

“The Normal Christian Life – HOW Then Should We Live, Part 7?”

Review: In Christ Jesus, We Are All Created Unto Good Works

- ***Good Works in the Lives of Us Saints in General***

- So what is the Pauline perspective on good works in the lives of us saints? Should we be focused on them or not? He has written so much in his letters regarding our works in a negative way, we might well wonder if there are positives as well to be considered?

Last time we saw how in Paul’s foundational prison letter to the Ephesians, he wrote these memorable words underscoring both the negative teaching on works but also highlighting the positive:

Ephesians 2:8-10

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

- This puts our works in proper perspective, doesn't it? They do not count at all as far as our salvation is concerned. For it is a pure gift of God according to his marvelous and full grace. “Not of works, lest any should boast.” Here, our apostle focuses on the Lord’s work “in us”. And, as he writes here, the Lord has “created us in Christ Jesus unto good works”. Great language indeed.

So we “... were created in Christ Jesus, as out of nothing!” Only God can do this, not the enemy, and not ourselves. What we can do (or the enemy), is simply not the same. For we can never reform the old nature.

He continues with these words: “unto good works which were ordained or set before us believers so that we might walk in them, or walk in the realm of them”, to paraphrase a little (not much though): For the fruit of the Spirit naturally is manifested in that way when works are brought forth with the empowering of Almighty God. It is as if God created the “molds” already, and what fills them to overflowing is our spiritual fruit. Our “walking in them” then is how he describes that result, that manifestation, of the work of God in us. That is how the desires of the new nature within us, due to God’s creative work, are naturally manifested. This is how the Normal Christian Life is completed. Amen.

Our Outline Today: In Christ Jesus, We Are All Created Unto Good Works, Part 2

- **Good Works in the Lives of Elders (Overseers)**
- **Good Works in the Lives of Believing Women**
- **Good Works in the Lives of Believing Men (Wealthy)**
- **Good Works in the Lives of Paul's Co-Ministers (Timothy)**
- **Good Works in the Lives of All (and with a Special Focus, On Titus Too)**

I. Good Works in the Lives of Elders (Overseers)

- But in the assemblies Paul had founded, there was a need for order, and Paul addresses that in his opening exhortation for Titus. There was considerable opposition to the assemblies of believers founded on the Mediterranean island of Crete. There was a potentially destructive challenge there already due to the constant opposition of Jewish legalists who were skilled in promoting their [false] religion with its many works that looked so good to the believers there in Crete.

Paul called Titus to be their encourager and teacher:

[READ] Titus 1:4-9

4 To Titus, *mine* own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders [*literally, select aged ones, men, according to the male gender*] in every city, as I had appointed thee:

6 If any be blameless [*unaccused*], the husband [*mature men*] of one wife [*literally, a one woman (kind of) man*], having faithful [*or believing*] children not accused of riot or unruly.

7 For a bishop must be blameless [*unaccused*], as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;

9 [*Now the spiritual side*] Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

10 For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision:

11 Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

- Paul had preached in Crete, we read here, and had founded churches there, apparently with his convert, Titus. When was this? It is not recorded in the book of Acts. We might conclude, therefore, that it was after Paul's release from the Roman house confinement, which we read of in the letter to the Philippians. This would be after the end of the

history Luke recorded in the book of Acts. He may have also traveled to Spain, Gaul, and central Europe. This is speculation, but somewhat well-founded.

As we read here in verse 5, when Paul departed from the island of Crete, he left Titus behind. The reason was that the assemblies they had founded and ministered to together were being quickly subverted by Jewish false teachers, as verses 10 & 11 show. Paul trusted Titus for good reason, as he knew him well and had full confidence in him. The next verses show how serious the issue in Crete was developing, for even before the apostle left the island, the word had come to him concerning what was already occurring in some cities where he had preached, and where assemblies had been founded. His memorable words are written in the following verses:

Titus 1:12-16

12 One of themselves, *even* a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. [*This person is well known, and the quotation is from him. This was Epimenides, a semi-mythical figure in very ancient Greek history...*]

13 This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them [*apparently the believers sharply*], that they may be sound in the faith;

14 Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.

