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Titus – Making Things Right

Chapter 3 - (vs.13-14)

Well, if you turn in your Bibles to Titus in chapter 3; as we come close to the end of this wonderful letter, we realize that engaging in good deeds as well as in pressing needs not only is a benefit to many that we minister to, but it actually has a fringe benefit to us; that is it brings our house in order. Pursuing good deeds brings us into order, and it's one of the great themes that we see in the book of Titus; the necessity for order and the necessity in how you get there.

So, as we come to Titus in chapter 3, we begin to read in verses 13 and 14 about diligently helping. All the way through we're having phrases like this. In fact, if you back up into verse 12 as he talks about Artemas and Tychicus making every effort to come, he's talking about a good deed and a pressing need, really. The fact that there's a necessity at that particular juncture for Paul and Titus and for things to be done.

If you go on, we look at verse 13,

"Diligently help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way so that nothing is lacking for them."

Obviously, we're dealing with a need that is there.

Then in verse 14,

"Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful."

"Unfruitful" means unproductive and doing things that have no value.

One of the statements that he makes, if you look in Titus 1:16,

"They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed."

The setting in verse 10 is "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."

In other words, they were involved in bad deeds. So, if you're not involved in good deeds, you're going to open yourself up to these kinds of things. Of course, one of the great phrases is "idle hands are the devil's workshop."

You see that as you go to 1 Timothy 5. In particular, he begins to deal with some of the women, and his statement in verse 13 is

"At the same time they also learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention.

(1 Timothy 5:14) Therefore, I want younger widows to get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach".

What is he saying? Well, the idleness and going around talking about things that they shouldn't; talking about other people in ways that they shouldn't; the fact they're not doing good deeds or productive in any way is telling us that they're opening themselves up. The way that it's put is "turning aside to Satan."

(1 Timothy 5:15) "for some have already turned aside to follow Satan."

So, the passage is telling us that you need to involve yourself in doing something productive with your life because by not doing it you're bringing greater hurt. He emphasizes this throughout.

If you look in Titus 2, it says that young men ought to be sensible.

(Titus 2:8) "sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us."

He goes on to say that they need to be an example in purity and deeds.

(Titus 2:7) "in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds..."

If you drop on down to verse 15, he makes reference to you need to "speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you." That's the whole reason why we were redeemed. God has redeemed us to be a people for His own possession.

If you look in verse 14,

"who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds."

He will then repeat it in Titus 3. In Titus 3:8, the trustworthy statement that Christ saved us is mentioned.

(Titus 3:8) “This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds...”

There it is. So, it’s not just me repeating myself, is it?

“... These things are good and profitable...”

Another way of putting it would be “fruitful; bearing fruit”.

“...for men.”

You begin to realize that in the book of Titus, he in many respects, defines or gives you the qualities of good deeds as well as defining pressing needs. So, we’re going to look specifically at that. What is a good deed? How do you define “good deed”? Well, Titus hits upon that. If you look with me in this book, you begin to see the necessity for being empowered by Christ.

He starts off this way, if you look in Titus 1,

“Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness”.

So, “How do you get in and do godly things?” is the question. Those would be good things, right? Godly things are good things because fundamentally, when you’re talking about “good,” you’re talking about things that are enduring. What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul, right? As Jesus says so clearly in John 15, “I came that you might bear fruit and that your fruit would remain.” If it’s good deeds, good fruit, productive, then it must be enduring; it must be virtuous to be good. That is to say, you couldn’t be hurtful in the sense of impurity. I know that sometimes people perceive that by maybe giving somebody drugs, they’re really helping them, but you’re not. You’re not helping them.

So, what is virtuous? Pure; that which is righteous will be a good deed. Things that aren’t righteous would be a bad deed. People are always trying to help people that are doing the wrong thing, and that would be a bad deed. It’s not a good deed; it’s not helpful or virtuous. So, a good deed is something that has to be enduring, virtuous, and beneficial. It has to be beneficial to the people. In order to have these qualities, it has to come from God. That’s why he starts off the way that he does in Titus 1:1,

“...the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness”

He’s saying that you have to know Christ in order for you to be sincerely good. As Jesus said, “If you abide in Me then the truth will set you free, but you have to abide in Me.”

