



Sunday School Lesson for August 29, 2004.  
Released on: August 24, 2004.

Study: Titus 2:7, 8,11-3:10. "Do Good Works"  
Questions and answers are found below.

Devotional Reading: James 1:19-25.  
Background Scripture: Titus 2:1-3:11.

TIME: A.D. 62  
PLACE: unknown

Titus 2:7, 8,11-15

7 In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,  
8 Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

.....  
11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,  
12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;  
13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;  
14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.  
15 These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

Titus 3:1-10

1 Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,  
2 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men.  
3 For we ourselves also were sometime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.  
4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,  
5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;  
6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;  
7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.

9 But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

10 A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject.

## LESSON AIMS

After participating in this lesson, each student should be able to:

1. Make a list of all the commands for action that Paul gave Titus in the lesson text.
2. Explain how good works demonstrate appreciation for the salvation we have through Jesus Christ.
3. Name one of Paul's commands that he or she will put into practice this week.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

Everything that a believer does is to center around Jesus Christ. Without the promise of His purifying power in our lives and the assurance provided by His redeeming work on our behalf, we would soon lose heart about performing good works, or begin doing them for the wrong reasons. We seek to live godly lives because we have a relationship with Christ and desire to please Him.

This week we will examine some of what Paul wrote to Titus, who had been placed in charge of a church on the island of Crete. Judging by what Paul had to say about the character of the Cretans, Titus was facing a challenging task (Titus 1:10-13).

As he had with Timothy, Paul warned against those who would lead the flock astray from the truth. The teachings they espoused led to immoral living and a forsaking of Christ (1:14-16).

We must not think that Paul's instructions have no relevance for today. The church is still beset with many temptations to lose her focus. We can all profit from a careful consideration of how Christ is to be central in our lives.

## EXPOSITION AND QUESTIONS

Acting in the Light of Christ's Coming Again —Titus 2:7,8,11-14

1. Why was it important for all of Titus's speaking to be presented correctly (Titus 2:7,8)?

All good teachers must lead by example as well as by words. To be a "pattern" means to be a type or model—in this case of godly deeds (1 Tim. 4:12).

Beyond his example in "good works", Titus is to be an example in commitment to sound doctrine. Even though some Christians are often frustrated or bored with the study of doctrine, we must recognize its importance. Our deeds need a solid doctrinal foundation. Without such a foundation, false doctrine can take over. When that happens, our deeds can become worthless or even evil.

Titus is to show commitment to his message in certain ways. Handling doctrine with uncorruptness (integrity) and gravity (seriousness) is vital. The latter does not mean that Christians are to be grim people. Rather, it is a reminder that teaching and preaching Scripture is serious business. The word sincerity is not found in the oldest Greek manuscripts of this verse, but the idea is certainly not foreign to Paul (2 Corinthians 1:12; 2:17; 8:8).

The instruction to preach with sound speech probably refers to Paul's concern that Titus's preaching be above reproach. While the word gravity in verse 7 refers to the manner of teaching, sound speech probably refers to the content of what is communicated.

What is certain is that if someone teaches what is good and true, then others cannot condemn the message. At least they cannot do so with any credibility. Titus is to speak with such integrity that his opponents will be ashamed to criticize him (1 Peter 2:15).

2. What did Paul mean when he said "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (vs. 11,12)?

Although God was gracious to people in Old Testament times, His grace comes into distinct focus in the person of Jesus Christ. It is this quality Paul has in mind when he speaks of how the grace that brings salvation has appeared to us all. This does not mean that all people will receive that grace. The grace has appeared to all, but we must accept it.

What is meant by the statement that God's grace is "teaching us" (Titus 2:12)? It may mean that part of God's grace is His careful instruction of His people through the work of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 15:26). But perhaps it also refers to the fact that the person who has experienced the grace of God through faith understands that there is more to live for than this world's goods and pleasures.

The man of God has the power and motivation to refuse the slavery of the world. He will not settle for the temporary pleasure that comes from satisfying sinful desires. Instead he will live in a self-controlled way ("soberly" in Titus 2:12), seeking in God's strength to live according to His will and standards.

The motivation that empowers him is hinted at in the words "in this present world." Implied here, and made explicit in the next verse, is that there is a better world to come and that it is that world the believer longs for and lives for.

3. "Ungodliness and worldly lusts" seem to be at the heart of much of the entertainment industry. Movies, television, magazines, and other media display increasing amounts of immorality. Even the "good guys" participate. How can a Christian "deny" such ungodliness and still stay in touch with the culture?

