

An Attractive Gospel

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[0 : 0 0] Well, good morning, everyone. It's so lovely to see you here today. Big welcome if this is your first time with us. Great to meet some new folks this morning. Know that you are genuinely so loved and welcome here today.

And if there's anything that we can do to help you or serve you during your time with us today, it would always be our joy to help you with that. So let me invite you to come expectantly to God's Word this morning.

Why don't you grab your Bible if you came with one? If you didn't, you can grab the Pew Bible, which is, I hope, on the pew in front of you. It's roughly about page 1200 is where you're going. Or you can scroll on your phone if you so desire to the book of Titus.

And this is such a brilliant passage. I have loved getting into it this week. And it is so much to teach us, I think. Let's just read this together as we hear God speak to us through his Word.

You, however, and this is Paul writing to Titus, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine. Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.

[1 : 1 3] Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind and to be subject to their husbands so that no one will malign the Word of God.

Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. In everything, set them an example by doing what is good.

In your teaching, show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us. Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Saviour attractive.

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age while we wait for the grace of God our great God our great God our great God our great God our great God our great God our great Savior Jesus Christ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

[2 : 5 8] these then are the things you should teach encourage and rebuke with all authority do not let anyone despise you and so father we pray this morning that you would enthuse us as we turn to your words may the challenge may the comfort from this text lord may it hit us square between the eyes and may it settle squarely in our hearts father be by your spirit we ask in Jesus is worthy and in his beautiful name we pray amen okay so put your hand up if you put either cream on your face or gel on your hair this morning okay i'm not here to act to the vanity police i promise who let the max factor do the x factor put your hands up i'd say keep them up come on keep them up so i can see okay a number of us did that this morning if you did i want to reward your bravery and i want to say to you you've got a head start on understanding the wonderful truth at the heart of this passage here is the key verse i think at verse nine maybe you took it in as we read it together paul says so that in every way you will make the teaching about god our savior attractive now when you consider that the word that the paul uses at the end there attractive maybe some of your translations run with adorn when you consider that's a translation its root is in the greek word cosmosin which is where we get our english word cosmetics from why does paul want this for this church in crete so that people from the outside world would look in and do you know this to be true in your own life people

look in and say we don't get why you believe what you believe we find it if we're honest borderline offensive but we cannot argue with what it seems to do in your life and they see verse 14 christians in the world who are zealous for good works now be clear that we are not saved by our good works that is a foundation of our faith we are not saved by our good works but we have been purposely saved by god for good works now we thought last week about this culture in this island of crete and maybe if you weren't here last week this is a great chance for you to tap into this we saw paul quote from one of crete's leading thinkers this man called epimenides if you see him at verse 12 there of chapter 1 this is what he says about the people who live on this island of crete he says cretins are always liars evil beasts lazy gluttons now we thought about the fact that that is a slogan unlikely to make it onto the front page of your visit crete holiday brochure but just to show you that this is not just one man's opinion of these people on crete here's greek historian paul obias i think you pronounce his name as who wrote this he said it's impossible to find conduct more treacherous or public policy more unjust than in crete and onto this island then that's known for its wild living god through the proclamation of the gospel as it's gone forth the message has birthed this church and paul has called them if you remember last week to live lives that are counter-cultural to the people who are on this island who they rub shoulders with every day if by nature cretins are liars evil and lazy how different then are the jesus people on crete going to look as god's grace truth and his truth trains them to live lives that are marked by truth self-control

