
Thursday, September 14, 2023 • Titus 2:1–2

Questions from the Scripture text: In contrast to the unordained idle-talkers and deceivers of 1:10, what sort of doctrine is Titus to speak, and what kind of conduct is he to speak in relation to that doctrine? Whose conduct is he to address first (v2)? What is the first thing they must be (cf. 1Tim 3:2, 11, where NKJ translates it “temperate”)? The second (cf. 1Tim 3:8, 11)? The third (cf. 1Tim 3:2, Titus 1:8, where it is translated “sober-minded”)? In what three things are they to be “sound” (cf. 1:9, 13)?

What should a minister speak? Titus 2:1–2 looks forward to the second serial reading of in morning public worship on the coming Lord’s Day. In these two verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **ministers should speak not just sound doctrine, but application appropriate to the people, beginning with the elderly men.**

The church was plagued with many “insubordinate” (1:10)—many who did not follow Christ’s order in the church, and though not ordained, spouted their theological opinions to others. Their speech was characterized as “idle talk and deceptive” (1:10)—“things which ought not” be taught (1:11).

Speaking sound doctrine. Just being a correct talker doesn’t automatically mean that man is doing correct talking. First, his doctrine must be sound (v1). We remember back to 1:9 that this means that it comes from the Scripture. The Word must be in charge of our teaching. It is a faithful Word. And it must be clung to. This means holding fast to it *as it was taught*. Bible study is not a place for innovation. Theology is not a place for creative thinking.

Speaking application of that doctrine. In v1, the sound doctrine is actually behind the sort of talking that is being commanded. What is being commanded is specifically the application of that doctrine to life. The things which are “becoming” unto sound doctrine, or as in our version “proper” for sound doctrine. Not only must Titus teach them good theology; he must instruct them in how to live consistently with that theology.

Starting with the older men. The word used is similar to the one for the office back in 1:5, but not exact. It would be like saying “elderly.” And the primary applications to them, that Titus must make, sure are elder-ish! In a culture obsessed with youth, and a church culture obsessed with young people and young families, it is a needful correction to see where Paul starts and where Titus must start: the elderly men. Just as the elders and deacons do by their office, the elderly men also must be an example of godliness to the rest of the congregation. What a difference it would make if, in the churches, rather than the church generally dressing down to the casual immaturity of youth, imitated the sober, reverent, temperate, sound elderly whom the Lord had placed among them. What is the character that these elderly must display to be such an example?

Sober. When this word appears in 1Tim 3:2, 11, our version translates it “temperate.” The word describes a man who does not indulge his senses in his tastes and habits. He doesn’t live for pleasures of the body. He lives for the deeper, lasting, steady joy of the Lord. He is a serious (not the same as “somber”) person. Earnest not superficial, and steady not always coming with something new.

Reverent. This is another word that comes from the qualifications of an elder (cf. 1:8). It has to do with dignity and nobility, seriousness and majesty of manner—worthiness of respect. Not only is his behavior is respectable, but the dignity and nobility of his behavior is what best summarizes him as a person: both inwardly by the Spirit and outwardly in serious, worthy living.

Sound in faith. This corresponds to the “sound doctrine” of v1, except that this is on the receiving end. Their conviction about the true teaching of the church is stable and steady. There are no holes and weaknesses in their holding fast to the Word (cp. the elder in 1:9a).

Sound in love. There are no gaps or instabilities in their love for God, brother, and neighbor. The love is healthy and strong. It isn’t mere feelings or heartless actions. Mind, affections, and will are set first and foremost upon the Lord. Their worship is according to Scripture and a sincere expression of their heart. Likewise, their interaction with others is full of heartfelt service. What a blessing they are to a congregation who can see, in their elderly, that true doctrine produces “love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith” (cf. 1Tim 1:3–5)!

Sound in patience. They are not impatient. But neither are they fatalistic or stubborn. Their endurance is healthy and stable. Cheerful hope in the Lord persists through their trials. With their age, indeed, trials are likely to have multiplied. But their patience holds up to the strain. And thus they are an example to the whole congregation that the grace of Christ will get us through.

What should the relationship of your doctrine and your behavior be? What elderly men in your congregation are an example of this? Which of the characteristics in v2 do you need most to work on?

