

1. Introduction

Good morning.

The Olympics have begun and I love it. I really enjoy watching all the different types of sport, I'm there in front of the tv cheering for the athletes, and occasionally dreaming of what it might be like to be on the Olympic team.

In the lead up to the Olympics this year, there's been quite a bit of controversy about who will be accepted onto the Australian Olympic Team.

This is Michael Diamond(P) and he's represented Australia at the last 6 Olympics, he's won 2 Olympic Gold medals, he wanted to be the flagbearer for the Opening Ceremony. However, his attendance at his 7th Olympic games was not going to happen. Michael Diamond had been charged with drink-driving and firearm offences and was stripped of his gun licence in May. Here's what the Australian Olympic Committee representative had to say about the situation.

"The incident involving Michael Diamond has, in our view, put our sport in a position which is inappropriate," Shooting Australia chief executive Damien Marangon said.

If you want to be an Australian Olympian, you not only have to have very good skills at a sport, but your behaviour has to be good as well. Instead of making shooting and the Olympics attractive, Michael's behaviour is actually doing the opposite.

As we come today, to the book of Titus, this same kind of issue was occurring in Crete. The Christians there were not acting like Christ. They were acting like the other people around them, liars, evil brutes and lazy gluttons. Instead of being attractive as a Christian, they were blending in or even worse driving people from knowing the truth of Christ.

Unfortunately I think we can easily see this kind of problem within the church today. The truth that we have in the bible is absolutely stunning, when you see real Christian faith in action, it's very attractive. so why is it that so often people say that Christianity is ugly?

Recently I had a conversation with a woman about her experiences with church. Asking her about whether she went to church. Her answer was this, I used to go to church, but I left because the people at the church were not as nice and friendly as my friends who did not go to church. She said, We were learning about love and kindness but I wasn't seeing that in the church people, so I had to leave, and now I no longer go to any church. As I had this conversation with this lady, I was deeply saddened, that she had left the church because there wasn't love and kindness being shown by the followers of the God who is love. And this problem is not just a one off case, we hear of these situations everywhere, and we even hear it happening here at our church.

So the challenge for Us and for Titus is, How do we live lives that displays the true attractiveness of Christianity and not make it look ugly? ? Well, thankfully for Titus, and for us, Paul continues in chapter 2, with what I think is the How To guide. How do we live lives that are godly?

In verse 1 of chapter 2, Paul says to Titus, You however must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine.

2. What is Titus to Teach? Titus 2:1

Illustration: Some of you may not know but I love playing table tennis. And at the moment I'm taking lessons. I know certain techniques to play better. However, most of the time when I'm actually playing, I forget what I'm supposed to do.

I can know a lot about table tennis, I can learn from my teacher but in order for it to be effective knowledge, it needs to be shown in the way that I play. My knowledge of table tennis needs to lead to better table tennis.

This is the same for us as followers of Jesus. It's important for us to be taught sound doctrine. It's important for us to learn what the bible says. But it can't stop at that point, we can't be happy with just having the knowledge of the truth in our minds, remember what Chapter 1:1 says, the knowledge of truth leads to... godliness.

And so Paul doesn't just say teach sound doctrine, he says to Titus teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine. In other words, he's saying teach the lifestyle to the Christians, live out what you are teaching.

I wanted to just pause at this verse, because I think it's important for us to think about this. As a Christian you may have a lot of knowledge, maybe you've been able to fill your mind with theological truths, understanding things like predestination or justification by faith, you may be able to answer people's questions about Christianity, and while it is great that you have this knowledge, the key question is does this knowledge of the truth lead to a change in behavior with my lifestyle. how is this knowledge going to transform my behavior this week. We're not here to simply to fill our heads with knowledge from the bible, we are to learn the truth in order that we might grow in godly living.

So let's look at Paul's How to instructions, and look at how Titus is to teach godliness.,

And I think there are three things that Paul highlights in this passage that helps Titus to teach godliness

Godliness in lifestyle, Godliness by example, and Godliness through grace.

