

Dr. Robert Yarbrough, Pastoral Epistles, Session 14, Titus 3

Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Yarbrough, Pastoral Epistles, Session 14, Titus 3, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture excerpt from Dr. Robert Yarbrough's course on the Pastoral Epistles focuses on Titus 3. **Yarbrough interprets Titus 3's emphasis on good works within a robust theological framework**, highlighting the transformative power of God's grace and its impact on believers' lives. He **discusses the importance of addressing false teaching and maintaining unity within the church**, drawing parallels to contemporary challenges. The lecture also **explores the historical context of Christianity in the Greco-Roman world**, contrasting its ethical emphasis with the prevailing pagan worldview. Finally, **Yarbrough concludes by emphasizing the unstoppable nature of God's saving grace and its global impact**, despite ongoing opposition and challenges.

2. 18 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Yarbrough, Session 14 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Pauline Epistles → Pastoral Epistles).



Yarbrough_PastEpistles_Session14.mp3

3. Briefing Document: Yarbrough, Pastoral Epistles, Session 13, Titus 3

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from Dr. Yarbrough's lecture on Titus 3:

Briefing Document: Dr. Robert Yarbrough on Titus 3

Overview:

This lecture focuses on Titus 3, the final chapter of the Book of Titus, within the broader context of the Pastoral Epistles. Dr. Yarbrough emphasizes that Titus, while addressing practical issues of church life and behavior, is deeply rooted in theological truths, primarily God's grace and the work of Christ. The central theme is the connection between salvation and the imperative to do good works, not as a means of earning salvation, but as a natural outflow of a life transformed by God's grace. The lecture also addresses issues of division within the church and the importance of unity and reconciliation.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. Saved to Do Good:

- Titus is not primarily a moralistic text; it is a *theologically grounded* set of instructions.
- The emphasis on good works is not legalistic but flows directly from the grace and salvation offered by Christ. As Yarbrough puts it, "it's this mainstream, direct thing that it's transformative of our behavior, and it's also, it's quite natural."
- The headings in the NIV, "saved in order to do good," highlight the purpose of salvation: to live a life of service and good works.

1. Practical Implications of Faith:

- Christians are to be subject to rulers and authorities, ready for every good work.
- Specific actions include refraining from slander, being peaceable, considerate, and gentle. Yarbrough offers an alternative translation of "gentle" as "having every consideration for all people," emphasizing the need to cut others slack and avoid dismissiveness based on social or personal differences.
- Yarbrough strongly emphasizes the importance of not writing other people off because they are different, acknowledging the pervasiveness of this tendency.

1. The Human Condition and God's Mercy:

- All people, including Christians, were once "foolish, disobedient, deceived, and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures." This applies universally, with no exceptions to this baseline human condition.
- Salvation comes "not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy."
- This salvation involves "the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit," referencing the metaphor of being "born again." Baptism is understood as a sign and seal of this spiritual transformation.

1. Justification by Grace and the Hope of Eternal Life:

- Justification is by grace, and believers become "heirs having the hope of eternal life." This inheritance connects back to the Abrahamic heritage and even to the promise made in Genesis 3:15.
- Eternal life is not only a future reality but also a present quality of life, a "God quality of life." Yarbrough draws from the Old Testament understanding of life as a covenant relationship with God.

1. The Natural Progression to Good Works:

- There is a *direct* link between understanding and accepting the theological truths of the gospel and living a life of good works. This is not a secondary issue, but an immediate and transformative result.
- Yarbrough uses the analogy of children who, in a loving relationship with their parents, will naturally want to serve and express their love, noting "It just grows out of the relationship, and that's what Paul, that's how he lives."
- He describes a good work not as simply a prescribed action, but rather, it is "what you had to do" out of obedience to God.

1. The Revolutionary Nature of the Gospel:

- The gospel revolutionizes behavior and worldview, challenging cultural norms. In the Greco-Roman world, morality and ethics were not connected to religion. Christianity offered a radical shift by presenting scriptures that provided moral guidance and linked ethics to God's character.