Here again, we’ve made mention of this, but he goes back to John 15. If you go back to John 15, you remember the analogy that he gives,

(John 15:1) “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.

(John 15:2) Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it...”

Now, obviously we’re talking about good fruit.

“... so that it may bear more fruit.”

As He goes on, He says in verse 5,

“I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me...”

I don’t know if you’re getting this or not, but you can’t do anything. “Oh, I think I can do some good work without Jesus.” I don’t think you can. See, because it’s not going to be enduring. It’s not going to be virtuous. Ultimately, because of that, it won’t be beneficial. Only true benefit can come from Christ. So, it’s literally clarified throughout Titus as he goes on because as he goes on, you begin to realize that it’s the grace of God that moves within us to do the right thing. Look, Paul is all too aware of the fact that man will take orders and jump through hoops. He did it himself with the law, but that won’t keep you there nor will it cause you to do anything productive. Once again, you go into Galatians 6, and it says so clearly that if you sow according to the flesh, of the flesh you reap corruption. What is he talking about “the flesh”? Well, the flesh is anything you do in your own power. If you sow according to the Spirit, of the Spirit you reap life. So, you’re not going to get anything beneficial from you just with great resolves. “I’m going to do some good deeds.” It’s not going to happen, but when the Spirit of God is in you.

So, not only in Titus 1:1 does he talk about godliness from the truth that is in Christ Jesus, but in Titus 2:11,

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,

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

What instructs us? The grace of God. The favor of God upon us through Christ. When we define the word “instruct,” it means “beats us, disciplines us.” What’s a better way to say this? It brings us to our knees before the foot of the cross so that we begin to have a heart to do the right thing.

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

(Titus 2:13) looking for the blessed hope...”

Then, verse 14,

“Who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself...”

How are we purified? The grace of God instructs us. What moves you? What motivates you to do the right thing? Christ has done so much for me; I can do no other. Paul would say, “The love of Christ constrains me.”

It is the same point that he makes in Titus 3:4.

(Titus 3:3) “For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.

(Titus 3:4) But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared,

(Titus 3:5) He saved us...”

What happened when He saved us?

Watch verse 6,

“He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ...” this regeneration that he talks about in verse 5. A regeneration, a renewing is like a new person. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. So, you and I can't do good deeds without that. Once again, Paul was acutely aware; he was given these clear standards, “You need to do this. You need to do this. You need to do this.” But if the right force isn't moving you, you cannot do anything. That fundamentally is where he begins in this as he starts off in Titus 1. The same thing is true in John 15 as we gave you prooftext to this; that you have to be empowered by Christ and the force of Christ needs to be that which motivates and moves you. Without Him, you and I can't produce anything.

There's an interesting passage in 2 Peter 1 where he talks about bearing fruit. Of course, the ultimate goal here is to not be unproductive but to be fruitful. In 2 Peter 1:5 he talks about applying all diligence to our faith. Through this, we supply moral excellence. What are we doing? We're being motivated by the Spirit of Christ which is the Spirit of virtue. Without the Spirit of virtue, there really can't be any good thing done.

So, you have this, “Supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge,

(2 Peter 1:6) and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness,

(2 Peter 1:7) and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.”

Here again, I think it's important to understand that godliness actually has to be before kindness. Without the sense of what is right, you won't show kindness that is beneficial. It's

impossible. So, there has to be that sense of “I’m doing everything for God” rather than, “I want to see this person change.” Sometimes, we want to see people change just because they flat out annoy us. “So, I’m going to do everything to change this person,” but the only thing you’re going to do is make them mad. If in fact you will apply yourself to these things, in other words, you focus on your life being right, then it says this, “For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 1:8) In other words, what brings productivity? Well, it has to be that you are applying all diligence to your faith in these things. In other words, you’re getting your own life right. What does that mean? It means that Christ in you, the hope of glory; Christ is the one that’s motivating you. You’re doing all that you’re doing for God. You’re not doing it for man or yourself, but you’re doing it for Him. Just like how Christ did everything for the Father. So, it has to be in that order, and of course, John starts off with that.