1. Godliness in lifestyle

What does godliness look like?

One of the first things you notice as we come to verse 2-10, is that Paul gives us 5 descriptions of the people who make up the church. There is a description of behavior for older men, older women, younger women, younger men and slaves. Why do you think he does this? Is it because godliness is different depending on whether you're old or young, a woman or a man, or whether you're a free person or a slave? No I don't think that this is the reason, because. Everyone, from young to old is to live a life of godliness and the standards are the same for everyone. Why I think Paul has different descriptions of godliness is because of our ungodliness. What godly behaviors we may struggle with, may look different depending on who we are, and depending on what stage of life we are in. There are some things that Older men might particularly need to hear, and there are some things that younger women need to hear. And as we read these descriptions today, we need to understand the context and the culture that Paul was writing into, to help apply it to our

time and culture. But the one thing that doesn't change, is what godliness is, godliness for the Cretan Christians is the same as it is for us.

So as you look through these descriptions of godliness, don't think I'm not in that category, therefore this doesn't apply to me. Really, almost all the behaviours that are spelled out in verses 2-10 can be applied to everyone who is to live a godly life.

Now unfortunately due to time, we won't be able to delve deeply into every behavior listed in our passage today, but I hope as we touch on some of them, that it might stimulate you to go out and to think more on what struggles with godliness you might have in your life. You're welcome to come and speak to anyone on the staff team about what godliness is, or speak to a trusted Christian friend, or if you want to read some helpful Christian books, read the books that both Ian and Anne have reviewed for us in the newsletter or you can read another very helpful book by Jerry Bridges titled the practice of godliness.

I just want to talk briefly about a major behavior that seems to overlap between all the groups, that is self-control. I looked up in the thesaurus the word-self-control and here are some of the similar words that came up...Dignity, restraint, sobriety, stability, constraint, temperance, discipline

As you scan your eye down the list of behaviours, self-control seems to cover a lot of the different types of behavior that Paul describes. Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified and self controlled, older women are to be reverent in their behavior, they are to have self control with how much wine they drink. Both young men and women are to be self-controlled. The slaves are to be self-controlled in the way they talk and to be self controlled in not taking things which don't belong to them.

What is self-control? It means being thoughtful about your behavior, you don't just do what comes naturally, you don't just react with your instincts. It's about being controlled in your actions. Self-control helps you to make the right and wise choice when faced with temptation. Self-control helps you to say no to worldly desires. Self-control is to be in all aspects of our life, self-control with what we think, what we say, and what we do, what we watch. If you know God Paul says, you are to be self-controlled.

So again, a good question for us to think about is, in what areas in my life do I lack self-control? I'm sure all of us can make a list of where we might lack self-control. Is it with the things that we say or the things that we think about? Is it the things that we watch on tv, DO we have self-control when we use my time? Do we lack self control when it comes to our emotions? Do we lack self – control with what we eat or drink? Do we lack control when it comes to intimate relationships, or in the area of sex. Do we lack self-control in reading our bible, in prayer, in coming to church? Perhaps there's a lack of self-control when it comes to shopping, When you have written your list, start working on one thing. Because I think sometimes when we look at the list like this we can be overwhelmed with what is lacking, but it is important that we begin somewhere and over time, as we train ourselves in self control, as we pray for self-control and through God's grace, we will be able to be better in self-control. We won't be perfect in our behavior whilst living in this world, but we ought to be striving to live godly lives.

AS we trust in Jesus, and know the truth, our lifestyle our behavior, must be consistent with sound doctrine. Paul in these verses show us what this looks like.