15 Unto the pure all things *are* pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving *is* nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

16 They profess that they know God; but in works they deny *him*, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

- Paul's instructions here to Titus are detailed and specific. He first addresses the older men, saying that some of them should be set aside as leaders of the assemblies. The objective here is to have in charge those who can be effective both in the defence of the gospel and in keeping order.
- The "gainsayers" in verse 9 are those he is specifically addressing here with this word of grace in verses 12-16. So the converse is true of godly believers who are walking in the Spirit. These false teachers, though, are unbelievers as verses 15 & 16 show. And, he writes of them, that they are not even capable of bringing forth truly good works for "their mind and conscience is defiled." [*Some applications of this are important, but we will not dwell on them today.*]
- So the standard for elders (or overseers, verse 7) is high indeed. Few can fulfill it, but Paul was so confident in the work of the Lord in these new believers that he strongly exhorts Titus, as we see here. We should take

Paul's example for ourselves as we face far less challenging circumstances in our own lives. Let's look at some of these verses more carefully:

Verse 6 If any be blameless [*uncharged*], the husband [*mature men*] of one wife [*literally, a one woman (kind of) man*], having faithful [*or believing*] children not accused of riot or unruly. [*There is a lot here ...*]

Verse 7 For a bishop must be blameless [*uncharged*], as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; [*So elderly men are to be selected to be overseers or bishops. The rest here indicates that they were also the pastor-teachers.*]

Verse 8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;

Verse 9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught [*by Paul, it seems*], that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. [*Only a pastor-teacher would be able to fulfill this requirement. Apparently, Paul had spent some time there training up many so that this selection, this "ordination" could be accomplished.*]

- There is much here to take to heart, isn't there? In verses 15 & 16, Paul, by contrast, sets such a high standard for the good works of believing men. But what about the women, we might ask, for they are surely much in Paul's mind as he writes here as well:

II. Good Works in the Lives of Believing Women

- Now our apostle gets specific and addresses the women in the assemblies, first the married ones, and then the women who had lost their husbands:
- Regarding the first, the married women, he writes this:

[READ] 1 Timothy 2:8-10

8 I will therefore that men [*men, specifically, as opposed to women*] pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided [*or braided*] hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;

10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

- Then, the believing widows, he includes this, twice in his first letter to Timothy and chapter five:

1 Timothy 5:3 Honour widows that are widows indeed. *[Of all that this might imply, he singles out one in particular a few verses later.]*

[READ] 1 Timothy 5:9-10

9 Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man *[a one man woman]*,

10 Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

- Some of the “good works” are listed here. It is quite a list, isn't it? But the list is important, and the works are indeed good. Who could deny it, though some of these would be considered unacceptable in our day. Times have surely changed. Others would need to be added today, more appropriately.

So how important were “good works” to our apostle? Very much indeed. But all his other writings about works still apply, and our teachings on the Normal Christian Life have shown the way forward to the fruit of the Spirit and the good works that flow from them. Let's not forget that.

III. Good Works in the Lives of Believing Men (Some Wealthy)

- Firstly, in chapter two he addresses all men:

1 Timothy 2:8 I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

- Then he addresses the rich:

1 Timothy 6:17-19

17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

- The rich “in this world” have been greatly blessed by Almighty God. He writes in verse 17 that the giver, who is rich above all, owning and managing everything from heaven's viewpoint, has provided these riches

for us living here in a sin-cursed world, “to be enjoyed”! So our enjoyment is not the issue, rather, the issue is how that is obtained. Amen?

- And so he adds this dual warning: “be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches.”
- And then this exhortation follows: “Do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.”
- And he concludes with his teaching for those who are rich in this world: “Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”

So that brings us to where we need to focus in this study, to our apostle’s exhortations to his fellow co-ministers in the faith and in his apostolic work, specifically, brothers Timothy and Titus:

IV. Good Works in the Lives of Paul’s Co-Ministers (Timothy)

- Paul emphasizes in a very special way those who have been called into ministry. Timothy was very special to Paul:

1 Timothy 1:1-2

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, *which is* our hope;

2 Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

2 Timothy 1:2 To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

- They had a very special relationship indeed as indicated in many of Paul’s writings. For example:

2 Timothy 3:14-17

14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned *them*;

15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

- “But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned *them* ...”: It makes a difference of whom one has been taught the scriptures, for some teachers are not teachers of the word of truth and others are, but are unfaithful to that word as given by God and intended to be understood and applied.

