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Titus – Making Things Right

Chapter 3 - (vs.1-2)

Well, we come to a letter that was written for the purpose of setting things in order. On the island of Crete, that's not an easy task. So, as we come to this, we understand that by the time we come to chapter 3, it really comes to a head that you need to submit to authority. Who wants to do that? Submitting to authority is just something that goes against our nature. When you give us rules or a set of guidelines and tell us that we need to do something, it just makes us not want to all the more. Really, it goes all the way back to the book of Genesis as you see this tree. "Any tree you can eat, but not that one." Then, that's what man does. We see that as well with Moses as he is deemed the leader. Then Korah's rebellion, "Who put you in charge?" God says, "Well, I did." But man still resists any kind of authority, rules and regulations. I think that's one of the things that the Old Testament teaches us. The law really never could make us want to do right; it actually makes us want to do the opposite. That's the argument of Paul in Romans 7, "the things that I want to do, I don't do; the things that I don't want to do, I do. Wretched man that I am. Who will set me free?" His point in that particular chapter is that until the law came around, I was sinful. Then the law came and made me utterly sinful because it told me I couldn't do something, and it actually made me want to do it more. Of course, that reveals not only that we have a tendency to sin, but we have a tendency to rebel, and it's our nature.

This is probably going to get back to Jeremiah and he's going to get mad at me because he doesn't like me using him as an example, but hey, Pastor has kids, what else is he going to use, right? So, when Jeremiah was young, we had him in the car seat in the back. Dear old dad, it's just something fleshly in me, I just don't like stoplights. I don't mind if they're green, but when they turn red, I'm not very happy about it. So, you're heading down the road and trying to get someplace at a decent time, and the light starts changing. Of course, you can either speed up or slow down. I have a tendency to do the speeding up. I remember I'd get a little upset, "Man, that light. It seems like every time I want to go, that light wants to turn red on me" or something like that. Then, Jeremiah said, "No, I like the stoplight, Daddy." Then I said, "Why? What's wrong with you?" Actually, on one of his birthdays, we had to take him down to the sign store because he loved road signs. So, we had to get him a stop sign and we got him a yield sign or something else. He just loved those signs. I said, "Why do you like the stoplight?" and He answered, "We get to be first." I got to thinking, when you submit to what the Lord tells you to do, you get to be first. Scripture tells us that if we humble ourselves, the least will become the greatest and the last will be the first. So, it really is in humbling ourselves that God elevates us.

It's hard to think that way because we don't see the great benefit of it, but we need to change our way of thinking. Here again, part of repentance is changing our way of thinking.

So, when we come to Titus 3, it's kind of a culmination effect. We know that Paul sends Titus to Crete to set things in order. Once again, just go back to chapter 1 to reiterate that. He says in Titus 1:5, "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you."

In other words, appoint men that will be leaders that will then direct and correct and do their due diligence. Then, as it goes on, he begins to remind them why they are there. If you look in verse 10, "For there are many rebellious men..." So, there's a lot of rebellion. Of course, "empty talkers and deceivers"

(Titus 1:11) "who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families..."

When things are in disorder, it's very upsetting to everybody. He talks about the fact that a lot of different teachers are teaching different things there. If you want to upset somebody, just tell them there's no absolute. That will begin to really shake people. It doesn't really hit home until somebody asks you whether or not you packed the parachute, and you say, "Well, I could have, but maybe I didn't." Then, at that time, people just seem to want absolutes. I don't know why, but they actually want to know that there is a parachute in there and that it's going to open up. That's the way with good doctrine. If in fact you have many good ideas and nobody knows what the truth is, then it's upsetting; nobody knows what to hold onto. According to Hebrews, we have an anchor for our soul both sure and steadfast. (Hebrews 6:19) That is a truth. In fact, one of the statements that is made in Hebrews is that since God could swear to no greater name, He swore to Himself. (Hebrews 6:13) That's really an anchor if God said it, isn't it?

I like the way that it's put here in Titus 1:1, "Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness,

(Titus 1:2) in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago."

You have a lot of people telling you a lot of different things, and after a while, you begin to realize that "what this person told me wasn't true," and you think, "Who can I believe? What is right? What is wrong?" It's very upsetting. So, you don't have anything to grab onto when you're drowning.

When we come to Titus 2, you begin to see the order going in a very practical way; that is, the older men teaching the younger men and the older women are teaching the younger women. So, you realize the necessity of order. One of the words that is repeated over and over again is "tell them to live sensibly."

