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EQUIPPING MEMBERS OF HOPE IN CHRIST BIBLE CHURCH  
IN BERKLEY, MICHIGAN, TO BE ZEALOUS  
FOR GOOD DEEDS

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A Project  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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Doctor of Ministry

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by  
Peter Nathaniel Smith  
May 2021

**APPROVAL SHEET**

EQUIPPING MEMBERS OF HOPE IN CHRIST BIBLE CHURCH  
IN BERKLEY, MICHIGAN, TO BE ZEALOUS  
FOR GOOD DEEDS

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With a heart of profound gratitude, I dedicate this work  
to the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave his life for me;  
to Sonya, the love of my life and my best friend;  
and to the congregation at Hope In Christ Bible Church,  
my joy and crown in the Lord.

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## PREFACE

Accomplishment of any significant ministry pursuit requires a team of loving supporters as well as the grace of the Lord. I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to all who contributed to the accomplishment of this project.

I am so grateful for my parents, John and Elsie Smith, whose lives and words pointed me to Christ and who model contagious joy in serving him. I also want to convey my gratitude for my faithful fellow elders and congregation at HCBC for their love for Christ exhibited in joyfully living out his truth. Words of special appreciation are in order to the Kahl family for modeling being zealous for good deeds and assisting in organizing statistics. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. T. J. Betts for his Christlike example and gracious assistance as my doctoral supervisor.

To Sonya, my godly and gracious wife, thank you for your prayers, your patience, and perseverance with me in honoring the Lord in this. You are my great joy!

Finally, all praise and honor belong to God for his undeserved love, his unsurpassed grace, and his unending kindness exhibited in the Lord Jesus Christ.

“For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen” (Rom 11:36).

Peter Smith

Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

May 2021

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose statement of Hope in Christ Bible Church (HCBC) is to glorify God by loving, learning, and living God's Word. By the grace of God and working of his Spirit through his preached Word, every member of the church will more deeply understand and experience the joy of ministering for his honor to the saints within (Eph 4:11-13) and unsaved without (Matt 5:16). In this way the church will more fully reflect the radiance and glory befitting herself as Christ's glorious bride.

#### **Context**

By the grace of God, HCBC began in 2000, after a core of likeminded families banded together to launch this church plant in southeastern Michigan. For the first four years, a capable lay preacher faithfully fed the flock as a team of four elders provided spiritual oversight. The church subsequently called a recent seminary graduate to be their pastor. After five years, and with no explanation, the pastor left the church. It was then, while I was still church planting in the Czech Republic with my family, that I was invited to take the pastorate of HCBC. By the grace of God, it has been a joy and honor to minister with the elders and serve the saints at HCBC since 2009.

God has graciously grown this fellowship into a unified body of believers. The flock embraces an uncommon reverence and love for God's Word. Most who attend HCBC listen with great attentiveness whenever God's Word is proclaimed. Many, including children, take notes as well.

Church tradition, popular religious opinion, and church by-laws are not the authority to which the elders and members of HCBC appeal. Rather, by God's doing, the

propositional truths of his Word stand as the infallible, unchanging foundation for the church (John 17:17; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:19-21).

God has gifted HCBC with a faithful core of servant leaders (Eph 4:11-13). These leaders include four elders, five deacons and a team of faithful saints who serve the church family with joy. Ongoing ministries include ushering, maintaining the church website, teaching adult and children's equipping classes, caring for infants during corporate worship, leading men's and women's Bible studies, overseeing stewardship of finances, assisting in Sunday worship and praise, caring for the elderly and those with special needs, assisting in the upkeep of the church building and meeting as CARE groups.<sup>1</sup> Apart from the work of the pastor and church janitor, all ministries at HCBC are carried out by church volunteers.

While an estimated 50 percent of church members serve in a recognized capacity, the remainder have no place of regular ministry. Some have not taken steps of involvement beyond Sunday attendance nor shown a desire to care for needs in the church body. A few members, who once served with enthusiasm, have become idle. Exemplary servants of the Lord who have been serving faithfully in multiple ministries would be greatly encouraged if others would join in and share in the joy.

To a newcomer who observes ministry at HCBC, it may appear that all the bases are covered and there are no pressing needs. Week after week, a core of faithful servants covers vital ministry bases. Yet, on the sidelines sit those satisfied only to attend and benefit from the ministries being offered. These who merely come and go on Sundays without a place of joyful participation in body life shortchange the fellowship of believers and themselves as well. They miss the privilege of contributing to the building up of the body of Christ, and they lack close relationships with others in the church

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<sup>1</sup> The goal of bi-weekly CARE groups is to Cultivate intimate fellowship, Apply God's Word to life, Receive and share biblical encouragement, and Exercise spiritual gifts.

fellowship from whom they might otherwise derive spiritual encouragement.

Sadly, many in the HCBC family have never met in a one-on-one discipleship relationship with another from whom they can learn as well as encourage spiritually. Young Christian women are not regularly going to more mature Christian women in the church for counsel, and young Christian men rarely seek out discipleship relationships with more mature brothers in the Lord.

Such insufficient mentor relationships impede leadership development in the church. With a dearth of church members being sharpened and spurred on in their walk with Christ through intentional discipleship, there is no pipeline for developing teachers and leaders in the church body who can in turn train up others (2 Tim 2:2).

This lack of training and embracing ministry opportunities in the church is mirrored by a paucity of evangelistic zeal outside the church. God has afforded HCBC a wide-open door of gospel opportunity. The fact that the church facility is situated on a busy thoroughfare between Berkley (15,000 population) and Southfield (73,000 population), just three miles north of Detroit (673,000 population), makes HCBC accessible to myriads of people in need of the gospel.<sup>2</sup> The church's location is also strategically positioned proximate to multiple ethnic groups, including large Jewish and Muslim enclaves. Dearborn, twenty minutes from the church's doorstep, has been called the "heart of Shiism" in the United States, and is home to the oldest and largest Shia mosque in North America.<sup>3</sup> Though HCBC has led an outreach to Muslims and conducted multiple evangelistic English language classes, it has been difficult to sustain an ongoing ministry to internationals. The same is true of its efforts to the Jewish community. While people from the church have visited a local synagogue twice for the

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<sup>2</sup> United States Census Bureau, "Quick Facts: Detroit, Michigan," last modified July 1, 2019, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/detroitcitymichigan/PST045216>.

<sup>3</sup> "Islamic Center of America," Revolvly, accessed Dec. 13, 2017, <https://www.revolvly.com/main/index.php?s=Islamic%20Center%20of%20America>.

sake of the gospel, HCBC has no formal ministry to unsaved Jews.

HCBC has also conducted various outreaches to the surrounding neighborhood, including special evangelistic services at Christmas and Easter. Yet there remains great opportunity for growth in taking the good news to the lost that God has placed in the immediate vicinity of the church building. It is not the church's goal to get unbelievers to come to the church, but to bring Christ to them.<sup>4</sup> Hence, there is much ground to be claimed for HCBC in making the good news known in the immediate vicinity as well as in church members' spheres of influence.

During the past eleven years, there has only been a handful of people who have professed faith in Christ through the witness of church members. Though people from the church have gone out on various occasions with the gospel, some HCBC members are shackled by the obstacles of fear and feeling too busy to witness for Christ.

These concerns at HCBC can be summarized by a need to grow in a biblical zeal for God's glory in and through the church. It is an undeveloped biblical conviction concerning God's call upon the lives of those whom he has saved. This passive mentality of some members, who come to be served rather than to actively serve the body of Christ, fails to embrace how God has called, prepared, and privileged every believer to be an enthusiastic worker in the church and witness to the world.

Members not stepping out to serve also manifests an unbiblical view of ministry. It views edification opportunities in the church and evangelistic opportunities outside the church as optional rather than essential. Thus, some come and go each Sunday and miss the joy of actively contributing to the needs of the saints. And during the week, they miss the thrill of letting their lights shine before the unsaved that they may see their good works and glorify their Father in heaven (Matt 5:16).

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<sup>4</sup> The consistent biblical injunction for the New Testament believer is not to "invite," but to "go" and proclaim the good news to unbelievers in darkness. See Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47-48; Rom 10:14-15.

## **Rationale**

Viewing the ministry context of HCBC as described above reveals the tremendous opportunity to actively trust the Lord to bring change and honor to his name. That every member of HCBC would be enthusiastically zealous for good deeds is more than a dream; it is vital and urgent for the glory of God. Five arguments, outlined below, support this rationale.

### **Danger of Spiritual Passivity**

While many churches have settled into a situation in which a few of the members carry out most of the ministry, this practice finds no biblical warrant. Thus, the servant leadership at HCBC must not tolerate the unvoiced sentiment, “That is the way it will always be.”

Those who exhibit spiritual passivity and lack of contribution in the fellowship of the church miss the gladness of being used by God in the lives of others. They also fail in their example to encourage others to love and good deeds (Heb 10:24-25). As God continues to bring visitors (many who continue on and become members) to HCBC, it is vital that they do not see a congregation that gives the specious impression that attending without serving is an acceptable option.

### **Development of Spiritual Gifts for Spiritual Service**

Praise be to God for members who know how he has gifted them and steward these gifts for his honor in the church. Yet some, though willing, have not yet stepped out in a regular place to exercise their spiritual gifts. The “I am available to help- just let me know when you need me” perspective may be sincere, yet it misses the joy of active service in the church body. This also includes men whom God desires to serve as elders and deacons yet need to grow in character and ministry of their spiritual gifts.

Consequently, it is imperative that all members at HCBC be equipped to actively contribute to the ministry through consistent spiritual service in the church body.

### **Demonstration of Biblical “One Anothers”**

Not a week goes by without someone in the HCBC family facing a tough trial while another concurrently experiences great triumph in the Lord. Yet, these times of difficulty as well as delight are often unknown to the church body until after the fact. The upshot of this is that others in the fellowship, being uninformed about such matters, are unable to join in prayer and show spiritual support as befits fellow members of the body of Christ. For Scripture enjoins believers in the local church to “rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep” (Rom 12:15).<sup>5</sup> This biblical commitment is predicated on an awareness of the joys and sorrows other church members are experiencing.

While bi-weekly CARE groups embrace such body life, insufficient conviction at this point contributes to members who have not yet taken advantage of such opportunities. Hence, laying out a biblical justification for being zealous for good deeds bolsters the congregation’s active commitment to truly caring for one another.<sup>6</sup>

### **Delighting in Seeing God Bless**

Although the focus of this project is not to merely produce outward change, such change will follow internal heart transformation.<sup>7</sup> As the saints are built up in their

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<sup>5</sup> The apostle Paul instructs his readership in the church of Rome as fellow members of the body of Christ to show individual care and concern for one another (Rom 12:4-5). Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture citation comes from the NASB (1995).

<sup>6</sup> John reminds his readers, “Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth” (1 John 3:18).

<sup>7</sup> A spiritual IQ must produce a spiritual “I Do.” Christ, after washing the feet of the twelve, averred, “If you know these things you are blessed if you do them” (John 13:17).

faith and grow in their love for Christ through the preaching (and application) of the book of Titus, they can see their service to the Lord as a contagious delight rather than as a cold duty. Older and younger men and women in the church will flourish in their biblical character and service and experience the joy in seeing God's hand of blessing on their lives. Others who have been inactive and idle will have to ask themselves, "Why am I missing out on being used by the Lord?" and thus seek to join in with those contagious in their Spirit-driven zeal for good deeds.

### **Diffusing the Sweet Aroma of the Gospel**

Scheduling evangelistic opportunities and praying for the unsaved comprise only part of an effective church ministry to the lost. HCBC continues to show faithfulness in these areas, yet vitally needs deepened personal convictions in making Christ known as a default in daily life. With the book of Titus having a strong evangelistic thrust, what better way to see the Spirit of God change minds than through this epistle being preached and applied? When that happens, there should not be a man or program to point to, but all the "thanks be to God who always leads us in His triumph in Christ and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place" (2 Cor 2:14).

### **Depositing Treasures in Heaven**

Should not pastors be thankful and content if their members faithfully attend on Sunday? Thankful, yes; content, no. For there is a world of opportunity beyond mere attendance that every genuine believer must seize.<sup>8</sup> Such service to other members in the body of Christ and proclamation of the gospel done in the Spirit's power will reap treasure in heaven. Ministry to others in the church and in the community brings joy to

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<sup>8</sup> While every HCBC candidate for membership goes through a membership class that examines the gospel and biblical salvation (including sharing personal testimony of salvation), the elders realize some who may affirm the facts of the gospel and are baptized may not be regenerate. These individuals likely do not realize their spurious faith.

the Lord Jesus and eternal reward. This includes spiritual fruit in converts the Lord has brought to himself through the faithful witness of members.<sup>9</sup> Thus, the danger of spiritual passivity, development of spiritual gifts for spiritual service, demonstration of biblical “one anothers,” delighting in seeing God bless, diffusing the sweet aroma of the gospel, and depositing treasures in heaven all necessitate equipping the saints at HCBC to be zealous for good deeds through expository preaching of the book of Titus.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to better equip, by means of expository preaching, every member at HCBC in Berkley, Michigan, to be zealous for good deeds both inside and outside the church.

### **Goals**

The following goals were established to determine the overall effectiveness of this project:

1. The first goal was to assess the HCBC members’ attitudes toward being zealous for good deeds.
2. The second goal was to modify attitudes of HCBC members toward being zealous for good deeds by preaching an 8-week preaching series from the book of Titus.
3. The third goal was to recruit a team of ministry mentors who would help train others in specific church ministry opportunities, so the number of ministry leaders increases by 50 percent.
4. The fourth goal was to integrate being zealous for good deeds into the HCBC ministry, including CARE groups, new member classes and ministry teams, so that there would be a 25 percent increase in the number of church members committed to a recognized area of church ministry.

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<sup>9</sup> Following the parable of the wise steward, the Lord Jesus states, “And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness, so that when it fails, they will receive you into the eternal dwellings” (Luke 16:1-9).

## **Research Methodology**

On what basis were the established project goals evaluated? Various means were applied for measuring the four goals. The aim of the first goal was to understand the members' attitudes toward being zealous for good deeds. The method for accomplishing this goal made use of a pre-preaching series survey entitled "Zealous for Good Deeds." This ten-question survey was given to all HCBC church members.<sup>10</sup> Accomplishment of the goal of understanding the members' attitudes towards being zealous for good deeds required the survey responses to be compiled and then analyzed using descriptive statistics for each of the ten survey items.<sup>11</sup>

The second goal was to modify attitudes of church members regarding zeal for good deeds by developing and preaching an 8-week expository series from the book of Titus. The following sermon themes were featured: the context of being zealous for good deeds (Titus 1:1-4), the correction of being zealous for good deeds (1:5-9), the contrast of being zealous for good deeds (1:10-16), the call of being zealous for good deeds (part 1, 2:1-5; part 2, 2:6-10), the cost of being zealous for good deeds (2:11-15), the carefulness of being zealous for good deeds (3:1-8), and the commitment to being zealous for good deeds (3:9-16). The goal of modifying attitudes of church members regarding zeal for good deeds was then evaluated by means of a comparative survey.

Upon completion of the 8-week expositional study from Titus, members were given a post-series survey in which they were asked to respond to the same questions they had answered before the preaching series. In keeping with the second goal, I evaluated members' responses to the first five survey questions pertaining to their attitudes toward being zealous for good deeds. The pre- and post-series results were compared using a t-test.

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<sup>10</sup> All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

<sup>11</sup> See appendix 1.

Success in the second goal required a statistically significant difference in members' attitudes toward being zealous for good deeds following the sermon series.

The elders were provided with a form to evaluate faithfulness of each message to the biblical text, clarity and conviction in communication, and relevance to the church body.<sup>12</sup> These were filled out following each of the messages in the Titus series and then discussed as elders.

The third goal was to recruit a team of ministry mentors who would help train others in specific church ministry opportunities. Participants for these mentors were selected by the elders from those who most faithfully exemplify zeal for good deeds. Each of these individuals were profiled in their particular area of ministry and provided ongoing encouragement, training, and modeling for those who would step forward to serve with them. To attain this goal, the total number of recognized ministry team leaders needed to increase by 50 percent.

The fourth goal was to integrate the biblical imperative of being zealous for good deeds into the HCBC ministry. This included midweek CARE groups, new member classes and ministry teams. Success for this goal was determined by a 25 percent increase in the number of members committing themselves to a recognized and ongoing area of ministry within the church.

### **Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations**

The following definitions of key terms are used in the ministry project:

*Expository preaching.* Expository preaching is the proclamation of God's Word that lays open the meaning of a chosen text according to the authorial intent (both divine and human) and then applies that to the listeners. It is the explication of biblical

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<sup>12</sup> "Relevance to the church body" by no means suggests that some of what God has revealed in Titus may be irrelevant but rather that the inspired truths must be communicated in a way that is timely and appropriate to the current situation of the listeners. See Prov 15:23 and Eph 4:29.

truth where the very “words of Scripture are the source and content of preaching.”<sup>13</sup>

*Lectio continua*. While *lectio continua* literally means “continual reading” (the systematic reading from the beginning to the end of a given book of Scripture), it also describes the consecutive preaching of God’s Word through an entire biblical book. Hughes Oliphant Old defines *lectio continua* as “preaching through a book, verse-by-verse or section by section.”<sup>14</sup> This sequential pattern of preaching allows the congregation to hear the exposition of a given text tethered to the entire flow and argument of the biblical book in which it is found. *Lectio continua* preaching also embraces issues that flow from the text and spares the preacher from the perception of riding a doctrinal hobby horse.

The reality of limitations had to be addressed if they were to be effectively mitigated. While the goal was to see a significant increase in members who become zealous for good deeds, there were Sundays when some members were unable to attend. This resulted from factors such as unforeseen sickness, work schedules, or vacations. In such situations, members not present were able to listen to the Sunday message as well as review the sermon notes as early as the following Tuesday.

Another limitation was that some within the church family not presently serving were hesitant to complete the Zealous for Good Deeds inventory.<sup>15</sup> Others seemed slightly embarrassed to answer candidly lest they be perceived as having a shallow commitment to HCBC. To offset this limitation, such members were encouraged (but not pressured) with the reminder that the survey was simply a tool to help the elders

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<sup>13</sup> John H. Leith, “Calvin’s Doctrine of the Proclamation of the Word and Its Significance for Today in the Light of Recent Research,” *Review and Expositor* 86 (1989): 32, 34.

<sup>14</sup> Hughes Oliphant Old, “Preaching by the Book: Using the Lectio Continua Approach in Sermon Planning,” *Reformed Worship*, June 1988, <http://www.reformedworship.org/article/june-1988/preaching-book-using-lectio-continua-approach-sermon-planning>.

<sup>15</sup> See assessment tool in appendix 1.

learn how they can better shepherd them.

Several delimitations were necessarily imposed on this project. The target group was focused on members of HCBC. Though not all attenders are members, virtually all members regularly attend. Secondly, though by the grace of God there will be long-term impact on the church family, only the changes that took place within the first 16 weeks of this project were measured and recorded.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter described the context of the ministry project at HCBC which evidenced significant opportunity for growth in a specific area—that every member would be enthusiastically zealous for good deeds. Six related concerns were addressed: danger of spiritual passivity, development of spiritual gifts, demonstration of biblical “one anothers,” delighting in seeing God bless, diffusing the aroma of the gospel, and depositing treasures in heaven. The specific purpose and goals of the project were further defined, and the research methodology to assess growth from the project was described.

Chapter 2 lays out the biblical and theological foundation for a life that is zealous for good deeds, based on the entire book of Titus. Chapter 3 focuses on the historical and theoretical basis for equipping a church to be zealous for good deeds through expository preaching. Chapter 4 details the process of the entire project from beginning to end. The project culminates in an overall assessment of the Zealous for Good Deeds project in chapter 5.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR BEING ZEALOUS FOR GOOD DEEDS

An enthusiastic commitment to being zealous for good deeds is vital for spiritual maturity and bringing glory to God at HCBC. I chose the New Testament book of Titus which demonstrates the absolute necessity and priority of this biblical imperative.<sup>1</sup> The entire argument of the book will be observed in eight distinct units, beginning with the context, and concluding with the commitment to engaging in good deeds. In properly understanding the Spirit-intended meaning of this book, God's people, in and through the local church, will be better equipped to engage in good deeds for his glory.

