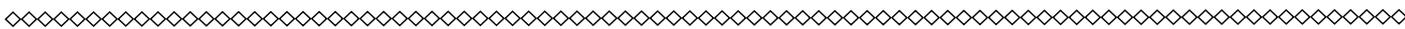




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**Sermon Brief**  
**Text: Titus 2:1-15**  
**Title: God's Church: With Pastoral Leadership**  
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Seeking to faithfully proclaim the whole council of God in scripture!



**INTRODUCTION**

What's a pastor supposed to do? The work of pastoral ministry is multi-faceted and often heavily determined by culture and church tradition. Frequently these external shaping forces impose on the pastor responsibilities and obligations that burden him down to the point of "preacher burn out." In much of Protestantism today world wide, "preacher burn out" has become such a problem that large numbers of ministers are leaving the ministry for careers in other fields, often non religious fields. At Gardner-Webb University, where I taught for eleven years, the majority of the religion majors in the undergraduate degree programs had little or no interest in serving God through a local church. Among Baptists in the US, most all of the denominational groups have full time employees that do nothing but counsel pastors who are so frustrated at local church demands that they are considering leaving the ministry. Among Southern Baptists in the US is the infamous "eighteen month pastorate" pattern that all too often exists among some pastors. That is, they seldom stay at a church much longer than eighteen months before moving on to a new church.

What has led to such a bad situation? The answer to this question is complex and has many aspects. But one of the major sources of preacher frustration lies in what I mentioned at the outset: cultural expectations and traditional demands placed by a church on its pastor.

The New Testament offers many perspectives on pastoral responsibility. Over time we will take a look at most all of them in order to develop a wholistic picture. For a church to develop authentic spirituality, its leadership must be functioning within the framework of New Testament patterns. This is a deep concern of mine for our church. I deeply want us to become exactly the kind of church that God wants us to be. One of the necessary ingredients for that to happen is that I as your pastor must be functioning as a pastor is supposed to function within the guidelines laid out in the Bible. Thus my sermon today is intended to help both you and me better understand that responsibility which God has placed on my shoulders as your pastor.



Today I want to focus on one such text that uses some foundational terms related to pastoral leadership. In Titus 2:1-15,<sup>1</sup> Paul was writing to the young missionary Titus who had been left on the island of Crete to help the Christian communities that existed

<sup>1</sup>**NRSV:** 1 But as for you, teach what is consistent with sound doctrine. 2 Tell the older men to be temperate, serious, prudent, and sound in faith, in love, and in endurance. 3 Likewise, tell the older women to be reverent in behavior, not to be slanderers or slaves to drink; they are to teach what is good, 4 so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be self-controlled, chaste, good managers of the household, kind, being submissive to their husbands, so that the word of God may not be discredited. 6 Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. 7 Show yourself in all respects a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, gravity, 8 and sound speech that cannot be censured; then any opponent will be put to shame, having nothing evil to say of us. 9 Tell slaves to be submissive to their masters and to give satisfaction in every respect; they are not to talk back, 10 not to pilfer, but to show complete and perfect fidelity, so that in everything they may be an ornament to the doctrine of God our Savior.

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, 12 training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. 14 He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds. 15 Declare these things; exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one look down on you.

