

Season 8: Titus

Episode 5: People living out the good news

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Felicity: We're thankful to New Growth Press publishers for sponsoring this season. And I'd love to tell you about a couple of kids books that we've really enjoyed recently in our house. The first is called Sean and His Amazing Shrinking Sister by Ginger Hubbard and Al Roman. It's a quirky, fun and helpful story that shows children and warns them about the dangers of teasing. With every teasing comment, Sean's sister shrinks, and you have to grab a copy to see how the situation gets remedied. The second is the Acrostic of Scripture by Jonathan Gibson and Timothy Brindle. It's a rhyming illustrated walkthrough of biblical theology for kids as the writers take us through the Alpha. Each letter comes with a short rhyming verse that shows how this moment in the Bible points to Jesus. Now, I know it sounds ambitious, but it's actually accessible and beautifully done. Grab your copies at 10ofthose.com.

Sarah: Welcome to two sisters in the cup of tea My name is Sarah, I live in the UK. This is my sister Felicity. She lives in the States. And today we're carrying on in the book of Titus and we're in chapter two today. But before we get there, Felicity, what's in your cup?

Felicity: Well, I've taken a new tea venture today because I've got a green tea. But it's not just any green tea. I was with a friend recently and she was drinking this tea. This is why I've picked it up, because of the name. It's called Empress clouds and mist. I mean, that's just a beautiful name.

Sarah: And it doesn't really tell you much about the tea, though.

Felicity: No.

Sarah: Like cloudy and misty.

Felicity: Yeah, well, it is definitely cloudy in a kind of green kind of way. To be fair, the name is the strength of the tea. I wonder yes, I maybe have just got the way you drink it wrong. I don't know or something like that. But I probably need to ring her for advice. How to drink the Empress clouds. That's the question.

Sarah: How long have you steeped the bag for?

Felicity: Well, I actually managed to break the bag as I put it in.

Sarah: It's not going well, is it?

Felicity: To be fair, the tea probably needs another chance. It's my whole treatment of it that's the issue here.

Sarah: I see that tomorrow is a new tea day. Exactly. Okay, before we get into Titus flisty, we're answering some questions about reading the Bible with someone else. Our question today is the when question when should we get the Bible open with others?

Felicity: Yes, when? Now, you might be thinking if you hear that question, when's the best time of day? I'm going to say there's no perfect time of day. We're not going to prescribe when the time of day is, but what we're really talking about is when in terms of how we are feeling about getting the Bible open with someone, there's no perfect time in terms of, oh, I think I'm ready now, I'm mature enough. Or I think this person is going to absolutely say yes just because I'm asking the question at this point. I think really now, in terms of we just want to get the living Word open with people right here and now. And I'm tempted to wait and wait and wait until I feel like I know that book well enough or I'm sort of feeling in a good place spiritually myself. But the reality is that we, as we get the Bible open with someone else, are going to be sitting at the feet of Jesus as well. So we're going to be benefiting and growing and delighting in that at the same time. What do you think?

Sarah: Yeah, I think it's acknowledging that we're needy, aren't we? We need this word to shape us. And when we come from that stance, it's a no brainer to say, I need to do this. Would you do this with me? Starting from that kind of point, I think there's no better time than now to say that, is there? Because we all need the word of God and we all need to be steeping ourselves in it. But I do think that plays into the time of day question because actually that means you can do it when your kids are around. You can do it on your

commute. You can do it late at night if you need to. You can do it early morning because actually, if there's 20 minutes where you can prioritize in your week to get this open with someone else because you know that you need it and you know that you both will really benefit from it, then do it.

Felicity: I love that.

Sarah: Make that time for it.

Felicity: Great point coming from the point of neediness. Brilliant. Let's do it now is the let's do it now.

Sarah: Okay, I'm going to read chapter two. Here we go. You, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine. Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self controlled, and sound in faith, in love and endurance. Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderous or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands so that no one will malign the word of God. Similarly, encourage the young men to be self controlled in everything. Set them an example by doing what is good in your teaching. Show integrity, seriousness, and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us. Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them and not to steal from them. But to show that they can be fully trusted, that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive. For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self controlled, upright. And Godly lives in this present age while we wait for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are his very own eager to do what is good. These, then, are the things you should teach, encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.

Felicity: What a picture. What a picture of this sound doctrine impacting every part of life, isn't it? Like every walk of life?