#### **The Context of Zealous for Good Deeds: Titus 1:1-4**

Titus 1:1-4 makes clear the context from which the apostle Paul appeals for Christian lives that overflow with good deeds. It is based on divine authority. For God sovereignly prepared Paul as his chosen instrument to bring the gospel message especially to those in Gentile areas. Under the same divine mandate, the Apostle pens this epistle to his beloved co-worker Titus.

#### **Divine Authority**

Titus has been aptly termed a pastoral epistle. Yet, it is not merely a personal letter to one man (Titus) but a divinely given message intended for a group of churches

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<sup>1</sup> Rather than selecting various passages throughout Scripture which relate to the believer's call to good deeds, I have chosen to explore this theme throughout the book of Titus.

(see Col 4:16; 1 Thess 5:27). Here is a “blueprint for building churches God’s way that will survive and thrive to the glory of God.”<sup>2</sup>

Being zealous for good deeds is the recurring theme that ties this compact epistle together (Titus 1:16; 2:7, 14; 3:8, 14). It can be best understood, appreciated, and applied by careful attention to the book’s overall polemic evidenced in its entire context. This begins with the letter’s extended salutation.<sup>3</sup> Before exhorting Titus (including the believers he shepherds) to good deeds, Paul lays the theological groundwork. He introduces himself with a two-fold appellation anchored in the sovereign working of God: “Paul, a bond-servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ.”<sup>4</sup> That term *bond-servant* (δοῦλος), better rendered “slave,” profiles how Paul views himself in relation to Christ.<sup>5</sup> A slave in the first-century Hellenistic world was “a nonperson . . . a chattel that belonged totally to its owner, a living tool without rights, without power, without family, without property.”<sup>6</sup> Thus, the distinctive Paul sees in “the concept of the δοῦλος is the subordinate, obligatory and responsible nature of his service in his exclusive relation to his Lord.”<sup>7</sup> With that submissive role of slave to his Master, the Apostle sets forth what is to be the passionate pursuit of every believer: fulfill the will of the Lord. And that includes, as Paul goes on to emphasize, a life zealous for good deeds.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> David Platt, Daniel Akin, and Tony Merida, *Exalting Jesus in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, Christ-Centered Exposition (Nashville: B & H, 2013), 226.

<sup>3</sup> Though the book of Titus is a brief 46-verse letter, it contains one of the longest introductions written by the apostle Paul.

<sup>4</sup> The apostle Paul begins his letter to the Romans and Philippians with the same vivid term, *bond-servant*.

<sup>5</sup> Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. William F. Arndt, trans. F. Wilbur Gingrich (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), s.v. “δοῦλος.”

<sup>6</sup> Jerome D. Quinn, *The Letter to Titus: A New Translation with Notes and Commentary and an Introduction to Titus, 1 and 2 Timothy, the Pastoral Epistles* (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 60.

<sup>7</sup> Rudolf Tuente, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol 3, edited by Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), s.v. “*doulos*.”

<sup>8</sup> Paul specifically emphasizes “good deeds” five times in Titus (1:16; 2:7; 2:13; 3:8, 14), and

What gives Paul the authority to make such demands on Titus and those under his spiritual leadership? It is bound up in his being “an apostle of Jesus Christ for the sake of those chosen of God” (Titus 1:1). Hence, he gives an extended explanation in the introduction of this epistle to explain the purpose of his apostleship. God did not save Paul only to take him to heaven but to serve him on earth. As the Greek term *ἀπόστολος* means *sent one*, so Paul’s message comes as from a herald dispatched by a great King.<sup>9</sup> He speaks as God’s mouthpiece and in God’s stead. Thus, his exhortation toward a life of good deeds in this epistle is anchored in his apostolic authority. Titus (as well as those whom he shepherded) thus received this message not as merely the word of men but as the word of God through his authorized apostle (1Thess 2:13).

From the outset of this epistle (1:1), Paul envisages the goal of his apostleship being “for the faith of those chosen of God.”<sup>10</sup> He longs for these believers’ trust in God to be marked by vitality, stability, and progress, and he shows that the path to get there is “the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness.” This knowledge (*ἐπίγνωσις*) is not a matter of intellectual assent but is a clear perception of sound doctrine which produces godly character. It works in the lives of believers in the church as well as those who will yet come to repentance. Why is godly living so significant for Paul to affirm at the outset of this epistle? It is because living a consistent life of devotion to God allows him to affirm in his own life that to which he calls others: greater likeness to God (Phil 4:9). According to John MacArthur, “Paul also knew that the . . . gospel message falls on deaf ears when those proclaiming it live ungodly lives that show no evidence of

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thus it becomes the overarching theme that unites this epistle.

<sup>9</sup> Quinn, *The Letter to Titus*, 62.

<sup>10</sup> The concept of being chosen of God runs throughout the Bible: Ps 105:6, 43; Isa 42:1; 65:9; Mark 13:20, 27; John 15:16; Rom 8:33; 9:14-26; Col 3:12; 2 Tim 2:10; Eph 1:4. It is God’s special choosing for himself those whom he will save.

redemption. When Christians live in open sin, they can hardly expect unbelievers to heed a message that purports to save men from sin.”<sup>11</sup>

Having stated his purpose for writing, Paul then highlights the basis for his ministry as being the “hope of eternal life” (v. 2). This hope is confident expectation of what is to come. It embraces the unending life the believer will enjoy as God’s gift through Christ (John 17:3; Rom 5:1-2; 1 Tim 1:1; Heb 6:19-20). This certainty of eternal life is the promise which propels Paul in his mission. And it is the “basis on which the superstructure for service in the body of Christ is built.”<sup>12</sup> In his first letter to Timothy, the apostle Paul exclaims, “For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers” (1 Tim 4:10).

What gives absolute certainty in this hope of eternal life? First, God’s character, as Paul asserts (v. 2), “God . . . cannot lie.”<sup>13</sup> Secondly, and further in verse 2, God’s promise assures of this eternal hope. For God “promised [this] long ages ago,” which reaches back to before time began.

It must be remembered that Paul’s goal in this salutation is to validate his apostolic authority. Thus, he shows that the message concealed long ago is the “proclamation with which [he] was entrusted” (v. 3). His commissioning was not self-willed. Rather, it was “according to the commandment of God our Savior.” So too, Titus, Paul’s “true child in a common faith” to whom he addresses this epistle, now finds himself under designated authority. He is under obligation to faithfully carry out the

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<sup>11</sup> John MacArthur, introduction to *Titus*, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1996), xi.

<sup>12</sup> Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 14 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 182.

<sup>13</sup> *Apseudes* describes God as “free from falsehood.” This divine epithet is rooted in Old Testament declarations (Num 23:19; 1 Sam 15:29) and is affirmed elsewhere in the New Testament (Rom 3:3-4; 2 Tim 2:13; Heb 6:18).

instructions placed upon him through his mentor and co-worker, Paul. While Titus is not mentioned in Acts, his name often appears in Paul's letters as a close associate and trusted co-worker.<sup>14</sup>

As his robust introduction concludes, the Apostle comes full circle to God whom he serves and to Christ who set him apart as an apostle. He commends the Father and Son to Titus as the source of all blessing: "Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior!" It is these great doctrinal verities, rooted in the Father and the Son, that enable the believer to be zealous for good deeds.

### **The Correction of Zealous for Good Deeds: Titus 1:5-9**

Titus 1:5-9 reveals the necessary correction for believers to lead exemplary lives. This comes down to understanding and applying God's design for the spiritual oversight, nourishment, and protection of local churches.

#### **Distinctive Leadership**

The spiritual health of a local church is largely dependent on the doctrinal commitments of its spiritual leaders. They must stem the tide of confusion and compromise in the local congregation.

The apostle Paul clarifies for his child in the faith, Titus, why he had left him on the island of Crete: "that you might set in order what remains" (1:5).<sup>15</sup> This suggests Paul and Titus had previously ministered together for the cause of the gospel on that island, perhaps following Paul's Roman imprisonment (AD 61-63).<sup>16</sup> There was fertile

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<sup>14</sup> See 2 Cor 2:12-13; 7:5-6, 13-14; 8:6, 16, 23; 12:18; Gal 2:1-5; 2 Tim 4:10.

<sup>15</sup> This rare term *epidiorthoo* also rendered "straighten out" (TNIV, NRSV) was discovered in a second century BC inscription. It is related to the legal context of reforming legal codes and treaties. Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 678.

<sup>16</sup> See Acts 28:30 regarding Paul's two-year imprisonment.

soil for the gospel, yet the work of establishing strong churches was far from complete.<sup>17</sup> The fledgling congregations were disorganized in leadership, immature in the faith, and susceptible to false doctrine.

Paul, therefore, instructs Titus of what must be done to address the concern of these nascent and vulnerable Cretan churches: “appoint elders in every city as I have directed you.”<sup>18</sup> Effective, qualified leadership must be recognized and affirmed in each of the Cretan churches; this is the primary task entrusted to Titus.<sup>19</sup>

Paul’s statement “as I have directed you” indicates he had previously spoken to Titus concerning this leadership imperative. Yet writing these specific requirements in the form of this epistle reminds and clarifies the specific qualifications for Titus. This would forestall any disputation in the churches as Titus would be able to communicate these non-negotiable requirements under clear apostolic authorization.

The abbreviated discourse employed in giving these requirements contributes to their compactness and force.<sup>20</sup> The unstated but clear sense of the context is, “If anyone meets these requirements, he can be appointed as an elder.” The opposite is also clearly inferred: “If anyone does not match up to this standard, he may not be chosen to serve in the capacity of elder.”<sup>21</sup> It is imperative to recognize that while these elder

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<sup>17</sup> Luke in Acts 2:11 notes that Cretans were among those who witnessed the power of the Holy Spirit and heard the gospel proclaimed at Pentecost.

<sup>18</sup> As early as Homer’s *Iliad* (8th century BC), Crete had a reputation for its many cities; see George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles*, A Commentary on the Greek Text (Grand Rapids: Paternoster, 1992), 287. “Appoint” (*kathistemi*) appears in the similar context of Acts 6:3, where seven qualified men, proto-deacons, were to be selected and then “put in charge” (by the apostles) of a vital task in the Jerusalem church. The “and” (*kai*) preceding “appoint” should be taken epexegetically meaning “and especially.” I. Howard Marshall and Philip Towner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999), 152.

<sup>19</sup> The Pauline pattern for ministry was not complete once converts were made. Those who were brought to Christ were nurtured in their faith and then entrusted to the oversight of faithful spiritual shepherds, namely elders (see Acts 14:21-23).

<sup>20</sup> The list of similar elder qualifications from Paul’s pen in 1 Tim 3:1-7 are nearly double in length. The elder requirements in Titus 1:6-9 are immediately followed by the urgency of teaching sound doctrine to refute false teachers.

<sup>21</sup> William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *Thessalonians, the Pastorals, and Hebrews*,

requirements were initially given to provide guidance to Titus in appointing elders in the churches, they have continued relevance for the church today as they ensure that these leaders meet the God-given standard.<sup>22</sup> It is not a matter of preference, popularity, tradition or subjective feeling; only men whose lives match up with Gods' requirements may lead in the church as elders. The listed requirements fall into three groupings: the elder's character, the elder's conduct, and the elder's convictions.

### **The Elder's Character**

The first and overarching qualification of a local church elder is that he be "above reproach (1:6)."<sup>23</sup> This establishes that the one considered to serve as elder may not be subject to, deserving of, or worthy of a charge of wrongdoing.<sup>24</sup> He must be a man with an unstained reputation in the eyes of the church as well as community. Since his life is to serve as an example, an elder must have a track record of consistent godly character in every arena. This foundational prerequisite is not suggestive, optional, or open to discussion. Paul further emphasizes, "For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward" (1:7).<sup>25</sup>

The proving ground of blameless character is the potential elder's home life. He must be the "husband of one wife," (*mias gynaikos*), literally "one woman's man."<sup>26</sup>

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New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1957), 345.

<sup>22</sup> Andreas Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville: B & H, 2009), 648.

<sup>23</sup> The same requirement is made of both elders and deacons in 1 Tim 3:2, 10.

<sup>24</sup> *Anenkletos* is translated as "above reproach" as well as "blameless."

<sup>25</sup> While *presbyteroi* (pl.) is used in verse 5 to describe elders, Paul uses *episkopos* (s.) to view the individual in relation to the requirements. While *presbyteroi* focuses on the elder's office and *episkopos* focuses on the elder's duty as an overseer, both terms in the text are used to describe the same man and office. See Acts 20:17, 28 where the same pattern is followed.

<sup>26</sup> This identical phrase occurs in 1 Tim 3:2 as an elder qualification, and a similar phrase is used in 1 Tim 3:12 for deacons. "Husband of one wife" does not necessitate that an elder must be married but rather stresses sexual purity. See Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin Jr., *1, 2 Timothy and Titus*, New American Commentary, vol. 34 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 280. For a helpful description of the four different views on what Paul means by "husband of one wife," see Denny Burk, "What Does It Mean That an Elder Must Be the Husband of One Wife (1 Timothy 3)," Crossway (blog), July 7, 2020,

This stipulates the moral mindset of the elder candidate. It must be marked by uncompromised marital fidelity and sexual purity.<sup>27</sup> Only that kind of man whose life exhibits holiness in his moral life is fit to shepherd the flock of God.

Following careful consideration of the man's married relationship, Paul then directs Titus' attention to the man's children: "having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion" (1:6).<sup>28</sup> Clearly, the elder's children must not be disobedient, disrespectful, wild, or disorderly. Such disqualifies a man from a ministry of spiritual oversight in the local church. For "if a man does not know how to manage his own household well, how will he take care of the church of God" (1 Tim 3:5)? So it is, the elder requirement in having children in subjection "demonstrates Paul's conviction that effective spiritual leadership in the home suggests the probability of effective spiritual leadership in the church."<sup>29</sup>

Therefore, Titus must give careful attention to evaluating a man's spiritual leadership in his marriage and family to determine the fitness of the man for the office of overseer. In the same way, every church from that time onward must make the home life of the elder candidate of great priority in determining if a man has been prepared by God to lead in the local church.

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<https://www.crossway.org/articles/what-does-it-mean-that-an-elder-must-be-the-husband-of-one-wife-1-timothy-3/>.

<sup>27</sup> This rules out not only fornication or adultery but all lust, flirting, and pornography (see Prov 6:25-33 and Matt 5:28).

<sup>28</sup> See Dennis McBride, ed., "Titus 1:6 Study: 'Believing Children' vs. 'Faithful Children.' Considering the Question: Does Titus 1:6 Require an Elder's Children to be Christians?" March 2004, <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/4534810/titus-16-study-believing-children-dennis-mcbride>, 10-11. "Despite strong support 'believing' enjoys from most translators and commentators, the fact is that *pistos* occurs 67 times in the New Testament. Of these it is translated in the Authorized Version 55 times as 'faithful,' 9 times as 'believing,' twice as 'true' and once as 'sure.' Since 'true' and 'sure' are virtual synonyms for the word 'faithful,' this means 87 percent of the time it means 'faithful' rather than "believing." Most significantly, in Titus, *pistos* is used three times, two of which clearly have the sense of 'trustworthy' or 'reliable' (Titus 1:9; 3:8)." The third usage here is best interpreted as children who are faithful. This also best harmonizes with the parallel requirement and rationale in 1 Tim 3:4: "keeping his children under control with all dignity."

<sup>29</sup> Lea and Griffin Jr., *1, 2 Timothy and Titus*, 282.

## The Elder's Conduct

The test of character is followed by the test of conduct. Paul rapidly lists eleven specific areas of behavior that flow from a blameless life. The first five in verse 7 are negative, followed by the next six in verse 8 which are positive. God's man for the job must not be self-willed. This describes one who is arrogant and more concerned about doing his own will rather than God's. A self-pleaser has no business "serving" in church leadership, for he will ultimately only serve himself. One who is only in it for his own ego, blows up when he does not get his way. Thus, Paul further stipulates, "not quick-tempered." Those with a short fuse and prone to fits of anger will not fare well dealing with frustrating problems in the church, and neither will those who are drunkards. Therefore, Paul specifies "not addicted to wine, not pugnacious." The last thing the church needs is a leader whose senses are dulled with alcohol and solves interpersonal problems with his fists. For the elder is called to build up not beat up believers! Previously in writing to Timothy, Paul emphasized, "The Lord's bond-servant [slave] must not be quarrelsome but be kind to all . . . patient when wronged" (2 Tim 2:24). Further, when Titus is told that the elders to be appointed must not be "fond of sordid gain," he rules out any who are motivated by the love of money which "plunge[s] men into ruin and destruction" (1 Tim 6:10). This prohibition is relevant to all Christian leaders drawn to ministry as a money-making business.

Like shining stars against a dark night sky, so follow six positive aspects of blameless conduct in Titus 1:8. The call to be hospitable comes first and speaks of a genuine concern for the welfare of others and their practical needs.<sup>30</sup> The requirement of loving strangers flows into the next—"loving what is good." This describes one who has a passion for what is virtuous and for the common good of God's people. He gravitates to

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<sup>30</sup> Biblical hospitality far exceeds having friends over for a meal. The core idea of hospitality (*philoxenos*) is a lover of strangers. It is meeting tangible needs of those who will be unable to repay the deed (see Luke 14:12-14; Rom 12:13; Heb 13:2).

what is wholesome and noble rather to what is frivolous and profitless. That necessitates that he be “sensible,” having a sound mind able to discern right from wrong. The final three conduct requirements requisite for the overseer are closely related: “just, devout, self-controlled.” A man who is “just” lives a life of honesty and integrity whether or not anyone is looking. It is this which gives him credibility in ministry. His life shows devotion to purity and holiness as he submits to the Holy Spirit’s control over his passions and desires. Titus, like many other believers, had no doubt seen Paul emulate such wholehearted devotion to God: “You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers” (1 Thess 2:10). Every would-be elder in the church of God ought, by his grace, to be able to say the same!

### **The Elder’s Conviction**

Having addressed the elder’s character and conduct, Paul now takes up what is to be his conviction (1:9): “holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching.” As a spiritual shepherd over living souls, the elder must show unwavering adherence to the Word of God. He must be absolutely convinced of the full inspiration, unrivaled authority, and total sufficiency of the Word. God’s man must be Word-captivated, Word-dominated, and Word-saturated; from such biblical convictions will overflow faithful and fervent dissemination of God’s truth. Yes, such wholehearted adherence serves a critical purpose in the overseer’s ministry: “so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.”

Every elder must be eager and able to fulfill this high calling, to never cease to cling to God’s Word. He must trust it, love it, live it, and teach God’s Word to all.<sup>31</sup> This includes biblical exhortation of sound doctrine to the saints. It also necessitates biblical

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<sup>31</sup> The call to faithful teaching ministry of the Word can best be carried out by following the model of the apostle Paul who, after just three years of ministry to the Ephesian church could say, “For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27).

confrontation to those in opposition in and outside the church. To denounce false doctrine and correct misguided thinking might appear to be narrow-minded, unloving, and judgmental. Yet those whom God calls to leadership must be men of conviction who uncompromisingly speak God's truth and nothing but the truth. For that is the foundation upon which a church and lives are built that are zealous for good deeds.

**The Contrast of Zealous for Good Deeds:  
Titus 1:10-16**

For a church to be filled with members who enthusiastically serve the Lord, detractors to God's work must be countered. For godless influences spread like a deadly gangrene among believers. Therefore, Paul exposes false teachers and charges Titus to silence them.

**Disobedient Living**

False teaching in the churches of Crete was not merely a remote possibility. It was a present crisis. Paul declares, "For there are many rebellious men." These false teachers had already begun to proliferate in the young Cretan churches. What characterizes them is a refusal to submit to God's authority revealed in Scripture. They are a law unto themselves.

Paul indicts these rebellious false teachers as "empty talkers." While giving off the impression of knowing the deep things of God, in reality, their words are vain and useless. Even worse, these men are "deceivers." The *modus operandi* of such religious con men is trickery. They do their best to dupe men and women in the churches to trust and follow their teaching.

Who are these insidious influencers? Paul clarifies, they are "especially those of the circumcision" (v. 10). This refers to Jews who had become a part of the church and

considered themselves Christians.<sup>32</sup> Within the Cretan churches were Judaizers trying to coerce believers to submit to Jewish myths and legalism including the Old Testament food laws and ceremonial traditions. This becomes increasingly evident throughout this epistle (1:14, 15; 3:9) and closely parallels Paul’s warning to Timothy as he shepherded the church in Ephesus.<sup>33</sup> Hence, Paul sounds the alarm as he realizes the adversary that threatens the church is not outside but is within.<sup>34</sup> They “must be silenced.” Titus as well as other elders must put a stop to the infectious influence of these false teachers.