self-control and good works and so as you consider your life this is the question that this week and next week are going to invite us all to think about and consider is what are the good works that god has put in your path for you to do wherever you find yourself right now next week we're going to think about how those good works are going to look out there but this week we're going to think about the place where those good works are developed in us which is in here there's two points in this today here's the first one the church is called to make the gospel beautiful now if you want a strap line here it is the local church is the godliness gym the local church is the godliness gym now here's what i want you to do and we're all in this together as high school musical so beautifully sang why don't you turn around and take in look at the people who are around about you just do it for a minute we're all in this together so it's not weird just look at the people around about you the people that you look at have you ever thought about this are god's gracious gift to you when was the last time you thought about that you might think i've got nothing in common with that person around about you you might be right but in actual fact if you're a christian here today then you've got the biggest and the most important thing in your life in common with these people and the beauty of it is that god has purposefully and perfectly given us each other that you're not here by an accident you are here for a purpose and you're surrounded by people who that for whom that is exactly the same these are the exact people that god knows in his wisdom that you and i need right now if we are to grow in godliness you see titus chapter 2 contains a wonderful picture and did you pick it up as we went through it of an intergenerational church now it's likely that an older person in this context and i think in paul's mind is somebody who's above 40 right and i happen just to be the other side of that which is lovely now you might be laughing at that but i think in the context that's true so for the purposes of this older younger thing we're going to run with the track of that okay but let me pitch you a vision of the kind of church culture that we're looking to cultivate here that the grain of the new testament invites us to see and go with and this is why i think this is a wonderful word in season for us at the start of a new year and it's a wonderful opportunity as we demonstrate the power of what god has done to our world right now in this cultural moment you ready for this come on right what's playing out in our world right now and i just took that from a newspaper i quite liked it as i saw it a few weeks ago what seems to be playing out in our world right now is the opposite of what you have in titus 2 isn't it generally true that in our world right now where the generation gaps seem ever to be increasing that you have a younger generation who are critical of an older generation you guys are clogging the house and market you aren't being authentic and you also have an older generation who are suspicious of our younger generation you're not committed as we once were you've got an entitlement mentality what you have right now is generations in our world who are not speaking to each other they seem to be speaking over each other does that sound fair? that sounds roughly familiar? God calls his people to do this generations thing radically differently and to lovingly enter each other's worlds now think about the other generation if we're taking 40 go with it think about the other generation to the one that you're in right now here's some questions for you as you think about them do you know their biggest struggles and their fears?

do you know the things that have influenced them over the years? do you see the unique opportunities that they have right in front of them and so here's a loving challenge to both generations older generation do you pray for and are you willing to invest yourselves in a younger generation who by the way are the church leaders of tomorrow in a way that communicates to them that we don't just want you to simply keep up the momentum of what we've started no we long that you guys accomplish and see so much more fruit than we ever did in our life as this generation of God's people do you appreciate that they are facing things that you probably never had to face and never had to worry about in your lifetime mounting student debt gender critical and sex saturated places of work online school learning social media mental health worries do you are you willing to enter their world and be their biggest cheerleaders in godliness and younger generation are you sitting here right now deep down thinking to yourself that you have nothing to learn from an older generation do you see that they have so much Christian life experience to share with you people who are in this room who have had marriages that have lasted for longer than I've been alive people who know what it is to live through and suffer bereavement people who know how scary it is to face unemployment and redundancy people who know what it is to be tired and exhausted and at the end of your tether as a parent people who know what it is to run a business and to do that with integrity people who know what it is to be a missionary in a foreign country and experience that when you consider all of what I've just said do you see how the local church is a truly marvellous gift from God that he would put each other all of us in the same church family and here's the challenge what we're called to do is that we are called to help each other figure out what faithfulness to Jesus looks like in our different life stages and so into our world that encourages a culture of dishonor are you up for being a church community who fosters and creates that culture of honor amongst the different generations generations in here two things that Paul tells Titus to foster in this church family in Crete two little sub points here here's the first one it's a culture of modelling do you see the different generations playing out here there's four of them in Paul's mind do you see he's calling older men verse 2 to be examples of a dignified life particularly so that the younger men can look at them and think that you are what I want to be when I grew up how many of us did that when we were growing up by the way was it just me who had posters on my bedroom wall of the person I wanted to be when I grew up

I think it was Ryan gigs at the time if that mean he means anything to any of you probably not in the later years of his life but older men we need you in this church know how much we love having you as part of this church family hear the encouragement to live that sober minded self-controlled sacrificial life in front of the rest of us because we need you to be setting the pace here we need you by the rings that are on the tree of your life to show us that Christianity still makes sense in your 70s can I encourage you not you might be physically taking your foot off the gas a little bit understandably so but inwardly spiritually can I encourage you to live a life in front of the rest of us that shows us that you're putting the gas well and truly on when it comes to your love for and walk with Jesus older women verse 3 do you see that be examples of how to use your words of how to conduct yourself socially of how to be with your family which by the way is the thing that makes them perfectly suited to be the ones who do you see it who teach and train the younger woman now that's not saying that men can't meet with women or anything like that understand that