And he also adds, “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures”: So it is important that children be raised up in the word of God. It makes a difference. That is only to be expected, of course. For it forms the character of the child, even when they are unbelieving. Paul earlier in the very beginning of the letter had written these words:

[READ] 2 Timothy 1:2-5

2 To Timothy, *my* dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3 I thank God, whom I serve from *my* forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;

4 Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;

5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

- So Timothy had a proper foundation with the best of teachers and mentors (at least on his mother’s and grandmother’s side). They were Jewish while his father was Greek (Acts 16:1) and were, it seems, early converts to the faith.
- “But continue [*Greek μένω, “to settle down and feel at home with”*] ... “
- There are several added and implied responsibilities here beyond that first one:

[READ] 2 Timothy 3:15-17

15 ... thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

- The scriptures [alone] are literally, “God-breathed”. It is for that reason that they have the inherent ability “to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus”. A more literal translation would be this: “Every mark [on the page] is God-breathed and therefore is profitable ...”

- As a consequence of being God-breathed, the scriptures alone are profitable in every way:
 - “For doctrine”: “doctrinal teaching”
 - “For reproof”: “providing evidence of departure”
 - “For correction”: “straightening the path”
 - “For instruction in righteousness”: “child rearing discipline”
- And it is all enabled for this grandest of the purposes of Almighty God, “That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” So it is all about what God has done and is doing now through his word of power and the fullness of his grace.

Psalms 138:2 I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

V. Good Works in the Lives of All (and with a Special Focus, On Titus Too):

Titus 2:1-8

1 But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:

2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.

3 The aged women likewise, that *they be* in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;

4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,

5 *To be* discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

6 Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.

7 In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine *shewing* uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,

8 Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

- Paul’s instructions for Titus are weighty indeed:
 - To speak the things (the truths) which are consistent with and promote sound or healthy doctrine, that is, that teaching consistent with the revelation of the mystery, the dispensation revealed to Paul for the Body of Christ, the assembly of which we are all members through faith in Him.

- He singles out now those groups within the Body one by one, the mature, older men, then the mature, older women, then the younger women, then the younger men, and finally those in bond service. He gives special instructions for each:
 - The mature men: “be sober [*of sound mind*], grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience”
 - The mature women: “likewise, that *they be* in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women...”
 - The younger women: “to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, *To be* discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed”
 - The younger men: “to be sober minded.
- He then returns to Titus himself: “In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine *shewing* uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.”
 - Finally, those in bond service are not left out, and their exhortation is a very special one indeed:

Titus 2:9-14

9 *Exhort* servants to be obedient unto their own masters, *and* to please *them* well in all *things*; not answering again;

10 Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

- So it is clear: It is not law with its works that teaches us and exhorts us today, but the grace of God and its teaching. And it is our heavenly hope that lifts us up and encourages us. For Christ gave himself for us ...

“... that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

- But he is not finished in this letter to Titus. In chapter 3 he writes even more, with powerful and transforming words indeed:

Titus 3:1-9, 14-15

1 Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,

2 To speak evil of no man [*no one*], to be no brawlers, *but* gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.

3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another.

4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man [*mankind*] appeared,

5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.

These things are good and profitable unto men.

9 But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

10 A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;

11 Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

12 When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter.

13 Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.

14 And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.

15 All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.

- So, as in Ephesians, in the letter to Titus, immediately after bold statements regarding our salvation by grace through faith, he adds the “good works”. So it is something in his mind that he needed to add. It is like the glorious story has already been told, and the storytelling is done.

But one thing still needs to be added at the end.

And it should be added in our walk of faith as well, but only after what is realized in our hearts and minds, as written just before in those words.

For good works otherwise are not truly and authentically good at all. They become “Wood, hay, and stubble”, so very easily when they are not built up on the proper foundation. For they then become a part of a religious system that we have entered into or have created for ourselves.

- And then in conclusion: “These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.”

Conclusions and Application:

- As I said last time, our lesson then WAS NOT about Paul telling us what we have to do to please God, for that would be to place us under another law. This, rather, is a gracious exhortation.

RATHER, this is all about what we are privileged to enjoy, as we walk by his grace empowering in newness of life and under the always-present shadow of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit
Amen.

- And the same is true as we have seen today in our study on good works. We are not under a law of good works today either.
- Again, we are reminded to praise God for his infinite grace through our wonderful, risen savior, our Lord Jesus Christ. He is risen indeed, and has broken the bonds of sin and death, and delivered us into a liberty of such power to lift us moment by moment out of this world and into the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. That is how our Lord God sees us, and that is how we must see ourselves as well, if we are to enjoy to the fullest the unsearchable riches of his grace.

We are to abound in fruitfulness AND good works. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, our works will be tested, whether they are truly good or not. And those not well be removed and the others remain, for our own and Christ's eternal glory. Amen and amen.