If you remember what that's about, it's actually reining in your emotions and your desires. In other words, you need to submit your will to God's because God knows better than you do. I know that's an epiphany to a lot of people, but I don't know why they would have difficulty actually remembering that simple truth, God's smarter than you. Why is that such a difficult thing to grasp? So, as he goes through this, he begins to in almost every case emphasize that word "sensible" whether it with the young women or the young men; or the older men, "tell them to live sensibly." Rein in those desires and pursuits that you have that aren't necessarily according to godliness. Proverbs 16 talks about the fact that you have plans, ok, but the outcome belongs to God. So, you want to roll those plans to God.

Of course, Proverbs 3:5-6,

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart
And do not lean on your own understanding.

(Proverbs 3:6) In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He will make your paths straight."

So, you're saying, "Ok God, I'm not going to go to such and such a city and do this and that. I'm going to say, 'If the Lord wills, I'm going to do this' as James says." So, we have that sense of man wanting to be independent; man wanting to be rebellious, "I don't want anybody telling me what to do." It just comes naturally.

The question is what causes us to want to do the right thing? That really is what gets hit really hard in Titus 2. If you drop on down, we will pick up in verse 9 because we already talked to the young men and women about being sensible and reining in their desires, passions and appetites.

"Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative..."

It's one thing to do what you know you have to do, but you mean I can't fuss about it, grumble or be critical about it? Nope, you can't.

(Titus 2:10) "not pilfering..."

Sometimes your perception is "They're cheating me. So, maybe I can cheat them over here." There's kind of a one-upmanship that goes on. "Not pilfering" is dealing with looking for an advantage in some sort of gain.

"... but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God..."

Now, he says that the main issue is we're representatives of God. Here again, the question in all of this is why should that make any difference to me? Why should I be concerned about adorning the gospel of God? Well, if you look in verse 11, it states this,

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men.”

Once again, I just want to reemphasize in verse 12, “instructing.” Do you remember that word? “Instructing,” “*paideuō*”? That’s literally translated “scourging.” So, Scripture is telling us that the grace of God, verse 11, which appears to us, and we see the salvation of God on the cross as Christ begins to reveal His love to us, disciplines us. We’ll put it another way, it beats us into submission.

Turn with me to Romans 2, which will shore this principle up. It talks about the fact that we’re without excuses, knowing what the right things to do is. He then begins to talk about how God has been so kind to you. The problem oftentimes is that we don’t think very much about that. “Oh yeah, Jesus died on the cross for my sins.” Wow, you need to back up. God so loved you that He didn’t have to give you a second look. You’re but dust, but He died for you, while you were a sinner might I add, as Romans will go on to say.

The question in verse 4 is “Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?”

What is it that moves and motivates me to do the right thing? Well, it’s the power of the grace of God. I’m touched by His love and His sacrifice for me, and I’m really thrust on my knees as I begin to see His sacrifice for me. If you take this seriously that He didn’t have to do any of this, and He certainly didn’t have to love me, but He loved me so much that He would give Himself for me. Now, here again, we’ve heard this story so many times. Oftentimes, we get over familiar with it, but that’s our motivation, and there is a sense of “I nailed Him on that cross,” which brings me to repent. It’s the kindness of God that causes me to think differently, which is the definition of the word “repent.”

We’ve mentioned this several times, but in Romans 12:1, how does Paul urge us to minister to one another? Well, the way he puts it is “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God...” In other words, what is the impetus that moves you to do the right thing? The mercies of God, right. Then, you present your bodies as a living sacrifice and begin to serve one another. See, if people aren’t serving the body of Christ, and if they’re not zealous for God then they have not understood or they refuse to accept that gracious gift of God because that’s enough to move you. In fact, it’s the most powerful force there is. Now, Paul does say to the Corinthians, “What? Do I need to come with a stick, or can I come in love?” because he knew that love was a far greater motivator than threatening. Of course, he wasn’t going to let them continue to do wrong. It’s the same way with parents. Your desire is “I wish you would do it because you loved us” and you hope that you never have to pull out the stick; you don’t want them to continue doing wrong because it’s going to hurt them. As Proverbs says, if you don’t discipline your children, you hate them. Why does it say that? Well, because if in fact you’re afraid to discipline your child, you’re more concerned about what they think of you than how they act out there. You’re not really concerned for them. A parent that really loves their child is willing to be hated

by their child so that their child will do the right thing. Chapter 12 ends with that sort of thought in mind, as it says,

(Romans 12:17) “Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.”

Ultimately, vengeance is the Lord’s. He will repay.

(Romans 12:21) “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

In this particular passage, the perception is “How do I fight evil if in fact they’re attacking me?” The initial knee jerk reaction is “I hit them because they hit me.” This passage is saying, “No, don’t take your own revenge.” In fact, it goes on and says, just to make it a little more difficult for you because God likes to make you miserable,

(Romans 12:20) “BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK...”

