

INTRODUCTION:

1. [Image] I don't like going to the dr. Most people don't really enjoy that and I am one of them. So even when something is wrong, or I am not feeling right I have to be dragged, or heavily encouraged to go. And if I am honest the main reason I don't want to go is this. If I go to the Dr. there is a good chance I might find out that something is wrong with me. And I don't want to know that something is wrong. I would love everything to be right. But the problem is that pretending that things are fine does not actually make it so. So this morning we are going to have a little check up. We are going to visit Dr. Paul in the book of Titus and get our doctrinal check up.
2. [Need] Do you have sound doctrine? All of us would probably like to say "yes of course!" You may even say I have more sound doctrine than you pastor I have it all figured out. But we need to take a closer look and see if that is actually the case. Because Titus 2 shows us that sound, or healthy doctrine looks different than we might typically imagine. We are going to look at three characteristics of healthy doctrine and see how our own doctrine compares. Is your doctrine healthy?
3. [Subject] Sound Doctrine
4. [Text] Titus 2:1-15
5. [Preview] Three characteristics of healthy doctrine

The first characteristic. Healthy doctrine believes the gospel. Healthy doctrine believes the gospel.

We have to start with belief. Because if you do not believe the gospel. If you do not believe the basics of Christianity then you don't have sound doctrine. One vital characteristic of sound doctrine is that we believe the gospel.

So what do we believe? What does it mean to believe the gospel. Let's start at verse 11 **"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people."** The grace of God appeared to us in the person of Christ. This is what we celebrate and spent time remembering during Advent and Christmas. That grace came down to earth to us. Sound doctrine has to believe the Jesus actually came. He was conceived by the

Holy Spirit and born from the Virgin Mary. He was born in Bethlehem and entered into the world wrapped in flesh. Truly God and truly man. Sound doctrine believes that Jesus is our only hope in life and death.

And this salvation came for everyone. He did not just come for the spiritually elite. He did not just come for others and not for you. Jesus came to bring salvation to the world. And that includes you.

And Jesus brought salvation through His death. Verse 14 **"who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness."** He gave Himself up in our place. He shed His blood on the cross. He nailed our sins on that cross. Yes, the Roman's executed Him, but He could have stopped it at any time. At any moment He could have spoken a word and had armies of angels set Him free. At any moment He could have pulled Himself off of the cross and healed Himself. Yet He didn't. He willingly gave His own life. Why? **"to redeem us from all lawlessness."** Jesus died to redeem you. We were all slaves to sin stuck in a debt we could never escape. But Jesus paid our debt. He bought us and sets us free. He adopts us into His family. Sound doctrine believes in the forgiveness of sins.

The gospel also has implications for our life. The gospel is not just that Jesus died for your sins. So you can be forgiven and then you are good! Do whatever you want now. Look at the rest of 14 **"who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness AND to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works."** We have our sins forgiven. We are justified, but Jesus is also sanctifying us. He is actually purifying us and making us more like Christ. The gospel does not just have to do with our justification, but our sanctification as well.

Notice who does the purifying. **"to purify for himself a people for his own possession."** Jesus is the one who purifies. Jesus is the one who sanctifies us. The Holy Spirit is the one who makes us more like Christ. The gospel believes that God does this. The world preaches self-improvement. The world tells us that you can do it. You just have to work hard. That's the whole time of the new year right? We all have our resolutions and hopes and dreams of what we could be in the new year. But the gospel does not say "believe in Jesus and then try really hard to be good." Try harder than you ever have before. That is not the gospel. The gospel believes that

Jesus does this. We don't have to try. We have to stop trying and let Jesus do it for us.

Believing the gospel also has to do with our future hope. Verse 13 **"waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ."** This is our blessed hope. Our hope is that the future is incredible. These last two years have been awful by every stretch of the imagination. It's hard to imagine what the future will be like. I don't know what 2022 will have for us. I don't know what it has in store for the life of our church, for you, or for me for that matter. BUT I do know what the future has in store. We have **"our blessed hope"** Jesus Christ our Savior and God will appear. He is going to come back. He will put all things in the world right. He will judge the living and the dead. He will bring justice and resurrection with Him. He will remake the world. Our hope is the person of Christ. We can have hope no matter what the news says. We can have hope no matter what our circumstances are. We can have a blessed hope because we believe that the gospel is true.

So you need to ask yourself. Do you believe the gospel? Is your doctrine sound? Is it correct? For believers do you remember that this is what we believe? Do you actually believe this with your heart, or is it just head knowledge to you? Have you forgotten that sanctification doesn't come from your effort, but from God? Have you forgotten what our blessed hope is? Have you forgot the wonders of what Jesus has done?

