied to them; they deceived them. They were inconsistent, incongruent; there were things that were happening that shouldn't be happening. "They were telling me one thing then doing another. What is truth?" So, they start marching on the streets and now they're angry. Why are they enslaved to various lusts? Well, they're going to escapism for the most part. Reality has thrown them a depressive thought. Now, they've just got to escape into another world. If it means fabricating some mythical thing, ok, they'll live there. Maybe that will bring them some sort of joy and at least consistency, but we don't have to be enslaved to various lusts anymore. We don't have to go to those things anymore.

“Pleasures”; spending our life trying to find immediate gratification. We don’t need that stuff anymore because Titus 3:4 says,

“...the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared,

(Titus 3:5) He saved us, not on the basis of deeds...”

Can you think of how relieving that would be for a person who grew up in a household where performance was everything, and that in order for them to be accepted they had to perform to a certain level? Then, Jesus comes into their life, and He goes, “I’m doing it all. Not on the basis of anything that you’ve done. I love you, and I’m going to save you.” Then you go, “I’ve never heard that before” but how freeing that is. You think of all the pressure people have dealt with throughout their life because they’re trying to meet the expectations of somebody else. Let me just say this, as a parent, the only thing you need to do is point your kids to Christ. Now, you want to teach them the fundamentals which is basically, “You want to live an orderly life. You want to do right things.” It needs to be about character. If a person has the right character, they’ll do the right thing. They won’t abandon things or go to school and not do their best, but you want to emphasize that. Fundamentally, you still love them not on the basis of deeds which they have done. Even though children oftentimes will not get it there, they will here and that begins to free people up; the fact that we’re justified by grace, and we’re heirs according to hope. “You mean He’s given me stuff and I didn’t even earn it?” Yeah, not only stuff but everything. Heirs with Christ, what an amazing thing. If in fact this is true, would this not cause you to want to help others? I mean, the other way you’re competing with others because if you think it’s a performance thing then you’ve always got to compete with somebody else. So, you look at everyone else as kind of the enemy, “I don’t want them to have too much.” However, with this way our mindset is “I’ve got everything. So, I can give everything away and still have more.”

So, what do we need to do to close the book on this? The answer is that you want to hang out with the right people because “bad company corrupts good morals”. (1 Corinthians 15:33) The same thing would be true in a household. I mean, how many times have we seen that when a kid starts acting out, you’re going, “What’s wrong?” You talk a little bit longer and you find out, “Oh, they have a new friend.” Then, you find out a little bit more about that friend. The thought is that “I can have bad company, and maybe I can change them.” No, they’ll change you. An interesting picture that we used to do with the teens is we had somebody get on a chair, and then we’d have somebody stand down. Then, we’d say, “You on the chair, try to pull somebody up.” They of course have a difficult time. “Now, you try to pull them down.” That was pretty easy. The point is that it’s a lot easier to pull somebody down than it is to pull them up. As we think about this, you think about passages like Psalm 1.

I like the fact that Psalm 1 starts off this way because we're dealing with psalms that are dealing with emotions, and there's going to be a lot of issues that are dealt with throughout the psalms. In some way, chapter 1 fundamentally says that if you do this, it will keep you out of a lot of emotional highs and lows.

(Psalm 1:1) "How blessed", happy, "is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked..." You don't want to listen to the people that are telling you bad things. If I can define "wicked," it would be somebody that has no reverence for God. So, though a wicked person may sound nice to you, we usually ask our kids, "Are they Christians?" Of course, just because someone says they're Christians, doesn't mean they are. So, then we'll follow that up, but "Are they Christians?" "No, I don't think so. They don't go to church, but they're really nice." Ok, so, what is a nice person that's not a Christian going to be telling somebody to do? What are they going to be pointing to? How are they going to be directing them? You just follow that all the way through, and you're going to find out that the counsel is not going to be good. After a while, you'll find out that it will literally suck out all of the happiness and joy because you've listened to wrong counsel.

"How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor stand in the path of sinners..."

That would be somebody that's convoluted in their thinking. The sense of standing would be that you're getting kind of comfortable with them.

The last part is "sitting in the sea of scoffers," and now you're not only comfortable but you're condescending; perceiving that there's a critical arrogance in there. His point is that you're not going to be happy with any of these people. You'll be happier not with them.

(Psalm 1:2) "But his delight is in the law of the LORD..."

In other words, he does what the law says. Now, Scripture will tell you "Bad company corrupts good morals"; it's fundamentally saying don't hang out with them.

Proverbs will say in Proverbs 22:24, "Do not associate with a man given to anger..."

I can see some people going, "What does that mean?" It means don't associate with people that are given to anger. I mean, if you know that somebody has a bad temper, don't hang around them.

The same thing is true with Proverbs 24:21, "Do not associate with those who are given to change".

What does that mean? Well, he's unpredictable. He likes you one day; he doesn't like you another day. It's that sense of instability and so the thought is "Yeah, he's unstable, but maybe I

can help stabilize him.” No. He’s going to make you unstable. Scripture says, “Don’t associate.” “I’m going to fix him.” Don’t associate.