**Greek NT text:** 1 Σὺ δὲ λάλει ἃ πρέπει τῇ ὑγιαίνουσῃ διδασκαλίᾳ. 2 Πρεσβύτεας νηφαλίους εἶναι, σεμνοὺς, σώφρονας, ὑγιαίνοντας τῇ πίστει, τῇ ἀγάπῃ, τῇ ὑπομονῇ· 3 πρεσβυτίδας ὡσαύτως ἐν καταστήματι ἱεροπρεπεῖς, μὴ διαβόλους μὴ οἴνω πολλῷ δεδουλωμένους, καλοδιδασκάλους, 4 ἵνα σωφρονίζωσιν τὰς νέας φιλόανδρους εἶναι, φιλοτέκνους 5 σώφρονας ἀγνάς οἰκουροὺς ἀγαθὰς, ὑποτασσομένας τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν, ἵνα μὴ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ βλασφημηθῆται. 6 Τοὺς νεωτέρους ὡσαύτως παρακάλει σωφρονεῖν 7 περὶ πάντα, σεαυτὸν παρεχόμενος τύπον καλῶν ἔργων, ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ ἀφθορίαν, σεμνότητα, 8 λόγον ὑγιῆ ἀκατάγνωστον, ἵνα ὁ ἐξ ἐναντίας ἐντραπῆ μηδὲν ἔχων λέγειν περὶ ἡμῶν φαῦλον. 9 Δούλους ἰδίοις δεσπόταις ὑποτάσσεσθαι ἐν πᾶσιν, εὐαρέστους εἶναι, μὴ ἀντιλέγοντας, 10 μὴ νοσιζομένους, ἀλλὰ πᾶσαν πίστιν ἐνδεικνυμένους ἀγαθὴν, ἵνα τὴν διδασκαλίαν τὴν τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ κοσμῶσιν ἐν πᾶσιν.

11 Ἐπεφάνη γὰρ ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ σωτήριος πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις 12 παιδεύουσα ἡμᾶς, ἵνα ἀρνησάμενοι τὴν ἀσέβειαν καὶ τὰς κοσμικὰς ἐπιθυμίας σωφρόνως καὶ δικαίως καὶ εὐσεβῶς ζήσωμεν ἐν τῷ νῦν αἰῶνι, 13 προσδεχόμενοι τὴν μακαρίαν ἐλπίδα καὶ ἐπιφάνειαν τῆς δόξης τοῦ μεγάλου θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, 14 ὃς ἔδωκεν ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, ἵνα λυτρώσῃται ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἀνομίας καὶ καθάρσῃ ἑαυτῷ λαὸν περιούσιον, ζηλωτὴν καλῶν ἔργων. 15 Ταῦτα λάλει καὶ παρακάλει καὶ ἔλεγχε μετὰ πάσης ἐπιταγῆς· μηδεὶς σου περιφρονεῖτω.

there. Evidently many problems had surfaced among the various churches in the towns scattered across the island. Some of the issues were rather common in churches generally in the first century Mediterranean world. But seemingly some of the issues are peculiar to the island of Crete that had its own distinctive culture and ways of doing things. Paul alludes to some of these distinctive issues in 1:10-16 with a quote (1:12) from a sixth century BCE Greek poet from Crete who had described some bad habits of the Cretans years before Paul wrote to Titus.

Chapter two of Titus contains several admonitions given to Titus as a spiritual leader helping the churches develop their own leaders. In chapter one, instructions for establishing the spiritual leadership of pastor are given by Paul to Titus. The pastors are referred to as “elder” (πρεσβύτερος) or “overseer” (ἐπίσκοπος) by the apostle. In chapters two and three, Paul speaks directly to the responsibility of Titus in providing a model of spiritual leadership that can be followed by these local leaders once they were in place.

I want to focus today on chapter two because it has some particularly important instructions for the pastoral leader of a congregation. And I think it is important for a congregation to understand these responsibilities placed on their spiritual leader. Gradually in later sermons we will come back to the materials in chapters one and three that provide additional insight.

Two essential points arise out of chapter two regarding the work of a pastoral leader in a church: 1) he has a job to do, and 2) there’s a certain way God wants it done.

## BODY

### I. He has a job to do, v. 15

In the last verse of our text, Paul bunches up a series of admonitions to Titus that are common admonitions to spiritual leaders found elsewhere in the New Testament as well: “**Declare these things; exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one look down on you**” (*Ταῦτα λάλει καὶ παρακάλει καὶ ἔλεγγε μετὰ πάσης ἐπιταγῆς· μηδεὶς σου περιφρονεῖτω*). Four specific admonitions are contained in this verse.

“**Declare these things**” (*Ταῦτα λάλει*). The “these things” refers back to vv. 1-14, which begins with the same verbal affirmation in even stronger expression: *Σὺ λάλει*. We will come back to the content of these verses in a moment, but at the outset I want to underscore the nature of these admonitions. Titus was to be speaking the things that Paul admonished. A part of the preacher’s responsibility to the congregation is to speak to them.