First of all, there is more to the culture than entertainment. While that is a major part of what defines a society, there are other ways to be in touch than through those outlets. The careful disciple will pursue such avenues in addition to choosing wholesome entertainment.

Jesus is our example. He spent time with the "sinners" of His day without participating in their sin. Similarly, a modern Christian does not have to view pornography in order to "relate" to those caught in this sin. We need to build relationships with such people nonetheless in order that they might be receptive to the gospel.

#### 4. What is the "blessed hope" (Titus 2:13) of the believer?

The believer waits expectantly for Christ's second coming. When a community in ancient times knew a king was coming, they would prepare for that visit. When we as Christians live "soberly, righteously, and godly" (v. 12, above), we will be ready for the arrival of our King. Jesus' return will be the realization of our "blessed hope."

Verse 13 is full of great riches for the believer. First, it refers directly to the fact that Christ is coming again. At that time sin will be vanquished and all things set right as His kingdom becomes fully manifest. This is truly a "blessed hope." When He comes the second time, it will not be in humble poverty but in awe-inspiring majesty.

This verse also makes it clear that Christ is indeed God. Christ is our Saviour, but He is also called the "great God."

Those people who doubt His deity will learn otherwise when He comes again. He will be plainly revealed as God in all His greatness.

#### 5. What was the purpose of Christ giving himself (v. 14)?

A further inducement to godly living is given in verse 14. We are reminded that Christ, God the Son, sacrificed His life for His people. This should fill us with gratitude and a desire to serve. Furthermore, Paul emphasized that Christ did not make His sacrifice so that we could live any way we pleased. He purchased us from the slavery of sin so that we might be a holy people, dedicated to Him. Believers in Christ belong to Christ (Acts 20:28; Eph. 1:14).

The reference to a "peculiar people" (Titus 2:14) does not mean that we are to be strange but rather that we are set apart as God's own special possession (1 Pet. 2:9,10). As His chosen people we should, by the Holy Spirit's power, be filled with a desire to serve the Lord and His kingdom.

#### Acting in the Light of What Christ Has Done -Titus 3:1-10

#### 6. In what ways should the believer's hope in Christ affect the way he lives in his community (Titus 3:1,2)?

Because the believer's chief hope is in Christ he does not have to live a selfish, grasping life in this world. He should instead be a model citizen, showing proper obedience to people in positions of authority. After all, the civil rulers have been placed in office by God (Rom. 13:1-7).

Good Christian citizenship does not just mean passive obedience. It also includes a spirit prepared to render active service for the good of the community. Christians testify to their faith when they lovingly come to the aid of their neighbors.

In addition to obedience and good works, a Christian should also be a witness in his community by displaying attractive character qualities (Titus 3:2). People should know that their reputation is safe with the believer. He will speak charitably of others. He also will not be inclined to pick fights. The term "gentle" means that believers should be actively considerate and forbearing, not insisting on their own rights" (Hiebert, Titus and Philemon, Moody).

Finally, the Christian should adopt a spirit of "meekness." This does not mean he is to be a weak pushover; rather, it refers to a quiet and "patient trust in the midst of difficult circumstances" (Reinecker and Rogers). Because he is solidly grounded in Christ, he does not feel the need to adopt the pushy, irritable spirit of the world.

7. How did Paul describe the state of believers before they came to saving faith in Christ (v. 3)?

When we find it hard to maintain a patient spirit, we do well to remember that we were at one time no different from the unsaved around us. Paul was about to remind Titus again of what Christ has done for His people. What better way to build his appreciation for His Saviour than to remind him of what sorry creatures we once were!

Before they came to know Christ, the believers had been "foolish," totally without understanding about what really mattered and acting accordingly. They were disposed to defiance of God's law (Rom. 8:7) and, not knowing the truth, were easily fooled by Satan's evil schemes (2 Cor. 2:11). Having refused to submit to God, they were instead enslaved to sinfulness, which is a much more burdensome taskmaster.

As a result of their bondage to sinful lusts, the people had lived in conflict and hatred toward others. They desired the harm of their neighbors and resented any success they might have. As a result of these inward dispositions, they despised each other and were in constant conflict (Jas. 4:1).

8. What is Paul's antidote for our tendency to pridefulness (vs. 4-6)?

Paul turned again to reflection upon Christ's redeeming work, which brought about a revolution in the lives of Titus and all others who truly believe. There was certainly nothing lovable in us that would cause God to give blessings, but He chose out of sheer mercy to shower us with goodness. His heart was full of a mysterious, unmerited love for His people (Rom. 5:6-8).