“But his delight is in the law of the LORD...” (Psalm 1:2) It’s not in the way that we perceive things because once again, we all have our philosophy and our theories, but where did that get the church in Crete? They were having all these counselors telling them all kinds of different things. Where did that get them? Everything’s in disarray and disorder; dissonance would be another word for it which is another way of saying, “no harmony.” Whole families were being upset. Why? They weren’t going according to truth. The Spirit of Good will always lead you into the word of God.

It’s an interesting picture, if you remember reading about king Saul in the Old Testament. Before he becomes king, or maybe shortly after, the Spirit of God comes upon him, and he does really weird and freaky things. In fact, he starts dancing around naked. In a way, the Old Testament is saying that the energy and the life of God, in the mind of a pervert, isn’t going to look good; it’s going to give energy to a pervert. The house needs to be in order. Then, the Spirit of God flows freely and does wonderful works.

Another example of the Spirit of God coming upon somebody is Samson, but I don’t think any of us would perceive Samson as a paragon. So, what was missing from Samson? Well, he was probably the most disordered person that you’d ever want to meet. I mean, I’d literally call him “Baby Huey” because you have this giant of a guy, as far as his strength goes, and he has no control over his emotions. So, God has given us this order, and He says, “If you’ll meditate on the word day and night, you’ll be happy.” Let the Spirit of God energize you to obey God’s word. Do the things that God is telling you to do.

The ultimate passage is 2 Corinthians 6:14-18. Paul says, “Bad company corrupts good morals.” Now, in 2 Corinthians 6, he says, “Don’t hang out with them. Don’t let this company be a part of you.”

The way that this book ends in Titus 3:10, “Reject a factious man...”

What is he saying? He’s basically saying that you don’t want to be with somebody that’s perverted. How do we know that?

(Titus 3:11) “knowing that such a man is perverted...”

I mean, who would encourage anybody to hang out with a pervert? The point is that you need to make sure that your company is correct. Once again, it’s all part of setting things in order.

If you drop on down, the way that he ends in verse 15 is this:

“All who are with me greet you...”

The word “greet” that is used means to “embrace somebody; to receive them; to feel joyful that they’re there”. His point is that those who are with him, that is Paul, “greet you”.

Now, we’re dealing with the imperative; he’s going to tell us what to do.

“... Greet those who love us in the faith...”

You know what that is? That’s clarity. Remember what brings about a lot of dissonance? There’s not a sense of right and wrong. There’s a sense of “we’re all the same.” We’re not all the same. There are people that follow the Lord, and there are people that don’t follow the Lord. There are people that walk in faith, and there are people that don’t. Do we wish and desire all to come to faith? Yes. Should we hang out with all those who don’t desire it? No. The passage is very clear, “Those who love us.”

Let me just say this, there are going to be people that are very kind and gracious to you; people that do nice things for you, but they just don’t love God. You know, if those same people are coming up to you, and they’re saying, “I really care a lot for you, but some of the other Christians that you hang out with, I just don’t get along with.” You know what I would do? I would ditch them because loving your brothers is not an option, it’s a command. One of the telltale signs of a person that is devoted to God in the Spirit is that they’re devoted to one another.

Don’t you think it’s interesting that in Romans 12, it says, “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.”

Then, it states this in Romans 12:9, “Let love be without hypocrisy”.

Do you know why that’s so important? Hypocrisy causes emotional disorder; deprivation of characters.

This is going to sound strange coming from a pastor, but I personally don’t believe it’s always good for somebody to come to church. I think that in many respects, if a person comes Sunday after Sunday and they don’t change, then it hurts them. I think that they’re better off in the world, letting the world give their “one-two-punch,” “knock ‘em down,” flatten them out; whatever the world wants to do so that they would at least see the clarity; “This is evil; church is good.” However, when they’re in church Sunday after Sunday and they don’t apply it to their lives, they’re living a duplicitous life. Another word for it is “schizoid” which means “divided mind.” In the word “schizophrenia,” “phrenia” means the “mind.” So, “schizo” is “split mind; split personality.” They’re living two different lives, and Scripture says that hypocrisy sears the conscience which means the longer you live the two lives, the harder your heart becomes, and that’s a very dangerous thing. It’s very important the church be real, be truthful, that it simplifies the truth of the word by the examples that they set forward. It’s very important that

the doctrine is all God. Once again, I don't know. There are times I've thought, "I think we should do this. Let me find out what Scripture says." Then I read the Scripture, and I go, "Ok, change of plans." There are times that you and I feel a certain way; it's just the wrong thing to do, but we embrace the order of God and He just set things in order. I've seen this. If I just do what God tells me to do in the way He tells me to do it, if I have His Spirit and His heart, and I begin to function according to what He says, man, He just puts things in order. So, Titus is a great book, isn't it?

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for Your continuity, Your peace, Your harmony that just eradicates the dissonance within a family, a household, and within a church. We're so thankful for truth; for somebody that's trustworthy and didn't break trust with us. You said You were going to do something and You did it. Now, You've said You're coming back, and we believe You. How wonderful it is to have something that we can anchor into, and the wonderful stability that You give us, not only of all the blessings that are ours that really pan out as we just simply do as You say, but how wonderful it is to know that You can change a life miraculously; we don't have to run into fantasy. We give You thanks in Your name. Amen.