The emphasis here is broad and general. The two subsequent admonitions in v. 15 narrow down his speaking to two specific aspects, one positive and one negative.

A preacher “makes his living” by talking. He must be able and willing to communicate his understandings to the congregation especially in public speaking. As I have shared with a few of you individually, one of the principles that has guided my ministry over the past half century came early on in my studies as a ministerial student. I came across the famous saying of the German / Swiss theologian Karl Barth. Barth asserted that the minister of the Gospel should hold the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other. The sermon is to be his efforts to build a connecting bridge between the two in order to show the relevancy of the Bible to contemporary life and living. For all of my teaching and preaching ministry this has been my goal. Every time I stand to speak, my deep desire is to take the principles of scripture and help the congregation understand how these apply to their lives.

The intention is to build a strong connecting bridge based on solid biblical interpretation. This means spending time in the scriptures digging out the concepts as they were first set forth to the initial audiences. It entails spending time reflecting on how those concepts come across the centuries of time between “then” and “now” to apply to our day. In German principles of preaching, this is sometimes labeled “Brückenschlagen,” that is, slinging the meaning across the bridge of time from then to now. The spiritual concepts are not to be my ideas. Instead, they are to be God’s ideas as set forth in scripture. My task as preacher is to communicate those ideas to you.

“**Exhort and reprove with all authority**” (*καὶ παρακάλει καὶ ἔλεγγε μετὰ πάσης ἐπιταγῆς*). Paul admonishes Titus to use his “full authority” (*πάσης ἐπιταγῆς*) to exhort and reprove his hearers. What authority does the pastor have? Paul’s term here stresses authority derived from God and given to the pastor directly by God in His calling to the minister. But this authority has boundaries which are clearly defined by God through scripture. The authority of the minister to lead a congregation must always be expressed within the guidelines of pastoral leadership set forth in scripture. God never ever gives a pastor a “blank check” of power over a congregation. Thus a congregation should always measure the expressed authority of any pastor against the Bible. Is he functioning within the limits of biblical principles? If so, then he has legitimate authority. If not, then his claimed authority is false and ought to be challenged by the church.



Paul tells Titus to “exhort and reprove” the churches (*παρακάλει καὶ ἔλεγχε*). The first command stresses the positive aspect. He is to “stand along side” the people with encouragement and exhortation to do God’s bidding. The second command focuses on correction of mistakes. When the church, or a church member, is straying from God’s will, the pastor is mandated by God to correct the problems in the church and in the church member’s life.

How I intend to apply these responsibilities as your pastor needs to be explained. First, and foremost, I want to be an encourager to you, both as a congregation and as individual members. I’ve always believed that a minister gets a lot more accomplished with “honey” than he does with “salt.” There are so many things to be excited about as believers. God is doing so many wonderful things in our church. I intend to focus on these things and stress them and hold them up to you as a challenge to inspire and motivate.

But there may be times when I need to “fuss at you” some. When the church strays from God’s will in some area, God demands that I do everything possible to correct the problem and lead the church back into His will. I will be held accountable by God on judgment day for that. This is a difficult responsibility for a pastor to fulfill correctly. Some preachers see their ministry only as “fussing” at a congregation. And so nearly every sermon is dominated by negative criticism of something in the church or in the lives of the church members. But that’s not what Paul is getting at here. He calls for a balance between the positive and negative. The other extreme, equally unbiblical, is what you usually see in TV preachers like Joel Olsteen from Houston Texas. You never hear the “rebuke” side of God’s mandate to pastors from him, as well as most TV preachers. Everything is always a “syrupy, sugar-coated” version of the Gospel. People, we all as believers make mistakes. Churches make mistakes. Preachers make mistakes. And we need to be held accountable for these mistakes. An important part of my responsibility as pastor is to call us to accountability. You remember a basic spiritual principle from last week’s sermon in 1 Cor. 11:31 -- “If we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged” (by God).