Sarah: Yeah, it's amazing, isn't it, actually? There's so many different groups of people there. Is it worth just kind of linking back slightly to what we've had before? Because the first phrase is you, however, and that is our linking word, which links back to the context that we were looking at last week of the fourth teachers and how abhorrent their behavior and their doctrine and their situation was.

Felicity: Yeah, really helpful. Really helpful. We have a stark contrast. And so, as Titus is being addressed here, everything that he's going to be commanded to do is good in comparison to what we've had before. It's worth maybe as well just digging into that must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine. And at that point, just maybe just skipping to the last chunk that you read there, verses eleven through to 14, we have the Gospel, don't we? What a glorious picture the Gospel we have there, verse eleven. For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. And that is the sound doctrine, isn't it? So in terms of he's saying, teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine. These behaviors, these intergenerational relationships, all of these things come with the Gospel. They're fueled by the Gospel, by Jesus himself.

Sarah: Yeah, they're an overflow, aren't they? Which I love that he includes this gospel explanation at the end of it. I love that it's kind of like this, this and this. Because of this, it's like a sort of like, beautiful kind of whoosh, here we go. Let the grace of God really kind of just remind you of how good it is. And it is good, isn't it? The grace of God. So anything that he's commanding them is because the grace of God has appeared for salvation to all people. There's no one exempt, there's no one too far gone to accept this grace. And this is the grace that teaches us to say no to ungodliness and to worldly passions. So it teaches us to say no in one respect and say yes to Godly behavior, to live self control, upright, and Godly lives. So I love that. I love that the gospel, well, it's interesting, isn't it? The gospel impacts the past. It's appeared, it's happened, it impacts the present in teaching them what to say yes and no, to in their behavior. And then in verse 13, it impacts the future while we

wait for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. So, yeah, it's all of that. I love that.

Felicity: So every aspect of what we're about, whether it's looking back, looking forwards, but most definitely in this passage right here and now, what does it look like to live out this gospel life? And it's just really interesting, isn't it, that there's so much interpersonal help, everyone's helping one another within the church family.

Sarah: How do you see that?

Felicity: Well, so we've got Titus himself teaching the older men to be temperate, and then we've got the older women teaching the younger women. And we've got then the young men being spoken about. And you can imagine that while the old men are being spoken about, taught this, then actually they are then going to pass that on to the younger men, who are ultimately going to become the older men. There's this kind of continuum of we're all going to seek to help one another to live out this good gospel life. And I just think that's a really striking aspect of this, the intergenerational nature of it. It's quite countercultural, I think. Like the way our world is set up, the way our society is set up. We don't have that much of this.

Sarah: It's beautiful, isn't it? It's really beautiful. And it is. Yeah. I think increasingly communities aren't wired in this way anymore. So when you see it in action in a church family, and you see it in action in a good and healthy way, and the word sound does mean healthy, doesn't it? And so this is a picture of a healthy church life. And when you see those intergenerational relationships working, well, it's beautiful. And it's right that it's beautiful because actually the refrain that's repeated at the end of each section is so that no one will malign the word of God, so that no one will be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us. So that in every way, the teaching about God our Savior is attractive. Like, there's a real kind of repetition of actually the way that you live and the way that you are with one another, and the way that the gospel impacts your relationships in your church family actually will impact the outside. It will impact how people view the love of God and the gospel because of the way that you are interacting together.

Felicity: Yeah, that's so encouraging, isn't it? Because sometimes it can feel like it's very hard to make any impact on anything, but actually, just by the way in which we conduct ourselves with one another and I think this is a challenge to us to look to the older generation to kind of exalt, to lift up the older generation as wise people, Godly people. And I think then also maybe a challenge to the older generation to have confidence that God has equipped us, whoever you are, whatever age you are, with the gospel. And the gospel is all that is needed in order to do what is being asked here.

Sarah: Yeah, it comes back to one verse one, doesn't it? Knowledge of the tree is what leads to Godliness. And actually so knowledge of this gospel growing in your delight, in this beautiful gospel that we see in verses eleven to 14, that actually is the most useful thing that you can pass on to someone else. That's what you're teaching as you teach one another. And that's what you're kind of encouraging one another with. You don't need a seven, a degree, you don't need I think it's tempting to think I'm just I just haven't got what it takes to do this. I don't have the confidence because I'm just not well versed in this. And actually all that you need is the gospel because that is the power to save and that is the power to transform. As we were seeing with the elders and as we're seeing last week, actually, it's the gospel that transforms lives, isn't it? It's not anything extra. The false teachers are adding extra stuff on. That's not what's needed. It's just a life fueled by the gospel, living and loving others with the gospel. Yeah.