Such dangerous adversaries had already gained ground in their assault against the churches, “upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach, for the sake of sordid gain” (v. 11).<sup>35</sup> Their strategy in assaulting the faith of new believers was to attack families . . . just like the Jehovah’s Witnesses and other cultists continue doing today. In addressing a similar situation, Paul warned Timothy in Ephesus concerning “those who enter into households and captivate weak women.” (2 Tim 3:6).

To illustrate the danger of the false teachers, Paul quotes from one of their own, the revered sixth-century philosopher Epimenides: “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.”<sup>36</sup> And then with great earnestness, the Apostle exclaims, “This testimony is true. For this reason, reprove them severely,” so that they may be sound in the faith (v. 13). While these words sound merciless, Paul is not making an ethnic attack. Rather he is showing how the Cretan culture, admitted by one of their own, was pervaded

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<sup>32</sup> The term *circumcision* (*peritome*) is used once of Jews (Rom 4:12), but primarily of circumcised believers, i.e., Jewish Christians (Acts 10:45; 11:2; Gal 2:12; Col 4:11). See Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 297.

<sup>33</sup> Compare with Paul’s similar wording in 1 Tim 1:4-6. See also Phil 3:3.

<sup>34</sup> Paul had previously warned the Ephesian elders: “I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them” (Acts 20:29–30).

<sup>35</sup> The apostle Peter cautions fellow elders to “shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of God*; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness” (1 Pet 5:2).

<sup>36</sup> Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy and Titus*, 289.

by deception, malice, and self-indulgence.<sup>37</sup> Such characterized the ungodliness of false teachers who, in paying attention to “the commandment of men . . . turn away from the truth” (v. 14).

Now Paul drives to the heart issue. Referring to believers, all of whom have been cleansed by Christ, he declares, “To the pure, all things are pure” (v. 15). Converts in the Cretan churches were now free in the Lord from the Jewish ceremonial practices, including dietary regulations, that the Judaizers insisted were necessary to be saved.<sup>38</sup> In contrast to those whom Christ had purified, for false teachers who are “defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure.” Their acute spiritual condition is impure minds and consciences from a refusal to be cleansed by Christ.

The opposition Paul exposes is spiritually bankrupt. They have tried to establish their own righteousness and, in so doing, have rejected the all-sufficient righteousness of Christ. And now it is that the Apostle pronounces some of the most scathing words of condemnation: “They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for every good deed” (v. 16)<sup>39</sup> They made a claim to godliness which their godless lives discredited. With hearts still captivated by sin, they live in blatant opposition to God and in defiance to his Word. Thus, nothing they do is acceptable to God. Scottish pastor Patrick Fairbairn pictures their tragic condition:

They have within a fountain of pollution, which spreads itself over and infects everything about them. Their food and drink, their possessions, their employments, their comforts, their actions—all are in the reckoning of God tainted with impurity, because they are putting away from them that which alone has for the soul regenerating and cleansing efficacy.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles, A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Paternoster, 1992), 299.

<sup>38</sup> Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy and Titus*, 292; see also 1 Tim 4:1-4.

<sup>39</sup> Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “Adokimos.” “Worthless” means “not standing the test.”

<sup>40</sup> Patrick Fairbairn, *The Pastoral Epistles, Greek Text and Translation with Introduction*,

Concerning such false teachers, Jesus explained to his disciples, “You will know them by their fruits” (Matt 7:16). Through that lens the apostle Paul saw the fruit of these enemies of the cross for what it was: worthless. He pleads with Titus to see it as such and refute it with the truth of God’s Word.

With wisdom and insight from the Spirit of God, the concern over opposition in the church is not just tacked on to the end of this epistle. It is not viewed as something minor to deal with after everything else is in order. Paul sees this as a desperate emergency that Titus and the elders, who will be affirmed in the churches, must confront with God’s truth. This challenge stands for all churches of all time that seek to honor Christ in being zealous for good deeds. Doctrinal compromise and false teaching must be confronted head on. The body of Christ must be protected, and the errant ones must be pursued with the gospel. Then God’s servants are better prepared to hear and heed the call to lives of good deeds.

**The Call of Zealous for Good Deeds:  
Titus 2:1-10**

For God’s people to be zealous for good deeds, they must be taught sound doctrine that includes God-honoring conduct of life. Spiritual leaders must impart such teaching to the church family not only in word but also by way of example. They must consistently model that message in their lives.

**Displayed Example**

Having decried professing believers who are worthless for good deeds, the apostle Paul urges his true child in the faith, “But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine” (v. 1). The task was clear. Titus must uncompromisingly preach God’s Word to God’s people, so their attitudes and actions are conformed to the

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Expository Notes and Dissertations (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1874), 696, Google Books.

image of Christ. For it is not slick programs, clever manipulation, or pragmatic techniques, but faithful dispensing of biblical instruction that produces changed lives.<sup>41</sup> Sound doctrine produces sound living. The result of godly living, as Paul will show, results in a credible gospel witness to the world.

Paul designates five distinct groups within the Cretan churches (older men, older women, young women, young men, and slaves) and gives each specific instruction in godliness that Titus must relay to them. Perhaps out of respect for the aged, Paul begins with the older men in the churches.<sup>42</sup> Four character qualities should distinguish them, with the first three being closely related. “Temperate” describes the man who is free from all excesses with clear thinking and right life priorities. He, therefore, is not frivolous or careless in his outlook but rather “dignified” and “sensible.” There must be a distinguishing seriousness seen in the life of an older Christian man coupled with self-control.

The final noted characteristic befitting older Christian men, “perseverance” (v. 2), speaks of steadfastness of life.<sup>43</sup> They must demonstrate perseverance and patience in all life circumstances. From the likely advantage of walking longer with the Lord than many, older men are to be exemplary in a triad of Christian virtues: “faith toward God, love toward all, and endurance to the end.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> God declared through the prophet Isaiah, “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it” (Isa 55:10-11). See also Heb 4:12.

<sup>42</sup> The term *older men* is best understood not as a specific age category, but as relative in respect to the other members of the congregation. The same pertains to “older women.” See William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 408.

<sup>43</sup> *Hupomone* speaks of endurance, fortitude, and steadfastness. See Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “*Hupomone*.”

<sup>44</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, Understanding the Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1988), 186.

Their seasoned spiritual lives should display deep trust in the Lord, vibrant love for the saints, and perseverance to the end of the Christian race.<sup>45</sup> Older men may retire from active employment, yet they must never forget the impact they can have on others by a life of godliness.

Just as for the senior men in the church, the Apostle gives four related qualities to be seen in the lives of older women. “Reverent in their behavior” describes conduct appropriate for a temple and pictures a life of holiness to God.<sup>46</sup> Elderly women, distinguished by such godly demeanor, will not be guilty of being “malicious gossips” nor be “enslaved to much wine.” Clearly, a lack of control over the tongue and over what is put into the body brings negative repercussions on others. Yet Paul’s expectation goes beyond these women avoiding such sin. He also longs for them to seize a vital ministry opportunity—“teaching what is good.”<sup>47</sup> This is not public teaching of God’s Word in the church assembly but rather a vital interpersonal ministry of exhortation and example to the young women.<sup>48</sup> It is an imperative focus of training from older to younger women to help them see their blind spots and “wise them up” in their responsibility as young wives and mothers.<sup>49</sup> MacArthur speaks to this urgent need in today’s churches: “A new generation of young women has been brought up in a society . . . that touts feminism and

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<sup>45</sup> While so many men, including ministers of the gospel finish poorly and disgrace their Savior, Paul longs for older men in the church to faithfully press on and be able to say with him, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith” (2 Tim 4:7).

<sup>46</sup> Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy and Titus*, 723.

<sup>47</sup> In 1 Tim 2:12-13, Paul articulates God’s will for women in the context of the gathered church: “But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. For it was Adam who was first created, *and* then Eve [emphasis added].” See also 1 Cor 14:34-35.

<sup>48</sup> The context of Titus 2:4-5 affirms Paul is speaking to all young married women in the churches, including those who have children.

<sup>49</sup> Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 187.

belittles biblical standards for men and women. In many cases, young women even in evangelical churches have not had the benefit of careful ‘teaching [of] what is good.’”<sup>50</sup>

With the plethora of commitments young wives and mothers must fulfill, in what areas can more mature women in the church be of greatest encouragement to them? Paul says, “Encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children.”<sup>51</sup> Charles Spurgeon deftly describes this kind of wife:

She delights in her husband, in his person, his character, his affection; to her, he is not only the chief and foremost of mankind, but in her eyes he is all-in-all; her heart’s love belongs to him and to him only. She seeks no renown for herself; his honor is reflected upon her, and she rejoices in it. Even in her dress, she thinks of him; without constraint she consults his taste and considers nothing beautiful which is distasteful to him. The domestic circle is her kingdom; that she may there create happiness and comfort, is her life work.<sup>52</sup>

Clearly, the mentoring encouragement for young wives and mothers in the church must focus on the primary God-given calling for married women and mothers not in the workplace but being “workers at home.”<sup>53</sup> Maturing in demonstrating sensibility, purity, kindness and showing loving submission to their own husbands (v. 5), all this is to be manifest in the place divinely designed for the woman’s greatest influence—in the home. Lest any believers then or now be tempted to ignore God’s high call for women here, Paul includes a sober caution: “that the word of God may not be dishonored.” To dishonor God’s Word in the home is to dishonor God before the church and watching world.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> MacArthur, *Titus*, 84.

<sup>51</sup> *Sophronizo* (translated in the NASB as “encourage”) speaks of bringing to one’s senses, to advise, to urge. Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “*Sophronizo*.” The primary objective of this ministry is that young women will be *philandrous* (lit. husband-lovers) and *philoteknous* (lit. children-lovers), which describes not a romantic love, but a love of devoted friendship. See MacArthur, *Titus*, 85.

<sup>52</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, *C. H. Spurgeon’s Autobiography: Compiled from His Diary, Letters, and Records, by his Wife, and His Private Secretary*, vol. 2 (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1854–60), 185.

<sup>53</sup> Regarding God’s beautiful design for mothers in making the home their greatest place of influence for his glory, see Ps 113:9; Prov 31:10-31; and 1 Tim 5:14.

<sup>54</sup> A similar caution is given to young widows in 1 Tim 5:14. Paul wanted them to “to get

Having dealt with the older men and women, and younger women, Paul then puts his finger on the paramount concern for young men in the churches: “Likewise urge, the young men to be sensible (self-controlled) in all things” (vv. 6 and 7).<sup>55</sup> Restraint over bodily passions not only keeps believers from sin but also frees them to serve the Lord and abound in good deeds. Such is the pivot point the Apostle uses to personally instruct Titus: “Show yourself to be an example of good deeds” (v. 7).<sup>56</sup> In exhorting the present and upcoming elders as well as congregations to aspire to lives of good deeds, it is imperative that the young protégé set the standard by way of personal example. His life must replicate the pattern Paul had modeled for him.<sup>57</sup> William Mounce notes, “Titus is to be a mold into which others can be impressed and therefore bear a likeness to him.”<sup>58</sup>

Such an exemplary life will be rooted in sound doctrine and marked by Christlike character and conduct. Paul specifies, that such a distinctively godly life results in a powerful apologetic defense: “in order that the opponents may be put to shame, having nothing to say about us” (v. 8). In other words, “Live your life in such a way that gives no place for a justifiable charge against the gospel.” Yet it goes beyond neutralizing negative attacks. For the Christian, by virtue of his set-apart lifestyle, will be a winsome witness for Christ. That is the goal Paul has in mind as he proceeds to speak of Christian slaves in the churches (vv. 9-10). Why are they to show submission to their masters, including not being argumentative, not stealing but rather seeking to please them? They

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married, bear children, keep house, *and* give the enemy no occasion for reproach.”

<sup>55</sup> This is the fourth and final occurrence of the *sofroneo* (sensible) word group (verse 2, 4, 5). The phrase “in all things” best modifies what precedes it (the young men’s call to sensibility) rather than what follows in verse 7. A similar phrase in verse 10, “in every respect,” describes the previous rather than following thought. See Marshall and Towner, *Commentary on Pastoral Epistles*, 253; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 412; Quinn, *The Letter to Titus*, 123.

<sup>56</sup> It is likely that Titus, like Timothy, was a young man when Paul wrote to him (see 1 Tim 4:12); see also Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 413.

<sup>57</sup> Throughout the epistles, the inspired writers give a clear call to following and modeling a life of godliness. See 1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; Phil 3:17; 4:9; 1 Thess 1:6-7; 2 Thess 3:7-9; 1 Tim 4:12; 1 Pet 5:3.

<sup>58</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 413.

are to do so, “that they (the unbelieving masters) may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.” So it is, the motivation for Christian slaves’ good deeds is evangelistic, to make the gospel as attractive as possible to their unbelieving masters.<sup>59</sup> This is the transforming power of Christ that ushers forth in a life of good deeds. It is the irrefutable testimony of changed lives that speaks volumes to the watching world. It is the fulfillment of the Lord’s promise to his disciples, “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matt 5:16). In a world filled with the darkness of sin, God calls his children to stand out as beacons that points to him.

**The Cost of Zealous for Good Deeds:  
Titus 2:11-15**

Many who bear the name “Christian” consider ministry to the body of Christ and to the unsaved world as optional for the believer. They tell themselves, “Jesus died to save me from my sins; as long as that is taken care of, everything else is secondary.” Christ’s costly cross work confronts such a myopic misunderstanding of ministry, and it urges the child of God to a life enthusiastic for good works.

**Death of Christ**

The exhortation in Titus to productive Christian living flows from a solid theological basis. It is anchored not in man being good,<sup>60</sup> (which he is not) but in God being gracious. With the incarnation in mind, Paul exclaims, “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men” (v. 11). The divine rescue operation embraced all people without discrimination, not only Jew but also Gentiles, not only those who are

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<sup>59</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 416.

<sup>60</sup> The New Testament epistles condemn any thought of an intrinsic goodness of man that will contribute to salvation (Rom 3:10-12; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:9; Titus 3:5) and sanctification (Gal 3:3; Phil 3:9; Col 2:20-23).

free, but also those who are slaves (who were just mentioned in v. 10).<sup>61</sup> Yes, all classes of men, on account of God's great grace, were made beneficiaries of Christ's grace in his coming into this world.

Paul, the master of metaphor, pictures the grace of God as a teacher who educates believers about a whole new way of living.<sup>62</sup> That instructor trains learners to put off the old—"ungodliness and worldly desires," and put on the new—"to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age" (2:12). Such an expectation of a fundamental change of life "deals a death blow to any theology that separates salvation from the demands of obedience to the lordship of Christ," Mounce argues.<sup>63</sup> According to MacArthur, "By His divine grace, Jesus Christ completely reprograms our computers, as it were. He throws away the old disks and deletes the previous programs and files"—all of which were permeated with errors and destructive "viruses"—and graciously replaces them with His own divine truth and righteousness."<sup>64</sup>

When God invades a life, he transforms that life inside out. For "if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come" (2 Cor 5:17). That is the way Titus must view converts whom he will shepherd—pupils in the school of God's grace who must conform to their high calling in Christ.

As God's children grow in sanctification, they must also grow in expectation. They are to be eagerly "looking for the blessed hope."<sup>65</sup> That blessed hope is bound up in

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<sup>61</sup> The "bringing salvation to all men" does not refer to all people without exception since the following verses speak of "us" and refer only to Christians. See Steve Jeffery, Michael Ovey, and Andrew Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007).

<sup>62</sup> Marshall and Towner, *Commentary on Pastoral Epistles*, 269. "Instructing" comes from the verb *paideuo* which speaks of training, educating, and disciplining. Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. "*Paideuo*."

<sup>63</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 423.

<sup>64</sup> MacArthur, *Titus*, 114-15; see also Rom 6:12-14.

<sup>65</sup> In the Hellenistic mindset of Titus' day, hope was a "self-deluding desire of what was simply unattainable." Quinn, *The Letter to Titus*, 169. In great distinction is the "blessed hope," rooted in

what Paul describes as “the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus” (v.13). This Second Coming marks the jaw-dropping manifestation of God’s glory in one great and divine Person, the Lord Jesus Christ!<sup>66</sup> Such anticipation must never be isolated from a concomitant obligation. For while the glorious grace in salvation spans the centuries from Christ’s first to second coming, Paul’s burden is to show believers how that salvation must impact their present behavior.<sup>67</sup> The purpose for which Christ “gave himself for us” is “that he might redeem us from every lawless deed” (that is the negative). “Every lawless deed” emphasizes “the whole gamut of human sins within which men and women are caged like slaves,” contends Quinn.<sup>68</sup> The positive result of Christ’s self-giving on the cross is to “purify for himself a people for His own possession.”<sup>69</sup>

Those redeemed are viewed as the object of God’s affection. Privileged with a relationship of intimacy made possible by Christ, there is an expectation of faithfulness placed on them.<sup>70</sup> How will those who have been saved through Christ’s blood show forth their new identity in him? What will distinguish them from the godless unbelievers around them? Paul asserts, they will be “zealous for good deeds.” Such good deeds as used throughout the pastoral epistles, “[describe] acts of service showing God’s kindness

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Christ, of which Paul speaks.

<sup>66</sup> While many scholars (including the marginal notes in the NASB and NIV), assert that two persons are in view (the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ), the most natural meaning according to the grammar is that the phrase refers to one person. The second coming appearance in the New Testament always refers to one person, not two. Two nouns (God and Savior) with one article (the) joined by and usually designate one person. The following verse (2:14), which continues the idea, speaks only of Jesus. See Lea and Griffin, *I, 2 Timothy and Titus*, 312; Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 323; and, A. T. Robertson, *Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 3rd ed. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1914), 786. In full affirmation of his deity, Paul declares Jesus Christ is “our great God.”

<sup>67</sup> Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 193.

<sup>68</sup> Quinn, *The Letter to Titus*, 173.

<sup>69</sup> The apostle Paul here draws upon Ezek 37:23 as the prophet describes the spiritual restoration of Israel: “I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned and will cleanse them. And they will be My people, and I will be their God.”

<sup>70</sup> Quinn, *The Letter to Titus*, 173-74. See 2 Cor 5:15.

that result from faith” in Christ.”<sup>71</sup> These Christians who are to be marked by being zealous for good deeds stand in diametric contrast to their Cretan adversaries who are “worthless for any good deed.”

The first century Jewish nationalists, the Zealots, who sought to throw off the shackles of Rome, were the embodiment of being zealous. Josephus, the Jewish historian, in a first-hand account of the Zealots states, “That was the name they went by, as if they were zealous in good undertakings; and were not rather zealous in the worst actions, and extravagant in them beyond the example of others.”<sup>72</sup> Though misguided in their mission, such enthusiasm and fervor in pursuing their goal is commendable.<sup>73</sup> The zealots’ motivation was to gain political freedom. The Christian’s motivation to be zealous for good deeds is because Christ has already given freedom from sin and death. After describing to the Ephesian church the saving work of Christ, Paul shows the upshot of such grace: “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them” (Eph 2:10). Therefore, the more a believer grasps the marvel of Christ’s redemptive work, the more fervently he will abound in good deeds for Christ’s sake.<sup>74</sup>

Zeal for good works is not optional; it is imperative for every blood-bought child of God. Thus, Paul gives Timothy a personal word of exhortation in how he must convey these truths to the congregations: “These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority.” Anticipating opposition to Titus’s teaching these things, Paul clarifies, “Let no one disregard you” (v. 15). Regardless of the response of complacent hearers, the

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<sup>71</sup> Marshall and Towner, *Commentary on Pastoral Epistles*, 332.

<sup>72</sup> Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, translated by William Whiston (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987), 672.

<sup>73</sup> See Acts 22:3 regarding Paul, even before his conversion, being “zealous for God.”

<sup>74</sup> 2 Cor 5:15 fully affirms the direct relationship between Christ’s death and the Christian’s service to God: “And he died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for him who died and rose again on their behalf.” See also Heb 9:14.

man of God must call Christians to exude deeds befitting the redeemed. Every genuine believer must be marked no longer by the former manner of life in sin but as one in whom and through whom the Spirit of God works.

### **The Carefulness of Zealous for Good Deeds: Titus 3:1-8**

Exemplary living in a pagan society showcases to non-believers God's mighty power to transform lives. To that end, the apostle Paul imparts to Titus hands-on instruction for practical conduct he must faithfully teach God's people.