Sample prayer: Lord, thank You for giving us true doctrine that You use to produce godly character in us. Forgive us for when we are not urgent enough about sound doctrine. Forgive us for when we idolize youth and immaturity rather than imitating the godly and serious elderly who are examples of grace. Forgive us for our tendency to go after new things. Forgive us for when we live in an unserious and unworthy manner. Forgive us when our faith, or our love, or our patience are superficial, unhealthy, or out of proportion. Forgive us, and help us, we ask through Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP1 “How Blessed the Man” or TPH172 “Speak, O Lord”

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Titus 2 verses one through two. These are God's words. But as for you speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine. That the older men be sober. Reverent. Temperate. Sound in faith in love in patience. So far the reading of god's inspired and inherent word. One of the things that we've been hearing the last few weeks, And the second half of Titus, chapter 1.

Is. Well, i guess it was just Last week in verses 10 through 16. Is that there are those in the church who are not? Um, Called gifted ordained by the lord jesus. To be theological teachers in the church who Go around spouting their own theology. Sometimes by idle talk.

That is that? They don't realize that they are being insubordinate. They're just Um, Giving their theological opinions. Um, in an idle sort of way and sometimes. In a deceptive way. Uh, they know that. They are not been made teachers in the church but they want to give their opinions anyway.

And so, as more willful, In either case, however, harm is being done to the church. Because theology that is not from the scripture. As has been taught by christ's servants and he Has appointed and called. Um, Errant theology has been taught in the church and it results. In. Uh, failure to believe, well, in jesus christ.

Uh, failure to receive the benefits. Of that union with christ through faith. That the spirit works out in us by Right doctrine. And he, And of course, the lord jesus is our only hope not just for forgiveness from sin's guilt. Uh, but for battling against sin, in its power, and in its presence.

And so, one of the results, A failing to follow, Christ's order in the church for teaching. As that, those who profess the lord jesus's name. Continue in and even and ungodliness, and even Uh, decline. And become more ungodly, which of course. Is a great blasphemy against the honor of the lord jesus that those who profess his name.

Uh, would function that way. And it really is. Soul killing discouraging. To the church that they would think that they have christ, but that they would have a christ who does not change them. And so you, you end up Blaspheming god and harming men. Um, Part of the counter to this then, of course, is that their mouths?

Uh, would be stopped. Uh, by the proper elders. As in chapter 1 and verse 11. But not only are the elders required to stop the mouths of those who aren't teachers in the church. The elders are to open their own mouths as those who are called to be teachers in the church.

Uh, those whom the lord has. Has called now, to the, to the office of pastor teacher are not allowed to be non-doctrinal or non-verbal anymore than an apostle, or prophet or evangelist. Uh, could Were permitted by the lord jesus. Uh, to be non-doctrinal or non-verbal you remember? And ephesians 4, when it's describing.

God's plan for the theological stabilization and equipping of his people and says, when he ascended on high, he gave gifts among men. Apostles. Prophets evangelists. Pastor teachers. Um, And so, Just as it would be ridiculous to say, do the work of an apostle at all times. And if necessary use words or do the work of a prophet at all times, and if necessary use words or do the work of an evangelist at all times.

And if necessary use words, So also it is an utter folly. Just i do the work of a pastor. Or an elder. At all times. And if necessary use words, The, the office of authority. In spiritual things in, christ's church is a teaching office. This is one reason, we're not surprised.

That in times of spiritual decline, You get attitudes in many churches. That are against teaching that are against preaching, or if there is teaching and preaching that are against doctrinal. Teaching and preaching or if there is doctrine that are against dogmatic doctrine where the doctrine is held to with conviction and the truthfulness of one, right interpretation of the bible is maintained In spiritually in times and spiritual decline, you get opposition to these things.

Because speaking sound words is required. It is of the lord jesus. And so the apostle now comes to Titus and he says but as for you speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine. There's two things that are being said here one is he asked to teach sound doctrine But the other thing is not only, does he have to teach the sound doctrine over against Uh, the false talk, the errors that were being talked by others and instead of The errors that were being taught by others but he must not leave the doctrine abstract.

He must also tell the people, the difference that it makes in life. The way of living that is appropriate. To sound doctrine. Now, lord willing and a few weeks time. Uh, we're going. Now, lord willing and a few weeks time, we are going to hear A profession of faith in the public worship.