Felicity: And that outworking of that loving would be like in verse four, we see that these older women, I guess specifically diving into the older women and the younger women, being women as we are then verse four, they can urge the younger women this role of urging one another on being taught the gospel. And so then encouraging one another in that. And that is just really quite practical actually, isn't it? In the sense of women get alongside one another and urge one another on through the gospel to this godly life. And there's some detail about what that looks like. We're thinking about the home. We're thinking about being self controlled and how we are with our husbands and children. This idea of submission, which I know is kind of a bit of a buzzword in the culture, but actually in the context we're talking about, that's not the only time it's mentioned. And we're talking

about submitting to someone who is seeking to be like Jesus, who is eager for self control and is in the gospel themselves, is fueled by the gospel themselves.

Sarah: I think that's key, isn't it? Actually, everything that you see here, every kind of attitude that's described, and particularly the repeated words like self control, that's a fruit of the spirit. That's a fruit of Jesus's spirit in you to submit is a fruit of Jesus's spirit. The way that he submitted to His Father in heaven, to be temperate, to be worthy of respect, to be sound in faith, in love, in endurance, all of these things, we can track them all back to Jesus himself and how he was and how he is. And I just think that's really important, isn't it, that none of these are disconnected from the grace that we then read about at the end of the chapter. It's all flowing from Jesus. And I think where I fall down sometimes is I can think, it's a bit abstract and I can think, okay, I need to grow in self control, or how do I do that? I'm really struggling with that. Rather than going, okay, let's go back to Jesus and see actually what is it like for Him to have self control when it came to the false teachers around him, when it came to pressures and temptations? And what did he do? He prayed and he sought encouragement from others and yeah, he used the word of God to help him to fight temptation and not to sin. And I just yeah, I feel like the challenge for me in all of these is how much am I going to go back to the grace that is Jesus Himself? Knowledge of the truth. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life that's going to be the thing. He is going to be the one who then helps me to grow in this way, I think.

Felicity: Yeah, I think that's absolutely right. And out of that comes also a challenge. Are we expectant that Jesus is going to change us? That because we have the gospel, we can expect that we are going to bear the fruit of the Spirit and therefore live out this good life that is described here. And I think with that comes the challenge of am I prepared to therefore love people as a gospel person? Love people enough to get involved? As I think here what we have is a picture of people involved in each other's lives. And through that God is going to work and the gospel is going to have an impact. But it requires a kind of expectation of that and therefore a seeking out of those opportunities, doesn't it?

Sarah: Yeah.

Felicity: And that can be costly time wise and emotionally and all of those things.

Sarah: All of those things. Isn't it like there's an intentionality to these relationships here? And that's why it's beautiful, I think, because actually, I think what we're seeing here is life carved out for one another. And as you seek to love one another, that will cost, that will feel costly in different ways. But love is costly and it's beautiful because you're giving of yourself to help others grow and to further one another in that knowledge of the truth that leads to Godliness. And so, yeah, there's an expectancy, isn't there? Like we should want to grow in these ways, but actually we strive and we pray, lord, help me to be intentional in this. Lord, show me. Who can I get alongside? Who can I ask to help me to grow there's just, I think, looking out for who's around you in your local church family and going, Lord, show me, what does this look like right now?

Felicity: Yeah, I think that's just so true. Shall I pray for us? That would be the case. Heavenly Father, we praise you so much for the gospel. Thank you for the power of the gospel. Thank you that we can be expectant, that you're bringing about change through Jesus. And we pray, Father, you give us eyes to see the people around us, these would you give us that intentionality, that we would love to involve ourselves in each other's lives. Pray that you'd help us to be those who are eager to bring the gospel to bear on our own life, but also in the lives of others. Please, Lord, would you move us towards this beautiful picture? We pray that you might do Your work in us through Your gospel, by Your grace, for Your glory. Amen.

Sarah: Amen. Oh, it's so good, isn't it? There's so much in here. It's worth saying that we're going to come back to some of this passage, some of this chapter next week with our guest Natalie Brand, who's going to help us think a bit more deeply about what it is to grow in this sound doctrine together as women in the faith. So we're really looking forward to speaking to her on that topic. But until then, if you don't already, why not sign up for our newsletter that comes out once a month and just keeps you in the loop with what we're doing, what we're studying next, what's going on, and different links that kind of link to our season entitus or whatever else. We'd love to connect with you in that way and we look forward to seeing you next time.

Felicity: Absolutely, see you next time. We're thankful to New Growth Press for sponsoring this season.