#### **Dignified Conduct**

Having addressed in Titus 2 how believers are to conduct themselves in the church family, in chapter 3 Paul describes how they must behave in a secular society. He calls his son in the faith to remind the saints in Crete of seven qualities that must characterize their lives.<sup>75</sup> Each of these is to be seen in the deportment of every Christian of every church then and now.

The first two go hand-in hand: "to be subject to rulers and to authorities and to be obedient." This calls for proper attitudes and actions toward government officials God has placed over the believer. There are no exceptions stated, and this necessarily includes all levels of political authority. Civil authorities on Crete, under the jurisdiction of Rome, were to be shown such submission. This includes Christians praying for those in authority (1 Tim 2:2), paying taxes (Rom 13:6), and showing them all honor (Rom 13:7). It is an eager attitude of the heart that Paul then describes as being "ready for every good deed." Such preparedness to serve and honor must be extended not only to civic authorities but

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<sup>75</sup> Paul employs an asyndeton (ἄσύνδετον, "unconnected"), a literary device that eliminates conjunctions between phrases for greater punchiness and emphasis. Thus, "Remind them to be subject to rulers . . ." in Titus 3:1 would have leapt out at the original readers.

to all people in general. For a Christian committed to a life of good works commends the gospel message to the watching world regardless of their standing in society. According to Marshall, this “is a call to live in such a way that the fruit of the new life in Christ is manifested in tangible ways in this mundane context.”<sup>76</sup> The Christian with such a sterling testimony stands in marked contrast to false teachers of whom Paul previously spoke in this epistle. For “they profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed” (Titus 1:16).

Four further qualities in Titus 3 show how Christians can be winsome witnesses in a godless society. They are to “malign no one” (v. 2). Regardless of the immorality, perversion, and crookedness of the unregenerate including those in places of authority, believers must refuse to badmouth, slander, and complain. To that Paul adds, they must also be uncontentious, not given to quarrels. In his epistle to the Philippians, Paul demonstrates the impact avoiding such sins will have on a lost world: “Do all things without grumbling or disputing so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world” (Phil 2:14-15).

Instead of being quarrelsome, God’s redeemed must be “gentle, showing every consideration for all men” (v. 2). There is to be a conciliatoriness that pervades the Christian’s demeanor. This graciousness of spirit flows from a humility before God and shows itself in a humility before man. With pastoral insight, MacArthur notes,

As followers and imitators of Jesus Christ, our calling is not to fight for our rights or privileges against the ungodly. Rather, as we live in this corrupt world in subjection and obedience to human authority, doing good deeds, maligning no one, and being uncontentious, gentle, and meek, we will thereby demonstrate the gracious power of God to transform sinners and make them like Himself.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Marshall and Towner, *Commentary on Pastoral Epistles*, 302.

<sup>77</sup> MacArthur, *Titus*, 145.

That evangelistic concern comes into clearer focus as the Apostle recalls the pre-Christian condition he (and every Christian) was in before salvation—the same condition of the unsaved Cretans.<sup>78</sup> In verse 3, he recalls, “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.” These seven vices define the divine diagnosis of all individuals before conversion. There is no spiritual understanding, no ability to obey God, no awareness of being led astray by Satan and being held captive as slaves to sin and accompanying lusts (see Rom 6:6, 16; 1 Cor 1:18; 2 Tim 2:26; 3:13). There is no ability whatsoever in man to break the shackle hold of wickedness toward God and toward his fellow man.<sup>79</sup> All that serves as a sober reminder to Titus, “We were just like them before God saved us!” What a vital perspective for persevering against the opposition of unbelievers. This message of hope would encourage believers in Crete who may have begun to lose heart in their gospel witness: “You need not suppose that it is hopeless to imagine that these wild Cretan folk can be reclaimed. We ourselves are a living proof of the power of God’s grace.”<sup>80</sup>

In great contrast to all believers’ dark backgrounds of hate-filled lives, the grace of God in the gospel shines. With a deep sense of awe, Paul marvels, “But when the kindness of God our Savior and his love for mankind appeared, he saved us” (vv. 4-5). A whole new era in the history of salvation dawned in the historical appearing of Jesus Christ. When rebel sinners could do nothing to extricate themselves from their

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<sup>78</sup> Throughout the New Testament epistles, when Paul speaks of the gospel, he loves to include a note in which he personally identifies with its transforming power in his life (see Gal 1:11-17; Titus 2:11-14; 2 Tim 1:9-10). See also Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 202.

<sup>79</sup> Paul is not primarily describing the wicked society in which Cretan believers lived (contra Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy and Titus*, 319), but his and all Christians’ wicked condition pre-salvation.

<sup>80</sup> Newport J. D. White, “Titus,” in *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, ed. Robertson W. Nicoll (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 197.

enslavement to sin, God out of unmerited love took the initiative and forged a way of redemption in his Son. This is a divine act of sheer grace.

Yet, lest any Christians on Crete look down upon unbelievers and pride themselves in some goodness before God, Paul reminds, “He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to his mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit” (v. 5).<sup>81</sup> Marshall avers, “The clear intention is to decisively rule out any notion that people can be saved by any kind of human merit.”<sup>82</sup> In his letter to the saints at Rome, Paul insists that God’s grace is fully incompatible with any deeds of man for salvation and declares, “But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace” (Rom 11:6). It expresses the sentiment of one broken and bankrupt with absolutely nothing to offer God for salvation: “Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling; naked, come to thee for dress, helpless, look to thee for grace; foul, I to the fountain fly; wash me, Savior, or I die.”<sup>83</sup>

All of God’s mercy and none of man’s merit produces the Spirit’s regenerating work. For at the moment of salvation, God through the finished work of his Son, lavishly poured out his Spirit on those who believe.<sup>84</sup> That is when he causes hell-bound sinners to be “justified by his grace,” and become “heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (v. 7). Such marks the turning point when works for salvation that God rejects are replaced by works that result from salvation that God accepts. Spurgeon asserts, “Works of

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<sup>81</sup> “Regeneration” may point to the beginning of transformation, while the “renewing” focuses more on the Spirit’s completion of the work. See Ezek 36:25-27, as well as Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 343; see also Marshall and Towner, *Commentary on Pastoral Epistles*, 321.

<sup>82</sup> Marshall and Towner, *Commentary on Pastoral Epistles*, 314. See the parallel emphasis of the impossibility of works to merit salvation in 2 Tim 1:9; also, Rom 3:27-28; 4:2-6; 9:10-11; Gal 2:16-21; Eph 2:9.

<sup>83</sup> Augustus Toplady, “Rock of Ages” (137), in *The New Church Hymnal* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Lexicon Music, 1976).

<sup>84</sup> God does not skimp and give those he redeems the bare minimum; he richly blesses them with all of his Spirit (see Rom 5:5).

righteousness are the fruit of salvation, and the root must come before the fruit. The Lord saves his people out of clear, unmixed, undiluted mercy and grace, and for no other reason.”<sup>85</sup>

What is the upshot of all this gospel truth for young Titus in the ministry that has been entrusted to him? Paul does not leave him guessing but gives him a charge to pursue: “This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently.” The Apostle emphasizes all he has said about God’s sovereign and saving grace in salvation (vv. 4-7) must be boldly taught to believers. He dares not be timid, uncertain, or fearful in preaching the transforming gospel message in the churches throughout Crete. For it is believers Paul has in mind who need to fully grasp and faithfully live out the gospel in a compelling manner. “Speak confidently,” he pleads, “so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds.” Here again, Paul emphasizes that those who have been rescued by the gospel must exude a whole new manner of living in their conduct. The fruit of such living is “good and profitable for men,” that is, for unbelievers. The watching world is compelled to sit up and listen, and even prompted to seek Christ, when it sees lives undeniably transformed by his grace.

**The Commitment to Zealous for Good Deeds:  
Titus 3:9-16**

Unlike deeds of kindness that are good and profitable for all, Paul exposes the deeds of opponents as worthless and unprofitable. Therefore, he places before Titus specific counsel for dealing with deceivers and divisive individuals. As he comes to his parting farewell, Paul entrusts Titus with a hands-on opportunity to show good deeds and calls all believers to a life of learning to do the same.

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<sup>85</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of the Bible*, vol. 7 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 905.

## Decisive Ministry

Paul echoes his opening words of warning in chapter 1 (vv. 10-16) as he approaches the conclusion of this epistle.<sup>86</sup> Burdened by the pernicious danger of distractors in the church, he isolates three behaviors which God's servant must recognize and shun: "foolish controversies" which amount to senseless debates, genealogies (including myths and empty speculation), and "strife and disputes about the Law." The latter exposes snobbish and argumentative discussions about the Scriptures. Paul evaluates all such controversies and disputes as being of no profit and worthless. Therefore, the force of what Paul is driving at is, "Titus, by all means, avoid these things."<sup>87</sup> Timothy faced the same challenge in his ministry arena as Paul warned him of those "wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions" (1Tim 1:7). All such foolish boasting, to borrow from Shakespeare, is "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."<sup>88</sup>

The spiritual overseer who stays clear of foolish disputes must at the same time confront the perpetrators of such disunity. For divisiveness and dissensions in the body of Christ is a destructive deed of the flesh (Gal 5:20). Troublemakers in God's church must not be avoided nor ignored with the hope their influence will go away. Rather, Paul insists, "Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned" (Titus 3:10). When there has been repeated admonition with a redemptive goal, a persistent opponent in the church must be

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<sup>86</sup> The apostolic warning in 2 Tim 2:23-26 reflects a similar concern for Timothy pastoring in Ephesus.

<sup>87</sup> Περὶ ἄστυγι has the idea of going around something to avoid it. This is also used in 2 Tim 2:16. See Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. "Περὶ ἄστυγι."

<sup>88</sup> William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, scene 5, lines 19-28, in *Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, ed. W. J. Craig, Oxford Shakespeare (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1916).

dismissed from the Christian community.<sup>89</sup> For such dissentious conduct reveals a sinful and twisted heart of rebellion against God.

The Apostle to the Gentiles, in concluding his letter to the Roman Christians, includes a sober word of warning: “Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting” (Rom 16:17-19).

While the call to keep clear of unrepentant, factious individuals may appear excessively stern, Paul puts a premium on unity and doctrinal fidelity in the church. This not only guards the flock from the spread of sin but also esteems the reputation of Christ before the watching world.

As Paul made plans for the coming winter, he asks Titus “to make every effort to come to me at Nicopolis” (3:12).<sup>90</sup> He would not leave the situation in Crete vulnerable and intended to dispatch either Artemas or Tychicus to cover the base there. The very fact that Paul could readily ask people to come and go and minister in the place of great need shows the influence of his life. He had set the example of a joyous and compelling life of good deeds that others readily followed. He ministered to others and felt free to ask others to do the same. He requests of Titus while still on Crete to “diligently help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way so that nothing is lacking for them.” These two brothers in the Lord likely brought the letter Paul had prepared for Titus. Not wanting to

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<sup>89</sup> Παρατέομαι speaks of not only rejecting and refusing but also dismissing or driving out. See Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “παρατέομαι.”

<sup>90</sup> As there were at least nine towns with the name Nicopolis, it is uncertain which one Paul has in mind. Yet 2 Tim 4:10 speaks of Titus being in Dalmatia, which was up the coast from Nicopolis, the capital city of Epirus (on the west coast of Greece, 200 miles northwest of Athens). See Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 357; Marshall and Towner, *Commentary on Pastoral Epistles*, 341. Paul may have chosen such a large city for his missionary endeavors that he might work his way further to Spain.

have them troubled over their accommodations in Crete, the Apostle asks his son in the faith to go all out and care for their needs. Titus was to be sure these visitors lacked nothing: good food to eat, a comfortable place to rest, getting acquainted with the saints in Crete. What an opportunity that young pastor had to be an example in showing kind hospitality and goodness to these visitors.

The lesson for the Cretan converts would first come by means of observing Titus zealously engaging in good deeds. Then they would hear Titus faithfully communicate to them God's will through the inspired words of Paul summarized in one statement: "Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful" (v. 14). All this flows from the gracious heart of God, which Paul commends to every reader of his epistle: "Grace be with you all."

### **Conclusion**

For believers to abound in good works for God's glory, they must embrace a biblically informed conviction of God's design for his church. Of all New Testament books, it is only in the epistle of Titus that such a singular emphasis of zeal for good deeds is given. With this great theme in mind, the apostle Paul places before Titus inspired directives to share with young churches in Crete. These include strengthening the churches by appointing qualified elders who will stand strong against compromised doctrine. Additionally, specific guidance is given for the older and younger believers and for all Christians to live "godly in the present age." Titus must also remind believers to submit to authorities. Lastly, Paul recounts the glorious gospel from which comes the hope of eternal life. All this instruction aims at a clarion goal: "so that those who have believed God may be careful to engage in good deeds" (Titus 3:8). This was God's call for every church in Crete. And this is God's call for every church in the world today.

CHAPTER 3  
THE HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL BASIS FOR  
EQUIPPING A CHURCH TO BE ZEALOUS FOR  
GOOD DEEDS THROUGH EXPOSITORY  
PREACHING

For a congregation of New Testament believers to experience Spirit-empowered progress in being zealous for good deeds, God’s plan, not man’s, must be followed. For “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16-17). Therefore, it is the inspired revelation of God which must be preached for good works to result. With great urgency of heart, Paul pleads with his protégé in the faith, Timothy, “I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and his kingdom: preach the word” (2 Tim 4:1). Thus, the minister of the gospel is not called merely to preach from God’s Word but to preach God’s Word.

In reference to the imperative “preach the word,” Jason Meyer observes, “Paul’s words here are a compact way of calling for expository preaching because ‘the word’ is the object or content that is unpacked in preaching.”<sup>1</sup> While there are other approaches to declaring God’s Word, including topical and textual preaching,<sup>2</sup> the exposition of Scripture best communicates biblical truth within its given context so that the text itself is “a master which dictates and controls what is said.”<sup>3</sup> Haddon Robinson

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<sup>1</sup> Jason Meyer, *Preaching: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 273.

<sup>2</sup> Topical preaching approaches the Scripture in pursuit of a particular thematic concern. In seeking to elucidate that chosen theme, multiple passages are typically referenced apart from a primary dominating text. Textual preaching, on the other hand, adheres to and requires faithful exposition of a particular pericope of Scripture.

<sup>3</sup> John Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Biblical Preaching in the Twentieth Century*

affirms, “Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through him to his hearers.”<sup>4</sup> Expository preaching, therefore, lets God set the agenda through His written revelation and “gives God the microphone.”<sup>5</sup> The main point God has given in Scripture becomes the dominating point of the message.

Declaring God’s truth expositoryly also trusts God to transform the life of his church and give his people deeper longings to obey him. When it is God’s Word and not man’s that is proclaimed, God’s voice is heard, and lives are transformed. John Piper emphasizes, “The inspired text of Scripture is where our authority lies. And it is in the very wording of the inspired text where the most vivid, reliable, and explosive revelations of these realities shine forth.”<sup>6</sup>

The ministry of the expositional preaching of God’s Word will now be examined historically with highlights of preachers from the Old and New Testament era as well as from church history into the modern era. From this historical backdrop, attention will then be given to three imperatives that flow from the expositional preaching of the book of Titus that results in greater zeal for good deeds. These are a commitment to deepening in biblical leadership, developing in modeling and training, and delighting in gospel-appropriate living.

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(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 126.

<sup>4</sup> Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 20.

<sup>5</sup> Christopher Ash, *The Priority of Preaching* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2009), 115.

<sup>6</sup> John Piper, *Expository Exultation: Christian Preaching as Worship* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 20.

## Historical Overview and Highlights of Expositional Preaching

Following the second return from the Babylonian captivity (458 BC), the Spirit of God blessed the expositional preaching of the Scriptures and brought revival to his people. “For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD and to practice it, and to teach his statutes and ordinances in Israel” (Ezra 7:10). Thirteen years later (445 BC), Nehemiah recounts how Ezra and others expounded God’s Word to his people who stood in rapt attention: “They read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading” (Neh 8:8). The “translating” that was done for God’s people emphasizes explanation and declaration of biblical truth.<sup>7</sup> The very text of Scripture read by the prophet determined the content that was then expounded to the listeners. It was that inspired truth, faithfully proclaimed, which ignited zeal in the hearts of God’s people for rebuilding the temple.<sup>8</sup>

The New Testament also bears strong witness to expository preaching. Christ’s preaching in the Nazareth synagogue (Luke 4:15-21), Peter’s sermon at Pentecost (Acts 2:14-37), Stephen’s final defense (Acts 7:2-53), and James’ message to the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:13-21) all evidence faithful explication of Scripture.

In the Patristic era, John Chrysostom (347-407) stands out as a most distinguished expositional preacher. The pulpit ministry of this great expositor “centers in his series of exegetical sermons on individual books of the Bible.”<sup>9</sup> Chrysostom preached

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<sup>7</sup> R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Workbook of the Old Testament*, new ed. (Chicago: Moody, 2003), s.v. “*parash*”; Alexander MacLaren, *The Second Book of Kings* (London: Hodder and Stroughton, 2009), 376.

<sup>8</sup> In response to Ezra’s ministry of teaching God’s Word, King Artaxerxes proclaimed, “Whatever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be done with zeal for the house of the God of heaven, so that there will not be wrath against the kingdom of the king and his sons” (Ezra 7:23). As a result of Nehemiah’s exposition of God’s law, he and God’s people repent of their sin and commit themselves to faithfully contributing to God’s work in the temple (Neh 10:32-39).

<sup>9</sup> Hughes Oliphant Old, *Worship: Reformed According to Scripture*, rev. and expanded ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 65. Referring to Chrysostom, Old concludes, “Few preachers in the history of the church have piled up such a treasury of expository sermons.”

most of the New Testament books *lectio continua*, explaining each text in a consecutive verse-by-verse manner.

The medieval era can be likened to the dark ages of expository preaching. With a low view of biblical revelation, including extreme use of allegorical interpretation, there was a famine in the land for faithful, let alone systematic preaching of God's truth.<sup>10</sup>

In contrast to the preceding centuries, the Reformation was fueled by a renewed commitment to the biblical text and expositional preaching. It is extremely significant to recognize what characterized faithful preachers of God's Word during this unique outpouring of God's grace. David Buttrick, in the *Westminster Handbook to Reformed Theology* avers, "Most reformers preached *lectio continua*, working their way through scripture passage by passage."<sup>11</sup> This conviction shaped their pulpit ministry and impacted multiple generations of preachers. Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) was influenced by John Chrysostom's ministry of the Word and popularized *lectio continua* preaching in the Protestant pulpit.<sup>12</sup> Martin Luther (1483-1546) sequentially preached through every section and genre of the Bible, amassing some 4,000 sermons in his lifetime.<sup>13</sup> John Calvin (1509-1564) stands out as a biblical expositor of the highest order. In his pulpit ministry of more than twenty years, Calvin systematically preached through nearly the entire Bible.<sup>14</sup> T. H. L. Parker remarks, "Sunday after Sunday, day after day, Calvin climbed up the steps into the pulpit. There, he patiently led his congregation verse by

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<sup>10</sup> John Smith, *Preaching All of God's Word: Why Pastors Must Intentionally Preach Tota Scriptura* (DMin thesis, The Masters Seminary, 2018), 79-80.

<sup>11</sup> David Buttrick, "Preaching, Theology of," *Westminster Handbook to Reformed Theology*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 177.

<sup>12</sup> Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*, vol. 4, *The Age of Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 43.

<sup>13</sup> Stephen Lawson, "Martin Luther: Thundering Voice of the Reformation," *Expositor* (March/April 2017): 11.