[16 : 20] I take it that there are so many good and appropriate ways where we can and where we should foster those kind of relationships between the sexes but wisdom would say wouldn't it that the people who are best placed to nurture a younger generation of females are the older women who are in this church family because they just know what it is they get it in a way that I certainly know that I just don't and you're to pass that on as you teach the younger woman just worth flagging there in case you picked up in the reading that working at home just doesn't mean that you can't have a job got to remember then this Roman culture family life work life they all happen in the household so it's not quite a straight line there that you can draw but and yet hear me say and I know this will click with so many in this church that in a culture that subtly undermines family and marriage and spotlights independence and career advancement that if you find yourself in a season of life that is calling you to be at home that if children and if your marriage is just what you do with your days you might be thinking I'm kind of missing out I've had to park things can I just encourage you that what you are doing is a glorious thing in the sight of the

Lord please please know that please know that and younger men do you just see how they are told to be self controlled and just in case you think you're getting off really lightly because there's one

thing there this is the equivalent of the personal trainer pointing you in the direction of the gym and saying go and get fit you don't hear that you wouldn't hear that and think I'm just he's just talking about my upper left tricep he's talking about no go and get fit that means all of your life all of you how you spend your money what you look at online the jokes that you make that's what he means by self control I'll be clear this isn't Paul pushing some kind of first century stoicism saying leave emotions at the side the Bible is full of emotions self control is when we let the Bible inform us as to what the right expression of those human emotions looks like Titus create a culture in the church of modelling and the other side of the coin really create a culture of witnessing so verse 9 Paul addresses bond servants and again this is not slavery as our minds automatically jump to picturing it in our day in this day you have roughly 30% or so of the Roman Empire who are slaves right doctors were slaves lawyers were slaves this is much more you do those things as you work for the family that both employ you and that you stay with slaves perhaps reading this thinking I'd love to make a difference for Jesus where I am but I've got all these work constraints on my life meaning I have to be in a certain place at a certain time doing certain tasks what can I do with my life for the witness of Jesus and Paul is saying don't underestimate the impact that just doing your job well and with integrity the impact that God may have through that increase and I hope that's a word for some of us today if we're struggling with our jobs thinking does anyone see does anyone see this is it making any difference please do not underestimate what God can do with the your faithful witness and love for Jesus wherever you are and in doing so do you see how you will adorn the gospel of God our savior what's the motivation for all of this well the church is called to make the gospel beautiful because the gospel has made the church beautiful that's what the little word for do you see that verse 11 indicates it's just the linking words what's the logic of what's gone before it the word for just links it to the section after in other words saying it's the gospel that's created this kind of community the message behind it all is the match that lights the fire of the practice of it all do you see how it's a message with a source verse 11 that source is not our efforts that source is not our feelings no the source is the unmerited grace of God and that grace is not just a message to be proclaimed it's a message that you see the word it it trains us trains us you know my biggest fear every time I go to put gas in my car at a petrol station my biggest fear is I put in the wrong kind of fuel anyone else have that weird thing when you go to a petrol station because I just don't want to be that guy who has to call the AA and says I'm sorry I put petrol in my diesel car can you come out and drain the thing I love that our car has got a big diesel sign at the the where you put the gas in it gets me every single time so I don't know where I'd be without it okay but I've if I were to put petrol in our diesel car the thing would just stutter and stall Paul is saying here that the Christian life we're designed to run on grace that's what we put into our lives we put in this message of grace and what we so often default to doing is that we put into the tanks of our lives our efforts our morals you put that in you put that in solely into your life that will not go far if we want to see growth in godliness we need to fill our tank with the truth of god's grace the truth of the that's why we do this every Sunday we gather together we have scripture readings we have songs that are appropriate all these things are going on are designed to fill our minds with the gospel this message of who Jesus is and what he's done for us because our minds during the week they just drift and you see by god's grace we find ourselves between two appearances in the text the first is when first appearing was when Jesus came at Christmas well we celebrate it at Christmas and his second appearing will be when he returns you see those two appearances and that means that the gospel gives us a hope and a future and that means that we are people who are waiting for Jesus's return now again if you think about Crete if Crete is full of people who are living for the moment if Crete is full of people who are saying life is too short if Crete is full of people who would happily subscribe to Carpe Diem how different are lives of people who are waiting and living not for today but who are living and waiting in light of the hope of tomorrow going to look on Crete big question I asked myself this week and would my friends would my family with those walking who I walk and talk with every day would they know that I'm a person who's waiting for Jesus's return would they see it in me you know C.S. Lewis I've quoted this guy a few times before he said this if you read history you'll find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next and I just caveat that and just say as long as what we mean by next is Jesus we think most about not just heaven but Jesus can I just say it's maybe something that's been in my mind this week with everything that's going on in our world maybe particularly in in our countries we think about stuff that's coming up in government and things like that let's remind ourselves what we read we sang at the start that he is in that place of all

