

Sunday September 13, 2020

Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church

Welcome & Prayer (Greg W)

Good morning and welcome to our service today. Only 103 days to Christmas and you can't help but wonder where we will be in terms of Coronavirus restrictions by then. As we continue to live life with many restrictions it is important that we not lose sight of the fact that God is in control of all things. For most, the challenges we are experiencing through the pandemic perhaps pales compared to what we have learnt of Job's afflictions over the past weeks, but suffering of any kind might lead us to question God. Just as Job continued to trust God through his suffering, we too need to continue strong in our faith whatever adversity we may be experiencing. As we will hear today during the sermon on Titus Chapter 2, we are being watched by our family and friends, our workmates and our neighbours to see if the gospel works. This means we need to know what we believe; we need to put what we believe into practise, and others need to see the power of God working within us – we need to live out our Christian faith. *For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.* (Ephesians 5:8)

Prayer. *Our Father in Heaven, may your name be proclaimed to the ends of the earth, and may you be glorified as the creator of all things. You are worthy, our LORD and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being. May all the earth shout for joy, and worship you with gladness, for you are the one true and living God. We give you thanks and praise for you are good, and your love endures forever. We pray that we will live lives that reflect that we have been reborn and that bring glory to your name. We pray Lord that we will be delivered from the evils that we face; Equip us with the shield of faith, help us to stand firm with the belt of Truth buckled firmly around our waist, and with our feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.*

Lord, we live in a world where there are many distractions that draw us away from worshipping You. Thank you that even though we are disobedient you continue to love us as your children and continue to grant us fresh starts and new beginnings. We see your faithfulness in not abandoning us when we read about how you treated Jonah, even though he was disobedient. We are all too often like Jonah, professing with our lips that we fear you, but continuing to be disobedient and doing our own thing. We give you thanks and praise that because of your grace you have redeemed us and have displayed a love to us that we cannot earn, and that is not deserved. We give you thanks that through Christ's obedience, and His death on the cross, that the price for sin has been paid – once, for all so that what was once unclean can be made clean. Thank you, Lord, that through the resurrection of Christ and his defeat over death, we can be confident that those who place their faith in Jesus will also be raised to eternal life with You.

Father God, we pray that we will strive to serve you as You would like us to do. We thank you Father that you sent your Holy Spirit to dwell in all believers. Thank you that through the Holy Spirit we are sanctified and that we can be made to be the people you wish us to be. Help us Lord to walk as children of the light. In Christ's name we pray, Amen

Song – Come People of the Risen King <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9j07fbld3uY>

Song – Jesus Christ is risen today <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9j07fbld3uY>

Bible Reading – Titus 2:1-8 (NIV)

You, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine. ²Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.

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. ⁴ Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, ⁵ 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.

⁶ Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. ⁷ In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness ⁸ 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.

Announcements

- **Church Services this term.** We are now entering our eighth week of 4 services a week so most people have worked out what they need to do and by when. Thank you. There are just a few people
 - **Who are not registering and turn up.** Please register if you possibly can
 - **Who are not letting Stephen know on Sunday morning if they can't come.** If you do that someone else might be able to take your place.
 - **Who are on rosters and are not registering.** We need to replace you if you can't come so please let us know.
- **Face masks.** Currently the NSW State government strongly recommended that people wear Face masks if they attend places of worship but stopped short from saying you had to wear face masks. We would strongly recommend that you do wear Face masks in church at the current time. There will be some washable facemasks available from the back of the Church if you would like one.
- **Operation Christmas Child.** Our church is hoping to participate again in Christmas boxes for disadvantaged children overseas. Would you like to help?
- **Focus for September – Sport/Leisure.** Sport and leisure are important in one's life but balance is even more important. As Christians we need to make sure our energies are not lopsided towards sport and leisure and away from prayer, bible reading and Church. So, try this quick quiz. On a piece of paper add how much time you watch sport, play sport, exercise, play computer games, read books, listen to music or watch TV for entertainment in a typical week. And then work out how much time you spend in prayer, bible reading, going to Church and teaching/discipling/evangelising others each week. Which one is more? Are they close? What does that teach you about your priorities? What are you going to do about it?
- **Prayer meetings.** Don't forget we now have just one prayer meeting for the church, each Monday at 7m on ZOOM. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89793950885>
- **Charlestown Work Day.** Please put Saturday 18th October in your diaries for a much needed work day around the church. More details to come.
- **Training Event.** Sunday October 25 from 3-5pm via ZOOM or live at Church we will be having time to grow our skills (and grow the pool of people willing to use their skills) in all aspect of service in our services including sound, computer, music, leading, welcoming, bible reading and public praying)
- **Browns on Holidays.** Jon and Ang will be on holidays for the next 2 weeks. If you need any pastoral assistance please ring Stephen
- **#HACK for Missions.** Joshua Montzka will be running the Australian leg of #HACK on the weekend of October 9-11 and will be a time where ministry minded computer people pool their resources to complete a project that will hopefully lead to a greater digital footprint for the gospel. Normally it would be on site in Melbourne but this year it will be on line. If you would like to participate in anyway – be a participant, a mentor, judge or a pray-er you can find more information at ndgt.us/hubmelb

