

Titus 2:1-14 Women's Retreat Talk

Charlotte Chapel May 22nd 2010

Outline

Theme: Gods Word is respected or dishonoured by the way we Christian women behave.

Aim: Godly older women are to teach younger women what is good -God's pattern for womanly living.

Context of Titus

Intro

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Older women

Younger women

Motivation of the gospel

Context of Titus

We are going to dig into the book of Titus this morning as Alison has said and this is a great book to study. The theme of Titus is the proper behaviour of Christians. How the knowledge of the truth will lead to godliness of behaviour and how this needs to be passed on to the next generation as they wait for Christ's return. Christians are to live self controlled, upright and godly lives (v12). Why? Because the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation for all people (v11). Note that the behaviour flows in response to what God has done firstly in us by saving us by His grace.

Read Titus 2:1-14

Pray

Intro

At different points in our lives we stop and consider: "What is my purpose in life? "What are my aims in life?" "Why am I living on this planet at this time in history?" Perhaps things happen that unsettle our routine existence and these questions bubble up to the surface. Or perhaps you have never stopped to think on these things at all, your head is down and you are just living, full

steam ahead. I want to challenge us this morning to stop and think **what God would have us do as women**. How are we to live as women today? What does the Bible have to say on that subject?

Principles for all women

First of all I want to point out that these verses contain truth for all women.

We've read this passage and perhaps you are widowed or single or childless.

And you're thinking what does this passage have to say to me in my situation?

These verses seem to assume that women are married with children. Does that

mean I am living a second best life? The quick answer is no and the slightly

longer one is that there are principles for us in this passage that we can apply

to our individual situations whatever they are. As women we are single for

much of our lives even if we do marry - usually 20-30 years or so at the

beginning and on average 5 to 10 years at the end. That's about half our lives.

So how can those who are single or don't have children of their own relate to

the specific words in here about husbands and children. We all know women

who are married and those with kids. You might be a real gift to your married

friend to help her in her marriage as you sit outside of the situation and have a

different perspective on it. You can come alongside a mother who is

struggling and encourage her to care for her kids, you can pray for families in

the church, you can nurture and show kindness to children either your relatives or neighbours children or children in the church or in a work environment. As you listen to the commands specifically for married women with kids think about how that translates into your life. How can you put Titus 2 into practice? How can you help others to put it into practice?

Older women

One of the surprises here is, that as women, we are to be teachers. Of the verses that speak of motherhood in the Bible (Deut 21:18, Prov 1:8, Prov 6:20, Prov 29:15, Prov 31:26, S of S 8:2,), most refer to the mother's role as a teacher of her children. Here Paul expands this to women spiritually mothering each other in the church.

Do you think of yourself as a teacher? Are you already doing so?

That is what Paul is telling Titus to teach the older women in the Church there in Crete. Titus, if you want to impact families in your ministry, if you want the church to be modelling godly behaviour to the watching world Monday to Saturday, enlist the help of the older women. The message of the gospel is the same, but we as women, have some specific applications that we need to work on. The practicalities need to be demonstrated and explained and this should be done by women, for women.

If you are an older woman, your responsibility before God is to teach the younger women. This is the ‘who’ we are to teach. Paul is not telling us to teach the whole church, in fact he specifically forbids this in 1 Timothy. The question next arises in our minds, who is ‘older’ and who is ‘younger’. Well, chronological age is one obvious marker, and I would like to point out that apart from 2 of us, we are all older than someone **and** all younger than someone.

V 3 But spiritual maturity is another qualifier referred to here. It is not helpful for just any older woman to teach the younger women. The letter starts with Paul referring to the elect as those whose knowledge of the truth accords with godliness of behaviour (1:1). Paul has instructed Titus to be a model in his behaviour as well as teaching (2:7). The elders are to live upright, holy lives as they instruct with sound doctrine. In the same way older women are to live out what they teach and Paul outlines a few **qualifications that must be met:**

1. Reverent in behaviour

This refers to a reverence before God – a holiness and Godliness of character. How do we show that we are reverent towards God? By being obedient to His commands and also reverent towards those in God appointed authority over

us; as a church member – submissive to the elders, as wives submissive to our husbands.

2. Not slanderers, but exercising self control over our tongue. The word used here is also the root word for diabolical, it is of the Devil to speak ill of another. If we are children of God, our tongues need to be restrained from this evil. Gossip is divisive and dishonouring to God
3. Not slaves to much wine, self control over our appetites.