I hope you remember the first point because you can’t skip to the second point. The second point that he focuses on throughout the book of Titus is that it has to be according to divine order. In other words, there are a lot of things we do that we perceive are good deeds, but it’s not according to the order that God has established. So, people are doing things that they shouldn’t be doing. They’re ignoring the order that God has ordained, and their thought is somehow good is going to come out of that. It may even be what could be described as a gracious, kind, or altruistic act that they’re doing for somebody. In fact, the people they do it for would consider them to be benevolent in doing it. However, you’re stepping out of the order of God.

So, if you look in Titus, it is about order, isn’t it? The divine order that He establishes. In the beginning of Titus 2, he talks first to who? The older men. He’s saying in the text that you can’t be peevish, temperamental, argumentative. “Peevish” would probably be “grumpy.” You can’t be a grumpy old man which I’m feeling that more and more. I think this is why he talks about it. You have to be “temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith.” The older you get, the more you feel like you can get away with stuff. I mean, when you were a kid, you said something wrong and your mom slapped you or something, but you get older, nobody’s slapping you. They’re just going, “Yes sir,” and you’re going, “I just got away with that. I can get away with more.”

(Titus 2:2) “Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance.”

I think perseverance is an interesting word to an older person because we tend to get a little bit more impatient with people around us. However, there needs to be that continuance in our faith and in a sense of humility; which once again, is one of those things that oftentimes is elusive.

(Titus 2:3) “Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good”.

Obviously, but how do you do that? Well, one of the statements that Paul makes in Philippians 3:17 is “following my example”; which is something you probably don’t want to do a whole lot the older you get, but that’s one of the best ways that we teach is by example. So, he’s literally saying, “Do what I do.” In 2 Thessalonians 3:9, he says the same thing. In every case, he understands that it’s by example that the greatest classroom exists. So, if you look in the passage when it talks to the older women, when you’re teaching the younger women; what are you teaching them?

(Titus 2:4) “...encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,

(Titus 2:5) to be sensible, pure, workers at home...”

What are we talking about? We’re talking about order. So, think about all the things it doesn’t say, “You ought to go to your boss and get a raise.” It doesn’t say that. The focus is on order. So, in order for good deeds to be good deeds, it has to abide by the order that was given. In the same passage, you have “Likewise, young men are to be sensible, workers at home.” That’s not what it says. That would be out of order. So, what are they doing? Well, if you look in verse 9, “Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative,

(Titus 2:10) not pilfering, but showing all good faith...”

So, it gives you the order in which things are done. You not only see that in Titus 2, but if you look in 1 Timothy 2 as Paul writes to Timothy dealing with the church at Ephesus in particular.

(1 Timothy 2:1) “First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men,

(1 Timothy 2:2) for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.”

So, what is he talking about? Submitting to authority which is an order thing.

You drop on down to the fact that the men need to lift up holy hands as they pray.

(1 Timothy 2:8) “Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.”

“Likewise, I want women to... lift up holy hands in prayer.”

That’s not what it says.

(1 Timothy 2:9) “Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments,

(1 Timothy 2:10) but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness.”

Which is telling us there is a different work that a woman does than a man.

(1 Timothy 2:11) “A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness.

(1 Timothy 2:12) But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.”

What is he talking about? He’s talking about order. You step out of that order, and good is not going to come. People can say, “Well, I was a blessing to all these people.” Ok, but you still didn’t do what God told you to do. So, what does that mean? It means that the work is not going to be enduring; it means that it’s not virtuous because you went against God. Therefore, it’s not going to be beneficial in the long run. It’s not going to happen because you literally went out of order.