With our hearts so inclined to pride and self-righteousness, it is helpful to be reminded that we are in a right standing with God not through anything that we have done but only through what He has done for us (Titus 3:5). We truly have been "saved," that is, rescued from a hopeless state.

God has cleansed us from sin by granting to us new life (regeneration). The salvation that we enjoy in Christ includes not only our justification—our rescue from the punishment of sin and the imputation of Christ's righteousness—but also an increasing freedom from the power of sin (sanctification) and our eventual deliverance from the pain and presence of sin (glorification).

When we understand salvation in this full sense, we understand why the words "washing" and "renewing" are used here. God cleanses us and makes us new at the time of the new birth, and that cleansing and renewal becomes more and more manifest over time as we grow in holiness. This glorious work in our lives comes through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

The "which" in Titus 3:6 refers to the Holy Spirit. God has not been stingy in His gifts to His people. He "shed," or poured out on us, His Holy Spirit. The bounty of this was evident from the Day of Pentecost on. This outpouring came about because of Christ's work and through His direct agency (John 15:26). Through the Holy Spirit we are empowered to continue in the new life we enjoy.

It is interesting that Christ is called the "Saviour" in Titus 3:6. In verse 4 there is reference to "God our Saviour"; therefore, we have in verse 6 another clear allusion to the deity of Christ. In fact, all three Persons of the Trinity are mentioned in this passage as playing a role in our salvation.

9. What does it mean to be "justified by his grace" (v. 7)?

To be "justified" means to be declared righteous (Romans 3:21-26). As a result Christians also have been made heirs (Galatians 3:29). This is a sign of the great love that God has for us, that He would number us as His children. But there is more: to be justified and to be made heirs means having the certain "hope of eternal life."

The "hope" of eternal life that is referred to here is not meant as a doubtful thing, as we sometimes use the term, but as a certainty we can build our life on. What a God we serve!

10. What does the teaching of sound doctrine lead to (v. 8)?

Paul used the term "faithful saying" (v. 8) to emphasize the importance and foundational nature of what he was about to say. Here he stressed the significance of the great doctrinal truths discussed in verses 4 through 7. Titus was to declare these truths confidently (the meaning of the word rendered "constantly" in verse 8) so that his flock would continue in a path of good works. Sound doctrine ("these things") has a beneficial impact on life. It leads to holiness and usefulness in service.

11. How was Titus instructed to deal with false teachers (vs. 9,10)?

Paul once again referred to the worthless issues that false teachers among the Jews were prone to bring up (1 Tim. 1:4; 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:3,4). As with the previous instructions to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:14,16,23, Paul warns Titus not to get involved in trivial matters. Instead of focusing on Christ and His work, these troublemakers wanted to draw the people off on tangents. The Jewish nature of these tangents is evident from the use of the terms "genealogies" and "strivings about the law." All these issues did was promote quarrels and dissension.

As Paul advised in Philippians 3:8, it was better to concentrate instead on counting "all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus."

The threat posed by false teachers was serious enough that Paul gave specific instructions concerning how to deal with them (Titus 3:10). The word "heretick" refers to one who causes schisms by departing from the central teachings of the faith. Such a person should be given the opportunity to turn from his harmful path. He should be warned twice about the error of his ways. If he continues in his wrong teaching after that, he is to be excluded from the fellowship of the church. He must not be allowed to do further damage.

We are reminded of how important it is to maintain the right focus. The right focus is the Lord Jesus.

## CONCLUSION

### Words and Deeds

Words and deeds go together. One confirms the other. Deeds without words can be interpreted in contradictory ways to those who observe them. Words without deeds may be judged insincere or hypocritical.

We Christians preach and teach God's Word. We also have Christian deeds as a natural result of the grace we have experienced. We glorify God when our words and

our deeds reinforce one another. Jesus challenges us to let our light "shine before men" (Matthew 5:16). We do this in both word and deed. This is not to bring glory to us, but so that others will give glory to the Father who is in Heaven.

John Wesley (1703-1791) revealed his code of living this way: "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can." That is a difficult challenge, but one worth adopting. In light of all God has done for us, that is the best way to live.

#### PRAYER

Dear Father in Heaven, I thank You for bringing Heaven's blessings to earth. Help me to make this earth more Heavenly, even as I strive to help prepare people for Heaven (Matthew 6:10). It is so easy to talk like a Christian-help me also to live like one, too. In the name of Jesus I pray, amen.

#### THOUGHT TO REMEMBER

May we have both words and deeds, and may they not contradict one another.

#### ANTICIPATING NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

Our lesson next week takes us to Genesis 2 to recount the work of God in creating the first man and woman.

#### LESSON SUMMARIZED BY

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