I admit that I have often relegated this part of the Bible to the ‘show by example’ department. And I mean ‘show by example’ from a safe distance. I confess that due to my fear of what others would think of me if they got to know me better, (which is pride) I have not actively pursued specific teaching and training opportunities with younger women. Its just so much easier just to look good on a Sunday isn’t it. Its messy to let others get close and to get close to others.

If you meet these qualifications by God’s grace, and if you are not actively teaching younger women, what is at stake? What is the big deal about obeying this command? Look at the seriousness of v5. Women are to teach what is good, **that the word of God may not be reviled.** Here at the chapel we like to think that we hold God’s word highly, that we base all that we do upon it, that we get good Bible teaching on a Sunday. Is it actually true in our

lives? Are we submitting our lives to His authority? If we are hearing the word of God and not obeying it, like Phil said on Sunday, we are like the man building his house on the sand and we will fall. How does not teaching women what is good lead to God's word being reviled? Its not spelled out, but implicated by considering what the opposite would be, rebellious, gossiping drunkards leaving the younger women to follow their example! In ch 1 of Titus, Paul talks about the behaviour of some who profess to be Christians – insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, greedy for money, liars, evil beasts and lazy gluttons. Some of them actually are Christians, Christians who need to be rebuked sharply so they will be sound in the faith (v13).

Obeying Jesus' command here will involve a change in our lifestyle, it will involve an active pursuit of relationships with an older woman and a younger woman – this will take some of our precious time. It will involve an examination of ourselves in the light of Scripture; it might involve us reducing our alcohol consumption in order to be qualified to teach other women. It might involve recognising that our slanderous words are a sin against others and God himself, and lead to another sin – that of reviling Gods word by not teaching other women what is good. In short, it will require repentance. It will require humility on the part of the younger women to submit to the teaching of an older woman, it will require humility on the part of the older

woman to open her life up to closer scrutiny as she allows someone else to come alongside. I feel that I am very much both a younger woman and an older woman so I'm in need of a double dose of humility.

Younger women

What is the content of this good teaching? There are seven things listed here;

(3-5)

1. Love their husbands
2. Love their children
3. Self controlled
4. Pure
5. Working at home
6. Kind
7. Submissive to their own husbands

These are all counter-cultural today and perhaps even also countercultural to us Christians surrounded as we are by the world with its feminist and godless agenda.

Lets have a quick look at each of these commands (3-5)

1. To love their husbands – the word for love here refers to friendship love, the women are to learn the habits of positive regard for their husbands, to develop the emotions of warmth towards and delight in

their husbands. The list starts with a very close relationship, the closest we generally have as humans. This is the person who knows our faults, who sees us as we really are, and the list starts right here. How often do we take our husbands for granted? How often do we think about developing our relationship with them to grow in friendship together. Life can quickly become a series of ratruns. We develop patterns of relating that can be good or not so good. Older women can see our patterns and helpfully point out areas that we need to change.

2. (3-5) Love their children – again the Phileo type of love, not merely a dutiful response but a delight in and enjoyment of our children. What will this look like? Well, loving children is easy when they're asleep! But we can easily get bogged down in the daily grind of seemingly menial tasks. Do you know the average number of nappies to change per child is over 2000!! I think of my friend Tricia who has had 4 of her own children and adopted 4 more. Her oldest child is blind, her third child is partially deaf, her fifth has foetal alcohol syndrome and will never achieve anything much academically, he's 9 and can write his name now. Her fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth are all drug babies, born addicted to various drugs and were subjected to various neglectful situations including near death by dehydration as infants. As such the

developmental difficulties these children will face are just beginning to show themselves as they get older. If your first child was blind, would you have had any more? Tricia not only has changed over 8,000 nappies, does laundry mountains all the time and feeds hoards regularly, but her life is bound by hospital appointment after child developmental clinic appointment, after speech therapy appointment as well as all the regular taxiing involved with teenagers, etc. Are any of these things appreciated by society? Does the world value her career? Do people in the church make comments about 'yet another child'? Tricia not only does these endless tasks but takes joy and delight in each of her children. Her hands are worn, hacks, blisters and ragged nails, she suffers from migraines yet she is tirelessly loving her children.

An older woman in the church has seen the pressure of her life and has come regularly to babysit while she can get on with housework or the supermarket or a hair cut. That's Titus 2 in action, older women helping the younger women to love their children.