You see the same thing in 1 Peter 3. Most of you are familiar with these passages, but it starts off in chapter 3:1,

“In the same way, you wives...”

Now, “in the same way” is bouncing off of 1 Peter 2 which is talking about servants in verse 18, “be submissive to your masters with all respect”. So, what is he talking about? Well, the men at work.

Now, “In the same way, you wives...”

Why doesn’t he talk about “...who are slaves and need to be obedient to their masters”? Their master is their husband.

“In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives”.

What’s he talking about? Productive ministry is done when order is recognized. So, the wife may say, “I think I can put my husband in his place” and you know, she probably can. She probably knows exactly what to say, and she can nail him to the wall, but it’s not the power of God in her that’s doing it. Therefore, it’s not going to be beneficial.

As it goes on, it says in verse 5,

“For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands”.

(1 Peter 3:7) “You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way...”

The point of it is that there has to be this sense of divine order that’s coming into play.

The other thing that he mentions in Titus 3 is that in order for something to be a good deed which is enduring, virtuous and beneficial, it has to be for the kingdom of God. Now, in a way, we’ve already touched upon that, but it goes to the point that we really need to emphasize it. You have to do all for the glory of God in order for this to be beneficial. I mean, literally, it makes all the difference in the world. I’ll tell you the reason why, it’s because the power to change things doesn’t come from you and I; the power to change things comes from God. So, when we’re pleasing to God, yes, he can make our enemies to be at peace with us. Yes, He can change our husbands. It’s when we delight ourselves in the Lord that he gives us the desires of our heart, but He’s the one that’s doing the changing. It’s by virtue of us having the right heart to do what we do for Him because literally our focus is on building the kingdom. That’s why we do what we do. God is telling us, “You want to build something permanent?” We go, “Yeah.” He goes, “Ok, but you’ve got to do it My way.” When you come in and start putting wrong blocks in the building, He goes, “You’ve got to get those out because that’s not going to last.”

You see that sense of building in 1 Corinthians 3, don’t you? I mean, wood, hay, straw... each man’s work will become evident in the day of fire because the quality of the work will be tested. (1 Corinthians 3:12-13) Well, “quality” is “Did you do it for Him?”

Now, the way that it’s put in Titus 2, when it talks about the women and how the young lady is supposed to be workers at home, if you look in verse 5,

“to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands...”

Watch the last phrase. What are we doing it for? Yeah, you thought we were doing it so that we could get the kids in order. So, they would stop screaming and everything would be at peace in the house. Hopefully that would happen, but that’s not why we’re doing it. We’re doing it so that God’s word will be honored. We’re building a kingdom. The word of God is what our focus is.

You see the same thing that is being mentioned in verse 10, as he talks about the young men.

(Titus 2:9) “Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative,

(Titus 2:10) not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.”

You fundamentally see the same thing, that God has called us for this purpose to redeem us from the lawless deeds and we're His possessions so we might be zealous for these good deeds, but it's for the kingdom.

Once again, look at verse 14, why were you redeemed?

"To purify for Himself a people for His own possession."

We're building what? We're building a kingdom, and there's absolutely no mistake.

If you look in Titus 3:8,

"This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men."

Then, he comes to the point of emphasizing the fact that everything we're doing is for the kingdom of God. Of course, that's always been the emphasis.

You consider in Matthew 5 as Jesus is talking about the kingdom. What is He saying in verse 10?

"Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

(Matthew 5:11) Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me."

Why are they attacking you? Because you're proclaiming Christ, and you're doing everything that you're doing for Him.

It goes on and says, "Rejoice and be glad..." (Matthew 5:12)

(Matthew 5:13) "You are the salt of the earth..."

What do you think He's talking about "salt of the earth"? He's not talking about the fact that you're doing this for your benefit; He's talking about you're doing this for the benefit of the kingdom of God.

(Matthew 5:14) "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill..."

(Matthew 5:16) "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works..."