3. Godliness by example

So now I want to move onto how Titus is to teach self control and godliness and it s through setting an example. Some of you may not know, but I've been at this church since I was seven years old, my dad was the minister here 2 ministers ago. (picture of the past two ministers and marty and I) I have learnt many things through the older and wiser Christian people in my life, and I can't name them all. But one person sticks in my mind and it is the example of a lovely woman named Betty. Every Sunday morning whenever I attended the early service with my dad, I always used to see Betty praying for my Dad and the people in the service. Over time, as I observed Betty's life, I saw that prayer was important in her life, and it made an impact on me. It showed me the importance of relying upon God through all things, and to bring everything I do before God in prayer. Now I think that this was an informal way of being an example, as I don't think Betty intentionally thought to herself, I will pray so that Emily can learn, it was just me observing her godly behaviour which shaped mine.

In verse 7, Paul calls Titus to be an example, a model of good works, Paul says, Titus, be a good role model for the people in your church community, in your life show integrity, dignity and sound of speech. Leaders in particular are called to be role models, and Paul also mentions that the Older

women are to train the younger women in particular things, they too are to be examples for the younger woman. This can be done formally or informally.

What I want to briefly say under this heading is that we all learn by example. There is a responsibility of the older people in our church, those who are mature Christians to be an example to the younger people in the church.

Speaking as a younger person, There are struggles that we young people go through, whether it be singleness, marriage, work, kids, and we appreciate being encouraged and shown how to live in godliness through these times. I appreciate learning through the experiences of older mature Christian men and women. I appreciate the time and effort they make to let me into their lives, and I've learnt from them how they live their daily life with Jesus as their King. I'm not saying that they will be perfect examples, but what I see is that in all they do they are aiming to be like Jesus, they learn from their experiences and mistakes and they share that with me.

One of the things that I've heard from many people is that they feel that they are not a good example. They say, I have weaknesses in areas in my life. Why would someone want to listen to my life struggles? It can be quite intimidating to be an example. But, I would like to encourage you all, whether you're married or not, You have been through life and experiences, and if you are someone who trusts in God, who is loving and is someone who is persevering in godliness, then you have important things to share. Even if its how you have rebounded from your mistakes and struggles. We all have weaknesses, we all struggle in certain areas, however, what is important is not that we are models of perfection, but that we are models of growth. AS we go through life, we should be determined to live a life in godliness.

Some helpful questions for us to ask might be who am I learning from or who might I want to learn from, and who am I being an example to.

4. Godliness through grace

So far, Paul's how to guide has taught us that we need to look at our lifestyle and we need to take seriously what our behaviour is like, we've also learnt that godliness is learnt through example of

others. Finally in the last verses, Paul reminds us that ultimately we receive godliness through grace.

These verses are the highlight of the chapter. These verses tell of the wonderful and amazing truth that is found in the bible It is the sound doctrine that Titus is to teach which leads to godliness. Now unfortunately due to time, we'll have to briefly go through what these verses teach us, so

Verse 11 teaches us of the wonderful news of the grace of God, Jesus Christ, who appeared into our world, to bring salvation to all people. All people have free access to this salvation if they choose to accept and trust in what Jesus has done for them. Please come and see me, or a person on the staff team, if you want to learn more about how this wonderful gift of salvation and how to accept it.

Verse 13 teaches us that we are currently waiting for our blessed hope, we are waiting for the time when Jesus in all his glory and greatness will appear for the second and last time. So as we wait now, we are to live godly lives.

Verse 14 teaches us that Jesus Christ gave himself for us, he died on the cross for us, to redeem us from our lawlessness which is also known as lack of control and Jesus has purified us, washed us clean so that we become his treasured people who are zealous for good works. You see this verse reminds us that the knowledge of truth, if we truly accept and understand what Jesus has done for us, must and will lead us to live godly lives. SO do you really understand what God has done for you, do you understand that he has bought you at a price, he has rescued you from eternal death into eternal life, because if you do understand this, then your lives must demonstrate a life of godliness. And the great news is that Jesus doesn't leave us on our own to do this,

You see, Verse 12 reminds us that grace trains us, Jesus is our ultimate trainer. Jesus, through the work of the Holy Spirit trains us to say NO to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled and upright lives, and godly lives. Jesus is the ultimate example that we are to follow, you see godliness isn't just a theoretical idea or just some moral guidelines, No, we can see godliness demonstrated perfectly in the life of Jesus. And we find his life in the bible. He also does promise us that the Holy Spirit will live in us and train us to become more godly.