<sup>14</sup> Old, *The Age of Reformation*, 91.

verse into the pulpit.”<sup>15</sup> John Knox, the “thundering Scot,” after spending time with Calvin in Geneva, was deeply impacted by his conviction on preaching. In *The First Book of Discipline*, Knox and his fellow churchmen insisted:

We think it most expedient that the Scripture be read in order: that is, that some one book of the Old or New Testament be begun and orderly read to the end. And the same we judge of preaching where the minister for the most part remains in one place. For this skipping and divagation from place to place of Scripture, be it in reading or be it in preaching, we judge not so profitable to edify the Kirk as the continual following of one text.<sup>16</sup>

The preaching of the Puritans veered away from expositing entire books of Scripture. Instead, a thematic approach was embraced that began with a text and then traced the thought of that pericope throughout Scripture. Church historian Hughes Oliphant Old notes, “Rarely could one cover in one sermon more than a single verse of Scripture using this form; in fact, it often took several sermons to treat but one verse, if the method was used to its full rigor.”<sup>17</sup> William Perkins (1558–1602), Thomas Goodwin (1600–1680), Thomas Manton (1620–1677), and John Owen (1616–1683) modeled such exposition of isolated biblical texts to their congregations.<sup>18</sup> In contradistinction, Matthew Henry (1662–1714) followed in the steps of Zwingli and Calvin, and preached God’s Word *lectio continua*. During his lifetime, he accomplished what few expositors have ever done—he preached through the entire Bible twice.<sup>19</sup> From the fruit of Henry’s studies and preaching, he bequeathed to the Church a six-volume commentary set, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*.<sup>20</sup> He calls pastors, in particular, to faithful

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<sup>15</sup> T. H. L. Parker, *Calvin’s Preaching* (Louisville: Westminster J. Knox Press, 1992), 1.

<sup>16</sup> Covenanted Reformed Presbyterian Church, *The First Book of Discipline*, True Covenanter, last modified January 13, 2021, [https://www.truecovenanter.com/kirkgovt/scotland\\_kirk\\_books\\_of\\_discipline\\_1621.phtml](https://www.truecovenanter.com/kirkgovt/scotland_kirk_books_of_discipline_1621.phtml). *The First Book of Discipline* is based upon the *Works of John Knox*, vol. 2, ed. David Laing (Edinburgh: James Thin, 1895), 183-260.

<sup>17</sup> Old, *The Age of Reformation*, 327.

<sup>18</sup> John MacArthur Jr., *Rediscovering Expository Preaching* (Dallas: Word Pub., 1992), 56.

<sup>19</sup> D. A. Carson, “The Primacy of Expository Preaching, Part 1” (plenary session sermon, Desiring God Pastor’s Conference, Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, January 1, 1995).

<sup>20</sup> I often turn to Matthew Henry’s extensive commentary in preparing to exposit a biblical

proclamation of the very text of Scripture: “‘The exposition or explication of thy word gives light;’ then it is most profitable when ministers do their part in giving the sense [of Scripture].”<sup>21</sup>

In more recent history, God has gifted his church with distinguished expositors who have preached consecutively through the breadth of Scripture. George Campbell Morgan (1863–1945) and D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899–1981) set the pattern for a new wave of expositional preachers who systematically taught through biblical books. Morgan looked at the ministry of preaching not as “preaching a sermon for each service, but simply [as] continuing where he was in the ongoing exposition of a book of the Bible.”<sup>22</sup> Following in Jones’ legacy have been Donald Grey Barnhouse (1895–1960), W. A. Criswell (1909–2002), S. Lewis Johnson (1915–2004), James Montgomery Boice (1938–2000), John MacArthur (1939–), John Piper (1946–) as well many younger expositors who have sequentially preached through the Scriptures.<sup>23</sup> In so doing, they have embraced Paul’s model of declaring to God’s people “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27).

With this great legacy of biblical preaching, there is danger of the contemporary church drifting from such rich expositional preaching. D. A. Carson warns that “over the last few years there has been a major push to abandon expository preaching for what is loosely called ‘narrative preaching’ that caters to the ‘less rational, nonauthoritarian, narrative-hungry sensibilities of our time.’”<sup>24</sup>

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text; his material continues to furnish helpful and timely insights to the contemporary reader.

<sup>21</sup> Matthew Henry, *An Exposition of the Book of Psalms with Practical Marks and Observations* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1866), 606.

<sup>22</sup> Ralph G. Turnbull, *A History of Preaching*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974), 442-43, quoted in James F. Stitzinger, “The History of Expository Preaching,” in MacArthur, *Rediscovering Expository Preaching*, 57.

<sup>23</sup> Stitzinger, “History of Expository Preaching,” 56.

<sup>24</sup> D. A. Carson and Timothy Keller, eds., *The Gospel as Center: Renewing our Faith and Reforming our Ministry Practices* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 15.

Yet, as faithful ministers of God feed their flocks the pure milk of the Word through an ongoing exposition of each text, they can be assured God will accomplish his purposes in blessing and building his church.<sup>25</sup> Such an outpouring of divine favor will be evidenced in deepening biblical leadership, developing nurture and training, and delighting in gospel-appropriate living.

### **Deepening Biblical Leadership**

For every divinely ordained institution, God has prescribed that some should lead and others should follow. This is true in human government, marriage and family, and the local church.<sup>26</sup>

Contrary to the opinions of many, God has not designed each local church to be a democracy with all believers equally responsible for the direction of the church. Nor has God willed that a pastor should singlehandedly wield spiritual authority over a congregation. Instead, the Lord of the church determined that a plurality of biblically qualified elders must exercise spiritual oversight.

As Luke narrates the growth and development of the churches in Acts, he consistently refers to them being led by multiple elders.<sup>27</sup> The New Testament epistles affirm the same commitment of local churches being shepherded by a plurality of elders (1 Tim 3:4-5; 5:17; Jas 5:14; 1 Pet 5:1-4). The apostle Paul, by leaving Titus in Crete “to appoint *elders* [emphasis added] in every city,” demonstrates this very intent (Titus 1:5). Missiologist Roland Alan explains, “St. Paul was not content with ordaining one elder for

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<sup>25</sup> See Isa 55:10-11 and Matt 16:18.

<sup>26</sup> God’s affirmation of leadership in government on the behalf of its citizens can be seen in Rom 13:1-5; Titus 3:1; 1 Pet 2:13-17. Biblical leadership of husbands in the marriage relationship is emphasized in Eph 5:22-33; Col 3:18; 1 Pet 3:1-6.

<sup>27</sup> See Acts 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22-23; 16:4; 20:17; 21:18.

each Church. In every place he ordained several. This ensured that all authority should not be concentrated in the hands of one man.”<sup>28</sup>

The Lord has entrusted to these spiritual shepherds the responsibility to feed, lead, and protect the flock of God. As spiritual sentinels, the elders are to provide vigilant biblical oversight to which the congregation is called to graciously submit (1 Cor 16:15-16; 1 Thess 5:12; Heb 13:17). This braces God’s people for attack both from without and from within. Shepherds of the flock must bear in mind,

Many a minister fails as a pastor because he is half asleep. He took it for granted that there were no wolves, no birds of prey, no robbers, and while he was drowsing the enemy arrived. . . . There are errors which are as fierce as wolves and pitiless as hyenas, they tear faith and hope and love to pieces and leave churches once prosperous mangled and half dead.<sup>29</sup>

Timothy Laniak warns, “Neglect in shepherding is tantamount to abuse.”<sup>30</sup> Therefore, it is of utmost importance that the flock of God is led and protected by godly elders. Mark Dever helpfully observes, “While even the most biblically structured congregation will make mistakes, the nearer a church’s polity gets to recognizing the biblical responsibilities held by the elders and by the congregation, the better protected and prepared the congregation is for the storms that inevitably come to all churches in this fallen world.”<sup>31</sup> Hence, it is imperative that the elder team for any local assembly of believers be comprised of godly men marked by biblical character, conduct, and convictions. For it is these who are to lead by precept and by their pattern of godly living.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul’s or Ours?* (London: Robert Scott, 1912), 138-39.

<sup>29</sup> Charles Jefferson, *The Minister as A Shepherd: The Privileges and Responsibilities of Pastoral Leadership* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1912), 50-51.

<sup>30</sup> Timothy Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 152.

<sup>31</sup> Mark Dever, *The Church: The Gospel Made Visible* (Nashville: B & H, 2012), 157.

<sup>32</sup> The call to the local assembly seen in Heb 13:7 is predicated upon men who have exhibited consistent godly leadership: “Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and

A commitment to deepening church leadership therefore necessitates carefully setting in place men who meet the biblical requirements to lead as elders. Jerome, in AD 394, wrote a letter to a young elder named Nepotian in which he admonishes churches for their negligent choosing of church leaders: “Many build churches nowadays; their walls and pillars of glowing marble, their ceilings glittering with gold, their altars studded with jewels. Yet to the choice of Christ’s ministers no heed is paid.”<sup>33</sup>

In selecting elders who will bear the spiritual oversight of a local church assembly, God-given parameters must be observed. Paul’s letter to Titus and his first letter to Timothy clearly prescribe such timeless qualifications.<sup>34</sup> These same requirements give current and aspiring elders a clear grasp of what is expected by God, who ultimately discharges the duties of their ministry.<sup>35</sup> These prescriptions also set the standard elders must pursue so that they continue to develop in their character and ministry to the flock. Thus, careful attention must be paid to both the elder’s character, conduct, and contribution if there is to be a maturing leadership team. Moral failure of a church leader not only makes him unfit for this role as he is no longer above reproach; such offenses brings reproach on the church and its Lord.<sup>36</sup> This sober truth is corroborated by the apostle Paul’s instructing Timothy to take pains with these matters: “Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things” (1 Tim 4:16). Hence, as foundational as it is, systematic and sound preaching of the Word does

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considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.”

<sup>33</sup> Jerome, *Letters 52*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 2, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library), 6: 251, <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/s/schaff/npnf206/cache/npnf206.pdf>.

<sup>34</sup> I address these elder qualifications in Paul’s instruction to Titus in chap. 2.

<sup>35</sup> Paul Williams, *Training Leaders: How to Ensure Gospel Succession for the Next Generation* (Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 2020), 130.

<sup>36</sup> Tragically, spiritual leaders who have led in the church and in Christian organizations for decades are regularly added to the ignominious list of men disqualified from serving because of moral compromise (see 1 Cor 9:27 and 1 Cor 10:12).

not stand alone. The call of God for all servants of his Word is to preach faithfully and live faithfully as exemplary models before the church. They dare not espouse the pervasive “Do as I say, not as I do” philosophy.<sup>37</sup> Rather, elders must “in all things show [themselves] to be an example” to the flock.<sup>38</sup> Robert Murray M’Cheyne exhorted a fellow-minister bound for Germany:

I know you will apply hard to German; but do not forget the culture of the inner man,— I mean of the heart. How diligently the cavalry officer keeps his sabre clean and sharp; every stain he rubs off with the greatest care. Remember you are God’s sword, — his instrument,— I trust a chosen vessel unto Him to bear His name. In great measure, according to the purity and perfections of the instrument, will be the success. It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus. A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God.<sup>39</sup>

It is therefore imperative that elders who are chosen and serve in a local church are men of untainted godly character. They may be men of great secular achievement and influence in the community, yet if they are not growing in likeness to Christ the Great Shepherd, they are not fit to shepherd his flock.

Os Guinness decries the secularization of contemporary church leaders: “How else can one explain the comment of a Japanese businessman to a visiting Australian? ‘Whenever I meet a Buddhist leader, I meet a holy man. Whenever I meet a Christian leader, I meet a manager . . . .’”<sup>40</sup>

What can the contemporary church do to stem the tide of compromised leadership? It comes by submitting to God’s inspired plan for deepening spiritual

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<sup>37</sup> Christ decried hypocrisy in the spiritual leadership of his day, and warned, “Therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and do not do them” (Matt 23:3).

<sup>38</sup> See Titus 2:7; 1 Pet 5:3, as well as Phil 3:17; 1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; 1 Thess 1:5-6; 2 Thess 3:7-8; and 1 Tim 4:12.

<sup>39</sup> Andrew A. Bonar, *Memoir and Remains of the Rev. Robert Murray M’Cheyne* (Edinburgh: Oliphant Anderson & Ferrier, 1892), 241-42.

<sup>40</sup> Os Guinness, *Dining with the Devil: The Megachurch Movement Flirts with Modernity* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 49.

oversight by qualified elders. Hence, every local body of believers must be prayerful and purposeful in assessing its leadership in light of the Scriptural mandate and implementing changes consistent with that standard. This includes seeking out and raising up future elders for this high service. It also requires ongoing training and evaluation of current elders to ensure their lives and ministry are above reproach and in submission to God's high calling. At times it may be necessary for unqualified men to step down from elder leadership permanently or for a season of spiritual renewal. At other times, it necessitates placing before the men in the congregation, through preaching and the ministry of discipleship, the high calling of an elder: "It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do" (1 Tim 3:1).

As the spiritual backbone of the church, the elders, continue to deepen in their godly example and ministry, the entire body of believers will be built up in their faith.

### **Developing Nurture and Training**

With an active commitment to growing church leadership at the elder level, there must be a focus on maturation of the church body through nurture and training. The apostle Paul speaks of "training in righteousness" as a product that flows from inspired Scripture. It is from this inexhaustible resource that gifted men of God, namely pastors and elders, labor "for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph 4:12). This ministry of equipping the body of Christ should take place every time the Bible is preached whether external change in the lives of the hearers is immediately visible or not.<sup>41</sup> In whatever venue God's Word is taught, whether behind a pulpit, in Sunday school classes, men and women's Bible studies, or

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<sup>41</sup> The preacher of God's Word can find great consolation from faithful Old Testament prophets. For their encouragement came not from the response of the people but from deep confidence in the inherent power of God's truth which they proclaimed. "The prophet who has a dream may relate his dream, but let him who has my word speak my word in truth. What does straw have in common with grain?" declares the LORD. "Is not my word like fire?" declares the LORD, "and like a hammer which shatters a rock?" (Jer 23:28-29).

midweek CARE groups and discipleship groups, the teacher must possess the deep-down confidence that God, through his Word, will grow the lives of his people in specific and individual ways.

Preaching that trusts in the power of God’s Word does not obviate the need for the teacher to link the meaning of the text to the listener’s life situation. Proclamation of God’s truth must be tied to, “How should we then live?” Textually-driven application necessitates addressing specific areas of spiritual development. Faithful explanation of God’s Word must be brought to bear on the lives of the listeners. Peter Adam affirms, “What we call training and equipping the saints is also a ministry of the Word, in which Christians are given not only the Bible’s teaching on the Christian life and Christian ministry, but also practical training and feedback on their ministry.”<sup>42</sup>

Pastors that embrace a strong expositional ministry of the Word must not overlook the vital importance of helping the church integrate biblical truth into daily living. Small groups should be seen as a strategic means for believers to prove themselves as “doers of the Word” (Jas 1:22). The goal is not accumulation of biblical knowledge but maximum integration into life.

Over three centuries ago, Pietist leader Philip Spener, the “father” of Pietism, promoted application groups in church ministry.<sup>43</sup> His concern was that listening to solid preaching of God’s Word would produce spiritual indigestion if not followed by action. As small groups began to meet and discuss the Sunday message, he described the effect as “watching the practice of theology bear fruit.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Peter Adam, *Speaking God’s Words: A Practical Theology of Preaching* (Leicester, England: Regent College Pub., 2004), 60.

<sup>43</sup> C. John Weborg, “Pietism: Reborn in Order to Renew,” Fuller Studio, accessed December 9, 2020, <https://fullerstudio.fuller.edu/pietism-reborn-in-order-to-renew/>; Lane Joel Creamer, “Equipping Disciples through Sermon Application Groups at the Protestant Chapel, Heidelberg, Germany” (DMin project, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014).

<sup>44</sup> Michael Fabarez, *Preaching that Changes Lives* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2002), 185.

Both in the ministry of biblical preaching and its application, specific areas must be given particular attention. The apostle Paul addresses four such areas in his letter to Titus that serve as a framework in any ministry of nurturing through God’s Word.<sup>45</sup> These include training in the following: sound doctrine, gender distinctions, generational differences, and job relationships.

### **Sound Doctrine**

A robust commitment to sound doctrine is non-negotiable for building up saints in their faith. According to one definition, “Doctrine is teaching *from* God *about* God that directs us *to the glory of God*.”<sup>46</sup> In Paul’s letter to Titus, the Apostle models training in sound doctrine. He establishes a theological foundation by articulating essential and abiding doctrines including the character of God (1:2), the sinfulness of man (1:15), the return of Christ (2:13), redemption (2:14), salvation by mercy and not works (3:5), and justification by grace (3:7).<sup>47</sup> One who would serve as an elder, Paul insists, must be characterized by “holding fast the faithful word . . . that he may be able to . . . exhort in sound doctrine” (1:9). He also emphasizes that Titus must “speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine” (Titus 2:1) and “be an example of good deeds with purity of doctrine” (2:7). Paul in turn instructs Titus, “Urge bond-slaves to be subject to their own masters . . . that they may adorn the doctrine of God . . . in every respect” (2:9-10).

Several years later, in his final letter written to Timothy, Paul warns, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* [emphasis added]

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<sup>45</sup> These areas of Christian maturity have been explored exegetically in chap. 2 of this project, and here they are developed by way of application.

<sup>46</sup> Scott Swain, “What is Doctrine?” *Ligonier* (blog), January 27, 2017, <https://www.ligonier.org/blog/what-doctrine/>.

<sup>47</sup> Andreas Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville: B & H, 2009), 648.

to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires” (2 Tim 4:3). Such teachers abound in contemporary Christianity. No few churches in our current day avoid doctrinal preaching and the great verities of God and instead pander to the whims of the audience with current events, edgy video clips, and entertaining stories. Yet, any God-exalting ministry of preaching his Word must faithfully articulate biblical doctrines of Scripture that keep God at the center. For this will produce people with a deep knowledge of God who understand how to live to the glory of God. Thomas Schreiner affirms this fundamental relationship: “Sound doctrine is never abstracted from life. It is always intertwined with life.”<sup>48</sup> Belief determines behavior; thus, preaching must endeavor to lay before the listeners sound biblical and systematic theology to which Christians, in the Spirit’s power, can conform their lives.

### **Gender Distinctions**

As Paul gives instruction to believers in the churches, he emphasizes there is no distinction among them in regard to salvation. He insists, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28). Yet pertaining to roles in the home, society, and church, the apostle Paul affirms clear distinctions. In Titus 2, he addresses older men in distinction to older women, and young women in contrast to young men. Each of these four groups are in turn given specific instruction tailored to their particular situation.<sup>49</sup>

It is of utmost importance that ministers of God’s Word uphold and proclaim gender distinctions God has sovereignly designed for his glory. John Piper sounds the alarm:

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<sup>48</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, “Overseeing and Serving the Church in the Pastoral and General Epistles,” in *Shepherding God’s Flock: Biblical Leadership in the New Testament and Beyond*, ed. Benjamin Merkle and Thomas R. Schreiner (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2014), 90.

<sup>49</sup> These group-specific injunctions have been examined in chap. 2.

The tendency today is to stress the equality of men and women by minimizing the unique significance of our maleness and our femaleness. But this deprecation of male and female personhood is a great loss. It is taking a tremendous toll on generations of young men and women who don't know what it means to be a man or woman. The consequence . . . is more divorce, more social awkwardness, and more emotional distress and suicide that comes with the loss of God-given identity.<sup>50</sup>

The pulpit ministry then must combat the pervasive lie in our culture that attacks God-given differences between male and female. It must decry the ungodly LGBTQ agenda which exchanges the truth of God for a lie and assaults God's impeccable design in marriage.<sup>51</sup> R. Albert Mohler Jr. insists, "There is no way that faithful Christians can celebrate an unbiblical sexual orientation and claim to be faithful to Scripture."<sup>52</sup> For God has clearly revealed his beautiful plan for marriage and the family.

Faithful preachers must hold the line and declare unabashedly God's will for sexual identity and holy matrimony. They must unflinchingly hold to the God-given call for husbands to lovingly lead their wives, and wives in turn must submit to their husbands (Eph 5:24-25; Col 3:18-19; 1 Pet 3:1, 7). For the egalitarian view of husbands and wives distorts the relationship which God has chosen for marriage to illustrate—Christ's love for his bride, the Church, and her submission to Christ as her Head (Eph 5:32).

### **Generational Differences**

Hadyn Shaw, in "Churches Need to Improve Their Generational IQ" leadership forum, suggests that "generational differences are the largest challenge that

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<sup>50</sup> John Piper and Wayne Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 33.

<sup>51</sup> The apostle Paul, in Rom 1:18-32, describes "the wrath of God from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness." Consequently, God "gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper."

<sup>52</sup> R. Albert Mohler Jr., quoted in David Roach, "LGBT Christians' Conf. Draws SBTS, ERLC Responses," *Baptist Press*, July 27, 2018, <https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/lgbt-christians-conf-draws-sbts-erlc-responses/>.

churches face.”<sup>53</sup> Shaw contends that understanding such distinctions will help churches ask better questions and prepare more helpful messages.

