Good morning everyone. The title of my message is “How To Live A Gospel-Centred Life” based on Titus 2:1-15. From this passage, I would like for us to take a look at the instructions the apostle Paul gave Titus on how to teach the Cretans to live a godly life. These practical instructions also apply to us as New Covenant believers on how to live our day-to-day life. \*\*The key verse for this passage is 11-12:

“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.”

My message has two parts:

1. Teach Them How to Live (1-10)
2. Grace Saves, Grace Teaches (11-15)

\*\*Part 1 - Teach Them How to Live (1-10)

Just as a reminder, Paul wrote this letter to his younger associate Titus, because he left him behind on the island of Crete. Paul and Titus (and many others) had preached the gospel throughout the island of Crete and had established several Christian communities on the island. Paul had left Titus to complete the work of God that still needed to be done. Titus 1:5 says “The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.” From our passage today, Paul outlines to Titus how certain groups of Christians (old, young, male, female) must conduct their lives to match their confession of faith in Jesus. Let’s look at the passage starting with verse 1 “You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine” At the end of Titus chapter 1, Paul described a group of false Christians living on Crete who claimed to know God but by their actions they deny him. Paul was encouraging Titus to be different than those false teachers. How could Titus be different? He could be different by simply teaching the people that their lives must reflect sound doctrine. Titus had to remind the Cretan Christians, that their life must be consistent with God’s word. If we confess that we are Christian, there must be proof of our confession in the life that we live. Why did Paul emphasize this? Because many unbelievers are confused about Christianity because several people confess to being “Christian” but live their lives separate from the teachings of Jesus Christ.

First, Paul instructs Titus on what to teach the older men among the Christians in Crete. Verse 2 says “Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.” Paul wanted Titus to know that older men must live with the maturity and wisdom that their life experience *should give them*. This means sober, reverent, and temperate lives. The older men must also have stability, being stable in the right things:sound in faith, in love, and in patience. As we get older, most people tend to get “set” in their ways. This is a good thing if we become “set” in the ways of *faith, love, and patience*.

Let’s look at verse 3 “Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good.” Just as Titus was instructed to teach the older men, Paul wanted him to teach the older women. These mature Christian women must be respectful in their behaviour. Paul uses the word ‘reverent’ which means feeling or showing deep and solemn respect. Older women were commanded to not be gossipers or addicted to alcohol. They must teach what is good, be self-controlled and submissive to their husbands. Verses 4-5 say “Then they can train 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.” According to Paul’s instruction, it was not Titus’ responsible to teach the young women directly. Instead, he was to equip and encourage the older women to teach the younger women. Paul’s instructions for young women begin with household matters. God has given women a strategic position of influence and assistance to their husbands and their children. When Christian women (or men) don’t live in a Biblical, godly manner…it means that the word of God may be blasphemed among non-believers. \*\*Every day, I get to witness how much influence Jemmie has within our family and house church. The food we eat, the clothes we wear and the things we read. I’m so thankful that in 2022 by God’s grace, Jemmie faithfully served our family by working a full-time job, homeschooling Abigail, teaching our homeschool community of five kids, and serving Terri through 1:1 Bible study while also encouraging me as I was running my business and looking for a new job. Wow! She’s amazing. Jemmie is a great role model and an ideal example of how Christian women must conduct themselves according to Paul.

Next, the apostle Paul gives Titus one simple piece of advice on how to teach younger men. Verse 6 says “Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled.” The reality is that younger men are very passionate and emotional, and much of that is caused by their sexual drive. Sexual immorality is a huge challenge for young men and the internet makes access to pornography as easy as a few clicks on a computer or cell phone. \*\*Many pastors and thought leaders within the Christian community agree that online pornography is the work of Satan. Pornography is just a trap set by Satan to ensnare those who might be looking for God. It's not the only kind of trap Satan uses, but it's one of the most effective. That is why in our Christian community, young men need to be constantly encouraged to control their emotions and sexual desire.

Paul then speaks to Titus personally about his responsibility while doing the work of God. Verses 7-8 say “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.” Titus had to be more than a teacher, he also had to be an example. His guidance to others could not be taken seriously if he himself was not walking after the Lord. Basically, he must be a doer of the Word, not just teach it. Titus had to be an example of sound faith, stability and integrity. He wasn’t ready to lead the church if he wasn’t settled in his understanding of the Scriptures. Titus also must use sound speech, so that any of his haters will be ashamed for falsely accusing a true man of faith.

