

# Sound Doctrine and Good Works

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**Bible Text:** Titus 3:1-8  
**Preached on:** Wednesday, July 22, 1992

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All right, let's open our Bibles again to the Book of Titus. There aren't many of the New Testament epistles or, for that matter, books of the Bible that you can completely read and give some measure of study unto like this short book here written by Paul to Titus. In chapter 1, the last verse which brother Jim read a moment ago, the last verse, verse 16, the apostle brings a charge, a serious, serious charge against some people which sets the stage for his exhortation to true believers. In that verse 16, Titus warns, he says this, "They profess that they know God." They profess. They claim. They even make a public profession that they know God. Now, this takes in about everyone in America in 1992. Religion and so-called Christianity abounds all over this nation. They profess they know God. There are churches everywhere, there are radio and television programs on every station, people preaching from the Bible, religion abounds. They profess that they know God. But look at the next line, "but in works they deny him." They profess that they know the living God of creation, of scripture, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, but in works they deny him. In their works, in their words, in their lives, they deny this living God who's revealed in the scripture.

Let me give you some examples. Men today profess to know God, and yet I hear them saying that God is trying to save the whole world, that God is trying to save all men. Isn't that what they're saying, that God loves everybody and God wills the salvation of everybody but God is unable to save everybody because they won't let him. I hear them saying God's done all he can do and now it's up to you. That God wills the salvation of every son of Adam, isn't that what men say? They profess to know God but does this not deny his true character? To say that God wills to do something and cannot do it, that God has a desire to perform a certain work, but men prevent him from doing what he wills to do, isn't that denying God? They profess to know him, but in their words, in their messages, in their methods, they deny him. The God of the Bible says, "Can I not do with my own what I will?" The God of the Bible says, "Is there anything too hard for God?" The God of the Bible says, "I'll have mercy on whom I will have mercy. I'll be gracious to whom I will be gracious." Isn't that what he says? In John 5, the scripture says the Lord quickeneth whom he wills. Jonah said salvation is of the Lord.

So they profess to know God, and yet in their words, they're denying him. They're denying the true God and then secondly, they profess to know God, and yet they say that

salvation is not an act of the will of God, it's an act of your will. It's an act of the human will. Are they not denying God's election, God's covenant mercies? The Lord God declared this as many as received him, to them gave he the privilege to become sons of God, which were born, not of blood, natural genealogy, not of the will of the flesh, not of the will of man, but of God. That's what he said. He says it's not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, it's of God that showeth mercy. That's what he said. He said that he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. Our Lord Jesus declared in his high priestly prayer, "Father, thou hast given me power over all flesh that I should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given me." In John 6:37 he said, "All that my Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh I'll in no wise cast out." He said, "Other sheep I have which are not of this particular fold, them also I must bring." That's what he said, that his will shall be done, that his will cannot be frustrated.

So they profess to know God, but in their words and in their works and in their methods, they deny him and then they profess to know God, and yet they say this, this is generally accepted everywhere like a dear man wrote me this past week, and he said, "Nobody in my whole neighborhood believes like I do." And generally, that's true. You'll find one here and one there and one yonder who really knows God and his works and words are consistent with his knowledge of God. They profess to know God and yet they say his blood atoned for all our race and when Christ died on the cross, that he died and paid the sin debt of every son of Adam, even those who were in hell and on their way to hell. Is this not to deny his holiness? Is this not to deny his justice? Is this not to deny his effectual atonement, which says he was wounded for our transgression? He was bruised for our iniquities, by his stripes we are healed and by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities? Isn't that what scripture says? Does not the word of God declare that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin, that there's nothing that I do by way of works that makes his blood effectual, but the effectuality and sufficiency is in the blood itself? Whose blood? Isn't that correct?

They professed to know God, but they deny him. By their words and by their works, they deny him. We are redeemed, the scripture says. We are redeemed. Not by works of righteousness, which we've done, but according to his mercy. We are redeemed. Not by silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins. It's in Christ. Paul said, "Who can condemn me?" Christ died. Well, if it be true that he died and suffered the same for all men, then people in hell can say, "How can you condemn me?" Christ died. Christ died. The only man who can lay claim to the efficacy of the Savior's blood is the man who has believed on Christ.

They profess to know God, but he says by their works they deny him. They profess to know him in one breath and then stand up and deny him in the next, deny his character, deny his attributes, deny his covenant, deny his blood. They profess to know God, and yet they go about to establish their own righteousness. Paul said that, he said, "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. I bear them record, they profess to know God, they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge for they being ignorant of God's righteousness, they're going about to establish their own righteousness. By their own works they're denying him and they have not submitted

themselves unto the righteousness of God, which is Christ, for Christ Jesus is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth."