- The example is given of Jewish faith being attractive to women, since it dignified them and contained laws that protected them.
- The new life in Christ requires a comprehensive transformation, affecting all aspects of life, from business dealings to family relationships, which is “like a multi-year project even to begin to start to implement comprehensively.”

1. **Dormancy and Deepening of Faith:**

- Christian experience can be initially limited or dormant, developing over time into a deeper, more comprehensive understanding.
- Yarbrough shares his personal experience of his faith not moving him deeply until his twenties, suggesting that this is common.

1. **Examples of Good Works and Conviction:**

- Yarbrough describes his own move from a logging career to theological studies, as a series of good works borne from his obedience to God.
- He also gives the example of a fellow logger who refused to join in profane conversation in the lunch bus, which demonstrates a conscience being informed by Christian values.

1. **Dealing with Division and False Teaching:**

- Christians are to avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, and arguments.
- Divisive individuals should be warned and, if unrepentant, disfellowshipped from the church.
- Yarbrough emphasizes that divisive people are “self-condemned” by their resistance to apostolic teaching.
- He uses the modern example of changing moralities to show how people may self-condemn through their actions and beliefs which contradict what scripture teaches.

1. **The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit:**

- The outpouring of the Spirit is a lavish and generous event, referencing Joel's prophecy and the day of Pentecost. It emphasizes not just emotional experience, but also the "unfeigned divinely enabled acceptance of one another."
- The power of the Holy Spirit brings together groups that were previously divided, using examples such as Arab Christians and Sudanese Christians, Messianic Jews and Palestinians, and black and white communities in the US.

1. **Reconciliation and Unity:**

- The cross of Christ is presented as having a "social dimension of the atonement," as Paul stated in Ephesians 2, where Jew and Gentile are made one.
- The work of Christ brings together those who were enemies, unifying them in the reality of God's healing presence.

1. **Final Remarks: Good Works and Grace:**

- Paul emphasizes the importance of providing for the needs of others and not living unproductive lives.
- He conveys greetings from the community, highlighting the importance of Christian community as part of living a life of faith.
- Bonhoeffer's "Life Together" is referenced to highlight the importance of the community dimension of Christianity.
- Yarbrough stresses that grace is the key to kingdom existence, concluding with "Grace be with you all." The emphasis on grace connects with the opening point that good works are an outflow of grace, and not a means of earning it.

1. **The Global Expansion of Christianity:**

- Yarbrough notes that despite persecution, Christianity is expanding rapidly, especially in Africa, Asia, and South America.
- He cites statistics showing that most Christians globally are no longer white.
- This growth underscores the power of God's grace and the unstoppable nature of his work.

1. Ongoing Challenges:

- The lecture acknowledges that the church will face ongoing challenges, with false teachers and nominal Christians present throughout history.
- Yarbrough concludes that despite these challenges, “the gates of hell will not prevail against the church,” and encourages listeners to “be rich in good works, and bring honor and glory to God through his grace.”

Key Quotes:

- "It's actually a very theological, theologically grounded set of admonitions that addresses a real-life situation."
- "It's this mainstream, direct thing that it's transformative of our behavior, and it's also, it's quite natural."
- "We were no better. At one time, in verse three, we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived, and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures."
- "He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done...but because of his mercy."
- "And here we have on Crete...a religion that calls for a change in your behavior."
- "They have made a decision to be out of line with the apostolic teaching, and even to this day, we have issues in churches sometimes."
- "Believers find themselves united by the reality of Christ's healing presence."
- “This grace offers salvation to all people. This grace justifies so that they may become heirs of this noble heritage.”
- “God’s saving work in the world is unstoppable...it cannot be thwarted.”

Conclusion:

Dr. Yarbrough's lecture on Titus 3 provides a compelling view of Christian life, emphasizing the essential connection between grace, faith, and good works. It is not a set of rules but a call to a life of transformation, expressed practically in every area of one's existence and extending to a global vision of God's work of reconciliation and redemption. The lecture stresses the need for believers to reject division, embrace unity, and actively serve others while remembering that this life is a direct outflow of God's grace, and not a means of achieving it.