Finally, I want to finish with why we are to be concerned that our lives, our lifestyle should be consistent with the knowledge of truth. Why is Paul concerned about the church's character? It has to do with verse 5, verse 8 and verse 10.

Paul has been concerned that the Christians in Crete have a godly lifestyle

Verse 5 so that no one will malign the word of God

Verse 8 so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

Verse 10 so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.

God's intention is that as we grow in Christ likeness, as we grow in love for one another, as we support and encourage one another we should display a culture that is totally different from anything in the world around us. The church should stand out as a people who love God and love each other. And that looks attractive. I think that this is God's supreme strategy for evangelism. When we think about evangelism we worry about what we have to say, or perhaps we really dislike the idea of doorknocking. But I think the best way that we Christians can evangelise is to be more and more like Jesus, godliness is what attracts people to Christ. If we are living authentic Christian lives, then the church will be attractive, and this will lead to more people belonging to Jesus. Imagine if our whole church community displayed godliness, I think the gospel will be so attractive that people will be bursting out the door. Yes, our church will never be perfect but we should aim to live godly lives so that the beauty of the gospel will never be unattractive.

DL Moody said 1 out of 100 people read the bible, the other 99 read the Christian.

Because we are a redeemed people, let us be fully immersed in his word, let us train in godliness, let us share our lives with each other so we can encourage one another to grow to be more like Christ together. Let us be God's people who make the truth about Jesus attractive.

Dear Lord Jesus, Thank you that you came, you came to rescue us, to redeem us, to purify us, and to make us your own possession. We pray then that we may respond to your grace that we may grow in passion to be more like you. And that our lives may show forth the reality of your love and your truth, your holiness, your wisdom, your self-control, Please Lord come to us in our weakness, and fill us afresh with your grace, and make us people zealous for your good works, so that we may

make the doctrine of God our Saviour attractive. So that the word of God may not be reviled as the result of us, help us not only to teach, but to learn and to live what accords with sound doctrine, and we ask it for the honour and glory of your name, AMEN

I met up with Anne Trouncer during the week, she is a lovely lady from our 5pm service, she wanted to share some of her experiences and thoughts with us in light of Titus 2, so we'll watch a short video now.

Women in the church

Teach what is good to others, and to younger women

Younger women – what does it mean to train? We don't expect to be trained to be wise to be mothers, to be husband, it won't always come naturally. More than romantic sexual love, more on service and sacrifice. Love your husband. They can be trained in it.

Of course it doesn't mean that you won't be loving

Don't accept being abused by your husband, that's not what it means to be loving.

When Paul says to be trained to love you husband –

Homekeepers

Verse 5 workers at home, good homekeepers, predominantly worked in the home, not idle and lead to gossiping.

Not busy idlers and slanderers – need

You can't argue from this verse women should never work outside the home, but you can argue that if a woman chooses marriage and accepts that God has given them children and that she

won't neglect them, but love them, and is to put time and effort into make the home a safe and comfortable place, and I'm not saying that the husband doesn't put any effort into making them home a safe and comfortable place, or not putting any effort into loving his children, they certainly should. Working at home is a noble profession, but it doesn't mean that

It may mean that for some woman, that's what a husband and wife need to work out what's best for their what is best for their marriage, and what is best for their family. Being a mother at home is also a good thing. It's extremely important job, we shouldn't look down at the stay at home mum.

Christian wife in the US

Answer: "I am socializing two homo sapiens into the dominant values of the Judeo-Christian tradition in order that they might be instruments for the transformation of the social order into the kind of eschatological utopia that God willed from the beginning of creation."

Then Peggy would ask the other person, "And what do you do?"

See their work as something that is honourable..

Arranged marriages were common, didn't often marry for love.