I intend to call us always to walk in God’s paths, and when we stray from them I must be able to call us back. Now, I will never ever rebuke people by name from the pulpit! I will never ever rebuke anyone in ways that publicly embarrass or humiliate! When I rebuke, I’m rebuking sin, not the sinner. My intention is to call the sinner to repentance and to restoration of fellowship with God. A redemptive motive will always characterize the rebuking that has to be done.<sup>2</sup>

**“Let no one look down on you”** (*μηδείς σου περιφρονεῖτω*). The NRSV translates *περιφρονεῖτω* as “look down on you.” Other translations use verbs such as “disregard” (NASB, ESV); “despise” (KJV, NIV); “ignore you or disregard what you say” (NLT). What seems to lie behind Paul’s words to Titus is that he as a young minister needed to back up what he said with an unquestionable example of living himself. Note Paul’s words directly to Titus in verse 7. He should present his message clearly to the people so that they could understand what he was saying. And what he presented must have the tone of divine authority saturating it; and not be his own personal demands. Titus was to speak God’s words to the churches, not his own. And he should strive to make this as clear as possible to them when he spoke.

As your pastor, this is my goal. I’m committed to living out what I preach and to my life backing up what I

<sup>2</sup>To be certain, the New Testament makes a place for public rebuking of wayward church members and ministers. But this is a formal action of the church itself, not something the pastor takes upon himself to do. Cf. Thomas C. Oden on 1 Timothy 5:17-22 (*Interpretation Commentary*):

“If it should happen that one of these church leaders comes under attack, ask for evidence, seeking testimony from more than one source (v. 19) to avoid bias (cf. Mt. 18:16). Paul had invoked the same rule at Corinth (2 Cor. 13:1; based on Deut. 19:15). The accused have a right to a fair hearing. If accusations are hurled, investigate carefully, impartially, without favoritism, looking for corroborating testimony. As for those who persist in sin or who sin “scandalously, and are duly convicted” (Wesley, p. 782), and continue without penitence, rebuke them in the presence of all (v. 20; cf. II 4:2; Titus 1:13; 2:15; see the same process in Mt. 18:15-17). The admonition is to be public, given in the presence of the company either of church officers or elders or of the church, depending perhaps on offense or circumstances.

“This serves a corrective purpose, not only for the offending church leader but for all church leaders, as a firm warning to others that they may better fulfill their responsibilities by being aware of the seriousness of discipline (cf. Deut. 13:11; Augustine, Letters, 95.3, NPNF 1 I, 402). The classical exegetes argued from verse 20 that unpunished misdeeds would reinforce those behaviors: “For as it is wrong to condemn hastily and rashly, so not to punish manifest offenses is to open the way to others, and embolden them to offend. . . . For as when sinners go unpunished, many commit crimes; so when they are punished, many are made better” (Chrysostom, p. 461). The charge is to guard this sacred tradition without prejudging, without bias or special favor (v. 21), “passing no sentence till the cause is fully heard” (Wesley, p. 782). Avoid any appearance of collusion with sycophants. The administration of these instructions must be evenhanded, otherwise the whole process becomes skewed to personal interest instead of justice.” [iPreach > Biblical Commentaries > *Interpretation Commentary* > 1-2 Timothy, Titus > FIRST AND SECOND TIMOTHY AND TITUS > PART FOUR The Right Ordering of Ministry > Qualifications for Church]

say in the pulpit. And what I say in the pulpit must always have its origin in God and His word.

## II. He should do it a certain way, vv. 1-14.

In the first part of chapter two, Paul laid out to Titus some specific instructions about helping the churches serve Christ. Time doesn't allow a detailed examination of all of the material here, but I do want to highlight three things that are basic to these verses.