Well, that’s a gracious act, isn’t it? Watch what it says.

“... FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD.”

In other words, it’s a greater force of changing that heart than you are slapping them around, I guess. It seems to work better because you actually can overcome evil by doing good. So, that’s fundamentally what Paul focuses on as we come towards the end. You have this authority, and you set up that sense of order by virtue of that. He knows that the greatest power in all of this is the grace of God. When somebody receives the grace of God, they willingly fall into line.

When you go back to Titus 2:9, “Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters...” You’re urging them to do this on their own volition. What would make somebody want to submit? I know I don’t want to submit. There’s only one thing; that you would do it for God; that you would do it because He loved you so much. He turns to you, and He says, “Now son, I want you to do this for Me.” There’s just absolutely no way that I would not do something for Him. Right? Because of what He did for me. So, this is your impetus.

That’s why he goes on and he says, “instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires...” Once again, he uses that word “sensibly;” to rein back our emotions, impulses, appetite and desires. What would cause somebody to voluntarily rein in their personal desires, and say, “Not my will, but Yours be done.” It would have to be the love of God and a love for God that moves and motivates us. It’s the Spirit of Christ within me that says, “I just want to do whatever Dad tells me to do.”

So, it instructs us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly and it causes us to look for that blessed hope and the appearing of God. (Titus 2:12) In other words, we’re looking for someone to come, if you look at the end of verse 13, that is not only a great God, but He is our Savior. There’s a lot of people that go, “Why should I look forward to seeing God?”

I would say, “Well, you wouldn’t unless He is your Savior. If He is your Savior, then you know how much He loves you.” So, there’s a great anticipation for that.

(Titus 2:13) “looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,

(Titus 2:14) who gave Himself for us...”

Once again, it gives that picture of His sacrifice for us.

“... to redeem us from every lawless deed...”

What causes us to be redeemed from every lawless deed? His love for us. Once again, that’s the great emphasis of this passage.

He ends in verse 15, “These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.”

In other words, this is the teaching that you must be firm about; it is the love of God. If I could put it this way, people go out and do the wrong thing, in a way a pastor or an elder within the church should reprimand in the sense of “How dare you bring shame to the grace of God.” That’s the reproof that really is there. People say, “Well, you shouldn’t shame anybody.” You should, and that’s part of the reprove, rebuke and exhorting in sound doctrine. We’re not exhorting because you have to do what’s right to be perfect. We’re saying, “Knowing what He did for you, why would you do that? Knowing that you’re a child of God and that you have called yourself a child of God; now people know that you’re a child of God, why would you defame His name? Why would you hurt Him like that?”

So, we pick up in Titus 3:1, and it says, “Remind them...” That’s actually a far stronger word, and it’s one of the reasons why I worded it this way. The tendency is to think, “Hey guys, I want you to remember this.” It’s not actually that. The reason being is that the phrase that is used is then followed by what is called in the Greek, an infinitive; which means that you must do it. So, it starts off as an imperative which means once again, it’s a command. So, a command followed by an infinitive is “You have to do this. Remind them; tell them. Don’t let them forget.” It’s like maybe there’s a state trooper right outside your door, and your kids get in the car, and you go, “Don’t forget to fasten your seatbelt.” So, you’re not just encouraging them, you’re saying, “You can’t not do this.”

“Remind them to be subject to rulers...”

Now, rulers and authorities would be kind of the same. The word that he uses for “rulers” means “the first.” The reason why it’s put that way, “*archē*,” it can be translated as “rulers, chiefs, or those in first place.” It’s also that which refers to “in time.” One of the patterns that you’re seeing within the passage is “Older women, likewise, teach the younger women,” and “Older men, likewise, teach the younger men.” So, the position that is given oftentimes is given by virtue of age. So, you have the word “elder” that is sometimes used in the text. His point is

that if there is an elder, you need to be subject to honoring that authority that God has given just by virtue of the fact that they were born before you. They were first, so to speak.

Then, he uses the word “authority” which is the Greek word “*exousia*.” It makes reference to the fact that these are people that were given a position, and they were given power and the privilege to direct. For example, my granddaughter, her husband is a state trooper which means he is a lot younger than me. However, if he pulled me over, I would have to submit to his authority. So, I couldn’t get away with saying, “I’m older than you,” because he has been given authority and privilege to give me a ticket. So, I have to submit to that authority. When people don’t, they end up in jail. So, I’m just encouraging all of you not to do that.