I think of Kent and Barbara, grand parents and great grandparents. They are investing in their grandchildren's lives proactively. They spend time with them as individuals and in little groups, pray for them and seek to teach them about Christ. They are the kind of grandparent that I want to be.

3. (3-5) Self controlled. All Christians are to exhibit this fruit of the Spirit and this is summed up in v12 of this passage. The opposite is to be uncontrolled and examples of this type of behaviour is given in ch3:3 “For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.” When we read the verses for the older men (v2) we see that self control is alongside sober-minded, dignified, sound in faith, in love and in steadfastness. What a difference in those two lists. What do you prefer? What a difference God’s goodness and loving kindness has made in our lives enabling us all to grow in this area of self control.
4. (3-5) Pure, in thought, word and deed. Purity starts in our minds and hearts. It is expressed inwardly as our minds are transformed by the Holy Spirit to know Gods will and to delight in His glory. We are to train our minds as Christians to think about whatever is pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, praiseworthy and does anything sum up these attributes like Christ himself. Are our minds so dwelling on him that when we meet impurity from the world the flesh and the devil we identify it immediately and are able to recoil from it?

Purity is expressed outwardly in modest dress and the gentle and quiet spirit that the apostle Peter commends. Not that this is a failsafe guide, I knew a girl that outwardly dressed very modestly at church, headcovering and all, but when she invited me to become her facebook friend, there was another side exposed. What do your clothes say about your thought life? What does your facebook persona say about you? If you are following Christ as your saviour and Lord, your status updates and uploaded photos should be pleasing for all your Christian family to see.

5. (3-5) Working at home. Whatever our employment situation, the priority of the Christian woman is to be the home. I'm going to say that again - the priority of the Christian woman is to be the home. WHAT? What an outrageous statement to make in this day and age. Imagine the response if we were in Princes Street Gardens saying this.

A career that neglects husband and/or children is dishonouring to God.

A few provocative things to think about for those who are married and especially with children. If you are working outside the home in employment or voluntary or church work - Why? Is it 'me time'? Is it out of financial necessity? Is it to further my career? Is it because my husband wants me to or because I want to? Is it to further Gods kingdom? Is it to care for the needy? Is it to pay for 'extras' that have become necessities? Does it make our family

life stressful? Am I able to provide a haven of rest for my family or am I so busy 'working' that I don't have time for my husband or children and I just use the TV to amuse both of them! Is my outside job so stressful that it impinges on my priorities at home? If my children are young, who is training them in the way they will go? How much time are they being influenced by others and who is influencing them?

For the record I have worked in secular employment as a wife and as a mother.

I have done so at times to further my career and I think I decided what I wanted and Paul went along with it. I have also done it out of financial necessity, literally to pay for the food on our table when Paul was a student.

When I look back now, I wish I had not worked so much when Nathan was a baby. I regret not seriously thinking about the priorities of home over my career. I was in the middle of a fairly predetermined career path and I just went along with it. I regret not submitting myself to my husband in discussing the options of how we wanted to live as a family. I wish an older woman had come alongside to give me a bigger perspective. I regret not humbling myself to listen and seek more when older women did make the odd comment. If you have kids, they are only yours to influence for a very short time (which feels like forever in the first few years but accelerates exponentially). Make the

most of it, discipline and training are so much easier the younger you start with your child and the more proactive you are.

Look with me at the excellent wife in **Proverbs 31**. This woman's days are useful, they are skilful, they are hardworking and they bless her husband and her children. In fact though she seems to be involved in business transactions, her out of the 'home' work is indeed centred on and caring for the home and her household.

Secular business today is demanding more and more of our lives. Is my work compatible with the priority of my home? Does my employment or indeed ministry get the best of me and my household the dregs of the day?

The woman in Proverbs not only manages her household and business with excellence but she is outward focussed and uses her home to reach out to the poor and needy as well, which brings us on to kindness.

6. **(3-5)** To be kind. Kindness is an underrated virtue, kindness reaches out with generosity of heart to others, kindness puts others' needs before ourselves, kindness expresses God's love to others. Kindness seems so ordinary, so insignificant. We will do well to remind ourselves of God's loving kindness to us. **Titus 3:4-5** puts it this way

“but when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy”

When we show kindness to someone, we are acting in a godly manner.

We show kindness not because of the ‘kindness-worthiness’ of the other person but in humility we show reach out to others in mercy and kindness.