And does that professional faith is being made, they're going to be some vows. Um, some holy promises before god And one of the vows that will be taken. And one of the vows that will be taken. Is that? We promise to live in a manner that is becoming The followers of jesus christ.

There is appropriate, too. The followers of jesus christ, Well. That is required of elders that they teach christ's people. How to live in a way that is consistent with? Christ's doctrine. That they teach christ's people the difference. That right thinking should make In right, feeling. Right desiring, right speaking.

Right. Living And so it is required. Of the elder that he teach, and it's required that he teaches sanctrine. And in his required that he teach. Proper living, proper application of that doctrine to the life. Now, the first ones that the apostle tells Titus and by implication the other elders that Titus is appointing.

The first ones that he tells him to address are the older men. If you need to cough, could you cough in a direction that is opposite?

He tells him to start with the older men. Now the word that is used for older men is actually Similar in root. Uh, to the word that is used for the office of elder. So the the office of elder we would Uh, say. Maybe, elder ish. And the word that is used here.

We might say elderly. And you can kind of hear the relationship of the words. It's not that's not the relationship of the sounds and greek at all. Uh, but you can hear the relationship of the words. That whereas it is a particular work of grace that god does and someone when he is making him and elder in his church.

All of the older men of the church should be making similar progress. That there is a work of god's grace and someone over time that matures them in faith. And the church rather than looking at those who are babies and maybe they have an attractive energy And thankfulness and eagerness and zeal.

Um, That. Without losing love. Uh, for the lord, yet, those who are either young, just in years or even young in faith, are not the ones who are the models for the rest of the congregation of what it looks like. When the lord has been at work and someone for a long time, That there is a maturing and a seasoning.

Excuse me, that there is a maturing in a seasoning that takes place. Over time. And that the church is meant then to have especially these older men. Who are taught to live in a way that is consistent with sound doctrine? Well, what is it? What is that? Way of living?

That is consistent with sound doctrine. Well, First, we read that it in verse 2 that it is sober. A man who does not indulge his senses, his taste and habit, he is not living for the pleasures of the body. He lives for the deeper and lasting and steady joy of the lord.

And it is in such a man that we see that. The joy of the lord is something that is steady. It does it isn't something that is marked by these frenzied up and downs. Um, In a church culture in which youth is idolized, you can see even in worship styles, even in worship, songs style, but even in the particular life of the christian, How these kind of frenetic ups?

That cannot be sustained. And so are matched also by downs. And so, you have this kind of high amplitude spiritual experience way that people live by. No, The, the work of the lord, and, and the joy of the lord himself. Is something that is strong and steady and sustained.

Now, this is something that only comes with the maturing grace with the holy spirit, applying Christ, more and more to us on maturity. And so the The steadiness of the joy of the lord should be something that is observable in the older people in the church. You know. Paul gives titus advice.

That is almost exactly opposite. What you hear for some people i say, well when you're looking for revival and reformation in the church, focus on the young, And now paul is writing to Titus and he says your church needs reformation terribly. So you need to focus on the elderly.

And so we must go with god's wisdom and not man's. And the first thing he says, To aim at an application of sound doctrine. Is the sober steady. Um, Life that finds pleasure not And earthly things. That are up and down. Whether? Material things or even earthly emotional. Superficial things.

But pleasure in that, which is eternal and substantial the lord himself. And so it's not surprising that on the back of sober. You have reverent and temperate. Reverent that the conduct themselves in a way that is worthy. Of respecting and imitating. That they would be dignified in their conduct.

Not the immaturity of One. Upping and jabbing, back and forth in conversation. You know, not sarcastic, people who are always trying to be funny. Um, in a way that will often Draw attention to oneself. Uh, but living and speaking and conducting in a way that first of all, Uh doesn't just find pleasure in god but honors god and all that they do.

And so they're interaction with others. Is also very honoring. This is the dignified and noble and reverent way of interacting with others. Uh, when we honor others, they find us to be honorable why? Because proper honoring of others, is an identifying of them as made in the image of god.

And so, there should be this this dynamic in our interaction with others that that we handle people. With the most care and the most respect. Of all of god's creatures. For, they are made in the image of god and then especially believers.

Joined to the lord, jesus christ and to be treated as of a worth that the rest of creation That cannot compare to. And somebody who, Um, treats others. With with that sort uh especially the lord first and then others, and especially believers. Uh, with that sort of reverence, they themselves.