What will it cause them to do? Why are you doing it? You're doing everything you do to glorify God and that continues to be the emphasis of Titus; as well as the fact that you don't want the doctrine to be messed up because this is the gospel that changes lives. We don't believe that

the magnificent, wonderful deeds that we do in the flesh changes anything. I mean, you can show kindness to people from now literally to kingdom come, and it doesn't change their hearts. But I know what does. We do everything to preserve that. Whether it's at home or work, everything we're doing is to make sure that the gospel is adorned properly so that every opportunity that we're given, that door opens up and we begin to proclaim. That's why we do everything and our motivation. Ultimately the point is that everything needs to be done for the kingdom of God.

One of the great passages in 1 Thessalonians 1, Paul writes to those in Thessalonica. He says, "Look, we're just so thankful for you..."

(1 Thessalonians 1:3) "constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope..."

(1 Thessalonians 1:4) "knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you;

(1 Thessalonians 1:5) for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction..."

In other words, "This is what motivated and moved you to do what you did."

(1 Thessalonians 1:6) "You also became imitators of us..."

Why would he throw that in? We have the Spirit. Why become imitators? We're looking at order. The Spirit of God gives us this sense of love and desire to minister, but like any other emotion, it's out there. God gives a sense of order so that we might use that energy correctly. It's sort of like you have a wild horse that has a lot of power and strength, but until you harness that, it's not productive. So, you then have power under control that is doing something beneficial.

He goes on and says,

"You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit,

(1 Thessalonians 1:7) so that you became an example to all the believers..."

(1 Thessalonians 1:8) "For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you..."

Why? I just told you why. You became an example. Now, why is Paul writing this to the Thessalonians? Because he's going to say it's important that you're the right example because by not being the right example, you bring shame to the gospel of God. If you walk according to the proper example that God has called you to do, God will bring ministry to you. In fact, He'll use you to be a "light set on a hill," but you have to do it His way.

If you look in particular with the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 4:11,

“make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you”.

“Well, God, if I do that, nobody’s ever going to be ministered to.” I can just hear God, “Let Me take care of that. You just do what I told you to do.” Most people aren’t taking care of their own business, let alone helping anybody else.

Now, you have that same example that is given in Ephesians 4:28.

“He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good...”

I can’t think of this verse without remembering a guy who said, “You’ve got to pay attention where the commas are” because the way he read it was, “Let him who stole steal; no longer let him labor with his hands.” That’s actually not the way it reads.

It reads, “He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.”

Now, the Thessalonians’ problem was they weren’t even taking care of themselves. So, I’ll oftentimes tell people, “I know you want to help a lot of people, but you need to take care of yourself first. Then, you can help somebody else.” You know how people go out and volunteer to help people, but then they have to go and get somebody to help them help the people? So, it becomes more of a burden on other people when they should have been helping them. The point of this particular passage is that you’re looking for ways to help people, but you’re making sure you’re doing the right thing and everything you’re doing is ethical and appropriate. When you’re doing virtuous work, then you can do beneficial work for somebody else. He gives that wonderful picture of the kingdom of heaven and doing things for all the right reasons.

2 Timothy 2 emphasizes that as well. Paul states in verse 9, “I’m willing to suffer hardship.” Of course, it’s for the purpose of the gospel. (2 Timothy 2:8)

(2 Timothy 2:10) “For this reason I endure all things...”

His point is that “Everything I’m doing is for the sake of the gospel.”

“For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.”

1 Corinthians 9:22, “I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some.”

Why are you doing what you’re doing?

Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, you're doing it to the glory of God. So, the motivation has to be the building up of the kingdom in order for it to be good. So, let's review. In order for it to be good deeds, you have to be empowered by Christ. Without the Spirit of Christ, it's impossible. Without Him you can do nothing. Then, what is clear is it has to be according to the order of God.

Once again, you go back to Matthew 7, "Lord, Lord, didn't we prophecy in Your name; do all these deeds?" And He goes, "I never knew you. Lawless, you didn't do what I told you to do." The point is that everybody likes to define their own ministry, and God says, "I define your ministry. You do what I tell you to do." Then, by doing that, the blessings come; benefit comes; fruit comes. If you're not going to submit to Him and do things His way, you're just not going to see the benefits. So, not only do you have to be empowered by God, but you have to do it according to divine order and you have to do everything that you do for the kingdom of God. This will produce good deeds. He says, "Let our people engage in good deeds."