So, that’s the reason why he mentions both. There are some that are in a position by virtue of their age; there are others that are in a position based on the fact that they have been delegated that position. The passage is making reference to the fact that we are to submit or subject ourselves to their leadership. Now, the emphasis once again, not unlike Ephesians 5, where it’s dealing with “wives, submit yourselves to your husband;” it even says in Ephesians 5, “Submit to one another.” That particular word is almost always used in the context “of your own volition.” It’s an interesting picture, and actually a military term, of falling in order or we would use the phrase “falling in rank.” So, it’s talking about you willingly putting yourself in a position. It’s not that somebody is browbeating you to be in there. It’s that you have made the decision to do this. Once again, where it says to the wives to do this, people sometimes take the passage, and the husband says, “Submit to me. The Bible says it.” Well, you have just misused the text because it says to you husbands, that you need to love your wife as Christ loved the church. It actually goes on and says that you wash her by the water of the word. What does it mean by that? It means that you’ve lived so much like Christ, that it convicts her to submit to you. See, your walk by virtue of following in the steps of Christ has a cathartic cleansing effect on your wife and she actually wants to follow you because she can tell that you have her best interest at heart. Women don’t have a problem with trusting men, but they need to know. Ultimately, a woman submits to her husband, not because he’s a great guy, but because as unto the Lord. The same thing is true here in the particular passage. You have a master as unto the Lord because our faith is in God; it’s not in our spouse or our masters. So, we’re going to do the right thing. It’s sort of like 100%/100%. How much does the wife need to submit? 100% as unto the Lord. How about the husband? He needs to 100% love her like Christ loves the church. The two are really not contingent upon the other. You’re both doing what you’re doing because you love God; not because you’re looking for some sort of reciprocity from the other person.

As the passage begins to talk about this, it’s talking about the sense of “I willingly put myself under and fall in line.” You say, “Why is it important to be subordinate to these authorities?” It is interesting that Scripture calls insubordination an equal to idolatry. Did you know that? Go back to 1 Samuel. I saw some blank stares there, “Where did he get that from?” Did you know rebellion is like divination? Like calling up the dead? Where did I get that from? 1 Samuel 15.

So, in 1 Samuel 15, we're dealing with Saul who is a king. So, wow, that's somebody in charge, right? Did you know that even Saul has to submit to the authority of the word of God, and in this particular context, the prophet of God has authority over the king? It starts off this way in 1 Samuel 15:1, "Then Samuel said to Saul, 'The LORD sent me to anoint you as king...'"

In other words, "Where do you think you have your authority from?"

"... over Israel; now therefore, listen to the words of the LORD."

This is the prophet rebuking the king in the sense of "You must obey this."

He goes on, and the Lord says, "I will punish Amalek, and I want you to completely wipe them out." Of course, we know that in the context he doesn't do that because he saw some advantage of maybe keeping some of the things. When he's questioned by Samuel, "Did you do what God told you to do?" He throws everybody else under the bus, and he says in verse 15, "They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep..."

(1 Samuel 15:16) "Then Samuel said to Saul, 'Wait, and let me tell you what the LORD said to me last night...'"

(1 Samuel 15:17) Samuel said, 'Is it not true, though you were little in your own eyes, you were made the head of the tribes of Israel? And the LORD anointed you king over Israel,'"

In other words, "You weren't anointed king over Israel because you were great; it's God's greatness that made you great. Not you that made yourself great."

(1 Samuel 15:18) "and the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are exterminated.'"

That was a simple command.

(1 Samuel 15:19) "Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD..."

That's a good question, isn't it? Well, let's go down the list of the different reasons why we don't obey the voice of the Lord.

- "I don't feel like it." That's a good one. I always like that one.
- "I don't see where it brings me any advantage." You like that one? I like that one.
- "It's uncomfortable."
- "It puts me in a bad mood."

I'm sure there's a lot of really, really good reasons.

So, he goes on and he says, "... but rushed upon the spoil and did what was evil in the sight of the LORD?"

(1 Samuel 15:20) "Then Saul said to Samuel, 'I did obey the voice of the LORD...'"

(1 Samuel 15:21) But the people took some of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD...”

In other words, “Samuel, don’t be so upset. The people did it. Ok, I don’t really blame them. They were getting sacrifices for God.” So, “The reason I robbed the bank is to give to the church.” That’s a good reason, isn’t it?

(1 Samuel 15:22) “Samuel said,
‘Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices
As in obeying the voice of the LORD?
Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,
And to heed than the fat of rams.

(1 Samuel 15:23) ‘For rebellion is as the sin of divination,
And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry...”