authority and power right now the risen

[24 : 42] Jesus we live between these two appearances but don't ever doubt the fact that he is in control every square inch of our existence he is in control of the difference is just now we're living by faith in that truth but then we'll see it by sight in his second appearing but never doubt that he's in control never doubt that he's not sovereign over square every square inch of our existence the gospel gives us a purpose as well do you see that now you're living in your woman world you're used to reading that the gods came down to get stuff from us and we thought last week about Zeus apparently he was born on Crete the classic example of might and right the gods come down they demand our worship they demand our allegiance and if we obey we get good things in return from them but you see how Paul says Jesus is the complete opposite of that

Jesus gave himself for us to redeem us you can remind yourself of that every time you go to buy something at Tesco when you pick up an item you go to the till you pay the price and now it's yours Jesus paid the price for our freedom not in pounds but with his precious blood on the cross he was humiliated so that we could be his he was pierced so that we could be purchased that's what the word redeemed means he bought us back for himself and he didn't just do it for individual people just although that is true it is our people do you see that in the text it's our people collectively why do we say no to ungodliness because Jesus has redeemed us from ungodliness he's called us out of our old way of life and said I set you free to live for me that was a whole reason that you were created in the first place to know God and walk with him and why do we say yes to godliness because Jesus has purified us he's bought us for himself and we belong to him and so as we do this together do you see how we become proof cases we become exhibit a to the world that the gospel it works now just as we close can I tell you about my friend Doug

Doug was an elder at the church I used to go to up in Aberdeen when I was a student there Doug was about 20 years older than me Doug was an oil and gas lawyer and as someone who was studying law at the time I remember really looking up to him Doug and his wife Ray and their kids they used to have me around to their house for lunch I used to send Doug my CV and job applications he used to look over and give me some really sobering words about what I'd written Doug used to tell me what corporate culture was like before I entered it but the biggest thing that Doug did for me was with a 20 year gap between us I could see him loving his wife I could see him caring for his children I could see him loving and serving in his local church because he loved Jesus now I moved away from Aberdeen I moved down here and he subsequently and his family moved away as well first he worked in America in law then he went to Hong Kong and I think he did a bit in legal banking as well before he retired from law and a few years ago he moved back to Edinburgh I did not know this at all and he's just taken up the role of executive pastor at

Crubber's Christian Fellowship on the Royal Mile now with that skill set talk about the right man at the right time doing the right job as those guys embark on a really exciting building project that they're doing there brilliant guy but I went to to preach recently at Crubber's and there he was with his wife Ray and all I could say was just thank you thank you for convincing me as a 20 year old young guy who thought he had life sorted and actually didn't have a clue what life is all about thank you for convincing me by the way that you lived your life in front of me that Jesus was going to be worth following for the next 20 years of my life thank you for doing that wouldn't it be a wonderful thing if this church community were filled with more of those kind of relationships let me just give you a one and a two as really quick fire applications just as we finish to do off the back of this here's number one try and speak to one person today who's in the other generation from you right you can use this sermon as an excuse to do it try and speak to one person today who's the other generation to you and I also want you to do is to look in two directions as we think about modeling friends the challenge here is to get on the catwalk who is older than you that you can learn from who is in this church family who is perfectly placed to be the person who comes alongside you and says let's do life together who's older than you who's younger than you who can you get alongside with the sole purpose of wanting to pass on the things that you have learned in life truth leading to godliness and together let's just be this church community who's helping each other in that privilege of adorning the gospel listen at the end of the sermon I'm going to be at the end of the service I'll be at the back and if you're interested in this if you would love to be paired with somebody I love doing that matchmaking thing if you'd love to do that just give us your name your details and I'll make that happen with somebody in this church grab Kate as well Kate I would love to do