And then listen to what Paul said here in Galatians chapter 2. Turn over here and underline this in your Bible. Galatians chapter 2, verse 21. Galatians 2:21. "I do not frustrate the grace of God." And this is what they're doing. They profess to know God. They talk about Almighty God. They talk about God who created all things. They talk about God who's in heaven. They talk about the infallibility of the word. They talk about God. And then they deny him. It's frustrating. It's confusing. But he said, "I do not frustrate the grace of God, if righteousness, holiness, sanctification, acceptance with God comes by the law, then Christ died in vain." That's my conclusion. They profess to know God, and yet they take us back to the Levitical law. Back to the Levitical law, back to Sabbath-keeping, back to Holy Days, back to tithing, storehouse tithing, back to ritualism, back to baptism, back to the priesthood. Is this not a denial of the new covenant in Christ?

Turn with me to Colossians, if you will, chapter 2 of Colossians, chapter 2. I preached on this the other night. In Colossians chapter 2, verse 9, it says, "For in him," in Christ, "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." They'll read that, they'll preach from that, and yet, they'll go on and deny it. In Christ is everything, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, everything the law demands, everything God requires, everything that heaven demands, everything the sinner needs. Verse 10, "And ye are complete in him." Now look at verse 13, "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with Christ, having forgiven you all trespasses." All sin in Christ. He blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, all of the Levitical law, all of the ceremonies which were contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it." Now watch verse 16, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat," in dieting, in eating certain meats, abstaining from certain meats, "or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days." Don't go back and pick those things up. Don't you hear what the law says? If a man starts out on the law road, he has to take all of it, not just sections and parts of it. Don't. That's denying Christ.

They profess to know him, and then they reach back and say, you've got to keep these days. You've got to do certain things that were required under the Levitical law. Bring your infants and have them sprinkled, that goes back to circumcision. Bring your tithes into the storehouse, that goes back to the Levitical law. Keep Sunday as a Sabbath day, that goes back to the Levitical law. Church succession, all of these things. Don't let people deceive you. These things, verse 17, "were a shadow of the good things to come, but the body is of Christ. So don't you let any man beguile you of your place in Christ who is your reward." Don't do it. They profess to know him, but they deny him. Ritualism, factisms, priesthoods, holy days, Sabbath-keeping, all of circumcision, all of these things are whole denominations built on these denials of Christ.

And then in this next place, they profess to know God, and yet by their works they deny him. They do not love one another. You know, what they call churches today are just filled with wranglings and divisions and strife and discord, unhappiness. Is that not denying Christ? They profess to know him, but by their works they deny him. They don't forgive one another. They don't strive for unity and peace. They don't dwell together in unity and peace. They seek not the glory of Christ, but they seek vainglory and personal glory, personal riches. They deny his sanctifying work. They deny that if any man be in Christ, he's a new creature. They profess to know God, "Yes, we know God. We know God." But by their works, they deny that they know God.

And then they profess to know God and then deny him by their works, they are not supporting the gospel ministry. There are people all over this country who claim to be sovereign gracers, they claim to believe in the sovereignty of God, they claim to believe in the covenant of God's mercy in Christ Jesus, yet they do not support the gospel ministry. Everything that comes into their hands goes out used for themselves in their own comforts and luxuries. They don't support the gospel ministry. They're not faithful in worshiping God. They're not identified with a church anywhere. They'll turn up at Bible conferences occasionally, but as far as promoting and supporting and being identified with a ministry and a gospel witness in a definite place, they're not. They profess to know God, by their lives they're denying God, is not identified with his minister. They're living for the world. The world is their whole life. Their jobs and their families, and their entertainment, and their vacations, and their wardrobes, and their houses, and their lands, and their vacations and all, that's their entire lives. They profess to know God, but by their works they deny him.