### **Promoting healthy teaching, v. 1.**

What Paul wanted Titus to do was to advocate the things that were appropriate to "spiritual health promoting" teaching. As I explored in much greater detail in the background study for this passage, the apostolic leaders of early Christianity, and especially the apostle Paul, placed primary emphasis on spiritually healthy believers, rather than on 'orthodox' belief. A lot of the historical emphasis in Christian interpretation has been on 'correct' belief. That is, our system of belief must be correct to some authoritative standard of belief. In Roman Catholic tradition, the Magisterium contains that standard. Protestant Christians have insisted on the standard of scripture through the principle of *sola scriptura* since the time of Martin Luther. But most Protestant groups have gone beyond this with the adoption of a creed, ein Glaubensbekenntnis, as defining the boundaries of orthodox belief. Consequently, wars have been fought over the most accurate credal declarations.

But the New Testament takes an entirely different approach, and we see a prime example of it here. Correct belief is what produces spiritually healthy Christians. If Christian belief doesn't lead this direction, it is not correct belief, no matter how 'orthodox' it may be.

My job as your pastor is first and foremost to produce spiritually healthy believers as the membership of this church. I have spent an entire career of teaching, some 36 years as a professor, trying to help ministerial students learn how to correctly interpret the Bible, particularly the New Testament. I have written almost 40 books and articles over the years to encourage this. But all this was targeting the end product of spiritually healthy Christians, both out of the ministerial students and the people they minister to. Orthodox belief can be completely accurate to the teachings of the New Testament, and still be as dead and lifeless as paganism.

What God needs in the IBC church of Cologne is spiritually alive Christians who are living out their faith on a daily basis. My assignment from God is to promote this, to help facilitate it in all that I do and say as pastor.

### **Belief and practice, vv. 2-10.**

In these verses Paul works off a foundational religious principle embedded deeply into both Jewish and Christian understanding, and basic to religious experience in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. It is the so-called "vertical - horizontal" nature of religious commitment. From Moses forward the clear understanding in God's revelation is that a person can never be properly related to God (the vertical) without being properly related to people (the horizontal). The Israelites rejected the ancient middle Eastern religious tendency to disconnect religious devotion from ethical responsibility. Christianity under Jesus and the apostles followed the identical path and insisted that one must love both God and his neighbor as well. This placed both ancient Judaism and Christianity in a unique position in the ancient world. Moral obligations, especially to other people, in that world had nothing to do with religious devotion. What little moral teaching that existed at that time stemmed from perceived obligation either the ruling monarch, or, as in the Greco-Roman world, to the Roman government and to a 'stable' Roman society. But the Ten Commandments summarize both vertical obligations to God (commandments 1-4) and horizontal obligations to people (commandments 5-10) in both Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21. This dual obligation is the heart of religious commitment to God, and adherence to these obligations defines the status of one's relationship with God.

In applying this basic principle, Paul admonishes Titus to address different segments in the churches on Crete. To *the older men* in the churches Titus was to admonish them "to be temperate, serious, prudent, and sound in faith, in love, and in endurance." To *the older women*, he was to tell them "to be reverent in behavior, not to be slanderers or slaves to drink; they are to teach what is good,..." The goal in this instruction to the older women was to help *the younger women*: "so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be self-controlled, chaste, good managers of the household, kind, being submissive to their husbands, so that the word of God may not be discredited." To *the young men* Titus was to admonish them "to be self-controlled. Show yourself in all respects a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, gravity, and sound speech that cannot be censured; then any opponent will be put to shame, having nothing evil to say of us." And to *the slaves* in the churches, he was to exhort them "to be submissive to their masters and to give satisfaction in every respect; they are not to talk back, not to pilfer, but to show complete and perfect fidelity, so that in everything they may be an ornament to the doctrine of God our Savior." Much of what Paul says here highlights needs that especially grew out of the cultural background of the Cretans, in light of his earlier quote of the Greek philosopher Epimenides (*de Oraculis*) in 1:12 about the Cretan culture: "Cretans are always liars, vicious brutes, lazy

gluttons.” But many of the virtues and vices mentioned here by Paul are also found in the vice and virtue lists elsewhere in the New Testament, thus suggesting wide spread concerns across first century Christianity. In a society and culture with little self discipline and high levels of violent behavior toward other people, Titus had a huge task in instilling in the believers patterns of behavior that ran contrary to the values of the surrounding world. But correct belief could not be severed from proper behavior in the Gospel.