Kids Talk – QUIZ WORX

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1gJwLAWMYgwAlZ35Le3KmuXuWukibk016>

Song – Reformation Hymn

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UOmdVUX-wLw>

Pastoral Prayer Points

Pray for Burkino Faso (Population 20 million, Christians 5 million). Formerly known for its religious tolerance, Christians now fear for their survival since the dramatic escalation of violent persecution in the last year. Islamic extremists have targeted religious minorities, taking the lives of over 50 Christians and attacking hundreds more. At least 15,000 people are now displaced in Burkina Faso. Fear of violence now prevents many believers from attending church services or sending their children to school. It has been reported that school teachers have died at the hands of extremists for failing to teach Islam. Ethnic divisions, aided by religious differences, have resulted in extreme pressure for Christians to renounce their faith. Converts are particularly vulnerable, cut off from their family and stigmatised in their community.

COVID-19. Pray for the places around the world where COVID is causing havoc. In the last 2 weeks the following countries had the highest death rates – USA (12,709), India (12,577), Brazil (12,410), Mexico (7,062), Columbia (3,966).

Pray for those who have are experiencing racism that they might know that God looks not on outward appearance but on the heart. Pray that we might also not judge people on outward appearance either in our country or in our church.

Pray for our HSC Students – Caleb G, Juliette Mc, Luke W, Emma B & Jannah P.

Pray for the Parsons in Japan. They write “A Japanese saying can be translated as “the threshold is high”. It’s often used when explaining how hard it can be for a Japanese person to enter a church since it is so foreign to their culture. Well, an unexpected consequence of COVID is the increase of people attending church! With church services having to be online, more Japanese people have felt free to “attend” through not having to enter a church building. Praise God for using COVID in this way, and that one of our country churches has found they’ve outgrown their building now they can meet again in person. Please pray for Shinshu Community Church as they consider purchasing a larger building. Also pray for wisdom to all those involved in integrating these new people into the church... may they find Christ in the process”

Bible Reading – Titus 2:9-15 (NIV)

⁹ Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, ¹⁰ 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 Saviour attractive.

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. ¹² It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions & to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, 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. ¹⁵ These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.

Sermon – We are being watched!

<https://youtu.be/lula9-rpB58>

“No one would have believed in the last years of the nineteenth century that this world was being watched keenly and closely by intelligences greater than man’s and yet as mortal as his own; that as men busied themselves about their various concerns they were scrutinised and studied, perhaps almost as narrowly as a man with a microscope might scrutinise the transient creatures that swarm and multiply in a drop of water. .. Yet across the gulf of space, minds that are to our minds as ours are to those of the beasts that perish, intellects vast and cool and unsympathetic, regarded this earth with envious eyes, and slowly and surely drew their plans against us.”

Slide 2

These are the opening words of HG Well’s classic novel, the War of the Worlds a book that has again just been turned into a movie and a tv series. But imagine being watched, imagine everything we do and say being noted by those around us.

Slide 3

Well we are all being watched not by aliens but by children and teenagers, family and friends, workmates and neighbours. For they want to know whether the gospel of Jesus Christ is real. Whether it works. Yes, they can hear its truth from God’s word but will they see its truth in your lives and mine? Are we walking the walk not just talking the talk? Do we practise what we preach? Are we living what we learn? Well that’s what Titus 2 is all about.

Slide 4

So, Paul when he is talking to his apprentice Titus says **2** *“You, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine”*. Don’t be like those false teachers we heard about last week who were talkers and deceivers. Who claimed to know God but their actions denied their claim. For lying, deceiving, dishonesty, laziness is not a good accessory to the gospel. Those two things clash worse than my wardrobe! So, if Titus is going to make an impression on both the Church and the community in Crete, he will need to teach sound doctrine.