Now that leads us into chapter 2. Now watch this chapter 2 as we look at it in verse 1. But he says, "Titus, you speak and teach and preach the things that become sound doctrine." What do you mean by become sound doctrine? You mean this, that characterize sound doctrine. You know, over in Hebrews it says, "It became him." It became him, our God, of whom are all things, in bringing many sons and daughters to salvation, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering. In other words, this covenant of mercy is becoming to God. It's characteristic of God. It's what God would do. In loving those who don't love him, that's what God would do. In giving his Son to die for our sins, that's what God would do. It became him. It's like him. It's characteristic of him. It's God-like. That's what he's saying. It became him. Well, there are certain things that become sound doctrine. The things I've been talking about prior to reading this verse do not become sound doctrine. So he said, you preach those things that become sound doctrine, that are characteristic of sound doctrine, that are produced by sound doctrine. You preach those things that are worthy of the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Read on, let's read that entire second chapter. Here are the things that become sound doctrine. If a man really knows God and believes God, he's going to act like it. He's going to talk like it. His conversation and his behavior will be consistent with this God whom he claims to know. Isn't that right? That's what he's saying. It's becoming to sound doctrine. Let's read verse 2, "That the aged men," the older believers, "that they be sober," that is, discreet, cautious, careful, "that they be grave," serious, "temperate men,

sound in the faith," sound in love, sound in patience. That's what becomes a man who believes God, an older man. That's what's becoming to a man who says, "I know God." And that "the older women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness," holy women, "not false accusers, not given too much wine," intemperate, "that they be teachers of good things, that they be able to teach the young women to be sober," that is of a sound mind, wise, "to love their husbands," set the example, "to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home," homemakers, "good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." You see, what he's saying is people who profess to know God and don't act like it blaspheme God. They don't know God. They deny God and they blaspheme God. This is not consistent with what the word teaches and what God says.

And then the young men, of whom we have a host here tonight, "Young men likewise are exhorted to be sober-minded," discreet, "In all things, showing thyself a pattern," be like me, do what I do, "a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness," sound doctrine, "gravity," seriousness, serious about the gospel. You know, we don't make light of the gospel. We don't make fun of the gospel. We don't joke about the gospel. We don't joke about anything having to do with God. They're grave men, sober men, serious men. They're sincere men. These young men are sincere, "Sound speech," consistent with the scriptures, "that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you."

Now they exhort servants, here are people that work for other folks. They're servants, they're workers, they're employees. This becomes sound doctrine. Sound doctrine produces good works, godly living. You tell the servants, this is consistent with sound doctrine. You tell the servants to be obedient to their own masters, be a good worker, be a hard worker, and to please them well in all things, and not answering and not talking back, gainsaying, arguing, "That's not my job. That's somebody else's job." If he tells you to do it, it's your job. Not purloining. What's that? That's stealing. Don't steal from your company and from your employer. That denies God.

We profess to know God and deny him by our works, showing all good fidelity, integrity, honesty. Why? That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. What do you do when you adorn something? You make it beautiful. You garnish it, that sort of thing, garnish it, decorate it, make it beautiful. You know, somebody told me one day, you're going to sell a house. If you're going to sell a house, sell it while you still live in it. Don't move out because people come in to bare walls and bare windows and rugs where things have been sitting, you know, and old cold kitchen floor. Sell it when that wife has that woman's touch in there, you know, the curtains on the windows, and the pictures around, and all the furniture in there. It's decorated, it's garnished, it's adorned, it looks at home-like, homey, you know, looks comfortable.

You know, you can take doctrine and preach it in such a way that it's not beautiful. It's bare. It's cold. It's dead letter. Do you know what I'm saying? Sound doctrine is sound doctrine no matter who says it. Now that's just so. That's the truth whomever preaches it. But sound doctrine is only effectual when that sound doctrine becomes a man's

experience. Now that's when it's effectual. That's when it's effectual. Adorning the doctrine of God our Savior in everything, in conversation, in your life, in your behavior, in your attitude, in the way that you do things.

Oh, verse 11, listen, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation." That's what we believe, the grace of God brings salvation. And everybody here, it's appeared to all men, it appeared to everybody here. But it's been made effectual to those who've experienced it in heart and spirit and life, and to those who demonstrate it. That's right, and those who walk in it. That's the ones to whom it's become effectual.

And what does this grace of God teach us? Look at verse 12. What does this sovereignty of God, the free grace of God, the sovereign grace of God, election, and effectual call, and particular addition, what do these truths teach us? It teaches us this, verse 12, denying ungodliness, denying worldly lust, worldly riches, and entangled with those things, and worldly luxuries and all of these things that we just have to have. We just have to have. Deny those things and teaches us to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world while we look for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.