Unbelievers who may be here, or watching later. Do you know Jesus? Do you really believe that these things are true? I invite you to believe. Place your faith in Christ. He loves you. He died on the cross for you. Jesus proved what He thought about your sin and life by dying for you. He loves you. He offers forgiveness for your sins and resurrection life. Give your life to him. Believe the gospel. You can do that now, or come talk to me or Rob, or one of the elders.

[transition] The first characteristic of sound doctrine is that it believes the gospel. But sound doctrine is about much more than just belief.

The second characteristic of sound doctrine. **Healthy doctrine lives the gospel. Healthy doctrine lives the gospel.**

Healthy doctrine has to actually be lived out. Doctrine is not just intellectual, but it has implications for how you live every single day.

Look at how this chapter starts in verse 1 **“teach what accords with sound doctrine.”** If you read too quick you might miss that. He starts by telling Titus to make sure they know sound doctrine. But it is not enough to just know doctrine. We have to know how to live out that doctrine. How that doctrine should affect our everyday lives. How we are to live as believers because of what Christ has done for us on the cross.

Unfortunately we only associate doctrine with belief and facts. We think that doctrine is studying words like election, or the eucharist. We think that doctrine is knowing the difference between dispensationalism and covenant theology. We think that solid doctrine is getting your soteriology correct. Instead for Paul healthy doctrine is doctrine that lives out the gospel. Doctrine has to be lived out.

MTR: Unhealthy doctrine does not live out the gospel. Unhealthy doctrine claims the gospel and then does not believe it. It claims to believe and then does not live. It is like a patient who is sick and then goes to the doctor. And the doctor gives a prescription with some antibiotics to help take care of the problem. And they tell everyone how awesome their doctor is. They post on facebook about how great and trustworthy the doctor is. They call up some friends to just gush about how wonderful this doctor is how smart and thoughtful. But the patient decides to not take the medicine and just take care of it themselves. And so they don't get better and someone asks what's going on. And this person would rightfully ask "why aren't you taking your medicine?" I thought you loved this doctor and thought they were the best? Wouldn't you take the medicine they gave you if that was true?

That is how some Christians live. They post Bible verses. They listen to Christian music and may even watch some Christian movies. But day in and day out they don't actually follow the words of Jesus. They do not live their faith. That's unhealthy doctrine. Because healthy doctrine lives out the gospel.

And living out healthy doctrine is something that is required for all of us. You might be tempted to look at this list in Titus 2 and only see your

part. Paul gives what is commonly referred to as "household codes." And just about every member of the household is here. Older men and younger men. Older women and younger women. I'll let you decide which category you think you belong in. And also bondservants, or slaves.

The wrong way to read it is to think that only part of this applies to you. You might see that older women are told to **"not be slaves to wine."** verse 3. You can't say well good thing I'm a younger woman. Or good thing I am a man now I can be a slave to wine. That's missing the point. The point Paul is trying to make is that all of us are responsible to live out the gospel. This is not just for those who have known Jesus for a long time. This is not just for the super spiritually mature. This is for the young and the old. This is really for all of us. This is for the elders and for the church members. This is for everyone who claims the name of Jesus. We are called to live out the gospel.

I'm not going to go through each of these, but they are all worth studying on their own. But what we see here as well is that all of us where we are called to live out the gospel. Everyone in the room should live out the gospel. And it looks different in each of our contexts. Each of our lives are in different places of our lives. We have different relationships. We have different personalities. But all of can be more like Jesus. We don't become clones, but we become like a tapestry and beautiful mosaic all pointing to Jesus in our own unique ways.

We live out the gospel in uniquely ordinary ways. Do you notice how simple some of these are? Being **self-controlled** verse 2, **not being slanderers** verse 3 **being kind** verse 5 **having integrity** verse 7 **not pilfering about** in our work verse 10. Those are simple ordinary things. Those aren't going to knock anyone's socks off. Those are not uniquely amazing displays. No one is going to see you quietly having integrity, or being kind even on a hard day and go "WOW!!! We should make a movie out of this!" It is just ordinary. AND YET our ordinary faithfulness to Jesus lives out the gospel. It lives out healthy doctrine. Our doctrine should be affecting our lives in ordinary simple ways.

So the question you need to ask yourself is are you living the gospel? Is the gospel affecting how you live? Are you different because of Jesus?

Or your doctrine might be unhealthy. You might be declaring that you love Jesus and yet never doing anything that Jesus asks.