Now, the second thing that he says in the passage is "pressing needs". "Pressing needs" is going to fall under two categories. One is obligatory or obligation; pressing need would be an obligation. The other would be that it would have to be a necessity. So, by virtue of the word "needs", you have both of those. In fact, the word that is used in the text has both connotations: obligation and necessity. So, what is he talking about with "obligation"? Well, one of the first things that we're obligated to do, as we've been reading in Thessalonians as well, is tend to our own business; work with our hands. We're obligated to do that. It would be in some ways a pressing need, but beyond that, there is this sense of taking care of the household of God which is going to be a major priority according to Scripture. Now, I know according to man, he goes, "That doesn't seem like an emergency to me."

So, that's why he puts in what he does in Titus 3, "When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you..." I've got to throw this in, I don't know, it's just the sovereignty of God, but the different ones that are being sent, let's just mark it: "When I send Artemas". See there? Ok, so there's Artemas. You drop on down, "Diligently help Zenas". Then, "the lawyer and Apollos". All of those are Greek gods. That's pretty interesting because when you consider Artemas, didn't we just shoot up a space thing called Artemas? Didn't we shoot up an Apollo? So, it doesn't go away, does it? Apollo is basically the sun god, and the picture of him was the god of both destruction and healing; which is pretty ironic, but the sun was perceived to have this power to destroy. Oftentimes, it was referred to as a satanic power, but nevertheless they saw him as a good force. Then, Artemis is the god of nature. So, you know that nurturing and the nature of god, and fell down from heaven for that particular purpose. I don't even know why you would name a space thing after Artemas because it's literally the god fell out of heaven. So, it seems like you're dooming it but, anyway. Then, Zenas is Zeus which is the god of lightning bolts and

thunder. So, it's probably what James and John were thinking about. "Do you want us to get some help here from Zeus, to strike these guys?" To me, it's interesting that they've been subjugated to be servants of God in this passage. It's like how God was over all the gods of Egypt. So, you have this interesting picture.

If you look in the passage, "When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, make every effort..."

Now, that's really more intense than we would read it, but Paul is saying, "This is a pressing need."

If you drop on down, verse 13, "Diligently help". That's a pressing need.

"...so that nothing is lacking for them."

John will put it the same way if you look in 3 John 1:5,

"Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially when they are strangers;

(3 John 1:6) and they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God.

(3 John 1:8) Therefore we ought..."

Do you know what that is? That's an obligation.

"Therefore we ought to support such men..."

Top on the list of engaging in good deeds and pressing needs is taking care of the body of Christ in particular. As Galatians 10 says that as long as you have opportunity, do good to all men; especially for the household of the faith. So, that's going to be that sense of obligation that we have.

The same is true if you look in 1 John 3 where it talks about the brethren; James will say this in a similar way.

It says in 1 John 3:16, "We know love by this, that He first laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

There's that "ought" again; meaning an obligation.

(1 John 3:17) "But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?"

That's an "ought". You need to take care of your brother.

You're going to see the same thing in James as well in James 2:14.

“What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?”

(James 2:15) If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food...”

That would be a necessity, right? Look at the emphasis, “a brother or sister”. Now, this isn’t to say that you can’t help somebody that’s not, but the emphasis is you have an obligation to the brother and sister. I mean, that’s not just an act of kindness; you owe God this. This is family.

So, it goes on and says that you can’t just say, “Be warmed, be filled, be clothed” if you don’t give them what’s necessary. Here again, it’s in the context.

You see the same thing in James 1:26, “Look, if you think you’re religious, are you watching your tongue?” Why does he throw that in? Because most people like to talk about what they do. Oftentimes if they talk long enough, they destroy somebody. The conversation may even start off good. As Proverbs says, if you talk too much then you’re probably going to do damage.