The apostle Paul showed keen awareness to age and generational distinctions in the church. His letters to the churches, as well as personal letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon show the importance he placed on proper relationships between younger and older in congregations (Eph 6:1-2; Col 3:20; 1 Tim 5:1-2, 9; Titus 2:6; Phlm 9). Parents are to be shown honor and obedience by their children (Eph 6:1-2), older men and women are to be treated with respect as due one’s own father and mother (1 Tim 5:1-2), and women who are “widows indeed” are to receive special honor by the church (1 Tim 5:3-10). Among the specific requirements to qualify as “a widow indeed,” it is noteworthy that Paul stipulates the woman had to be at least sixty years of age (1 Tim 5:9). The apostle Peter also addresses generational distinctives among believers. In his first epistle to churches scattered throughout the Roman Empire he writes, “You younger men . . . be subject to your elders (1 Pet 5:5).

While younger men and women must be taught to honor those older than them, the latter must be instructed to set an example worthy to be followed. “Older men,” Titus writes, “are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance.” Likewise, “older women are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good” (Titus 2:2-3). “Teaching what is good” anticipates the specific ministry they must actively embrace: “[to] encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children. . . .” This vital ministry of encouragement calls older women in the church to train and spur on the younger generation of women in their role as wives and mothers.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Hadyn Shaw, “Churches Need to Improve Their Generational IQ,” Faith & Leadership, January 26, 2016, <https://faithandleadership.com/haydn-shaw-churches-need-improve-their-generational-iq>.

<sup>54</sup> Young women in the church must exhibit teachable hearts if they are to learn from those more mature than them. One lady at HCBC, burdened for younger women to fulfill their biblical roles remarked, “But they just aren’t asking questions of the older ones!”

Faithful expositors of God's truth must be faithful to teach and train their congregations in the responsibilities God has given for both the older and younger generations. God's people must appreciate the generational distinctives and their requisite responsibilities and be admonished when they disregard them. The non-canonical epistle of 1 Clement, written in the mid-90s AD, describes a group of headstrong young men who instigated the removal of their church's elders. In response, Clement, Bishop of Rome, rebukes this brash group of troublemakers for showing such shameful disrespect (1 Clem 1:1; 3:3; 21:6).<sup>55</sup>

In ministering God's Word to his people, pastors must not only show sensitivity to their congregations' physical age distinctions but also to the various levels of spiritual maturity represented. The apostle John models this as he takes time in his first epistle to address three generations represented by his recipients comprised of little children, fathers, and young men: "I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for his name's sake. I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one" (1 John 2:12-13).

Hence, every local church must be taught the God-appointed calling for each physical and spiritual generation represented in their assembly.<sup>56</sup> This will help each individual better grasp God's specific design for them to emulate; it will also inform the entire congregation how they can pray for and encourage fellow believers to pursue God's high calling for them.

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<sup>55</sup> Nathan Finn, "Respecting Our Elders," *Ligonier* (blog), March 1, 2013, <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/respecting-our-elders/>.

<sup>56</sup> Such important matters will be encountered, and therefore preached, by a pastor who teaches through the Scriptures in a consecutive book-by-book and verse-by-verse manner.

## **Job (Employer-Employee) Relationships**

Equipping a congregation through expository preaching must also bring God's truth to bear on an oft overlooked area of his people's lives: employment. God has included in the Scriptures multiple texts, narrative and didactic, which focus on interplay in the marketplace.<sup>57</sup> These include the master-slave relationship which provides applicable principles to the employer-employee relationship. "With good will render service as to the Lord, and not to men" places before the Christian worker the highest motivation for excellence on the job (Eph 6:7-8). The anticipated reward follows: "knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord." Masters, in turn are instructed: "do the same thing to them . . . knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with him" (Eph 6:9).

David Miller observes, "Many who are Christians claim of a 'Sunday-Monday gap,' where their Sunday worship hour bears little to no relevance to the issues they face in their Monday workplace hours."<sup>58</sup> Why is this too often the case? "Whether conscious or unintended," Miller continues, "the pulpit all too frequently sends the signal that work in the church matters but work in the world does not."<sup>59</sup> David Platt underscores the importance of this matter for the pastor:

If the people I pastor work forty hours a week for forty years of their lives, that means they will put in more than eighty thousand hours at a job during their lifetime. . . . Consequently, one of our greatest needs in the church is an understanding of how daily work according to God's Word ties in with God's ultimate purpose in the world.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> See Gen 2:15; Gen 29-31; Exod 5; Ruth 2; Prov 14:23; 18:9; 22:29; 24:27; 31:13; Eccl 2:18-24; Acts 18:3; Eph 4:28; Col 3:22-4:1; 1 Thess 4:11-12; 2 Thess 3:10; 2 Tim 2:6; Titus 2:9-10; Rev 22:3.

<sup>58</sup> David W. Miller, *God at Work: The History and Promise of the Faith at Work Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 10.

<sup>59</sup> Miller, *God at Work*, 10.

<sup>60</sup> Sabastian Traeger and Greg Gilbert, *The Gospel at Work* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 11.

This bifurcated view of Christian worship and work can be remedied as God's design for work relationships is expounded in preaching the whole counsel of God. Then both executives and employees, business owners and business workers will learn from Scripture that their faith must inform how they perceive and carry out their work to the glory of God. As Old and New Testament texts that touch on the marketplace are taught in the normal course of expositional preaching, both idleness at work and idolatry of work will be confronted. Believers in the marketplace will come to see that whom they work for is infinitely more important than what they do for work.<sup>61</sup> They will come to embrace their work first and foremost as the mission with which God has entrusted them.

### **Delighting in Gospel-Appropriate Living**

Equipping God's people through expository preaching is not complete unless it also addresses their witness to the world. In the book of Titus, Pauline emphasis on the saving plan of God through Christ (1:2-3; 3:4-7) indicates a major aim is for the reader to be equipped for effective evangelism.<sup>62</sup> They must see those around them in dire need of hearing the lifesaving message of the gospel. How can the believers in the fledgling churches on Crete gain a hearing from those pagans all around them? How can they best make known to lost men, women, and children "the hope of eternal life . . . which God promised long ago" (Titus 1:2)? Effective and God-honoring evangelism is predicated upon three great truths: the design of God, the declaration of the gospel, and the demonstration of that good news.

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<sup>61</sup> Traeger and Gilbert, *The Gospel at Work*, 15.

<sup>62</sup> John MacArthur, "Introduction to Titus," *MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 1853.

## Design of God

God's sovereign design in salvation provides the solid underpinning for gospel witness. Convinced of this truth, the Apostle, in his opening sentence to Titus, designates believers in the church with the descriptive phrase, "chosen of God." In so doing, he establishes from the outset of his letter the fact that those who have come to faith in Christ have done so in response to God's prior selection of them.<sup>63</sup> The God who saves is the God who chose whom he would save. Spurgeon, quoting John Adams, aptly comments, "Sons we are through God's election, who by Jesus Christ believe; by eternal destination sovereign grace is here received."<sup>64</sup> J. I. Packer urges, "We must never forget that it is God who saves. It is God who brings men and women under the sound of the gospel, and it is God who brings them to faith in Christ."<sup>65</sup> For from start to finish, "salvation is from the LORD" (Jonah 2:9).

Unswerving confidence in God's sovereign choosing whom he will save affirms that "it *does* not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy" (Rom 9:16). The gospel message shows the only way people can be rescued from the plight they are in is by crying out to God who has shown mercy in Christ. Certainty of divine election for salvation thus frees the Christian from having to rely upon man-centered programs, marketing techniques, and pressure tactics in witnessing. But it does not deprive the Christian of the responsibility to declare the gospel of Christ.

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<sup>63</sup> Paul uses the term *eklektos* to describe "those whom God has chosen from the generality of mankind and drawn to himself." Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick William Danker, trans. William Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, 3rd ed., BDAG (2000; repr., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), s.v. "*Eklektos*." See also Matt 22:14; Acts 15:7; Eph 1:4; 1 Pet 1:1.

<sup>64</sup> John Adams, *Gospel Magazine* 4, no. 120, April 1777 (London: Vallance and Simmons), 77, quoted in C. H. Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Sermons*, vol. 2 (New York: Sheldon, Blakeman, 1857), 80. The words come under the heading, "The godly consideration of Predestination and Election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons."

<sup>65</sup> J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1961), 27.

## Declaration

David Bosch states, “The primary responsibility of ‘ordinary’ Christians is not to go out and preach, but to support the mission project through their appealing conduct and by making ‘outsiders’ feel welcome in their midst.”<sup>66</sup> Such a view diminishes the universal nature of Christ’s Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20), obscures clear texts that speak of the active participation in sharing the gospel by all believers (Phil 1:14-18; 2:16; 1 Thess 1:8), and ignores the imperative command of putting on shoes for spreading the gospel (Eph 6:15).<sup>67</sup>

For the believers on Crete, the message they had heard preached from the beginning was the message they in turn were to proclaim:

But when the kindness of God our Savior and *His* love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior (Titus 3:4-6).

The good news that must be declared is not an ideology, opinion, or religious system. It is a person, the Lord Jesus Christ, who came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10).

Therefore, the apostle Paul asserts, “Him we proclaim . . . that we may present everyone complete in Christ” (Col 1:28 ESV).

Believers sitting under faithful exposition of God’s Word will regularly hear God’s call for them as ambassadors of Christ to plead with others on his behalf to be reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:20-21). Convinced of the urgency of declaring the Lord Jesus, a Christian made the following resolve for life: “Whenever I was in such intimacy with a soul as to be justified in choosing my subject of conversation with another, the theme of themes (Christ) shall have prominence between us, so that I may learn of his need, and, if

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<sup>66</sup> David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011), 138.

<sup>67</sup> P. T. O’Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 124.

possible, meet it.”<sup>68</sup> For “there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Therefore, the primary God-ordained means of evangelism is all Christians telling others of the spiritual plight they are in and how Christ alone is their only hope. It is one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread—the Bread of life!

### **Demonstration**

God calls his children to live consistently with the message they proclaim. Declaration must be accompanied by demonstration. Paul places great emphasis on the necessity of such distinctive Christian living in writing to Titus. That son in the faith (and by extension all young men) was to be “sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.” The shame Paul envisages “should probably be understood not simply as public embarrassment, but the remorse of genuine repentance which accompanies saving faith.”<sup>69</sup> This reality evidences divine expectation of Christian conduct being a powerful apologetic in the gospel. The apostle Peter emphasizes the same thought to Christians scattered throughout the Roman Empire: “Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, glorify God in the day of visitation” (1 Pet 2:12). A vivid testimony of a godly life before a watching world had been enjoined upon Peter and his fellow disciples by Christ: “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matt 5:16). The philosopher Seneca, a contemporary of the apostle Peter, and known for his hypocrisy, spoke better

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<sup>68</sup> Charles Gallaudet Trumbull, *Taking Men Alive* (New York: Association Press, 1912), 68-69.

<sup>69</sup> Robert L. Plummer, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006) 101-2. See 1 Tim 1:20; 2 Thess 3:14-15; Matt 5:14-16; 1 Pet 2:12; 3:16.

than he lived when he said, “Prove your words by your deeds.”<sup>70</sup> Similarly, the skeptical German poet Heinrich Heine told Christians, “You show me your redeemed life, and I might be inclined to believe in your Redeemer.”<sup>71</sup>

Winsome and exemplary living will not suffice in and of itself but will showcase the preached gospel to the watching world. It puts on display what Christ does in transforming the lives of those who embrace it by repentant faith. Dever affirms, “The church is to be the appearance of the gospel. It’s what the gospel looks like when played out in people’s lives. Take away the church and you take away the visible manifestation of the gospel in the world.”<sup>72</sup> That visible manifestation of the gospel, the church which is the body of Christ, shows men and women the beauty of Christ their Head. Therefore, the heart and soul of evangelism is not what believers do for Christ but what he does through them.<sup>73</sup> It is he who has works in the lives of those he has chosen, resulting in lips that proclaim and lives that embody the gospel. This is the message that every expositor must preach to his flock, and in the power of the Spirit, emulate before God’s people and the watching world.

### **Conclusion**

Expository preaching is not a recent development in the ministry of the Word but is described in the Old Testament and prescribed in the New Testament. It is the unleashing of God’s very thoughts revealed in a biblical text. Throughout church history, God has raised up men who faithfully feed his flock a solid diet of exegetical sermons

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<sup>70</sup> Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Moral Epistles*, vol. 1, trans. Richard M. Gummere, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1917-25), 135, [https://www.stoics.com/seneca\\_epistles\\_book\\_1.html#%E2%80%98XX1Epistle 20](https://www.stoics.com/seneca_epistles_book_1.html#%E2%80%98XX1Epistle%2020).

<sup>71</sup> Heinrich Heine, “Good Example,” Preaching.com, accessed December 9, 2020, <https://www.preaching.com/sermon-illustrations/good-example/>.

<sup>72</sup> Dever, *The Church*, 165.

<sup>73</sup> Joe Aldrich, *Life-Style Evangelism* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1981), 121.

and explain the text in a consecutive verse-by-verse manner. From this biblical and historical precedent of expository preaching, the book of Titus should be proclaimed. Honoring the apostle Paul's authorial intent in this epistle (for God's people to have greater zeal for good deeds) requires deepening in biblical leadership, developing in modeling and training, and delighting in gospel-appropriate living. All these flow from the text of Titus and will result in lasting fruit when faithfully preached and fervently practiced.

## CHAPTER 4

### DESCRIPTION OF THE MINISTRY RESEARCH PROJECT

The project of further equipping the congregation of HCBC in being zealous for good deeds included the following elements: initial assessment of the congregation's active commitment to ministry, preparation for and preaching expositionally through the book of Titus, elder feedback, implementation of follow-through (CARE groups, ministry teams, and a new members' class), and a post-preaching series assessment. This chapter highlights each of these six facets as they were undertaken at HCBC during a 16-week period. Overall evaluation of the project's effectiveness will be addressed in chapter 5.

#### **Assessment of the Congregation**

The assessment of the HCBC congregation regarding the degree to which members were in some capacity (and thus giving some evidence of) being zealous for good deeds was carried out by informal observation as well as by means of a formal questionnaire. Both were helpful in revealing the level of the members' commitment to active participation in serving the saints.

#### **Informal Observation**

Watching and reflecting on the present ministry involvement of the members at HCBC was a useful indicator of the degree to which those in the church body were serving one another. Observing those in the congregation who were actively ministering to others, as well as those who were not engaged in faithful service, revealed great

opportunity for the church members to flourish all the more in this vital area of ministry.<sup>1</sup> Of those not currently serving, some had expressed willingness to participate and help yet seemed to lack either understanding or initiative in embracing a place of active ministry.<sup>2</sup>

The HCBC elder team was grateful to God to see the faithful core of church members who carry much of the weight of week-to-week ministry responsibilities. This group includes gifted teachers for the Sunday equipping hour and Bible studies as well as members who serve in the ministry of music, sound, church website, ushering, preparing special church meals, and keeping our facility neat and running efficiently.

While the overall needs of the church were being met, the elders deeply desired to see others in the congregation embrace the joy of ministering for God’s glory and the edification of other members. The elders did not perceive this as a crisis in which the majority of the church showed no interest in serving or a situation in which 80 percent of the church ministry was being done by 20 percent of the people.<sup>3</sup> Rather, it was a God-given opportunity for the congregation to excel still more in ministering to the needs of others.

### **Formal Assessment**

Formal assessment was then made of the congregation through a pre-sermon series Zealous for Good Deeds survey (see appendix 1). This ten-question tool made use

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<sup>1</sup> Scripture affirms the priority of God’s people being able to “distinguish . . . between one who serves God and one who does not serve him” (Mal 3:18).

<sup>2</sup> Statements such as, “Let me know how I can serve,” shared from genuine hearts of love, did not seem to be followed-up by the member or church leadership; this resulted in a number of individuals who were willing to serve yet still waiting to serve.

<sup>3</sup> This 80/20 rule, often referred to as the Pareto principle, has been used as an informal measuring device for local churches. “Application of the Pareto Principle in Today’s Church,” accessed January 20, 2021, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323127023ApplicationoftheParetoPrincipleinToday’sChurch>.

of the six-point Likert scale, allowing responses from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” Members of the congregation were given opportunity to respond to statements concerning their understanding of what it means to be zealous for good deeds. The questions were also designed to help members identify and express their present commitment to ministry at HCBC. There was a total of 41 members who completed the pre- and post-preaching series in Titus.<sup>4</sup>

Since HCBC members were not accustomed to taking such church-based surveys, it was necessary to explain how this survey would help the elders better know how to shepherd and minister to the congregation.<sup>5</sup> The goal was to establish a baseline that reflected the attitude members had toward being zealous for good deeds that could then be used to evaluate their growth in understanding and in actual serving following the expositional preaching series from Titus.

When the surveys were completed by the congregation, it was helpful to share with the elder team highlights gleaned from the feedback. The responses to the initial survey helped the elders gain a better understanding of how the members perceived ministry to believers in the church and their own personal level of involvement.

Based upon both informal and formal assessment of members related to the subject of being zealous for good deeds, it became evident that allocating two months to preaching through Titus would be both timely and helpful to the congregation.

### **Preparation for Expositional Preaching of Titus**

Laying the groundwork for the Titus preaching series received careful attention and substantial study. Thoroughly grasping the overall argument of the book of Titus

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<sup>4</sup> This included 11 that participated in a new member’s class as part of the project.

<sup>5</sup> I had also told the church family at our previous membership meeting that I would be doing a study program in expository preaching at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, so there was some context for the survey. My great concern in the entire project and DMin program was that it would not only benefit me personally but be a significant blessing to the HCBC family.

related to being zealous for good deeds was vital before embarking on the series of messages. My ambition was that members of HCBC would come to grasp the burden of Paul in writing Titus: all believers in the churches throughout Crete were to be wholeheartedly committed to a life of good deeds both in the fellowship of the local church as well as to the watching world outside the church. Therefore, it was my desire that our church family come to realize how God calls his children not to an either-or focus of edification or evangelism but to a simultaneous commitment to both.

### **Expositional Preaching of Titus**

The preaching plan for the zealous for good deeds project featured an 8-week systematic study through the epistle of Titus. Each message was approximately fifty minutes in length and was preached to a congregation of families including children.<sup>6</sup> The opening message focused on the introduction to the epistle of Titus (1:1-4). It laid the context for the entire book, establishing the writer (Paul), the addressee (Titus), the date (c. AD 62-64) and the main argument of the letter: sound doctrine produces sound living shown in good works in and outside the church. The goal of preaching this initial sermon was that members of HCBC would be gripped with a deeper sense of this being God's great purpose for them in the world. This divine design anticipates productive living before God that impacts others, both saved and unsaved, for his glory.

The first expository sermon highlighted four areas of devotion in Paul's life and ministry that compel all believers to purposeful living for God's sake: commitment to (1) God's rule, (2) God's plan, (3) God's Word, and (4) God's church. The commitment to God's rule called listeners to view themselves as Paul did in two ways— as bond-servants (literally “slaves”) of God and as ambassadors whose ambition is to make him

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<sup>6</sup> At HCBC, parents with children three years and older typically seek to train them to participate as much as possible in singing, praying, and listening to the preaching of God's Word in the worship service.

known. The commitment to God's plan urged listeners to joyfully embrace how he has given saving faith to those chosen by him.<sup>7</sup> The commitment to God's Word enjoined upon the congregation the urgent need to boldly proclaim the gospel, and the commitment to God's church called believers to celebrate his kindness in giving them a common faith.

The congregation listened with attentiveness to the first message and evidenced anticipation for the following sermons from the Titus series. There was a spirit of encouragement and expectation as to how the Lord would bless this preaching series that was so pertinent to our church situation.

The focus of the second message from Titus was encapsulated in the title: "Correction of Zealous for Good Deeds." The goal of the preaching was to convey with conviction the apostle Paul's urgent call to Titus for order in the churches. Adhering closely to the text (1:5-9), the preaching emphasized the crisis, character, conduct, and conviction of spiritual leadership. Special emphasis was placed on the purpose for which Paul left Titus, his true child in a common faith, at Crete: to "set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city." In explicating the text, I endeavored to show how the needs Paul was addressing had great application to our situation as a local church: "Paul calls Timothy to shore up what is lacking in the young churches that had begun on Crete. That need is true for every church including Hope in Christ Bible Church. And it is true for every one of us individually. There is a need to fix what is lacking."