[**Transition**] Sound Doctrine is not just believing the gospel, it is not just living the gospel. Sound doctrine always involves proclaiming the gospel.

The third and final characteristic is **Sound doctrine bears witness to the gospel. Sound doctrine bears witness to the gospel.**

We see this mentioned at least three separate times in this passage. We are given three reasons for living out the gospel and they are all related to how our behavior is a witness to the gospel.

Look at the first one in verse 5 **"that the word of God may not be reviled."** We are to live out of the gospel so that believe to not disparage the Bible. And this is reviling that is connected to our own behavior.

Some of your Bibles might translate the word **"reviled"** as **"blasphemed."** This is where the word for blasphemy comes from. Now I don't think anyone in the room wants to be called a blasphemer. Certainly none of us would want to commit blasphemy even on accident. But this is what God calls our lives when we do not obey. When we deliberately ignore God's Word. We are blaspheming and we are causing unbelievers to blaspheme.

If you didn't know Jesus, what would you think of Christians who do not live out their faith? Who do not actually act like Jesus? Who blaspheme against their own God? Would that make you want to become a Christian? Would that make you want to turn from your sins? Would that make you think that Jesus truly is God? Would it make you feel like the Bible is valuable?

The reality is that our disobedience pushes people away from God's Word. You cannot tell people how much you love the Bible. How much you love God's Word and how valuable it is while living contrary to it. That will lead someone to say "oh wow what a joke." They will believe that the Bible is not that important.

Instead our sound doctrine and living can point people towards the Bible. It can make them consider it. It can cause people to want to know more. To see our lives and think wow the Bible must be significant.

Our personal obedience also impacts our witness. Verse 8 **“so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.”** We are to believe and live out the gospel so that people cannot say a bad word about us. This should be what our witness as believers is. People should not be able to use our lives as excuses to dismiss Christ.

This is one of the reasons that it is so horrible and offensive when Christian leaders are found out to be abusers. Or we see pastors acting like worldly and selfish CEO's instead of shepherds. Because it harms the witness of the gospel. It makes people dismiss Christianity, the church, and Christ. Because they can point at say “see look I knew it was all a crock.”

Instead people should be able to look at our witness and be forced to just reject Jesus. They shouldn't be able to say that we are hypocrites or that we do not believe it.

I have a family member many of you know who does not know Jesus. He is an unbeliever, but I usually end up getting to have a couple conversations about faith with him. And one thing that often comes up in my conversations with him is how Christians act. He has a hard time understanding why Christians seem to hate wearing masks, or just want to fight about politics and tell him why he should be a republican. They ruined their witness and lost the chance to tell him about Jesus.

Our obedience also adorns sound doctrine and makes it attractive to others. Verse 10 **“so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our savior.”** Our lives adorn the doctrine of God. They are the decoration that either draws people towards it, or pushes them away from it. Our lives are doctrine wrapped in flesh. We live out the things that we believe. And they way that we live. The way that we love our neighbors even when they hate us. The way that we sacrifice and serve even when it is costly. The way that we care for the poor and the needy. It should make people stop and want to know about Jesus.

People should never be able to say things like “I like Jesus, but I don't like those Christians.” That should never be said of us.

Our gospel witness is connected to how we live. When we live lives that look like Jesus it makes people want to follow Jesus. When we live

lives that look nothing like Christ it makes them think that Christianity is a waste of time.

This can be a hard pill for us to swallow. But we need to think and wrestle with the implications of this. Your sound doctrine and the way that you live bears witness to the gospel. Do people want to believe the gospel because of your life? Or do they want nothing to do with Jesus after being with you?

Now none of this means that we have to be perfect. This is not God telling us that every mistake and sin we make is sending people to hell. But it should force us to consider our conduct. How do you act? What does your life look like? Is your doctrine sound? Because the reality is that people will decide how they feel about Jesus based on you.

My sons will decide partially how they feel about Jesus based on me. If I preach one thing on Sunday and then come and live only for myself they will notice. If I preach all about grace and am a harsh and cruel man they will probably not want anything to do with Jesus. Now I am very aware of that reality. But there are others who will make decisions about Jesus based on that I don't know about. And the same is probably true for you. You never know who is watching. And we don't know and we cannot control what they do. But we can be good witnesses for Christ. With our words and with our lives. Be a good witness.

CONCLUSION:

1. [Summary] Sound doctrine believes the gospel, lives the gospel, and bears witness to the gospel.
2. [Challenge] Do you have sound doctrine? If not what is missing?