Titus 2: Teach Sound Doctrine. Be clear. Christ is life for the broken world.

Living so the message is heard, not drowned out

SPEAKER	Matt Ryniker
DATE	Sunday, August 9, 2020
PASSAGES	Titus 2:2-10; Matthew 7:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:9-11; 1 Corinthians 14:7-9; Galatians 5:1; Isaiah 40:8
MESSAGE	Begins at 1:08:06 in the service

THE BIG IDEA

In Titus 2 Paul gives instructions to older men, older women, young women, young men and bondservants, and three times he says why: so the word of God is not reviled, so opponents have nothing true to say against us, and so we adorn the teaching of God our Savior. The gospel is precious and Christ is life for a broken world. Our lives should point clearly to him, never muddy the message – and never replace it.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- If God has put something on your heart, don't wait for someone to read your mind. Start talking about it.
- Love can be trained. It is not just a feeling but something described in Scripture and shown in God's character.
- People will slander the church anyway. We just don't want there to be any real substance behind it.
- A bad tree makes people unwilling to taste its fruit. A community's behavior can keep the world from hearing the message.

- We are free in Christ – free from the power of sin and death, not free from responsibility.
- Good behavior is no substitute for proclamation. "We can't good people into the kingdom." We proclaim Christ, and he saves.
- If someone rejects Christ, let it be because they saw him clearly and said no – not because our lives got in the way.

▶ 1:08:40

Matt began with good news: a second Sunday of children's ministry at the outdoor service, five children to be baptized in a tank on the lawn, baby dedications, and three Wednesday prayer nights on the playground. Going "rogue" from his notes, he said there is something incarnational about church. Podcasts and worship music at home are good, but God made us for one another, and he urged people to find some way to worship with other believers in person.

Don't wait for someone to read your mind

▶ 1:12:08

After a few dad jokes – a bear with no teeth is a gummy bear – Matt told a story the board chair had urged him months earlier to share. When he first joined Hope's staff he longed to preach; he told Mandy he felt like a dragon with fire inside. But he kept waiting for Steve Youngs, Geno or Steve Hawthorne to read his mind. When he finally raised it, he did so so timidly that it barely registered. When he asked Geno directly, the answer was yes – though high school ministers preaching on Sunday mornings was not yet part of Hope's culture.

▶ 1:15:54

Even then the fire burned, and he saw the Lord's fingerprints when he began preaching online; there had been no reason to wait. God was working through his excuses. So, for anyone God has been speaking to: don't wait for someone to tell you your own dream, like the king in Daniel. "I've been in full-time ministry more than ten years, and I still can't read people's minds." His "spiritual-sounding reasons" for hesitating had probably been fear. Start talking about it with a roommate, spouse or friend.

▶ 1:18:46

If pastoral affirmation is what you are waiting for, "here it is – I affirm you." Not that every idea is good, but don't hold it in. Tell him. And people around you may be ready to help without knowing it yet: in

college ministry Matt once kept an opportunity to himself, and when he finally apologized and asked for help, people responded with such energy that he realized he had been holding them back.

The text

▶ 1:21:47

Turning to Titus, Matt said it helps that Paul explains why he writes what he writes.

> "Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled."
>
> TITUS 2:2–5 ↗

▶ 1:22:33

Notice that older women are to "train" younger women to love. Love is something you can do, not just affection or romantic desire; it is described in 1 Corinthians 13 and defined by God's character, so it can be taught. That applies to parents too. And notice the reason: "that the word of God may not be reviled." Paul is talking about people's behavior, for the sake of the word.

> "Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us."
>
> TITUS 2:6–8 ↗

▶ 1:24:11

People always slander the church, someone might say. True, and sometimes for no reason but hating God. "But I don't want there to be an actual legitimate substance behind that accusation."

> "Bondservants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior."
>
> TITUS 2:9–10 ↗

Three reasons

▶ 1:25:16

"So that the word of God may not be reviled" – because we want the world to hear it. We all know the experience of having a bad taste about a book or a movie before we have even opened it. "So that an opponent may be put to shame" – which is why Paul insists in chapter 1 that leaders be above reproach: they naturally draw attention, and we do not want a vile distraction from what they proclaim. "So that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior" – not to adorn ourselves, but so the teaching of Christ is received as the treasure it is. Christ, God made man, is "the true tree of life everlasting."

▶ 1:26:50

Paul asks how people will believe if no one preaches (Romans 10:14). But how will they listen if they hate you before you start, and with good reason, because your community is out of whack? Jesus said something similar:

> "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit."
>
> MATTHEW 7:15–20 ↗

▶ 1:28:10

We have the message of life, immortality, forgiveness and grace, and then we offer immorality and slander. "That's not the tree, that's just me." "Well, that's your whole community, and I don't want anything y'all are eating if this is what it produces."

Isn't this a yoke of slavery?