Just as was Titus’ responsibility to the Cretan believers, I as your pastor have a deep obligation to you here in the church. Much of my preaching and ministry to you will focus on how to live acceptably to God as believers in Jesus Christ. The need of self discipline is already one that I’ve sensed in contemporary German culture. Older traditional German culture possessed self discipline well, but I’m coming to realize that much too often younger Germans lack the ability and or willingness to make serious commitments and then follow through on them. I think it is a major problem also in the immigrant community here in Cologne. To be sure, the time around Karnival may not be the best time to try to observe patterns of self-control and serious commitment! But I do think our culture has growing problems here. And if we’re not careful, these ‘worldly’ ways will come into the church and cause havoc in our spiritual lives. The demands of the Gospel will not let us destroy our lives in unruly living and unwillingness to ‘get our act together’ spiritually and morally. The pastor is commanded by God to “hold the line” on such behavior among church members.

#### **Basic belief, vv. 11-14.**

In the third unit of text material, we are reminded of the foundation belief declaration that stands as the doctrinal basis of our Christian existence. In highly creative manner, Paul summarizes that foundation around two appearances of Jesus Christ. In Jesus’ first coming, the grace of God was manifested that brings salvation (v. 11). In the second appearance of Jesus at the end of human history the divine Presence, Jesus Christ, will appear to hold us believers accountable for how we have used that saving grace of God made available to us. Thus Christian experience and belief can be summarized around the two appearances of Christ. In the first comes the saving grace of God; in the second comes accountability of our stewardship of that grace.

In a way unusual to modern perceptions of divine grace, Paul characterizes the grace of God as a disciplinarian: “training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly,...” (παιδεύουσα ἡμᾶς, ἵνα ἀρνησάμενοι τὴν ἀσέβειαν καὶ τὰς κοσμικὰς ἐπιθυμίας σωφρόνως καὶ δικαίως καὶ εὐσεβῶς ζήσωμεν ἐν τῷ νῦν αἰῶνι,...). The key concept is παιδεύουσα ἡμᾶς. Most English translations will use either ‘teach’ or ‘train’ to translate παιδεύω. The weakness of either English term is that both words ‘water down’ the intensity of the Greek concept, especially in light of first century Greco-Roman methods of instruction. The better English concept of what God’s grace does is to instill into the hearts of believers a deep commitment. God’s grace doesn’t merely inform us of what we’re supposed to do. No, no! Divine grace is not a reporter. Much deeper, God’s grace changes and transforms us deep down inside to shape and form commitments to live in the ways of God. The motivating dynamics for that living come out of each appearance. In Jesus’ first coming was a sacrifice intended to wash us clean of our sins and lawlessness. Additionally that cleansing was designed to create a special people of God “zealous for good works.” The second coming of Jesus will bring the divine Glory, the awesome divine Presence, that brings us into final judgment and assessment of how we have lived as God’s people.

Thus basic Christian belief underlies our living as believers. My responsibility as your pastor is to proclaim this foundational belief system so that every member not only understands but continually experiences this transforming, self-disciplining grace of God in their lives. And that is my commitment to you. We must certainly understand what the Bible says about Christian belief. But much more importantly we must EXPERIENCE that belief in life changing ways. Only then can we become a powerful witness of the gospel to the people of Cologne.

### **CONCLUSION**

**I have a job to do at IBC church.** That much is clear from Paul’s words to Titus. God assigns duties to every pastor and then holds him accountable for carrying out those duties. I want you to understand this. My leadership of the church will seek to carefully understand those job assignments from God through scripture, and then faithfully carry them out.

**I need your prayers and help in getting it done.** This is the second point in conclusion. The ministry needs of this church are already too big for one person to do all of them. Every one of us is called to minister. Each of us needs to find that place of service that God has and then fulfill God’s calling to serve. As pastor and church join together in faithful service, the church will move forward in wonderful ways advancing the Gospel. Come, let us work together!