Let’s look at verses 9-10 “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, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.” Paul teaches Titus to also encourage slaves to be good witnesses to their masters. In today’s world, Christians are free to work and live pretty much anywhere they want. As employees of a company, we (Christians) must conduct ourselves and live out our Christian lives in a way that attracts our boss and co-workers to Jesus and the gospel message. Each day we go to our place of work, we can be a witness to Christ through our integrity, work ethic and godly character. \*\*I recently read a news article about an accountant in British Columbia who was forced to pay her former employer more than $2,600 after a tracking software showed she engaged in "time theft" while working remotely from home. I found this article interesting because I’ve recently started a new sales job working remotely from home. I know all too well (at my former work-from-home job) the temptation to steal time from your employer by doing personal work during company time. I repent that I sometimes stole time from my former employer when I did personal errands or household activities during my workday. Father God, please help me to be focused and committed to doing only my job duties and responsibilities during my 9-5 work hours. Lord Jesus, I ask that you use me at my new job to be a sincere witness of Christ through my integrity, strong work ethic and honesty.

Part 2 - Grace Saves, Grace Teaches (11-15)

Let’s look at verse 11 “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.” Grace brings salvation. We don’t go out and “get” salvation; it comes to us and we have the opportunity to receive it. So, what is grace? *Grace is the undeserved favour of God*. Paul wanted to remind Titus that no one has ever deserved or earned being saved from sin, from the world, or from the devil, however, it’s given to us freely as a gift from God through Jesus Christ. Paul also wrote about this in Ephesians 2:8 “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast.” There is one gospel of grace for all men. God doesn’t have a gospel of grace for some and a gospel of law for others. All men (young & old) and all women (young & old) find salvation by the grace of God. Now verses 12-13 say “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 glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ” This means that God’s grace teaches us. It’s a teacher. The ancient Greek word for *teaching* has in mind what a parent does for a child. It speaks about the entire training process: teaching, encouragement, correction, and discipline. Paul is saying that God’s grace, should instruct us to order to live a righteous life. Grace puts sin and worldly lusts in our past. Now grace teaches us to stand firmly against the sins of the world, not to passively be indifferent towards them. We live in a world where we are tempted to say “yes” to every desire and “yes” to every feeling, but the reality of our faith can be demonstrated by what we will say “no” to.

\*\*Before I fully committed my life to Jesus back in 2015, my life was a mess. I was drifting through life with no clear life purpose or worthy goals. I would “yes” to every worldly passion and desire that was presented to me. I had no concrete values or principles to guide me when making life decisions. I had no self-control regarding my sexual desire and my emotions, especially my anger. However, the worst thing was that I was a sinner based on God’s word who was guilty of eternal death in hell. But by God’s grace, I was saved when I fully admit to God that I was a weak and lost sinner. I cried out to God to have mercy on me and to give me another chance to live my life in a way that is pleasing to Him. Since that pivotal moment (nearly 9 years ago), God’s saving grace has helped me to gradually say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions. By God’s grace:

- I’m married to Jemmie, who’s a committed woman of faith

- I’m a father to a beautiful and smart little girl, Abigail (with another child coming this

 summer)

- I serve 3 faithful Bible students (Kane, Bamidele, Elstan)

- And I now have a clear life direction and purpose: which is to serve the Lord. Listening to and obeying God’s word until I’m face-to-face with Jesus Christ.

\*\*Jesus mentioned this in Luke 9:23 “Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” Grace teaches us how to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in our world today. Grace teaches us obedience to God through the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul also mentioned to Titus that Christians should live in active expectation of the return of Jesus. Grace teaches us to expect and prepare for the blessed hope, of being face-to-face with Jesus Christ. So it’s fair to say that God’s grace is really working in someone’s heart when there will be an awareness of the return of Jesus Christ, there will be a longing for the return of Jesus Christ and there will be some evidence of life preparation for the return of Jesus Christ.

Let’s look at verse 14 “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.” Jesus gave, which means it was voluntary and He gave Himself for us, which means Jesus was given as a substitute for us who are sinners. To redeem means “to be bought out of slavery by the paying of a ransom.” We are bought out of our slavery to sin, and purchased for God’s service. We are redeemed and purchased to live with eagerness. Born-again Christians will have an eagerness for righteousness in their life and they will also have an eagerness for righteousness in the lives of others.

\*\*What are you eager to do in your life?

What are you eager to achieve in the year 2023?

Last year, I was eager to start and build my own business. While this desire is not sinful or wrong, I realized through God’s humility training that my #1 desire in 2023 and for the rest of my life must be to seek God’s will and faithfully obey the direction he has for my life. I am now eager to grow my relationship with God and faith in Jesus Christ as the Saviour and Lord of my life. This is the #1 goal in my life.

Lastly, verse 15 says “These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.” Titus and every one of God’s servants (pastors, Bible teachers, Godly leaders) are directed to speak, encourage, and rebuke…and to do it with all authority. If Titus spoke with all authority, he also had to back it up with his life. Titus had to live so that no one would despise him or the gospel message.

In conclusion, may God bless all of us to follow this practical wisdom in Titus chapter 2. To faithfully live a gospel-centred life that brings glory to God and draws people to the one who is mighty to save, Jesus Christ.