Then it says this in verse 27,

“Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.”

Here again, “virtuous”, unstained by the world, and of course, beneficial in the sense of this is an obligation that God has called us to do.

The same thing is true in 1 Timothy 5. These are all things we’ve talked about before, but I don’t know if we think of them in terms of pressing needs. 1 Timothy 5 says that you have a pressing need sometimes in your own family.

The way that it’s put is:

(1 Timothy 5:3) “Honor widows who are widows indeed;

(1 Timothy 5:4) but if any widow has children or grandchildren, they must first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family and to make some return to their parents...”

My mom says, “I need to repay you for doing this.” I said, “Mom, I’m paying you back.”

“... for this is acceptable in the sight of God.”

Now, it goes on and it says that the true widow is going to be put on the list and supported by the church is somebody that, if you look in the context, has had a reputation for good works herself.

If you look in verse 10, “having a reputation for good works; and if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers...”

These are all obligations by the way.

“... if she has washed the saints’ feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work.”

It’s talking about obligation; these are obligations that we have that really define what we’re supposed to be doing.

If you look in Hebrews 10, you see the same thing as he gives an example in verse 32.

“But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings,

(Hebrews 10:33) partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated.”

I’m going to stop there. You and I have an obligation when somebody is suffering for the sake of the gospel, to come alongside and to identify with them; not to let them stand alone.

It goes on and says in verse 34,

“For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property...”

Do you know why he put those two together? Because the identification with the prisoners caused their property to be seized.

The same thing is true if you look in Hebrews 13:1, “Let love of the brethren continue.”

That’s an imperative, once again, not an option. That would be a pressing need; especially when they’re strangers.

(Hebrews 13:2) “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.

(Hebrews 13:3) Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, and those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body.”

What is the passage saying? Well, obviously, he’s not talking about all prisoners. As Peter would say, if you suffer for doing what’s wrong, you deserve it, but what he’s talking about are those that have been in prison because of their faith; by identifying with them, you could suffer as well. So, he says you have an obligation to show hospitality, kindness, attachment to and to identify with these people that are going through this. It’s an obligation that we have; it’s literally family ties when you think about it.

So, in obligation we have a pressing need, and we can go through a lot of passages that deal with that, but when Romans 12 says to be devoted to one another, what would that be? An obligation.

The same thing is true in 1 Corinthians 12, where it says you have to have the same care for one another. So, if one part of the body suffers, we all suffer with them. Sometimes you don't know what's going on in people's lives; that's understandable, but when you know, if there's something you can do, and there's not always something you can do, but you have an obligation. Just think in terms of family; what would you do in your own family? When you think that way, it's pretty easy to understand what you need to do.

The second part of this is not only obligation, but necessity which is dealing with helping and aid when somebody is in need. The interesting passage that we oftentimes read in Matthew 25 is dealing with Christ revealing those that are His. How do I know that I'm His? Well, you're doing His work. We'll put it another way, you're literally anchored in Christ. You've become a part of the branches so to speak. So, you've been grafted into the Spirit of God in you. Therefore, you produce good fruit through good deeds.

Matthew 25 shows you what they are if you look in verse 35,

“For I was hungry’....”

You might just want to underline these. Sometimes you go, “Ok, when you're dealing with necessity, what are you talking about?” Somebody's hungry. Ok, not just hungry. Of course, he's talking about especially those of the household of the faith.

“For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty’....”

So hungry and thirsty. Ok, so it's getting pretty clear. What's the third one? “Stranger”. What is he talking about? Have you ever felt like you were all alone? It's an emergency. When somebody's feeling that way, when there's nobody around to help them, their in a new place; you can feel like a stranger in a lot of different circumstances, but you and I see it as a necessity. We can't sit back and go, “I hope they feel more comfortable next week.” We have to go in.

“... I was a stranger, and you invited Me in”.

Isn't that what it says?

(Matthew 25:36) “naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick...”

