



MONDAY 11 JULY 2016

SERIES: ZECHARIAH

Read: Titus 3:1-2

Plug In...

These verses of Titus remind the church people to submit to rulers and authorities, obey, not slander, and be gentle. The reminder comes out of the same logic from chapter 2. Knowing God via the gospel follows through with particular behaviours. Chapter 2 primarily focused on the in-house relationships of church. Here, the gospel brings forth change in how you relate to world around you.

Chew It Over...

Submitting to authorities does not come easily – particularly for Australians. Think over how submissive you are when driving the car. Regardless of whether we think a road rule is stupid, or that we are a competent driver, how often do you use your mobile phone while driving or engage in speeding? In another realm, it is difficult not to slag off the boss to others, particularly when we think they've made a bad call. When we do these things (even so-called "little things") something is going on in our hearts. Titus 3:2 calls us to be gentle when we have difficult people in our lives. Whether a boss, or someone we share the road with, our temptation is to fight fire with fire. God is gentle, Jesus was and is gentle. This does not remove a place for evaluation or critique, but it maintains human dignity and their safety as we go about it. Gentleness is a consideration of others even when they don't deserve it.

Prayer Suggestion

Help us Lord to show we submit to you through submitting to our authorities. Help us to do this in everything. Help us to avoid rebellion in with regard to the innocuous or seemingly insignificant things. Stop us short from blurting out slanderous sentences. May we be so caught up by what Jesus is doing in our lives that we stand poised ready for every good work within our church and within the communities you've located us.



The Lakes

TUESDAY 12 JULY 2016

SERIES: ZECHARIAH

Read: Titus 3:3-7

Plug In...

Verse 3 starts with “For”. The commands to be submissive to authorities comes straight out of what God had done for us as rebellious creatures (who did not submit to Him). (1) Acted with goodness and love towards us; (2) saved us by mercifully providing righteousness we could not achieve; (3) washed us clean; (4) pours out the Spirit on us to reshape what we do; (5) placed us as heirs of eternal life.

Chew It Over...

The letter of Titus has a lot of commands to live like this, to do or stop doing xyz. However, the call for different living is not just a “come on, pull your socks up people!”, but a call directed to people Paul knows differ supernaturally to everybody else. These people have something: forgiveness and regeneration. Their judgement has been removed and the Spirit now enters and causes a person to act like they’ve been made anew (regenerated). When a person follows a command they display what they really are – one of God’s special people (2:14).

Prayer Suggestion

Thank the Lord for His mercy. Over specific areas you struggle with, ask the Lord to work there directly by His Spirit over the coming months.



The Lakes

WEDNESDAY 13 JULY 2016

SERIES: ZECHARIAH

Read: Titus 3:8 & Matthew 7:13-20

Plug In...

Paul insists that God's special people must *carefully devote themselves to good works*. Paul's insistence is because the gospel logic state that people who believe *will* do these things. Paul follows Jesus' teaching that you know a tree by its fruit (Matthew 7:13-20; *cf.* Matthew 15:18-19).

Chew It Over...

Our series at The Lakes for Titus is called *Living Out Loud*. This is because the logic of Titus is: the one who truly is a Christian will issue in a life that displays this out loud. I.e., their actions match their relationship. There can be disconnect between what we say and what we do hence why Paul says to work "carefully" at our devotion to good works. How do we be careful? What can you do with your regular patterns of life that will enhance your carefulness with living in a way that matches with what you say you believe?

Prayer Suggestion

Devotion comes from a deep place in the heart – we must ask God to generate this. Also ask for practical and pragmatic ideas to enhance carefulness in protecting that devotion.



The Lakes

THURSDAY 14 JULY 2016

SERIES: ZECHARIAH

Read: Titus 3:9-11

Plug In...

The person who is carefully devoting themselves to good works will be in a position to avoid false and distorted teachings that come up. Things may come to a head where the divisive person needs to be warned, twice. [NB: this refers specifically to the false teacher/s in the Christian community, not non-Christians in general.] And, if there is no change put out from the community. The warnings are *redemptive* for the person in the wrong; hopefully they come back (*cf.* 1:13). But if stuck in their false teaching, the very tough move of putting them out has to be done. Done for the love and protection of everyone else (*cf.* 3:8).

Chew It Over...

The avoidance mentioned in v.9 does not mean we can't interact with someone with distorted views. In fact, the warnings are an interaction. The avoidance is avoiding getting caught up in the views such that you participate in and follow along. Remember, the warnings–rejection are designed to save people. This is serious stuff and there are times when tough calls have to be made. However, as serious as this is, we don't want to police every word someone might say as though it is a test of their orthodoxy. Often times, what people say may indeed sound unorthodox, but with a little probing you realise it is a question they have, or they're in the process of figuring things out. Good conversation on our part that involves lots of questions like "what do you mean?" and "I'd like to know more

on how you came to that?" are ways of being gentle with another and give opportunity to help correct people before they do deep in the wrong direction.

Prayer Suggestion

May Jesus make us into people devoted to his teaching and good works so that we have an ear attuned to where people may be at with their grasp of the gospel. May God help us help one another stay committed to sound teaching and a lifestyle to match. Pray for profitable wisdom in our conversations that are communicated with love and gentleness.



The Lakes

FRIDAY 15 JULY 2016

SERIES: ZECHARIAH

Read: Titus 3:12-13

Plug In...

As Paul finishes his letter to Titus, his request now is that Titus comes and updates him on how it all went. Paul is going to send a replacement to enable Titus to be freed up to come.

Chew It Over...

It is easy to skip over this part of the letter thinking it has no relevance for us; thinking it is just a quirky detail all part-n-parcel of the earthiness of a real letter. Yet, even this move of Paul where he subs in another for Titus reflects the theology of Paul in *practice*. This letter has shown the most urgent thing for those in Crete is that people hear the true gospel, that they persevere in it, that leaders model it and pass it on in sound fashion. This structural move for the church of Crete is borne out of these concerns. Everything in our lives are to be connected to what we believe, we need to be able to trace lines from our actions, decisions, words, back to what we believe.

Prayer Suggestion

Pray that we don't compartmentalise our lives. That living for Jesus is integrated and filters down to everything we do.



The Lakes

WEEKEND 16-17 JULY 2016

SERIES: ZECHARIAH

Read: Titus 3:14-15 & Ephesians 5:15-17

Plug In...

This verse shows there is a priority amongst good works. We need to evaluate amongst good works as to whether or not they are urgent. We must be trees that produce fruit.

Chew It Over...

There is lots of stuff we can do. Lots of stuff you are capable of doing. We may find ourselves with opportunities, doors that are open before us. Before just stepping through we still need to evaluate the many good things and do what demands the priority at this time. The more we are students of Scripture and devoted to God's word, the more wisdom we will gain in order to figure out the urgent good works from the not-as-urgent good works (Ephesians 5:15-17).

Prayer Suggestion

Pray for devotion to God's word; for devotion to prayer. Ask for wisdom to make the most of every opportunity, to put our efforts into the most urgent.