Actually, the word is healthy doctrine. For the Greek word is the word we get our English word hygiene from. For if false teaching is like a germ that will pollute the whole body, sound teaching will make the body of Christ fit and healthy. So, what is the content of this

1. (Its) teaching (verses 1-10)

Well the first thing we will notice is that this teaching immensely practical. It’s not just head knowledge it’s about how to live your life. It’s about anger, family, immaturity, doctrine, laziness, substance abuse, slander, back talking and theft! It’s real life stuff! Don’t ever think that doctrine is dull & boring, no it’s going to affect every second of every day. For what you believe will determine how you live. You must have healthy doctrine to live a healthy life.

And yet doctrine is not a one size fits all package. For as Paul outlines what this sort of healthy doctrine actually looks like you see that he will say different things to different people. For there are different challenges when you are older than when you are younger, when you are a guy or a girl, when you are slave or a pastor. We will see a little later that this doctrine all comes from the one place, the gospel of grace but its applications will be different to you as to me, depending upon where we are in our life of faith.

But we are to practise what we preach as a community. We are to walk the talk together. For in Paul’s mind it all starts with the older men and women in the Church, they are to set the standard for the generations who are to follow. ² *“Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.”*

One aspect that older men and most of us when we think about it, have to work on is that our lives must be worthy of **respect**. Do people respect you? Do they see a maturity in your actions, a dignity in the way

that you hold yourself in both the good times and the bad, a self-control that shows others that the many years of being a Christian is making its mark? To grow in my faith, I want to look up to older, more mature Christian men. I want to see in them a victory over the struggles that I have faced and will face in the future.

These older men need to be sound in faith, in love and in **endurance**. Written into their wrinkles is a stick ability, a hanging onto God no matter what has happened. A willingness to be faithful right until the very end.

Slide 5

I wonder if you have heard of Bob Wieland? On 6/11/86 Bob Wieland, was the New York City Marathon's 19,413th and final finisher, but he was also the first to run a marathon with his arms instead of his legs! Wieland is a 40-year-old Christian whose legs were blown off in the Vietnam War. He recorded the slowest time in marathon history: four days, two hours, 48 minutes, 17 seconds. But he endured it to the very end.

Wieland said after finishing "Success is not based on where you start, it's where you finish, and I finished." Now that endurance, isn't it? And that's what Paul wants to see in his older men. A stickability. People who may not be the flashiest Christians, but who want to finish strongly as faithful followers of Jesus. If you are an older man you want the younger guys to look to you and say "I want to be like him. I want to fully follow Jesus like he is right now."

Slide 6

Titus then turns to the older women and says 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"*. Likewise, what was true of the older men is also true of the older women, they need to have those same qualities of faith, love and endurance in their faith and as well as that they need to be reverent in way they live and especially in the way they speak.

Just as older men can turn out cranky and cynical, older women can slander others or gossip about others or have one too many chardonnay's at night. But those who want to accessorise the gospel will instead of complaining about what is bad will teach what is good. They will mentor the young women. They will pass on what they have been taught and what they have learned about the life of faith.

Slide 7

It might have seemed in Titus 1 that the only people who would do any teaching in the Church were the elders but obviously that is not true. The older women have a vital role of teaching other women. About how to live out their faith at home. How to love those God has placed around them. How to live a godly life. ⁴ *"Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, ⁵ 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."*

Slide 8

The ripples of sound doctrine start with those who are older and they move across the Church, across the family to the younger women. The older women teach them and they model to them how to love. They disciple them on the work/home balance. They show them by word and deed what a godly life actually looks like. What submission to authority really looks like. They accessorise the gospel words with gospel actions.

They show the next generation that like the Proverbs 31 women, you can work out of the home but the priority still needs to be what is going on in the home. You can do much in the modern world but if you can't control yourself then you will not be able to control anyone else. Study, friendships, sport, money is important but not as important as godliness.

Slide 9

And those things are also true of the younger men. ⁶ *“Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled.”* Similarly, young people have the same sorts of temptations whether they are men or women. Actually, every group has been warned about self-control. Lust, ambition, impatience, greed are problems every one of us have. But self-indulgence is not a good look for those who seek to accessorise the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Slide 10

And Titus as a young man needs to set an example not just to the other young men but to all who come to the Church. ⁷ *In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness ⁸ & 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*

There are people watching us. There are people looking at what we are saying and doing. They want to see if this Christian gospel works? They want to know if this Christian life is for real or not. So, Titus as a minister must teach, but Titus as a young man must also live a life consistent with his Christ centred message. And it must be a compelling witness to Christ.