I went on to spell out specific areas of obedience for the congregation to consider: their prayer life, reading and meditating on God's Word, growing in courageous commitment to testify of Christ, and for any who may not be genuinely saved, repenting of sin.

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<sup>7</sup> It is my conviction that the doctrine of election and all systematic theology are best learned by a congregation when they are shown how these teachings flow from the God-given context of entire biblical books.

Continuing in this second message, the Pauline call to appoint elders in every city (1:4) had tremendous application to our church. For the HCBC elders believed it was timely to share with the congregation how we anticipated soon welcoming a faithful brother in the Lord to join us on the elder team. Thus, describing the character requirements (1: 6) and the conduct requirements (1:7) for a local church elder gave our congregation a fresh understanding of what God requires in one whom he would have serve in the capacity of elder.<sup>8</sup>

Preaching the third sermon from chapter one, entitled “Don’t Be Duped,” profiled how Paul sounds the alarm against attacks from within the church. The reality of false teachers, then and now, was shown in regard to their danger (“they are deceivers”), the defense against them (“reprove them severely”), and their deeds (“they profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny him”). In view of this warning from the text, I cautioned the congregation:

We can be certain that what Titus faced there on Crete speaks to our time as well. You cannot give enemies of the gospel an inch. You do not hand them the microphone. You do not give deceivers an audience, no place on the platform, no opportunity whatsoever to teach God’s flock.

I endeavored to show the listeners that silencing any form of false teaching in the church requires stopping its proponents with the truth. It is therefore incumbent upon the shepherds of the flock, the elders at HCBC, to be skilled in teaching God’s Word effectively. John Calvin insisted, “The pastor ought to have two voices: one, for gathering the sheep, and another for warding off and driving away wolves and thieves. The Scripture supplies him with the means of doing both.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> A couple months after preaching through the biblical requirements for elders in Titus 1, the members of HCBC affirmed and welcomed this man as a new member of the elder team.

<sup>9</sup> John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, trans. William Pringle (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1856), 296.

The fourth message in the expository series from Titus (2:1-5) focused on “Distinctive Christian Living” prescribed by God for particular groups within the church assembly: older men, older women, and younger women in the church. By way of application of the Pauline injunction for the first group, I exhorted them, “Older men, now is not the time to rest. It’s time for you and me to be vigilant in running the Christian race with aim and Spirit-dependent self-control.” And the older women in the congregation were encouraged to follow the plea of the text and pursue a ministry of biblical encouragement to the young women: “When they approach you with questions or concerns, graciously point them to God’s Word and God’s grace for applying it.” The younger ladies of the church received the following injunction that flowed from the preached text: “Younger women, God calls you to have a humble and teachable heart. You have to want to follow his plan and learn from godly women in the church. For they are a gold mine resource for you!”

A second message on “Distinctive Christian Living” covered Titus 2:6-10.<sup>10</sup> This addressed two more specific groups in the local church, the young men and slaves, to which the apostle Paul directs the readers’ attention. As our church congregation includes a significant portion of young men, I followed the exhortation given by Paul to Titus: “Likewise urge the young men to be sensible” (Titus 2:6). I called the young men of our church to stay far from compromises that lead to costly consequences to their body and soul and instead to follow Titus’ example in good deeds, pure doctrine, and a life of dignity. Finally, flowing from the apostolic mandate for “bond-slaves to be subject to their own masters in everything,” I then placed before all employees in our congregation five specific points of living out our text with regard to their employers: submit, show respect, stop speaking against, stop stealing, and show loyalty.

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<sup>10</sup> In the process of preparation for the fourth message (Titus 2:1-10), it became apparent to me that it would serve the church family best to divide this section into two parts. This afforded greater opportunity to unfold and apply the text in light of the five specific groups to which Paul gives instruction.

What a joy to see these timeless principles of God's Word, given nearly two millennia ago, joyfully embraced by our congregation. It was encouraging to hear how this specific application was particularly timely for members seeking to be a testimony for Christ in their workplace.

The sixth expository message from Titus (2:11-15) showcased the grace of God in action which calls his people to obedience. Hence, at the top of the sermon notes appeared the title, "Motivated by God's Grace." This sermon celebrated the appearance of God's grace in Christ, the about-face of God's grace (a call for repentance), the anticipation of God's grace in Christ's second coming, and the great aim of God's grace: "a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds" (2:14).

The congregation reflected on the grace of God made visible for the world to see in the person of Christ for which reason the apostle John declared, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. For of His fullness, we have all received, and grace upon grace" (John 1:14, 16).

The grace of God in Christ includes an expectation of obedience from its recipients to be shown both in the church and outside the church. Thus, the congregation was urged, "Because Christ has redeemed us and won our freedom from sin and death . . . our lives should be abounding in self-giving deeds fueled by love for our Redeemer." It was pointed out in the sermon that although the target group Paul had in mind, and to whom believers are called to extend good deeds is primarily believers, it must not exclude unbelievers. Christians are called to "do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith" (Gal 6:10). In developing this emphasis, it was an appropriate time to commend the faithful servants of HCBC who are fervent in their witness to the world and regularly minister their spiritual gifts for the good of the church body. Borrowing from the inspired affirmation of Hebrews 6:10, I reminded them, "For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward

his name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.” Members of HCBC who were more characterized by zealous service to the Lord in the past rather than in the present were called to ask God to increase their zeal in serving for his glory. Their need was to conform to Christ’s will for them as revealed in the text.<sup>11</sup> Lastly, a third group in the church was addressed—those who evidence little interest in serving. Out of great concern for these, I warned how claiming to be saved by God’s grace, but not serving out of God’s grace, is a contradiction in terms.

The seventh message in the Zealous for Good Deeds series (Titus 3:1-8) looked at Paul giving Titus hands-on instruction as to how he must faithfully teach God’s people to be lights in a dark place. In God’s providence, this came as a timely word for Christians in a godless culture. Based on the clear imperatives of this text, believers are to live as good citizens by showing subjection and obedience to government leaders. God calls his own to be a winsome witness to a wicked world.

In developing the text, it was a delight to remind the congregation that when we were foolish, disobedient, and deceived in our sin, God invaded our hopeless lives and changed everything: “But when the kindness of God our Savior and *His* love for mankind appeared, He saved us” (Titus 3:4, 5). And the expected response which God is looking for is “that those who have believed God may be careful to engage in good deeds.” For “these things are good and profitable for men” (Titus 3:8). In walking with the congregation through the passage, we were confronted once again with God’s great concern for the churches—that his people would be zealous for good deeds.

The capstone expository sermon preached from Titus 3:9-15 called the listeners to growth in good deeds. It emphasized how “God’s design is that all of his people with all of their hearts would minister for his glory.” By adhering to the argument

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<sup>11</sup> The goal of the preacher is not to coerce or cajole believers to serve but rather to trust the Spirit of God to work through his living and active word and move their hearts to joyful obedience.

of the text, I endeavored to show them God’s path to such a goal. Negatively, that required explaining and applying the apostolic warning to avoid foolish debates and reject factious men. Positively, it included a call to take practical steps of obedience in being more zealous for good deeds. For just as Paul instructed Titus to “diligently help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way so that nothing is lacking for them,” so God calls each Christian to actively minister to others in deed.

Members at HCBC were exhorted to embrace the attitude of lifelong students who “*learn to engage in good deeds [emphasis added]*” (3:14). Out of concern that our people respond with the right heart attitude, I emphasized the grace of God in Christ in the conclusion of the final message: “So Christian, keep before your eyes the greatness of God’s grace, namely Jesus. For he makes our service not a duty but a delight. Therefore, from a heart overwhelmed with thanks to him, live a life like never before, zealous for good deeds!”

### **Elder Feedback on Titus Series**

I was grateful for the written and spoken input of my three fellow elders as I preached through the epistle to Titus. Their listening to the sermons as shepherds of the flock enabled them to share helpful insights and suggestions for my weekly preparation. Related to the question of enthusiasm in preaching the messages from the book of Titus, one elder responded, “Great energy, looking up at the congregation, changing volume and pace, very engaging.” Regarding the question of my pace in preaching, one kind elder wrote “talked too fast at times” which I was grateful that he shared!<sup>12</sup> It was a great encouragement to know that the elders wholeheartedly supported my preparation and preaching of every message. Reading of the text from Titus that was to be preached was incorporated into the elders’ meeting. I would then give a preview of the coming message

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<sup>12</sup> “As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another” (Prov 27:17).

and welcome their suggestions, particularly related to applying the biblical truths in specific ways to our congregation.

### **Implementation of Follow-Through**

A major component of this ministry project was focused on specific opportunities for application by HCBC members. For the goal was that God's people would not only be careful hearers of God's Word but also be faithful doers of his Word who know his blessing.<sup>13</sup>

### **CARE Group Integration**

HCBC devoted three CARE group sessions during the series to review and re-emphasize what was being preached from the book of Titus. Each week focused consecutively on the highlights of the chapter that had been previously taught to the congregation. It was a timely opportunity to work through practical application of what the Lord was showing church members from the powerful truths in the book of Titus. A small group setting, with a focus on interpersonal sharing, was particularly advantageous to the internalization and appropriation of these biblical emphases.

In the first CARE group session, those in attendance were asked to recall the major theme of the entire book succinctly stated in Titus 2:14 concerning why Jesus gave himself for us. Negatively, it was "that he might redeem us from every lawless deed." And positively, it was to make us "a people for his own possession, zealous for good deeds." Thus, it was emphasized that the goal of the gospel is not only to save us from our sins but to cause us to be a people whose lives abound in good deeds.

The CARE group participants also focused together on the perspective they, following Paul's example, must embrace to abound in good deeds. They were reminded

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<sup>13</sup> Christ called his disciples to active obedience to what he had taught and shown them saying, "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them" (John 13:17; see also Jas 1:22-25).

to view themselves as bond-servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the gospel message to make known.

Additionally, in the first CARE group follow-up meeting, the elder qualifications were reviewed. Rather than merely reciting each of these from Titus 1:6-9, the CARE group leaders elicited the input from those present along the following line of application: “What would happen if an elder was not above reproach or not the husband of one wife? Or what would happen in the church if an elder was pugnacious or fond of sordid gain?” Helpful input was shared by those in the CARE groups illustrating the deleterious impact of elders who do not model the biblical standard for church leadership including being consistent examples of good deeds.

An important part of discussion in the first follow-up CARE group time related to how God’s call for believers to be zealous for good deeds ran cross-grain to the Cretan culture (1:12-14) and runs cross-grain to our contemporary culture. This gave opportunity for each participant to consider the challenges and count the cost in their obedient response to the messages being preached. The closing time of prayer focused on interceding for one another to have a God-given desire to serve fellow believers for his glory.

The second CARE group in the Titus series gave attention to character qualities highlighted by Paul for five specific groups in the local church: older men (2:2), older women (2:3), young women (2:4-5), young men (2:6-8) and slaves (2:9-10). Those present offered practical examples of how living out those qualities would look for each of those groups in a contemporary church context.

As many of those who attend the CARE groups are employed in local businesses, it was fitting to talk about how Titus was to “urge bond-slaves to be subject to their own masters in everything . . . that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.” After looking together at other New Testament passages related to the master-slave relationship (1 Pet 2:18-20; Col 3:22-24), we then discussed how a Christian

employee who has a bad attitude and trouble following the boss's instructions greatly dishonors Christ. On the other hand, we shared about how a joyful and submissive attitude to one's employer gives a winsome witness for Christ. An increasing number in our church testified of how God was blessing their lives in the workplace and, by his grace, was enabling them to "adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect" (Titus 2:10).

The third CARE group meeting focused on applying what the congregation had already heard preached from the final chapter of Titus—God's children must "be ready for every good deed" (Titus 3:1) before the watching world and in the church. The groups discussed the biblically mandated attitude and actions believers ought to exhibit toward those whom God has put in places of governing authority over them. Participants also talked about what specifically enables and motivates them to be zealous for good deeds—the gospel. Together we noted and rejoiced in how all three members of the godhead participate in our salvation: "[God] saved us . . . by the washing and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior" (Titus 3:5).

It was helpful for CARE group participants to see how believers are called not only to realize they are to be zealous for good deeds but are also to execute this in daily living. We came to appreciate how Paul presents Titus with a specific ministry opportunity namely to diligently meet the pressing needs of two faithful co-laborers. What a fitting illustration of the expectation God has for his children to be eager and responsive to ministry needs when they arise.

Final emphasis in the CARE group session was placed on being zealous for good deeds as something God's people must continue to learn (3:14); it is to be an ongoing process of growth. In response to the principles of Titus 3, those present were challenged to respond: "the elders want to encourage all of us at HCBC to be involved in serving in one or more of the ministry teams for God's glory." The CARE group members were then alerted to a special opportunity to serve in response to an immediate need in the church. Much help was needed later that week in preparation for the largest memorial

service our church had thus far hosted including a sit-down meal to be served to all who would attend. How wonderful it was to see the joyful response of God's people as they stepped out and enthusiastically served in meeting this need. The Lord used the gracious and sacrificial ministry that church members exhibited at this service as a powerful testimony of the gospel. Our facility was filled with guests, many of whom were unbelieving friends and relatives of the deceased, who heard the gospel preached and saw the gospel lived out by a church that incarnated the love of Christ. A number of attendees commented on how overwhelmed they were by the gracious care and service shown them that evening. This led to further opportunities for our congregation to converse with unbelievers about Christ.

### **Ministry Mentors**

Upon completion of the 8-week expository series from the book of Titus and the three midweek CARE groups focusing on application of those messages, I then gathered together a mixed group of members, some of whom had already demonstrated leadership ability in specific ministry areas and others who showed potential to do the same. These we termed "ministry mentors." While I had originally planned to work directly with a core group of five to seven people, in light of church growth and subsequent increasing ministry needs, it was deemed expeditious to meet with a total of fifteen ministry mentors to encourage them in overseeing the major spheres of service in the church fellowship. This streamlined communication enabled closer coordination with these ministry leaders.

After affirming how the Lord was already using them in this mentoring ministry, I discussed with them an upcoming ministry fair aimed at profiling their areas of service and enlisting more participants on their teams. These included the following fifteen areas of service in the church: Sunday School (equipping hour), food and kitchen, women's ministry and church beautification, nursery, facilities, attendants (offering and

communion), church website, ushers and greeters, tidy team, music ministry, conversation circles outreach, transportation, men's ministry, church grounds, and sound ministry. It was important to clarify with the ministry mentors the elders' expectations: "Our goal . . . is not for you to do more but to have you help us practically encourage and equip our members in ministering their gifts." With confidence that the Lord had worked in the hearts of our people in the Titus series, I affirmed, "For many in our church family who desire to be more zealous for good deeds, we believe this will be of great encouragement to them."

It was strategic to help these mentors embrace the focus of team ministry. As ministry mentors, they were called to view themselves not only as servants in the church but also as equippers who would help train others in serving the Lord in their particular area. They were also asked to prepare a profile sheet of their service area on which they defined how their ministry areas aimed to glorify God as HCBC. The ministry mentors also determined key needs in their specific areas of ministry to highlight to others in the church. Lastly, in speaking with those who showed interest, they were to help these individuals discern if this ministry area would be a good fit.

The ministry fair was held for the entire church following the second hour worship service. It was an exciting opportunity for our faithful leaders to communicate ongoing opportunities to serve the Lord and make new connections. Our ministry mentors presented their team's profile and personally fielded questions from interested parties. Attention was given to make each table visually appealing and promote interest in the specific ministry. Church members circulated from one table to the next and heard how they could be used by the Lord in specific areas of ongoing church service. Many of those at the ministry fair indicated a desire to help in more than one ministry team. It was clear to see, and an answer to prayer, that many new opportunities for service were being embraced at HCBC.

I emphasized to the ministry mentors the critical need of their following up in the next several days those who had expressed interest. They were also strongly encouraged to meet personally with their growing ministry teams. This strategic time together as individual ministry teams afforded each leader opportunity for providing greater vision and training for their group.

As intensity grew so did the believers' joy and commitment. Two anecdotes illustrate how believers had internalized these truths. A brother in the church who had signed up to serve on the church grounds team came out one hot afternoon to mow the large church lawn. He was still grieving over his father who had died a couple days before. When I told him to feel free to let someone else cut the lawn that week, he responded with a big smile on his face, "You've been preaching on how we are supposed to be zealous for good deeds, so don't try to talk me out of it!" One teenage girl, inspired to serve the Lord all the more, volunteered to prepare a praise and prayer sheet for our church prayer meetings. Some, who had never had a regular place of ministry, came to find the joy of using their spiritual gifts for the benefit of the body. Others who had been serving discovered new ministry venues wherein they could minister their spiritual gifts at HCBC.

### **New Members' Class**

Following the preaching series in Titus, eleven individuals joined a 4-week new members' class. Those present were taught how one of the major distinctives of HCBC is equipping members to serve. Thus, all who identify as members (rather than simply regular attenders) have the privilege of joyfully and faithfully using their spiritual gifts for the body on a recognized ministry team. Emphasis was placed upon each applicant prayerfully embracing a ministry area at HCBC, and each was given opportunity to indicate on the membership application form the area of service in which he or she desired to serve.

### **Post-Series Survey**

The concluding element of this ministry project was redistributing the Zealous for Good Deeds survey to assess changes that took place in the church during the project. This tool measured individual growth in understanding and personal application of what had been heard preached on this topic. The responses were encouraging and will be analyzed in detail in chapter 5.

### **Conclusion**

The guiding theme of this project was to better equip members of HCBC to be more zealous for good deeds through the expository preaching of the book of Titus. It placed before the people not a manipulative program but the divine design given in the epistle of Titus for local church ministry by all the saints. After eagerly listening to God's timeless truth on being zealous for good deeds, the church benefited by further discussing this instruction and being able to "stimulate one another to love and good deeds" (Heb 10:24-25). Many committed themselves for the first time, or in deeper measure, to specific areas of need in which they might show their love for the Lord and his church. As a result, the body of believers at HCBC was further equipped and mobilized in serving the Lord together with great joy.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

Upon completion of any significant endeavor, there is wisdom in taking pause and reflecting for a time of evaluation. For it is at that point one can assess what has been accomplished in the pursuit, and from lessons gleaned, make application to the future. Such is the express rationale for assessing the expositional preaching project focused on the book of Titus at HCBC.

The evaluation that follows examines the project's purpose and goals, as well as its strengths and weaknesses. Attention will also be directed to what I would do differently if it were possible to carry out the project again. Finally, space will be given to my theological and personal reflections on the entire preaching project.

#### **Evaluation of Project Purpose**

As established in chapter 1, the guiding purpose of this project was to better equip, through the expository preaching of the book of Titus, every member at HCBC in Berkley, Michigan, to be zealous for good deeds. This purpose was extremely significant and was in keeping with Paul's instruction for pastors and teachers to give themselves to "the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry" (Eph 4:11-12). With such a New Testament emphasis on church leaders equipping believers for ministry, it was my enthusiastic desire to give attention to this emphasis in my expository preaching project.

The purpose of the project was not only rooted in God's Word but was also a tangible expression of faith in what God would accomplish. For Scripture emphasizes

that “without faith it is impossible to please *Him*” (Heb 11:6).<sup>1</sup> And the Lord Jesus pledged his Word, “I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it” (Matt 16:18). Hence, setting forth the purpose of “every member of HCBC being zealous for good deeds” admittedly made reliance on God’s blessing not only non-negotiable but of critical importance. That dependence was particularly anchored in what God promises to accomplish through his preached Word.<sup>2</sup> The conviction that undergirded this pursuit is that faithful expositional preaching of Scripture would best accomplish the entire purpose of equipping for greater zeal in good deeds. The outworking of this presupposition was that the eight messages were not prepared and arranged in a topical format but rather issued forth from the inspired argument that blossoms from the sequential preaching through the book of Titus.<sup>3</sup>

Two caveats of the project’s purpose deserve closer examination: the extent (“every member of HCBC”) and the effect (“to be zealous for good deeds”). The latter will be considered first. Regarding the effect, “to be zealous for good deeds” must not be viewed as an all or nothing attainment. Rather, just as in sanctification, being zealous for good deeds is an area of spiritual growth in which every Christian is called to show continual progress. It is the “excel still more” pursuit to which the apostle Paul urges the saints in Thessalonica.<sup>4</sup> Realizing there is always opportunity and necessity to grow in good deeds to which God has called his children, it may have been helpful to nuance the

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<sup>1</sup> The faith spoken of by the author of Hebrews (*pistis*) is not a passive “let go and let God,” but confidence in the character of God that produces wholehearted trust and active obedience.