7. (3-5) Submissive to their own husbands. Obviously we could spend more time thinking about each of these attributes that we are to grow in and this one is no exception. God’s authority order is shown in the Trinity – specifically in God the Son being submissive to God the Father. It is also shown in the relationship between the church and her Lord, the church is to submit to God the Son, and in the church itself with members submitting to the church leaders and in marriage the wife submitting to her husband. In our marriages we do need to remember that we are supposed to be a living picture to the world of how the church lovingly and joyfully submits to our Lord Jesus Christ. When we read this part at the beginning, were you dreading even considering the ‘S’ word this morning or were thinking of the big picture of bringing glory to God even in our marriages?

Where do I stand before this passage this morning? What has leapt out at me afresh from God's word today?

As older women who among us hasn't been irreverent in our behaviour, hasn't slandered another, hasn't pursued ungodly escapist behaviours? As younger women, who among us hasn't been selfish, irritable and even malicious at times towards our husbands, or usurp their headship over us by active rebellion or subtle manipulation? Which of us mothers hasn't been neglectful of our children's characters and souls, and uncaring at the umpteenth interruption of the day? Which of us hasn't given into outbursts of anger, or greed as we indulge ourselves in yet another "just a treat"? Which of us hasn't watched or read impure novels, TV shows or films or allowed our thoughts to wander where they shouldn't? Which of us hasn't been lazy, a slave to our entertainments while our work lies untouched?

Whatever our age, we are tempted by all of these things and as Psalm 51 puts it, the remembrance of our failures is ever before us. What can we do? Is there any hope? Who can rescue us from this body of death? **Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

This is what Paul points out to Titus.

Motivation of the gospel

Look at v 11-14. Who are we as women (older or younger)? We are all sinners saved by grace. V 11 says **“For the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation for all people”**. We are all sinners, we all need rescue, we cannot save ourselves, we need God’s grace, the gift of God which is Christ – the one who has appeared – once for all – to die, – the righteous for the unrighteous, – to bring us to God.

This gospel saves us and this same gospel motivates us.

As we pass on what godly behaviour looks like to the next generation, the grace of God continues to train us (v12) to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self controlled upright and godly lives in the present age while we wait for our blessed hope, the appearing of Jesus in all His glory.

How does the grace of God train us? By reminding us of the future filled with the glory of Jesus Christ. By reminding us of our new status. Not just sinners, but sinners redeemed from all lawlessness. Sinners who are being purified for himself, being made into a people made zealous for good works.

What will it look like if we women become Titus 2 women? Godly older women getting alongside younger women and modelling, teaching and sharing practical obedience and wisdom. The younger women putting into practice what they have been taught, loving their husbands and children, living pure, useful lives that give glory to God. Both of them depending on God’s grace as

they fail, let each other down, and as they are gradually sanctified together by the Holy Spirit, giving the glory to God.

What impact will living this way have on us, on Charlotte Chapel and the world?

- We will be gospel focussed women. Women aware of living in the grace of God, as we see God's holy Spirit at work in us, changing us for his glory, we will give the glory to Him and rejoice as we repent and move forward in faith and experience daily His glorious salvation.
- We will be a community minded people, we will come to church to serve others and as we deepen our fellowship with one another as we teach and encourage each other to follow our Lord, we will come to church with our 'respectable' masks off. We will be honest about our real lives and struggles and caring as we bear one another's burdens. Why not print out or copy all the 'one another' verses in the Bible. Every time we come together at Charlotte, lets read the next one on the list and come ready to obey our Saviour.
- We will be outward focussed towards the world that is outside the church.

Lets remind ourselves of the results of the lives lived to the glory of God outlined in this passage; "the doctrine of God our Saviour will be adorned

v10”, “so that any opponents will be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us v8” and “so that the word of God may not be reviled v5”. These are all outward focussed results of the grace of God working through His word in our lives. They remind us of Jesus’ words in John 13:34;

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

That’s a ‘one another’ verse to get us started. If new comers come into Charlotte on a Sunday and see real fellowship, women knowing each other well, and still loving each other, encouraging each other and bearing each others burdens, they will see the love of Christ in action. They will know that we are His disciples. Amen, may God give us his grace to obey his word today.

Pray

We are going to chat together about these verses in small groups, first of all introduce yourselves and have a stab at answering some of the discussion questions amongst yourselves.

Questions for discussion

1. What did you find most encouraging in these verses?
2. What did you find most challenging in these verses?
3. Who is on your list of women you most want to become like?
4. Who could you encourage to grow in godliness this week?

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