Slide 11

And even the slaves, those who are at the bottom of the social ladder, they are being watched by their masters and so the healthy doctrine that they need to apply to their lives is *“to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, ¹⁰ 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 Saviour attractive.”*

And if Paul was here today, I am sure he would say the same things to us who are following orders from our bosses at work. Don't be lazy. Don't steal stuff from the job. Be fully trustworthy. So that your words and actions show what a wonderful Saviour Jesus really is.

Slide 12

Now let's just step back for a moment, what has Paul been saying about the Christian life? We need to walk the walk, talk the talk. We need to practise what we preach. For we are being watched. Hypocrisy is going to muddy the waters. Ungodliness is going to push people away not necessarily from you but from the truth of God's gospel. But people's eternities are at stake. God's salvation is not just about you, it is about those who are watching you. So, make sure your life counts!

Slide 13

But it's not just about me and my lifestyle. It is also about discipleship. Paul is saying clearly that we are disciple making disciples. That the gospel message doesn't stop with us but it moves through us to others. And so, Paul is discipling Titus so that Titus can disciples the people in his Church. Actually, he is to model this sort of discipleship to everyone.

For every age group and every section of the Church needs to be a part of this discipleship process. Older women are to disciple younger women so that they can disciple their families in the future. Older men are to be mentors to young men. Leaders are to examples and role models. So that every one of us might in turn disciple those in our work places, in our schools and universities, in our wider families.

Slide 14

I remember that a couple of years ago Greg Wilkinson went to a Katoomba Men's convention and he reported back to us as a Church that the main message was that all of us need to be a Barnabas, pursue a Paul, train a Timothy. We all need to be a Barnabas and encourage someone in their faith. We all should pursue a Paul, learn from an older and mature saint not just healthy doctrine, but a healthy Christian lifestyle. And we all to find time to teach a Timothy, find someone less mature in the faith and disciple them.

And I would probably add in all of these things, men choose men and women choose women. This is not just a job for the elders, this is a job for all of us. And so, each of us when we meet for Church or in a small group or just one on one need to be disciple making disciples. And that doesn't stop if you currently aren't able to go to Church because of COVID-19. You need to find other ways to disciple those who are in your Church. It might start at home but it has to be a Church wide thing. Sound doctrine includes

Slide 15

2. Its teaching and its aim (verses 5, 8, 10)

But why are we to live like this? What's our goal, our *aim* in being self-controlled, respected, trustworthy and enduring to the end? Well hidden away in our passage are three purpose clauses - three times where we read the words "**so that**". The first one is in verse 5, "*so that no-one will malign the word of God.*" How often have non-Christians used the 'Christian are hypocrites' line to say if that is what God's followers are like & I want to have nothing to do with either God or his word.

And sometimes they have a good point. When we don't walk the walk why would they want to listen to us when we talk the talk? When the Bible says that we are changed by the power of the gospel what sort of power is there in the gospel if we still gossip, lie & cheat?

Our aim is for others to see the beauty and the power of the word of God not to malign it.

Slide 16

And in verse 8 there is a second reason, "*so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.*" When our friends and family see the gospel at work and hear the gospel spoken it is not just so they can't speak against us, but there is also a sense of shame. Deep down inside they know that we have something that they haven't got.

Now no matter what sort of Christian life you lead, people will oppose you. Jesus said they hated him and they will hate his followers also. So, ensure that when you meet these people, they hate the message and not the messenger. Ensure they are offended by God's offer of grace not by our own ungracious conduct. Ensure that you are not a part of the problem of people turning away from God instead they can't speak against you.

Slide 17

Thirdly verse 10, "*so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Saviour attractive.*" Our aim is to make the **gospel attractive**. Our lives can either make beautiful or discredit the cause of the gospel. We can be like a shining jewel, showing the many facets of the gospel in a bright and attractive way or it can be like a plain stone, lifeless and ugly.

Slide 18

¹¹ "*For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people.*" All people. So why should the older men be worth of respect? So that other people might see the gospel at work and will not having anything bad to say about them. Why should the older women teach the young women about home life, so that others might see the way we do family as Christians and see how attractive the teaching of Jesus really is. Why should workers not steal from their bosses, so their fellow workmates will not malign the word of God.