<sup>2</sup> God declares through the prophet Jeremiah (23:28-29), “The prophet who has a dream may relate his dream, but let him who has My word speak My word in truth. What does straw have in common with grain?” declares the LORD. “Is not My word like fire?”

<sup>3</sup> Study of the book of Titus was undertaken with a hermeneutical presupposition that honors the historical, grammatical, and literal (unless otherwise warranted by the text) interpretation of the inspired pericope.

<sup>4</sup> “Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more” (1 Thess 4:9-10).

purpose statement by emphasizing “to be *increasingly* zealous for good deeds.”

Therefore, the purpose of the project continues as a relentless commitment, knowing that every child of God at HCBC can, and by God’s grace will, take further steps of becoming more zealous for good deeds until the day of Christ Jesus!

Regarding the extent of the purpose, that every member at HCBC be zealous for good deeds, this does not reflect a lack of concern for the small group of non-members. For it is the desire of the elders at HCBC that all who regularly attend would long to serve the Lord. However, serving on a ministry team and participating in any regular and recognized church ministry is a privilege reserved for members.<sup>5</sup>

### **Evaluation of Project Goals**

The four goals established at the outset of this project will now be assessed following its completion to determine overall effectiveness. The first goal was to assess the attitude of HCBC members toward being “zealous for good deeds.” This provided a baseline against which all subsequent growth could be measured. As explained in chapter 4, this evaluation was pursued through informal as well as formal means of appraisal. Informal assessment was made through observation of the church members’ ministry involvement. My observation of the church body was that while many of the church members attend the mid-week CARE groups and church prayer time, most had not committed themselves to a place of active and ongoing ministry in the church.

The formal means of assessing the ministry involvement of those at HCBC was through the pre-preaching series survey.<sup>6</sup> In keeping with the overall theme of the book of Titus, the first five questions focused on good works to believers within the

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<sup>5</sup> Membership classes are offered as needed and are an opportunity for HCBC elders not only to communicate our distinctives and philosophy of ministry but also to hear applicants share their testimonies.

<sup>6</sup> See appendix 2.

church, and the final five questions dealt with good works to unbelievers outside the church. The first survey statement, “I have a clear understanding of what it means to be ‘zealous for good deeds’” elicited an unexpected response. The mean response came in at 4.78 out of 6 (with 6 being the highest on the Likert scale). A range of only 3 indicated that the strong majority of members viewed themselves as grasping the significance of being zealous for good deeds.

As the preaching pastor, my initial concern regarding the members’ response was that they viewed themselves as understanding the major theme of Titus even before hearing it preached. This raised the question of whether or not most of the individuals in the congregation saw their personal need to grow in their service to the Lord. Could it be that they would not be as responsive as I had hoped to learn what God would teach them from the preaching series from Titus? After further reflection, however, I concluded that such a response by most in the congregation indicated a cursory understanding of the phrase “zealous for good deeds,” rather than a deeper grasp of the full-orbed significance it is given in the book of Titus. Nearly the same level of agreement (4.73 out of 6) was registered by respondents to the second survey statement, “I am faithfully committed to a weekly ministry within the church.” The highest percent of members expressed some level of disagreement in this question. Most significantly, member responses to this question of faithful commitment to a weekly church ministry showed the greatest statistical range (5 out of 6) and standard deviation (1.47 out of 6) in the survey. This indicated a wide spectrum concerning the members’ personal ministry involvement. It suggested a significant disparity in a congregation where some were actively ministering week in and week out while others were not.

While the elders at HCBC believed that most church members were aware of significant needs in the church family, the pre-preaching series survey revealed otherwise. Surprisingly, the lowest response on that survey was to the third statement, “I

am aware of many pressing needs in the church family.” The median score registered was 3.9 (with the highest possible score being 6), indicating substantial unfamiliarity among members to the concerns of other church members. This demonstrated great opportunity for growth in the congregation becoming more acquainted with the needs around them. It also revealed how the church leadership might more clearly profile specific opportunities to the congregation for serving one another.

The survey responses before the preaching series also demonstrated the need for members to be further trained in ministry skills. The most common response to the fourth statement, “I feel trained in specific skills I can use for God’s glory at HCBC” was “agree somewhat” (41 percent) revealing recognition of a need for further ministry training. The mean response was the third lowest of all survey questions (4.56 out of 6), demonstrating opportunity for measurable progress and significant growth in this area.

In reply to the fifth survey point, “When I am able to minister my spiritual gifts for the encouragement of other believers, it gives me great joy,” the overwhelming response of the members was strong agreement with the mean being 5.63 out of a maximum score of 6. That assessment signaled that the strong majority of believers had a right outlook of ministry being a joyous privilege rather than a cold duty. That would be reinforced and strengthened throughout the preaching series and project. Yet with such a high initial survey score, it also meant there was little room for measurable change in growth.

It was also helpful to see the participants’ attitudes in response to the statement, “Good deeds we do in our own strength are worthless.” That rated the highest of all responses to survey questions as overwhelming strong agreement with the mean response being 5.85 out of 6. This evidenced an encouraging outlook concerning one’s motivation in serving being God-centered and not man-centered. Yet as previously mentioned, such an overwhelmingly affirmative response by members allowed for little

margin of measurable growth. Thankfully, the congregation would enter the preaching series with doctrinal clarity regarding their inability to produce any good work apart from the power of God.

Responses to the final four survey questions revealed the members' attitudes to being zealous for good deeds toward unbelievers. In response to the seventh statement, while the strong majority of members considered themselves prepared to share from the Scriptures how a person can come to Christ (4.9 on a 6-point scale), there was a noticeable decrease (4.24) when it came to having courage in talking with people about the Lord. This revealed the church members as a whole saw plenty of need to grow in their active trust in the Lord. The upshot of the pre-series survey data showed the necessity of the members to become more alert to ministry opportunities to others in the church and seek to faithfully meet them. There was plenty of room to further grow in being zealous for good deeds. But how? That is what the eight messages preached from Titus endeavored to answer.

The second project goal, to modify attitudes of church members regarding zeal for good deeds by preaching an expository series from the book of Titus, will now be evaluated. A standard t-test for dependent samples was run from the pre- and post-series survey and was used as a measure for this goal.

Table 1. Paired sample t-test for mean difference

<b>Paired Sample T-Test for Mean Difference</b>							
<i>H0: <math>\mu_1 = \mu_2</math>; H1: <math>\mu_1 \neq \mu_2</math></i>							
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Variance</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>T-stat</i>	<i>t Critical two-tail</i>	<i>alpha</i>
<i>Overall</i>			41	40	-3.191	2.021	0.05
<i>Pre-Survey</i>	23.610	7.494	41	40			
<i>Post-Survey</i>	25.427	9.195	41	40			

Only the first five questions that focused specifically on ministry in the local church context were incorporated into the t-test.<sup>7</sup> This evaluative tool demonstrated a positive and statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-series survey scores:  $t_{(40)}=-3.19, p<.05$ . In other words, change in the members' attitudes regarding being zealous for good deeds was significant.<sup>8</sup> Truths that had been gleaned from the 8-week preaching series in Titus made a difference in the lives of the listeners. Members' growth in regard to the priority of actively ministering in the local church had taken place. Another implication of this goal being accomplished is that the members' responsive attitudes to God's word reflect humble and teachable hearts he will honor as they step out into new areas of service.<sup>9</sup>

The third stated goal of the project was to recruit a team of ministry mentors, so the number of ministry leaders increased by 50 percent. That goal was met and surpassed as 7 new ministry team mentors were gathered and affirmed to oversee newly formed areas of service within the church. This was a great blessing as the previous group of 9 ministry leaders increased by 78 percent. Such marked growth in the team of faithful servants overseeing burgeoning areas of ministry provided exciting opportunities for all who had just heard the expositional series from the book of Titus. These new ministry mentors began meeting with their teams and encouraging them in newly recognized areas of service which contributed to greater enthusiasm in ministry at HCBC.

The fourth goal was aimed at integrating the theme of being zealous for good deeds into ongoing ministries and included CARE group training, new member classes

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<sup>7</sup> See appendix 1.

<sup>8</sup> The sample mean improvement for questions 1 through 5 was 7.7 percent.

<sup>9</sup> This flows from what God is looking for in his people, which the HCBC elders strongly emphasize in new member classes: "But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word" (Isa 66:2).

and ministry teams. The measurable goal of a 25 percent increase in ministry team participation provided an objective standard for assessment.

One of the greatest expressions of ministering to the needs of others flowed through the CARE group ministries as they met and discussed each of the chapters from Titus after they had been preached. Practical opportunities to serve one another were seized in these mid-week groups as members shared and prayed together and became more aware of needs within their groups. The new member's class, held subsequent to the preaching series, saw an overwhelming response to being zealous for good deeds. Of the 11 new member applicants, 10 listed at least one area of service in which they desired to serve, and only one indicated "not sure." Regarding the increase in ministry team preparation, there was significant improvement. Based on ministry team sign ups following the preaching series in Titus, there was an increase of 34 to 51 members. That represented a 50 percent increase in the number of church members actively committed to an ongoing and recognized ministry team at HCBC.

### **Strengths of the Project**

The following section discusses the strengths of the preaching project.

#### **Timely**

In God's sovereignty, this preaching project focusing on God's call through the book of Titus to be zealous for serving came at a most appropriate time. For it had become apparent that HCBC needed more members to use their God-given gifts and talents for the benefit of the entire church family. Ongoing ministry teams, as well as new spheres of service (training men in the sound ministry, organizing rides, tidying up as well as enhancing facilities, growing international outreach), necessitated encouragement to the entire church body, particularly to the those not-yet involved, to recognize and respond to these God-given opportunities. This timely need was then addressed through

the timeless truths from the book of Titus with application made to the HCBC context.

### **Pulpit-Driven**

I am grateful that the focal point of this project was the exposition of God's Word. Rather than designing curriculums, programs, and strategies so as to move the congregation, the pulpit ministry led the way. How freeing not to feel compelled to cajole members to service with humanly devised techniques but to proclaim God's Word and call them to submit to its authority and show obedience in being more zealous for good deeds. Rather than trying to manipulate the people externally, it was a blessing to minister the powerful truths of the Scripture to people's souls and see God transform their attitudes and actions in the process.

### **Exposition of One Book of the Bible**

The backbone strength of this ministry project was in expositing the entire book of Titus to the HCBC congregation. This allowed listeners to understand the plea to be zealous for good deeds in the inspired context of Paul repeatedly pouring out his heart to young Titus on behalf of the churches throughout Crete. That included magnifying God's character, calling for qualified elders, warning against false teachers, affirming duties of younger and older men and women, submitting to authorities, avoiding foolish controversies, and glorying in the gospel. All of these in this book study were placed before the people as a significant part of what God says engaging in good deeds must include. Throughout the 8-week preaching series, members were able to anticipate from looking at Titus what was ahead and review what had been covered. In future days they will be able to remind themselves of lessons God taught them from this book study by returning to this epistle.

### **Immediate Integration**

As the church heard God's call to be abandoned to his service, they were given

hands-on opportunities to obey. Theological truths were wedded with practical living. Specific ministry team areas in which they could participate were profiled so that they could find new expressions of their growing desire to serve. As members saw one another beginning to serve in new areas, enthusiasm for being doers of God's Word spread.

### **Weaknesses of the Project**

The following section examines the weaknesses of the preaching project.

#### **Pace**

While the original preaching plan I had established for the series was to take seven weeks, I expanded it to eight weeks so as to give adequate attention to the five specific groups of people Paul addresses in Titus 2. While that proved helpful, the preaching pace of working through Titus was still too rapid and did not allow for maximum assimilation and application of the rich truths being discovered each week. Though Titus is one of the briefer epistles, at the end of the preaching series there was still a shared sense that it ended too quickly. The congregation would have been further encouraged had the Titus preaching series been spread out over a course of ten to twelve weeks.

#### **Focus**

In seeking to be true to the biblical focus that zeal for good deeds should be toward those both inside and outside the church, it became increasingly challenging to give due attention to both in implementing the project. Though my survey questions focused on both of these target groups, it became more difficult to quantify the members' growth in showing good deeds toward unbelievers. The focus of the preaching project, particularly in the follow-through opportunities, gravitated more to good deeds related to edification rather than good deeds linked with evangelism. While special church-wide evangelistic outreaches were not included in the scope of the project, the elders of HCBC

are convinced that the greatest opportunities in the gospel are those that God gives his people in their already existing relationships with unsaved family members, relatives, co-workers, neighbors, fellow students, and friends. It is in these God-given friendships with unbelievers that we desire our church to be most prayerful and purposeful in being lights set on a hill and zealous for good deeds.

### **Self-Reporting Surveys**

A major weakness of the project was the pre- and post-sermon series survey tool. While the pre-sermon series survey helped assess members attitudes toward the theme of being zealous for good deeds, the responses given did not leave much room for measured growth. For with the average response on the survey being so high (a mean of 4.8 out of 6) and most being in the “agree” or “strongly agree” areas, it became difficult to assess a sizable difference in the post-sermon series survey. This manifests an inherent weakness of a self-reporting survey.

### **What I Would Do Differently**

The project presented various challenges along the way. Based on what I have learned in the process, if it were possible to do it again, I would make the following changes regarding timing, peer consultants, and tools for assessment.

### **Timing**

Having received approval for my project, I chose to implement it beginning in June. The preaching series ran for eight weeks, followed by the opportunities for involvement particularly in the ministry teams. As some members were gone for summer vacation during this time, it would have been better to carry out the project during the school year.

## **Peer Consultants**

In retrospect, there would have been great benefit had I assembled a team of 3-5 individuals to assist in the implementation of the project. Together these could have served as a sounding board and given helpful feedback along the way. They would have also played a strategic role in helping organize the various follow-up activities. This would have been a great asset in communicating with ministry team leaders and the entire church congregation regarding ministry opportunities following the sermon series in Titus.

## **Tools for Assessment**

While the ten question pre- and post-series surveys using the Likert scale were helpful, I would better seek to maximize this tool. I believe it would have been advantageous to have included twenty questions (rather than ten) to provide greater accuracy in evaluation.

At the end of the preaching series, it would have been profitable to hold a focus group discussion in which the members could respond to specific open-ended questions, such as, “How did the preaching series change your understanding of what was meant in Titus regarding zealous for good deeds?” “What specific ways have you put what you have learned into practice?” “What questions do you still have about how to cultivate being zealous for good deeds?”<sup>10</sup> Receiving such input and hearing recurring themes would have helped me better gauge what the members had come away with and how I, along with my fellow elders, could continue to encourage them in their good progress.

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<sup>10</sup> These are adapted from helpful suggestions shared with me in a personal email from Dr. Joe Harrod, a member of the SBTS faculty, on January 27, 2021.

## Theological Reflections

As I reflect on this entire ministry project, several theological truths stand out. First, Christ's church is precious. For "Christ . . . loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Eph 5:25). Such an infinite price and costly sacrifice that Christ made for his church was for the goal of "purifying a people for his own possession, zealous for good deeds" (Titus 2:14). So it is, Christ's purpose in redemption was that his people would give themselves to carrying out the good deeds for which he had prepared them. That longing, to serve the Lord with gladness, is a distinguishing mark of the child of God (Ps. 100:2). Spurgeon exclaimed,

As for the true believer in Jesus, he serves his God because he loves to serve him. . . . To him it is the greatest of all earthly joys, and the antepast of joys celestial, to serve the Lord with hand, and heart, and strength, and to spend and be spent for his glory.<sup>11</sup>

Second, with such a joyous goal being at the heart of the gospel intent, every pastor must give himself to equipping the saints to be more zealous for good deeds. This cannot be achieved in one's own strength; it is the work of God. For, "Not that we are adequate in ourselves as considering anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God" (2 Cor 3:5).

Third, the power for Spirit-produced change comes from the preached Word. May the Pauline charge to Timothy be ever in the forefront of the pastor's thinking: "Preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction" (2 Tim 4:2). For God guarantees the success of his living Word. It will continue to change the lives of his people as they, in hearing his truth

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<sup>11</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, "Serving the Lord with Gladness," Sep. 7, 1867, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 13, <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/serving-the-lord-with-gladness/#flipbook/>.

preached, “behold as in a mirror the glory of the Lord” and “are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory” (2 Cor 3:18).

### **Personal Reflections**

The Lord has shown his great grace and kindness in allowing me to undertake this preaching project. He has reminded me of how I dare not lean on my own understanding but instead look to him for wisdom and actively trust in him. God has also caused me to more deeply appreciate a church family that loves to hear his Word and seeks to live it out for his honor. What a joy it has been to see an ever-increasing band of faithful believers at following in the footsteps of our Savior who “went about doing good.” Together with them it has been a privilege to grow in loving and serving our Lord Jesus Christ, knowing that such labors are never in vain in the Lord (1 Cor 15:58).

### **Conclusion**

This project has caused me to have deeper thankfulness and praise to God for how he so patiently and lovingly is at work in his church, growing his people into greater conformity with Christ. It has been a privilege to expositionally preach through the book of Titus and see more of the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God revealed (Rom 11:33). I heartily recommend this often-overlooked epistle to be preached by all pastors so congregations throughout our world would flourish in abandoned service to our great Savior.

The Lord has deepened my conviction and passion to fervently grow in being zealous for good deeds in response to Christ who loved us and gave himself for us. We have only begun to see all that God will accomplish for his name’s sake. “Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen” (Eph 3:20-21).

APPENDIX 1

HCBC “ZEALOUS FOR GOOD DEEDS” SURVEY

It is our desire as a church family to grow together as fervent doers of God’s Word. Thank you for briefly completing and returning this questionnaire. It will help the elders as they seek to faithfully shepherd our church family, and it will assist Pastor Peter as he finalizes preparations to preach through the book of Titus.

Please circle the best response to each question. SD= strongly disagree, D= disagree, DS= disagree somewhat, AS= agree somewhat, A= agree, SA= strongly agree.

1. I have a clear understanding of what it means to be zealous for good deeds.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
2. I am faithfully committed to a weekly ministry within the church.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
3. I am aware of many pressing needs in the church family.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
4. I feel trained in specific skills I can use for God’s glory at HCBC.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
5. When I am able to minister my spiritual gifts for the encouragement of other believers, it gives me great joy.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
6. Good deeds we do in our own strength are worthless.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
7. I am well-prepared to clearly share from Scripture how a person can come to know Christ.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
8. I have real courage in talking to people about the Lord.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
9. I regularly pray for unbelievers and how I can be a witness to them.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
10. Seeking to be an example for Christ to the unsaved is important in my life.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

APPENDIX 2

PRE-SURVEY DESCRIPTIVE STATS

Table A1. Pre-survey descriptive stats

<b>Pre-Survey Descriptive Stats</b>					
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Mode</i>	<i>Count</i>
<i>Q1</i>	4.780	0.146	5	5	41
<i>Q2</i>	4.732	0.229	5	5	41
<i>Q3</i>	3.902	0.181	4	4	41
<i>Q4</i>	4.561	0.140	5	4	41
<i>Q5</i>	5.634	0.076	6	6	41
<i>Q6</i>	5.854	0.082	6	6	41
<i>Q7</i>	4.902	0.155	5	5	41
<i>Q8</i>	4.244	0.163	4	4	41
<i>Q9</i>	4.634	0.167	5	5	41
<i>Q10</i>	4.732	0.164	5	5	41
<i>Q1-5</i>	4.722	0.086	5	5	41
<i>Q6-10</i>	4.873	0.104	5	4	41
<i>Q1-10</i>	4.798	0.080	5	5	41

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## ABSTRACT

### EQUIPPING MEMBERS OF HOPE IN CHRIST BIBLE CHURCH IN BERKLEY, MICHIGAN, TO BE ZEALOUS FOR GOOD DEEDS

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2021  
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This project features the indispensable priority of ministers of the Word equipping their members in being more zealous for good deeds. The undergirding presupposition is that this is accomplished most effectively by expository preaching and application of the Word, specifically from the book of Titus. The opening chapter provides a context that affirms the paramount importance of zeal for good deeds being pursued for the glory of God in a local church. Chapter 2 lays out the biblical and theological foundation for a life that is zealous for good deeds based on the entire book of Titus. Chapter 3 then focuses on particular areas of good deeds every church should be pursuing, both in and outside the church context. Chapter 4 details the process of the entire project from beginning to end. The project culminates in an overall assessment of the Zealous for Good Deeds project in chapter 5.

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