This is what we believe. You know, some folks got the idea that you can't preach works if you preach grace. If you preach the true grace of God, you have to preach works not as the cause of his grace, but as a result of his grace. James says, if there's no works, there's no grace. That's right, if there's no works, if there's no obedience, if there's no godliness, there's no grace. If God has not changed my attitude, my walk, and my talk, and my spirit, then I am not an object of his grace. Isn't that right? He gave himself, this is what we believe, that he might redeem us from iniquity, not in our iniquity, but from our iniquity, and purifying to himself a strange people, an unusual people, a separated people, a peculiar people, people who are zealous of good works. They're not running from them. They're not afraid of them. They're zealous of them.

I often say, wherever I go, and I've experienced this right here in this church, the most godly, the most generous, the most gracious, the kindest, the lovingest, the forgivingest, the people I know are people who believe in the sovereign grace of God. The most blessed fellowship that I've found anywhere is not among religious people, or fundamentalism or freewillism, it's among those who know and believe and have received and experienced the free grace of God. They're merciful, they're kind, they're generous, they're gracious, they're forgiving. That's right. They know what mercy is because they've experienced it.

Now verse 15, "These things speak. These are things, what did verse 1 say in chapter 2? Speak the things that become sound doctrine, the things that are characteristic of sound doctrine, the things that are produced by sound doctrine. Now you speak these things and exhort and rebuke with all authority and don't you let any man despise you. Don't you worry about people calling you a works preacher, or a legalist, or let them call you what they want to. Like Spurgeon said one time, "I don't mind being called an Antinomian. I

don't want to be one, but I don't mind being..." Let them call you what they want to. Let no man despise you. Speak these things. These are things that become sound doctrine.

Now, chapter 3. And "put them," that is those people who believe the grace of God, "put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work." God's people are to be law-abiding citizens, peaceful people, submitting to authority. You know, it takes grace to be a good leader. It takes grace to be an obedient servant. It takes grace to be a submissive wife. It takes grace to be an obedient child. It takes grace to be a good boss. It takes grace to be a peaceful citizen. It takes the grace of God. But that's what it produces.

And verse 2, you tell them to speak evil of no man. Keep your tongue from speaking evil of anybody. Don't be a brawler, a fighter, but be gentle. Be gentle. Brawling and conflict, that doesn't go with grace, does it? But be gentle, showing all meekness and humility. Anything else denies the Lord, denies the grace of God. Don't be a fighter, a brawler, but be a gentle person, showing humility and meekness before all men.

Now watch this, for this, for we ourselves were one time foolish and disobedient and deceived and served divers lusts and pleasure. We lived in malice, we lived in envy, hateful and hating one another. That's what we were before we came to know God. Isn't that what we were? Nothing will subdue a man's pride like remembering what he was before God saved him. Nothing will moderate a man's attitude, moderate his attitude and spirit quite like remembering what he was. Nothing will cause him to be more forgiving to others and more merciful to others and more generous to others like remembering what he was.

What he was when? Verse 4, "after the kindness and love of God, our Savior toward man appeared." What he was before that love appeared, before that kindness appeared. I tell you, it's the love of God for us, not our love for him. It's the kindness of God toward us, not our kindness toward him. This is what we were, verse 3, we were foolish and disobedient and deceived and sold to our lust and luxuries and pleasures and we lived in a selfish world of malice and hatred and envy and hating one another, but, oh, but God in love and kindness came to us. He did it because he would. He did it because he willed to. He did it because he purposed to. He did it on purpose, and it will be an effectual work.

When did it appear? Now listen. What is this, "after the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared"? When did it appear? When did it appear? Well, four things. Number one, it appeared when Christ came to earth fulfilling all the promises and prophecies and patterns of the Old Testament. It appeared then. That's not all. It appeared secondly, when he walked this earth in the flesh as a man and obeyed this law in every jot and tittle and gave us a righteousness. It appeared thirdly, when he went to that cross and died for our sin and was buried and rose again and received up into heaven and exalted at God's right hand as our mediator. That's when the grace of God appeared. But that's not all. There was a time when it appeared to you, when Almighty God, by his Spirit, by his grace, by his word, by his gospel, called you out. That's when it really appeared. That's when it appeared because you and I didn't know anything about it prior to then. That's

right. Prior to then, we didn't know anything about it. Oh, I know like Brother Barnard asked a little lady one time, "Are you saved?" And she said, "Yes." He said, "How long you been saved?" She said, "I've always been saved." He said, "That's too long." That's too long. There was a time when the love and kindness of God our Savior appeared. It appeared.