Slide 19

You see submission leads to mission. If we submit ourselves to Gods' word, if we submit ourselves to God Himself, then God's mission to a lost world will flow through us to others.

Slide 20

3. Its teaching, its aim and its basis (verses 11-15)

This is the sound doctrine that Titus is to teach the whole Church but what is the basis of this gospel? What is all about? For it's not about us and our good lives is it? No, it's all about God's grace. ¹¹ "*For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people.* ¹² *It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions & to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,*"

Slide 21

It is grace that saves the Christian. It is grace that transforms the Christian. It is grace that gives us the power to say no to the wrong things and yes to the right things. You see we can't do the things God wants us to do without God making us the people he wants us to be. So, Grace brings us into the family and grace makes us good representatives of God's family. Grace firstly changes our status, we are now sons and daughters of the living God and then grace changes our attitude, our appetites, our ambitions and our actions.

Paul says grace teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions. It was Francis Schaeffer who many years ago said "We are surrounded by a world that says 'no' to nothing. When we are surrounded by this sort of mentality... then suddenly to be told that in the Christian life there is to be this strong negative aspect of saying no to things and no to self, it must seem hard." And it hard without grace. But Grace empowers us to say no to evil.

And yes to self-controlled, upright and godly lives. We open ourselves up to the work of the Holy Spirit. And it is the Spirit of God within us that gives us love, joy, peace, patience, goodness & self-control. In our own strength we can't say yes to these things but being open to the power of God enables us to say yes to the ways of God. So, grace saves us and grace transforms us. And people can see that it isn't by our own strength that we do these things it is by God's strength so the gospel of grace is accessorised by God's work of grace within us

Slide 22

The basis of this changed life is grace and it is glory. ¹³"While we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ." Grace and truth were found in abundance when Jesus Christ appeared as a man. But when Jesus appears a second time, we will see God in all His glory. We will see God in all his justice & power. Jesus Christ opens up the books of life. He judges us for every word we said and every action we did & the knowledge that this is going to happen in the future, will affect what you and I do today.

Slide 23

Grace, Glory and lastly the Gospel. "Jesus Christ, 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 redeemed us. He bought our life from us. We now do not own our own lives. We were bought with the precious blood of Jesus. So of course, we will want to hand our lives over to God. And when we do that, he forgives us our sin and purifies our hearts.

With the Holy Spirit deep within our lives, the motivation is to no longer to live for ourselves but for the one who has saved us. And that changes what we want to do. We are now one of God's people. We are now eager to do what God is calling us to do. For we are enrolled in the school of grace, and as we look out one of the school windows we see the cross of Christ where the grace of God first touched our lives in a saving way and out another window we see a glimpse of the sun rising, the Son of God coming again. In the meantime, we put our head down and continue to learn our sound doctrine, from those who teach the word and those who live the word.

Slide 24

It has been estimated by one scholar that by the time a person dies they have influenced 10,000 other people during their lives. 10,000 people. 10,000 will look at your life and either gain a positive impression of what sort of life you are leading or a negative one. 10,000 people will either see your faith in action or see it missing in action. And I'm not just talking about what you do here on a Sunday at Church, I'm talking about your workplace, your home life, how you play sport, your priorities in shopping and what you do in your leisure time. These are all things that could influence people toward your Lord and Saviour Jesus.

Slide 25

Friends we are being watched. Some will be looking for faults and they will find them in you and me. But will they also find repentance, humility, a looking to Jesus in our time of need? Will they see the gospel in

our faults? And others are looking to see if this Christian business is really true. Will they hear the words of the gospel on our tongues? Will they see the power of the gospel in our lives? Will they see the transformation of the gospel as bit by bit they see us become more like Jesus?

So, listen to Paul's healthy teaching. Be discipled by those who are more mature than you are. Disciple others so that they will grow more in their faith. And keep trusting in the gospel. Keep opening up yourself to the power of God's grace until Jesus comes again in glory.

Song – Servants of the Gospel <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=efUcfkEjmwE>

Song – Lord be my vision <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=clqdCXxqYvI>

Benediction

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. ¹² It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions & to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, 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.

Morning Tea

Our morning tea is a vital way that we give and receive fellowship during a time like this. We don't want to be just consumers of Church; we want to be a part of the family of God. So why not give one or two people a call. Who might your ring now?