

Sermon to the Saints of God assembled at Topeka, KS: Sunday, December 8, 2024

Sober, Sober, Sober – Titus 2
Part 4

Titus 3:14 *“And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.”*

Today we will resume our examination of Paul’s instruction to “speak thou the things which become sound doctrine”, ministering continual and specific provocation to practical godliness within the church, according to each member’s need and circumstance.

Titus 2: 1-10 *“1 ¶ But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: 2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. 3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; 4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. 6 Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. 7 In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, 8 Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. 9 Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; 10 Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.”*

Our goal is to examine and apply the practical instruction that the Holy Spirit provided for each of the demographics in the passage. As a reminder of what we have covered so far:

- Aged men – Sermon 5/12/2024
- Aged women - Today
- Young women -
- Young men – Sermon 6/30/24 + 10/20/24
- Preachers
- Servants

Today we will consider Paul’s instructions to “aged women”, who are to utilize the God-taught wisdom of their experience to teach younger women, both by their example, and by their watchful, edifying provocations. This is a work that must be done in patience and meekness before God, knowing that we all stand in constant need of teaching, and

reminding. While the direct application is to aged women, each of us should look to apply these concepts to ourselves. We are all a part of the church of Christ - His Bride. She is a mother to His children – bringing them forth in the Spirit, by the preaching of the word, and raising them up according to her Husband’s rule. In that sense, we all take on the role of the aged woman, especially as the Lord increases our faith by experience.

These instructions have a strong overlap with the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31. (sermons 8/19/2018; 8/26/2018) These are action-oriented duties that aren’t just a matter of doing good, but from a heart that is focused upon pleasing God, and building up the body of Christ in holiness and peace. That’s the key to everything that follows – it has to be about pleasing Christ according to the law of His house; it cannot just be an exercise in works-righteous “morality”.

Aged women

- **Matthew Henry:** *“They must be in behaviour as becometh holiness: both men and women must accommodate their behaviour to their profession. Those virtues before mentioned (sobriety, gravity, temperance, soundness in the faith, charity, and patience), recommended to aged men, are not proper to them only, but applicable to both sexes, and to be looked to by aged women as well as men. Women are to hear and learn their duty from the word, as well as the men: there is not one way of salvation for one sex or sort, and another for another; but both must learn and practise the same things, both as aged and as Christians; the virtues and duties are common.”*
- Be in behavior as becometh holiness:
 - Holy – separate, set apart unto God. “Be ye holy; for I am holy” (**1Peter 1:16**). The outward behavior of aged women should be an example of practical holiness that younger women can look to and imitate, as they struggle with the vanity and pride of their youth.
 - *Matthew Henry:* *“Keeping a pious decency and decorum in clothing and gesture, in looks and speech, and all their deportment, and this from an inward principle and habit of holiness, influencing and ordering the outward conduct at all times.”*
 - **1Peter 3:3,4** *“3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”*
 - **Ephesians 4:24-32** *“24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and **true holiness**. [all that follows is a part of this “true holiness”] 25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. 26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let*

not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27 Neither give place to the devil. 28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. 29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

- Not false accusers:

- We should see how serious this issue is, just by understanding the Greek word that it comes from:
 - "Diabolos" (Strong 1228), 38 occurrences and 35 of them are translated as "**devil**", 2 as "false accuser", and 1 as "slanderer"
 - "prone to slander, slanderous, accusing falsely, a calumniator, false accuser, slanderer,"
- **John 8:44** *"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."*
- So we see plainly that this is one of Satan's key characteristics: he is a liar (**John 8:44**), and he is the "accuser of the brethren" (**Revelation 12:10**). Clearly then, we should not knowingly speak false words about anyone. Ever. But let's move beyond that obvious application, and consider how we fall into this behavior unintentionally.
 - 1) We often make bad assumptions because we don't have enough information. If you are relying on third hand, or incomplete information, then you probably shouldn't be repeating it without a very good reason. Just because someone has put words in your ears doesn't mean that you should repeat them, or even accept them as absolute fact; especially when partial information is being used to attribute motives to someone.
 - 2) We have to recognize that speaking false and harmful words about another person often starts in the heart. If it starts in the heart, then it has to be fixed in the heart. Specific to our co-elect, if we don't have a proper, charitable view of a person, then we will be prone to see everything that they do through a critical lens. Charity would have us to "think no evil" (**1Corinthians 13:5**) of each other – we are to apply the very best motivation to each others words and deeds, until it becomes impossible to do so. If our heart attributes the

worst motivation to a person, then we will make bad assumptions about them, and our tongue will bring forth accusatory words, in kind. The way to avoid this is to proactively examine yourself; if you see a place where you have a strained relationship with one of your co-elect, then you need to get about the prayerful work to tear down your bad view of that person, and engage with them in the spirit, such that you are knit together in love. That kind of work is very uncomfortable to the flesh, but is absolutely needful to the health of the body of Christ.