Why would Samuel say that? You see, the reason for idolatry is that fundamentally idolatry is you inventing your own god. Why are there so many different idols? Because there’s a lot of different tastes. “I want to be promiscuous. So, I’m going to invent a god that will help me do that” or “I like to go after my selfish desires. So, I’m going to invent a god that is all about prosperity. I’ll build that idol and I’ll worship it.” In every case, you’re the idol. You are because you’re creating something that will fit in with your pursuits. That’s all you’re doing. So, why wouldn’t you follow God? “Because I have something else that I want to do. So, I’ll invent my own idol.” What is your idol? Well, in this context, it seemed to be that he spared Agag the king. There were some riches that he wanted out of it. He saw a benefit for himself. Once again, Saul was the idol.

“... ‘Because you have rejected the word of the LORD,
He has also rejected you from being king.’”

So, it’s an interesting passage that deals with that whole concept. Why is it that people don’t want to do what God tells them to do? The answer is pretty clear. They are their idol. This is why you come to the end of days in 2 Timothy 3, “in the last days, men will be lovers of self, lovers of money.” So, those two things are at the top of the list.

So, when he goes to Titus and he says, “You must tell them to do this,” it’s that spirit of rebellion that he’s guarding against. It’s not a matter of “You’ve got to do what I tell you to do,” but once you begin to think in terms of “I don’t have to do what anybody tells me to do, I’m my own person,” that’s the spirit of selfishness. You’re not reigning in your desires. You’ve put them on the throne. It’s where God begins to lead and direct when we will humble ourselves. That’s why the next passage begins to deal with that.

If you look in Titus 3:1, “Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed.”

I know that people oftentimes say, "I'm not going to be obedient to everything they say." It says, "for every good deed"; which is basically saying, "Ok, they tell you to do something wrong, don't do that" because "good," "*agathos*" is making reference to that which is honorable and virtuous. So, obviously, you want to do what is right and upright.

It goes on and says, "to malign no one." (Titus 3:2)

Once again, you're dealing with not only the spirit of rebellion, but that sense of reviling, hurting, and speaking ill of people. "*Blasphēmeō*," the word where we get our word "blasphemy," is actually used in this passage. I think one of the reasons why it's used in that phrase "malign no one" is because when we speak ill of somebody, it is rebellion against God. This is one of the things that Paul wants people to see. Once again, he takes you to that picture of Christ on the cross, as you go back to Titus 2, and he says, "See what He did for you?" Now, from the cross, you can hear Jesus' voice going, "Malign no one." Where do you hear that from? Well, Peter is pretty clear about this in 1 Peter 2, 3 and 4 as it begins to talk about Christ, who is our example, while being reviled, He did not revile in return. Then it goes on and says that you've been called to follow in His footsteps.

In fact, if you turn with me to 1 Peter; what a great passage this is when I consider this small book, but wow, so many things that he begins to convey to us. We've been talking about this as we have looked in the book of Joshua. In 1 Peter 2 as he says,

(1 Peter 2:9) "But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

Here again, if we can put this into context, Peter emphasizes that you're not to be disobedient. Well, this would mean that you need to be submissive to the authority and the things that God is telling you to do. Well, what is it that motivates us to be obedient? I want you to see, if you look in verse 10,

"for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY."

So, what is your motivation? It's the mercy of God. That's why if you back up into 1 Peter 1, it says in verse 13,

"Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

(1 Peter 1:14) As obedient children...

What made you obedient? Your hope is completely fixed on the grace.

When you drop on down to verse 18,

“knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers,

(1 Peter 1:19) but with precious blood...of Christ.”

So, what causes you to fervently love one another? When God says, “This is My commandment: Love one another.” Why do you love one another? Is it because everyone is so wonderful and amiable in the church? Is it because they’re so easy to get along with and they always agree with everything you say? That’s not why we do it.

(1 Peter 1:22) “Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love...”

What purified you? The grace of God. So, why are you doing what you’re doing? “Purified” also has a connotation of single-mindedness. For instance, if you have a pure love for your spouse, you have eyes for your spouse only. That’s a pure love, and the same thing is true of your relationship with God. So, what motivates you?

“...a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart.”

Why? Because you weren’t redeemed with perishable things like silver and gold. You’ve been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.

What’s interesting is if you look at 1 Peter 2, and you drop on down, it talks about we’re to keep our behavior excellent among the Gentiles. Here again, why do I want to keep doing the right thing when everybody around me is doing the wrong thing? Why not just join them or do the wrong thing better than them so that I can at least get a one up on them?

It says in verse 12, “Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.”