Will be dignified. And will be worthy of respect and will be worthy of imitation. And so sober. Reverent. Um, Temperate. Again. The, the idea of someone who is therefore stable. As we have said, and then there to be sound. There to be sound in three things. The first is sound in faith.

This corresponds to the sound doctrine. It belongs to the teachers of the church. That they hold to the correct doctrine as they teach it. And they get there by, Remember in verse? Um, Nine of chapter 1 holding faster. Faithful word, as he has been taught, that he may be able to exhort etc.

So the older men in the church should be emulating that whereas that the teachers, the elders, the eldersh Um, Hold to sound doctrine as they teach it the elderly. Should be an example to the rest of the church as of holding to sound doctrine as they are taught. So that when you look at the older men in the church, what you see are the ones who Um, in our particular case, Have no qualms at all with the westminster standards.

Uh, you ask them or talk to them about a spiritual thing with theological thing. And they repeat what they had been taught. They hope they are sound in the faith. And so they may repeat to you. A line from the confession or an answer from The catechism and immediately give you half a dozen Bible examples.

Of how the thing that we are taught. And the thing that we as a church confess about this particular point of doctrine is so long obviously, what the whole bible teaches, Yeah, you may end up. With a man who, you know, in god's providence, you know, various For whatever other reason he is not an elder in the church.

But by god's minister to him, as one of the elderly in the church. Uh, he holds rightly soundly. To what has been taught he believes Not just sound. Uh, then in his faith, no holes, or weaknesses. In. The accuracy of his doctrine. But also sound in his love. His love for god and for neighbor and for brother.

Are as healthy and strong. Such a such a love, goes beyond the surface. It isn't mere feelings. Such a love is consistent all the way through. And so it isn't either mere actions. But the hole is consistent and homogeneous. He feels love towards god and he acts. In a proper and obedient way to the god that he loves, he feels love towards his brother.

And he is. Uh, kind tenderhearted and forgives his brother. That's his brother's needs ahead of himself. And so, there is both. The warmth of the affection and the strength of the action. The love is sound. There aren't gaps or weaknesses in it. And then also sound in patience. Now, one of the things that age does to us especially when the body starts breaking down, Is it gives us opportunity to experience and exercise patience.

And it needs to be sound patience, patience. That is Is true and healthy all the way through. Not the patients of fatalism. In which they just kind of give up and say, well, People are going to be what they're gonna be, things are going to be what things are going to be.

Um, and not the patience of stubbornness. Which is i'm going to stick to my way of thinking, in my way of doing, no matter what happens. But a patience that is built upon cheerful. Hope a sound patience. Patience that is consistent. And that is consistent for the right reason.

Like we were hearing in Romans 8, 23 through 25, the eager expectation. Where we wait with eagerness and perseverance. Because we are sure. Of that, for which The lord has saved us that which is certain to come. In god's salvation, a sound patience. And so you have really don't you here.

Another one of these faith hope and love triads. Uh, about the, the specific aspect of it, that should be evident in the elderly in the church. And that when we think of the godly elderly in our church, for instance, that you can see in them to some extent and that becomes a model for us.

Is that the faith? Hope and love would be sound faith. Sound love. Sound hope. That it would be stable that it would be whole that it would be healthy. Knowing that there are things that appear to be faith and appear to be loved and appear to be hope. But are not sand and strong and stable and mature.

And so, One of Titus's goals and his elders goals as they were reforming the church in crete. Is that they would instruct especially first of all the older men. That by god's blessing on his teaching and producing in them the fruit. Of that teaching, these older men. Would be an example.

Of sober and reverent and temperate and sound Christianity. Lord give us to value maturity. The lord bless. The teaching of our church, especially to the elderly. That they would be an example of maturity. And the lord grow us and season us. And make us mature. As well. Let's pray.

Father, we thank you for this portion of your word. We thank you. Particularly in our own season of life. And the own in our own. Season in the life of your church. That you have given us something to Act, as a corrective. To some of the errors of our age and the area of our flesh.

To some of the errors of our age and the errors of our flesh. We pray, lord that you would Help those whom you have called an appointed to be teachers in your church. That we would teach in a right way. That those who are Older in age would also become mature in faith.

Then be examples to the rest of Rest of the congregation. Grant lord, that it would be. So we asked jesus name Amen.