3) If you are in the habit of being a tattler, or busybody, then you need to look that sin in the face, and stop doing it. *“And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.” (1 Timothy 5:13)* We are not supposed to be gossiping about everything that comes into our ears. If the words we speak about someone are not for the purpose of building up and edifying, then we should be extremely circumspect about saying them. In the specific case where you have a concern about someone, you should either 1) Talk to them directly, or 2) Get counsel from your husband, father, or an elder, who can discreetly help you.

- Remember, my dear friends - even if we make false accusation unintentionally, the result is the same: strife and contention. It is shocking how much damage our mouths can do with a few ill advised words. We are all sinful creatures, so it’s going to happen, but we have to strive mightily against it.

- **James 3:5,6** *“5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! 6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.”*

- Not given to much wine:

- “Given” means “to make a slave to” (Strong’s 1402)
- Taken literally, she should not be a slave to actual wine or other intoxicants. If we are to be sober, then we clearly cannot be physically intoxicated, which makes it impossible to have our hearts focused on our duties to God. (**Galatians 5:21**) Further, we are to be spiritually sober - we should not be a slave to anything in this world. See the previous sermons in this series for more words regarding sobriety and temperance.

- Teachers of good things:

- “teachers of good things” is one Greek word: kalodidaskalos (2567).

- The underlying word for “good” is “kalos” (2570)
- Strongs:
 - Beautiful, handsome, excellent, eminent, choice, surpassing, precious, useful, suitable, commendable, admirable
 - Good, excellent in its nature and characteristics, and therefore well adapted to its ends
 - Beautiful by reason of purity of heart and life, and hence praiseworthy
 - Morally good, noble
 - Honourable, conferring honour
 - Affecting the mind agreeably, comforting and confirming
- Consider how the word is used by Christ at Matthew 5:
 - *Matthew 5:15,16* “15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your **good** works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”
- In short, the good that should be taught is anything and everything that helps a person to understand their duty to Christ, and to implement it in practical ways in their lives; provoke thoughts, words, and deeds that reflect well on Christ, and the beautiful, joyful, simple way of peace that He has appointed to us.
- This teaching is certainly done by example – see previous instructions. It should also be done directly with words. This is not a matter of chasing around looking for someone to instruct; I think it is more of a natural process of being engaged with the body, and then humbly teaching where you see an appropriate opportunity to provoke and encourage. It is not a matter of lording over someone, or trying to run someone else’s household. The spirit and approach should begin with the example of the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31:
- **Proverbs 31:26** “*She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.*”
 - **Wisdom:** She is to teach according to the wisdom of God, which she has been taught and has experienced. Perhaps the teaching needs to be about helping that person with perspective in an area where they are struggling or distressed. Perhaps they are lacking practical skills, and need help. Perhaps they need words that will encourage and comfort them as they try to understand their duty and carry their burden. Perhaps they are pridefully thinking that they are their own teacher, and they need don’t need to have anyone watching and helping them. Perhaps they are on a path that has led, or will lead to sin, and they need to be warned of the danger, so that they can change

course. In any event, the teaching cannot come from our own definition of good - it has to come from a *scriptural definition* of good. We have to be careful not to create our own standards. It is so easy to look at a situation from afar, and decide what we think the right outcome should be, and then try to cobble scriptures together around that outcome, so that it seems scriptural. Instead, we have to start with the scriptural standard, not the outcome that our flesh thinks is right. Those things will often overlap, but the exercise is to put down our flesh, and rely upon the word, so that we can be confident that our flesh isn't driving the train. If we focus on the scriptures, and seek the Lord in prayer, then we will know when to engage a younger person, and on what terms. Sometimes they need teaching that comes with a firm insistence of a behavior change. More often, they need scriptural words tied together with the experience that they are lacking, so that they can change their perspective, regardless of the outcome of any particular situation. The teaching always comes back to this simple provocation: sincerely put your focus on Christ, and everything else will become clear and easy. (**Matthew 6:33**)