Now what's the next verse? And we found out, we found out some things. It's not by works of righteousness, which we've done. Not by our profession. Not by our tithing. Not by our church membership. Not by our ancestry. Not by our old heritage, traditions of religion. Not by works of righteousness which we've done in any shape, form, or fashion. Actually, actually, I wouldn't want God to bring me into judgment to give an account of my traditional religion any more than my blaspheming out of my mouth because I denied him both times. But over here I was just denying him myself. Over here I was teaching others to deny him. See what I'm saying? It's not by works of righteousness which we've done, we found that out, when he appeared, but what's this next line? But it was according to his mercy he saved us. Mercy. His mercy. His mercy. Mercy for the miserable. Mercy. It's not what we earned or deserved. It's pure mercy. It's like mercy to a guilty, condemned criminal. It's mercy. God's mercy was as free and full to us as it was the thief on the cross, the murderer who died on the cross. Mercy. According to his mercy he saved us. Pure mercy. Grace is God giving us what we don't deserve, isn't it? What's mercy? It's God not giving you what you do deserve? That's right. Mercy. Mercy.

Look on. He saved us. Who? He saved us. I got saved. You didn't got saved. He saved you. I get so tired of hearing, when did you get saved? Just ask them. I never have been. He saved us. He did it. He purposed to do it, he decreed to do it, he chose to do it, he willed to do it, and he did it. He saved us. According to his mercy, he saved us. How? By the washing of regeneration. What's that? That's the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. Washing, water, word. By the word, by the Spirit, that's how we were saved, we were born of the Spirit of God. We're not born again because we made a decision. We're not born again because we believe. We're not born again because we love God. We made a decision. We believe. We chose Christ. We confess Christ. We love Christ because we're born again. That's the washing, the water, and the word, and the Spirit in regeneration, recreation. You were dead and he recreated you. That's right, regeneration.

And listen, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. What is this renewing? Well, go through the word. It's a new nature. It's a new creature. It's a new height. It's the new man. It's newness of life. It's new conduct. It's a new family. "Behold, I make all things new." Renewing. God doesn't take anything natural, anything fleshly, anything we've ever said, done, thought, or given, and make any contribution to our salvation. He makes all things brand new. That's right. Brand new. Everything in you that is of God, he gave you. He didn't use anything. You didn't bring nothing along. It's the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

All right, which he shed on us, he shed on us abundantly. All we need, all he requires is through Jesus Christ our Savior. That's salvation. That's what we believe. Which he abundantly shed on us. He shed about his love in our hearts for the Holy Ghost. He

washed us. He regenerated us. He renewed us. He gave us life. He accepted us in the Beloved. He redeemed us. He did.

Verse 7, that being justified by his grace wholly, totally, completely, we should be made heirs. We are heirs of God and a joint heir with Jesus Christ. We are heirs of God according to the hope of eternal life. And Jim read that in Titus 1 verse 2, listen, Titus 1:2, "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." That's our hope.

Now watch, this is my last verse, and this is a faithful saying, and Paul uses this every time he wants to emphasize a strong point. He said, "Now you better listen to this because this is a faithful saying." Christ came into the world to save sinners. This is a faithful saying. If we deny him, he'll deny us. This is a faithful saying. "And these things, Titus, I will that you affirm constantly," constantly, constantly, "that they which have believed in God might be careful, cautious, dedicated, diligent," to do what, "maintain good works." Work on it. Isn't that what it says? Work on it. Now, did I preach works? I sure did, but not for salvation. Sound doctrine produces good works. Sound doctrine is not sound doctrine if it doesn't produce good works. Grace makes a man godly. If he doesn't, he doesn't know grace. That's right.

All right, in closing, "Lord, speak to me that I may speak in living words of Thy grace. As Thou sought me, let me see Thine elect sons of every race. O Lord, lead me that I may lead the wandering and the wavering feet. Feed me, Lord, that I may feed others with Thy manna so sweet. Lord, strengthen me that as I stand firm on the rock and strong in Thee, I may stretch out a helping hand to weary ones on a troubled sea. O, teach me, Lord, that I may teach that precious truth Thou didst impart and bless my words that they may reach the hidden depths of someone's heart. Supply my needs, O gracious Lord, that I may give to those in need. I long to show along this road that my love is not only in word, but in deed. Oh use me, Lord, even me, just as you will and when and where until thy blessed face I see, and thy rest, and thy joy, and thy glory shall use me." Is that your prayer? It is, if you know God. Never let it be said of any here under the sound of my voice, that we profess to know God and in our works deny him. All right, Mike, come lead us in a closing hymn.