▶ 1:28:37

The obvious objection: we are free. "All things are lawful for me," the Corinthians said, and Paul answered that not all things are helpful (1 Corinthians 10:23). "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (Galatians 5:1). Is Matt preaching behaviorism? Free from what, he asked. Not from responsibility, or from loving and protecting our families. We are free from the power of sin and death. And when we live in bondage to sin, it looks as though our message has no power – when in fact there is power for healing, for prophecy, for resurrection, and for real freedom from sin.

▶ 1:30:47

Some think the humble, relatable thing is to broadcast our sins and weaknesses: "We're just stumbling along like you." But the same Paul who wrote Galatians wrote this:

> "I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people – not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler – not even to eat with such a one."
>
> 1 CORINTHIANS 5:9–11 ↗

▶ 1:32:45

"Struggle through this with me," Matt said. Grace does not mean God never really cared about sin. If I thought I had offended you and you said, "No, it's fine," that is less gracious than if I truly offended you and you forgave and restored me. God's grace shines precisely because he cares so much about sin. And the message we carry is so holy that we do not want to "reek of death unnecessarily" and draw all the attention to ourselves. We want to point to the exalted Christ, who seeks and saves the lost.

▶ 1:34:34

Some have said the gospel is worth their lives. It is precious enough that Matt is glad to say no to things almost for the sake of saying no. He compared it to flirting with Mandy in a crowd, a small signal only she understands: in a storm of temptation, refusing to go near something is a way of saying to God, "I love you so much."

Distinct notes

▶ 1:35:39

> "If even lifeless instruments, such as the flute or the harp, do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know what is played? And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle? So with yourselves, if with your tongue you utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said?"
>
> 1 CORINTHIANS 14:7–9 ↗

Apply that to wrong notes, Matt said: the bugle should sound the call to battle, and our lives are playing something that sounds like "go to bed." We do not want to send the world in the wrong direction

because our behavior is so disappointing. Think of why Paul refused to partner with the Judaizers, even though they were numerous, persuasive, well connected and wealthy, and the church was small. The message mattered more than strategy, because at its core is the risen Christ. "If I can't be a leader because I don't reflect that in my life, so be it."

Behavior is not a substitute for proclamation

▶ 1:38:11

In Paul's view there is a proclamation, and a behavior that suits it – not a behavior that replaces it. Sometimes we are so nervous about "dropping a J-bomb" that we hope people will love Jesus because we are cool or good. "I don't think we can good people into the kingdom. We proclaim Christ, and he's the one who saves." Of seeker-sensitive appeals, Matt wondered whether anything that cool would get him to start attending a mosque. No, because he does not want that message. The message of Christ is obstacle enough, and he wants it to be the only one. If someone rejects Christ, let it be because they saw him and did not want him, not because all they could see were Christians sleeping around, drinking and gossiping.

Christ is life for the broken world

▶ 1:40:29

At the core of it all is the preciousness of Jesus. We are here today and gone tomorrow; the grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. Temptation, addiction, sin and serious trauma are real. The answer to all of it is Christ, which is why it is worth everything to point people to him – not to our programs or ourselves.

▶ 1:41:19

If bondage is real and the message of freedom is real, all our focus should be on connecting the two – clearly, repeatedly, and with adornment. We cannot be Jesus: "I was so nice to you that now you want to follow God." What must be crystal clear is "that Christ is life for the broken world," and we exalt him with our message and with our lives, because he deserves it. Matt prayed that God would manifest the power of grace and freedom in the church and its families, open their eyes to the preciousness of Jesus, and let his resurrection power take deeper root among them.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

SCRIPTURE IN THIS MESSAGE

- Titus 2:2–5
- 1 Corinthians 13:4–7
- Titus 2:6–8
- Titus 2:9–10
- Romans 10:14
- Matthew 7:15–20
- 1 Corinthians 10:23
- Galatians 5:1
- 1 Corinthians 5:9–11
- 1 Corinthians 14:7–9
- Isaiah 40:8

FOR YOUR HOPE GROUP

1. What has God put on your heart that you have been waiting for someone else to notice? Who could you talk to about it this week?
2. Paul says love can be trained. Who trained you in love, and whom might you train?
3. Three times Paul says why behavior matters. Which of the three reasons speaks most to you, and why?
4. How would you explain the difference between freedom from sin's power and freedom from responsibility?
5. Matt said behavior must never replace proclamation. Where are you tempted to let "being good" stand in for speaking about Christ?

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Matt Ryniker is Hope Chapel's senior pastor — his own description of the job — and reports to the church's governing board, who he cheerfully calls his boss. He and his wife Mandy have been held up from Hope's own pulpit as an example to the congregation. He spent a stretch of his working life as a public school teacher, and he still teaches the parent dedication classes where families commit to raising their children to follow Jesus — a theme that runs straight into this message.

Watch the full message:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Dp_3EKvTA8&t=4086s

These notes summarise a message preached at Hope Chapel in Austin, Texas. They are a reader's aid, not a transcript — scripture references link to the full passage so you can read it in context.