What does he mean by that? Well, you could say that he’s making reference to the coming of Christ. Although, the word itself doesn’t seem to be emphasizing that. Once again, I wouldn’t have any problem with every knee will bow and every tongue confess when Jesus is here. I have no problem with putting that into the text. However, the word that he uses for visitation is “*episkopē*” which is where we get the word “episcopal.” That’s where we get the word “overseer.” That’s pretty interesting, isn’t it? So, what is he talking about? Well, the word itself makes reference to God searching out the hearts of man i.e. overseeing; knowing what’s going on. The responsibility of an overseer is that he searches out and looks for the character and protects. So, it’s an interesting picture, but the emphasis of this is that it’s describing the day of God’s inspection of their life. Once again, we know that the day of judgement is going to come, and everyone will be fully inspected, but the emphasis of the text is not in future tense. The emphasis of the passage is more descriptive. In other words, on the day in which God inspects their life. The point is that your behavior, by doing what is right, you believe that God will use that in the day when the Spirit of God begins to nudge that persons’ heart. It begins to reveal

the sins in their life. Then, burning coals may even come on their head and they think, "I was mean to that guy."

I've often heard testimonies in which people would come up to me, and they would say, "This person was gracious to me when I was so mean to them. When I was presented with the gospel, it was like God was convicting me all the more." Well, that's what the Lord is doing by virtue of your excellent behavior. We know that God uses these things. The last thing that I would want to do would be to mess up that process because I just wanted to not obey and say, "You're not going to tell me what to do." How powerful it is to walk in an attitude of submission.

If you drop on down to 1 Peter 2:18, what does it read?

Yeah, when we're talking about "excellent behavior," do you think we're talking about having excellent behavior when everything is going your way or are we talking about when things are really difficult?

"Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable."

Why would we do that? That the word of God would not be dishonored. "What do you mean?" By virtue of me submitting and not arguing and not fighting back but falling in line; not because they're a greater person than I am, but because my Father told me to. Also, when He begins to deal with their heart, I don't want to be the stumbling block that causes them to fall away. In fact, I want to be the source that God uses to bring them to their knees; to humble themselves before God.

So, "...be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable."

"Twisted" is actually the word that is used.

(2 Peter 2:19) "For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God..."

Why are you doing it? "Oh, because I want to put on a show to this guy." It has nothing to do with this guy. In fact, this guy might walk away madder at you because you did the right thing. Some days you're going to think, "Well, that didn't do any good," but you're not doing it to see the results today. You're doing it because God wanted you to do it and you know that it pleased God because today you resisted the fight, you resisted the hostility, you resisted the hate, and you were more like Jesus than you've ever been before. That's why you did it.

It goes on and reads this way in verse 20, "For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it..."

If you understand the passage, you didn't do anything wrong. In fact, everything that you did was right, and this person is accusing you and they're making fun of you, and you're not fighting back.

(1 Peter 2:21) "For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also..."

He went through the same thing; far greater than we could ever think.

"... leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,

(1 Peter 2:22) WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH;

(1 Peter 2:23) and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously."

Now, you can imagine that if you were to do something like that, the guy at the end of the day is shaking his head going, "What is wrong with that guy?" I mean, he's got to be thinking, "This guy is either crazy or he actually believes that God exists; that God is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him." He's actually got to believe that; that God is ever present. Do you know how Paul says to Timothy, "I come to you as we stand before God in the presence of His angels"? When Paul was saying that to Timothy, I'm sure he actually saw them in some way in his mind's eye at least; that he actually believed God exists. How do you convince people that God exists? You live as if He does. Pretty simple.

I like the way that it's put in verse 24, "and He Himself bore our sins..." Were those His? Talk about unfairness. I've read through the gospels a number of times. I've never seen any phrase that sounds something like, "Jesus was just really upset because it just wasn't fair" or "How dare them do this when I didn't do anything wrong?"

"He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed."

Here again, we see submission as the greatest weakness, but it's not; it's the act of the greatest strength. It's you, falling in line because God says so. As you go on in Titus, if you look, the whole attitude is that. In particular, if you go into Titus 3:2, "to malign no one."

It's election year, right? So, there's going to be someone you don't like, and they're going to be doing things you don't like. The tendency is to malign authority; to speak against them, say something against them, to attack the person. Now, you can disagree with the policy. It's wrong to abort babies and all these things, but we go into a realm of making fun of others. I said to Connie the other day, "I understand that's a real problem in this particular situation, but it's wrong to make fun of that person." That's reviling, and that's us saying, "I don't believe God is sovereign in putting that person in charge" and I believe He was, for whatever reason. In my finite mind, I can't imagine what the reason was, but I don't have to. I have to submit to that authority. If it means paying higher taxes, we pay higher taxes without complaining about it. It's almost irritating to me that I can't complain about it because you want to fuss about it. I think

people actually think that it's kind of cathartic, but it's not and actually makes you feel more miserable.