“Oh, I'm going to catch something if I help them.” Yeah, you probably will.

“...I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.”

You want to know what “necessity” is? He actually lists them for you.

I’ve oftentimes thought about the passage in Hebrews 12, if you look there with me. I know we’re kind of bouncing around, but just to show you how all of this really permeates Scripture. In Hebrews 12, we’re reminded of the fact that our brothers and sisters in Christ are going to get disciplined if they’re one of God’s children. Now, the last thing that you want to do is go, “He got it; he deserved it.” That’s the last thing you want to do. I mean, Job’s friends tried that, and it really wasn’t a good idea. You don’t want to rejoice over your brother’s hurt. What would that be? The book of Obadiah in which Esau was rejoicing over Israel and all of their problems. You don’t want to do that. What do you want to do?

(Hebrews 12:11) “All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.”

God’s doing a good work in people’s lives. Thank God He does it for me, and I don’t have to go beat up people. It would wear you out anyway.

Therefore, what are we supposed to do according to verse 12? Yeah, I would say this is a necessity; it’s not an option.

“Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble”.

Help them get on the right path. Clear the path if you have to; do what you can to strengthen and encourage them to walk straight so that they’re not going to be put out of joint, but rather be healed and pursue for peace. So, what you’re doing is giving aid to those people.

You’re seeing the same thing in 2 Corinthians 8, where we are talking about helping in very tangible ways. In 2 Corinthians 8, as Paul talks to the Corinthians, and he encourages them to be as generous as the Macedonians are.

His statement in verse 2 is “that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality.

(2 Corinthians 8:3) For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord,

(2 Corinthians 8:4) begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints”.

They realized the necessity of helping. Of course, from 2 Corinthians we read “God loves a cheerful giver.” What are we talking about in the passage? We’re talking about a famine that was in Jerusalem, and they’re taking a collection for the Christian bodies of Christ in Jerusalem that are going through famine. It’s a very tangible, real thing that they’re doing. It’s basically putting your money where your mouth is. Does God want us to be involved in real deeds that

are good and beneficial? Yes, but you need to do it the way He tells you to do it. Look, you want to support, like John says, “such men as these”. So many times, we throw away money at different sources. I know there’s a lot of good places. You can’t help but get in the mail certain things where people are asking you to give. One of the things that I consistently get a letter from is the police, I guess, taking a collection for them. Look, I love the policemen, but one, they have a salary, and two, I don’t know who I’m supporting; I could help somebody that is a bad cop. Let’s just pretend this, you have limited funds. I know that probably you don’t, but where do you want your money going? The world takes care of its own. I’m not worried about the world taking care of its own; they do, but the world will not take care of our own.

I mean, that's not to say you don't care for them. The good Samaritan, he didn't know what this person was, what faith he was or where he went to church. He didn't know anything about him. When you see someone in need, you help them. They're in front of you, but especially those of the household of God. So, you want to do good deeds in the proper way. Sometimes men can go and help damsels in distress. They'll find themselves going to their house, and they go into a place they should never go into to be really nice. They find themselves getting into a lot of trouble. They ignored order. They ignored the right way to do it and righteousness was neglected under the guise of “doing something good.” All of these qualities need to be a part of doing good in pressing needs. When they are, how wonderfully it works because it's not us, and it's not the deeds that we do that actually bring the results; it's God.

Just in closing, to remind you of that, 1 Corinthians 3. Wouldn't you know, there's Apollos that sticks his head up again.

He says this in verse 5, “What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one.

(1 Corinthians 3:6) I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.”

If you're not doing it for God, you're laboring in vain; you're rising up early for no reason.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for Your lovingkindness. We give You thanks for Your word that directs us into the path of righteousness. We know what truth is because we know our Savior. Your Spirit dwells within us, but You've also given us those clear lines that direct our steps; examples to go by; a sense of order that establishes what You've called us to do. You tell us in Your word that if we love You, there's the Spirit, and we'll keep Your commandments. There's the order. We give You thanks for this in Jesus' name. Amen.