- **Kindness:** This is a kindness that is driven from a spirit of meekness before God. It is borne upon the love of God and the love of the brethren. It is not rash and angry, but it also not simpering and wavering. It is steady and enduring. The work isn't about the person who is teaching - it is for the good of the person being taught, and is aimed at building up the body of Christ, for His glory! Therefore, the work has to be approached with real consideration of the person's frame, and a prayerful determination to keep your flesh out of the equation as best as you can. This can be very difficult if the other person wants to defend and justify themselves, rather than soberly hear what you are trying to tell them. (More on this when we discuss younger women.) When this happens, there is no telling what malicious, hurtful thing will fly out of their mouths. Stay on task; don't answer railing for railing, and know that the Lord will bless your effort. (**1Peter 3:9**) That fleshly opposition to good counsel is another thing that you can kindly help them with, once they are in their proper mind.
- o Remember - every time you set about to do this good work of teaching, you are still in your own flesh, and you are still learning: "... when I would do good, evil is present with me" (**Romans 7:21**) With that in mind, take advantage of each opportunity to ask the Lord to help you learn to do better. Don't be too proud to circle back to the person and tell them if you think that you didn't handle the discussion very well. Not only is that a right thing to do before

God, but it is also teaching them a thing – namely that we don't have anything to be proud about! This whole thing is about glorifying Christ, not our own pride.

- **Colossians 3:12-17** *“12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. 14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”*
- A couple of other notes:
 - When doing this good work of teaching, make sure that you are not undercutting the authority of that young woman's husband or father. If it is their policy at issue, then the discussion should start with them.
 - If we are trying to help someone with what looks like a problem, we have to ensure that we are actually seeing what we think we are seeing. Often, we have a tendency to overlay our own experiences onto other people. We might see some behavior, or hear some words that seem common to something we have experienced or struggled with, and then assume that what we are observing is the same situation or problem. If we do that, then we might charge in with a solution that's not helpful, because it's a solution to the wrong problem. The way to avoid this is to not assume – ask and listen before jumping to a conclusion.
- That [the aged women] may teach the younger women to be Sober:
 - Greek: “sophronizo” (4994) - this word is only used in this verse
 - Strongs: “restore one to his senses; to moderate, control, curb, disciple; to hold one to his duty; to admonish, to exhort earnestly”
 - The ‘-izo’ suffix is added to the verb, meaning that you are “causing it to become”. In this case the original verb “sophrone” means to be sober; so “sophronizo” means to cause the person to become sober.
 - Consider baptize. Original verb is “bapto”, meaning “to immerse”. Add “izo” = “baptizo”, meaning “to cause to be immersed”.
 - This is a distinct word that focuses on the duty of the **older woman**. The younger women are instructed to be “discreet” later in the passage; the

Greek word for “discreet” is the same root word as this word (4998). But here, we see the responsibility of the older women to insist upon that sobriety. To moderate, control, discipline, hold one to his duty, admonish, etc. This is not passive work. It’s not always pleasant work. But it is needful, useful, thankworthy work that the body needs.

- For this teaching to be possible, young women **must** put down their pride to believe that it is necessary to be taught, so that they can comfortably submit to instruction. This includes a willingness to be open and honest with older people who are trying to watch for your soul and give you good help. That does not mean that you should be vomiting the business of your house and your marriage all over the place (see discreet below). It means that you have to be willing to listen and consider without immediately taking offense, or trying to justify yourself. It means that you should not – ever – turn and assault the faithful soul that is trying to help you; or go about to malign them to others. Hear what they are telling you and take it to heart. Attribute to them the very best motivation, and forbear anything about their presentation that wasn’t your favorite.
- Certainly, any person that is setting about to teach a thing, ought to be setting a good example in their own behavior. But, sorrowfully, we are all sinners, and we all fail at times. Often, we are taught by God when we are chastened for our sins, which gives useful – if not painful - experience from which to teach. Young people: please do not look down on an older person, accusing them, and ignoring their advice in the name of hypocrisy. Please hear me on this: look at these sincere older souls as helpers, and not hypocrites. Hear them despite their own failings – in fact, hear them BECAUSE of the experience of their failings.

I love you all. Amen.