He's talking in the context of authority because we just left verse 1, right? So, "to malign no one;" he goes on and says in that same verse, "to be peaceable." Now, what he's talking about is "to be none combative." The King James version translates it as "not a brawler." It's a compound word, "not a fighter." Now, the world rewards fighting, but our faith fundamentally says that you win by surrendering. Now, we surrender to God; we don't surrender to man, obviously. If God tells us to do something, in this particular case, don't complain, don't speak against. We just do what He tells us to do. When you think of somebody in the service that is an honorable person, and if a general is raking them under the coals, it would be really smart for that guy just to shut his mouth and take it. If he starts arguing with the general, it's not going to turn out well. More than this, we do what we do as unto the Lord. We don't want to ever do anything that would in any way hurt the doctrine of God.

Go back to chapter 2, even when he's talking about women in verse 5, "be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands..."

Why do I have to be subject to my own husband?" Once again, it has nothing to do with how wonderful your husband is. What does it read? "...that the word of God will not be dishonored."

The same thing with the young men,

(Titus 2:7) "show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified"

Then verse 10, "not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect."

Why? Because that's the way Jesus did it. So, Pilate says, "I have authority to do whatever I want to." Jesus replies, "You wouldn't have any authority unless God gave it to you," but I'm submitting to that authority. It's so aptly put in the book of Acts, God literally ordained Pontius Pilate, Herod, and the Jews and Gentiles to do exactly what His hand purposed to do. Well, when you're looking at that scene, and you're seeing Christ being crucified, you're going, "Everything has gone berserk!" And God goes, "I have everything under control. They're doing exactly what I wanted to be done." It's hard for us to imagine at the time that things are seemingly going against our perceptions, but Scripture says to submit; don't be a fighter.

Then he actually goes into the mindset of "gentle" which is a reasonable, forbearing spirit.

"... Showing every consideration for all men" means to show a humble and meek attitude. The word that he uses in there is actually the root word that goes back to "*paschó*" which makes reference to "suffering." It's a word that is used for Christ as He's coming in; "meek on a colt." It's a picture of somebody willing to go in to suffer. So, like a lamb led to the slaughter is the picture. That's kind of the picture of "showing consideration for all men;" willing to suffer for

doing what's right and maintaining the right attitude and the right heart. "I'm not going to hate this person. I'm not going to fight with them. I'm not going to debate with them. I'm going to entrust my soul to the faithful Creator and do what's right." Like David, if you remember, Shimei cursed him and threw stones at him. David was the king, and as one of his soldiers says, "Do you want me to cut this dead dog's head off?" and David responds, "No, leave him. Perhaps God has sent him." It was really a humble time in David's life. I know in my life there's been times of great humbling where He has brought people into my life. I can just hear the voice of Christ saying, "Don't say anything." I can also hear me in my head going, "But...but..." "Don't say anything."

There's a passage in Luke 19 that has been near and dear to my heart in the sense that there are many parallels that are in this. Of course, throughout Scripture there are parallels to almost anything that you read. In Luke 19, we read the story of Zaccheus. I remember singing the song as a kid, "Zaccheus was a wee little man, a wee little man was he. He climbed up in the sycamore tree, for the Lord he wanted to see. The Lord said, 'Zaccheus, you come down!'" All the kids liked that one part. As we come to this, you might want to note in the beginning of the chapter that Jesus is going into the city, and it's a time around the crucifixion. So, He's marching into the city. Do you know where He's coming from? He's coming from the exact path of the Israelites, through Jericho. If you look at the beginning, "He entered Jericho and was passing through." Why does He go through that particular path? Because He's wanting to demonstrate "I'm doing this so that you might inherit the promises." A great picture, isn't it? So, the first person that we see Him having contact with is this guy by the name of Zaccheus, and he's a Jew by virtue of his name. This guy is a chief tax collector, and that means that he has made a lot of money exploiting his own people and his nation. He has become a tax collector whether it be through the Roman government or some other government, but he is really extracting. If he's very successful, then that's telling us that he has exploited the position; he has wronged people. We don't know why he has done what he's done. Sometimes, we just see miserable looking people and we just hate them because they are so miserable. It's kind of understandable because they have just lived that life. It's almost like they don't care what people think. At some point in time, Zaccheus would have had to come to that point to not even care what the Jewish people think because there's no way he would be in that position if he did. So, there had to be some kind of wall built up. Once again, our initial thought might be he's there just because he's a mean person; but there are some people that are where they are because they are wicked and there are some people that are there because they're weak and maybe hurt had come into their life. You say, "How do you know which person is there for what reason?" You don't always know. That's why you proclaim the gospel to everyone, but those that weren't doing it just out of pure wickedness, hear the voice of Christ and they come. That's how we know. Other than that, you wouldn't be able to tell.

Do you remember in the gospel of Luke, the woman that comes in from the streets? She's a woman of the city. That's a nice way to put it. Of course, Simon says, "If you knew what kind of person this was and you were a prophet, then you wouldn't have let her wash your feet." Jesus'

point was, "Ok, she's been forgiven much and that's why she loves Me so much." When you see her with her tears in her sorrow, and you say, "What made that woman take that job? What caused her to live that life?" We don't know all the ins and outs any more than we know all the ins and outs of Rahab in the wall of Jericho, but we do know that when they come into contact with righteousness, they're drawn to it. It's like the woman at the well; they had been looking all their lives for something like this. God begins to reveal the heart that really maybe had put up barriers and walls all along. Now, the walls have started coming down like Jericho.

So, when Zaccheus climbed up a tree, there was obviously a longing to see the one that was performing all these miracles and doing all these wonderful things. Why would a tax collector even be interested in such a thing? He has a heart to be. So, you have this little man, probably had some anger over that too. Jesus says to him, "You know, Zaccheus, I want to come to your house." Of all the things that Jesus could have said, I can think of a number of them, "What are you collecting taxes for?", "Why have you abused people the way that you have?" We can go down the list, right? The only thing that Jesus says is, "I'd like to come to your house." That acceptance was all that was needed in the life of this man. Maybe all of his life he had never been accepted. We don't know. That would cause people to build walls. It will cause people to be apathetic and not care about what anybody thinks. There's a reason for that. My uncle always used to say, "All behavior is caused." Here Zaccheus is, and he is drawn to Christ, and the grace of God so transforms him that he says, "Half of my possessions I'm just going to give to the poor. If I've wronged anybody, I'm going to give them four times as much as I ever wronged them." Now, all the preaching, all the delegations, and all the commands of the world could never make a Zaccheus do something like that, but the grace of God is so powerful that it beat him into submission. It caused him to empty himself and to do exactly what he knew was the heart of God. If you think about those two things, what are they? It's an act of mercy by giving what you have to the poor, which is being like Christ. Then, "if I wronged anybody" is an act of justice. So, those two things are really falling in line with what God wanted in his life. He's a Jew; he knew the law. He just hadn't been listening to it and obeying it, but now he has.

Jesus goes on, and He tells this parable of a nobleman that is building a kingdom, and he leaves some in charge. He talks about the fact that many of the people didn't want him to be king, and they become very upset. He turns to the ones that he leaves, and he goes, "I'm going to give you a minas." More specifically, it's dealing with a pound of something; whether it be of coins or whatever. I won't go into the details of that because Scripture doesn't. He says, "I'm going to leave this to you. Be faithful." The story is told in Matthew as well as here in Luke. Although, there are interesting differences in this passage, but he comes back, and one has made ten out of what God has given him and the other has made five. More specifically, this king goes, "Because you have made ten, I'm going to give you ten cities." Think about it, "ten cities". Ok, you just have a pound of something, and you're being rewarded with ten cities? It's not even equal to that. What is Scripture telling us? That this ruler had a desire all along to give many things, and the only thing he was looking for was their desire to do good to him. So, the final one goes, "I knew you to be oppressive. So, I hid it in my handkerchief." So, the king says, "If

you knew that I was going to be oppressive, then why didn't you put it into a bank and collect interest?" He responded, "Because I know that you actually reap where you don't sow. I do all the work and then you just reap." The guy is saying that "I don't believe you're a good person." The reason why people won't obey Christ is because they don't believe that what Jesus is telling them to do is good. They don't believe He's a good person. You'll never serve or submit to God unless you fully believe that He loves you and that He has far greater things for you than you could ever imagine. In this parable, it's interesting that Jesus is fundamentally saying, "You have no idea what I have in store for you. The only thing I'm asking you to do is trust Me. So, I'm telling you that while you're on this earth, serve Me, put Me first, submit to My authority, submit to the authority that I put in front of you. Do it for Me and watch what happens. See if I don't open the windows of heaven and pour out blessings for you that go above what you could ask or think." God has great things in store for us.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for Your love and Your kindness to us that leads us to think differently; leads us to repentance. Father, we pray that even as of now there are things that are very hard for us to do because of our rebellious heart and there are places which we find very difficult to submit to. For whatever reason, we don't feel like we should. Yet, You tell us to, and that should be enough for us. You've given us an investment and the investment is Your words. You say, "What are you going to do with it?" I guess it's that answer that helps us decide whether or not we actually do love You. We give You thanks in Jesus' name. Amen.