4. Study Guide: Yarbrough, Pastoral Epistles, Session 14, Titus 3

Titus 3 Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. According to the passage, what is the main theme of Titus 3?
2. What are some of the specific behaviors that Paul instructs believers to engage in within their communities?
3. Why does the author say Christians should be gentle and considerate?
4. What was the spiritual state of believers before encountering the grace of God?
5. How does the passage describe the transformative work of the Holy Spirit in believers' lives?
6. What does it mean to be "justified by grace," according to the passage?
7. What is the connection between theological beliefs and practical behavior for Christians, as emphasized in this chapter?
8. How did the Greco-Roman world differ from the Jewish and Christian worldviews regarding the relationship between religion and ethics?
9. What does Paul emphasize about dealing with divisive individuals in the church?
10. How does the passage describe the impact of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on believers, and how does it relate to unity and reconciliation?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The main theme of Titus 3 is being saved in order to do good, highlighting the transformative power of God's grace and its impact on believers' behavior. It stresses the importance of good works as a natural outflow of faith, not as a means to earn salvation.
2. Paul instructs believers to be subject to rulers and authorities, ready for every good work, to slander no one, to be peaceable, considerate, and gentle towards everyone. These behaviors are meant to reflect the transforming power of the gospel in their interactions with others.

3. Christians should be gentle and considerate because they were once "foolish, disobedient, deceived, and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures." This awareness of their past condition should foster humility and compassion for others, prompting them to be kind and understanding.
4. Before encountering the grace of God, believers were described as "foolish, disobedient, deceived, and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures." They lived in malice and envy, hated and hating one another, revealing the depth of their sinful nature prior to salvation.
5. The transformative work of the Holy Spirit is described as the "washing of rebirth and renewal." This includes spiritual transformation, cleansing, and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, leading to a new life and a new relationship with God, and making believers heirs to eternal life.
6. To be "justified by grace" means being declared righteous in God's sight not because of any works of righteousness one has done, but solely based on God's mercy and grace. This is a gift of God, and makes it possible for believers to be part of God's heritage.
7. The passage underscores a direct link between theological beliefs and practical behavior. It argues that understanding and trusting God's grace should naturally result in a life devoted to good works and a transformed manner of living, demonstrating that faith is not just a set of ideas, but a practice.
8. The Greco-Roman world largely separated religion and ethics. Unlike Judaism and Christianity, their gods did not provide moral guidance. The connection between being religious and living a moral life was largely absent, and religion was not associated with a code of ethics based on the nature of the deities.
9. Paul advises warning a divisive person once and then a second time, and if they do not change, believers should have nothing to do with them. This shows that persistent divisiveness and defiance of apostolic teaching are not to be tolerated and that such individuals are self-condemned.
10. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit brings about unity and reconciliation among believers from diverse backgrounds. It fosters mutual respect, charity, and the joy of serving together in Christ's name, overcoming historical animosities and social divisions.

Essay Questions

Instructions: Write an essay addressing each of the following prompts.

1. Analyze the interconnectedness between theological understanding and ethical conduct as presented in Titus 3. How does the passage suggest that sound doctrine should naturally lead to good works, and how does this principle apply to the contemporary church?
2. Discuss the significance of the “washing of rebirth” and “renewal by the Holy Spirit” as described in Titus 3. How do these concepts relate to personal transformation and spiritual growth, and what are their implications for believers' daily lives and relationships?
3. Compare and contrast the moral framework of the Greco-Roman world with the ethical teachings of the New Testament, particularly as seen in Titus 3. How did Christianity present a revolutionary approach to morality, and how did it challenge the prevailing social norms of the time?
4. Examine the concept of "grace" as presented in Titus 3, and discuss its role in salvation, justification, and the Christian life. How does Paul use the concept of grace to explain both God's provision for humanity and the responsibility of believers?
5. Analyze the importance of community and unity within the body of Christ, as highlighted in Titus 3. How does the passage address potential conflicts and divisions, and what does it suggest are the signs of a healthy and thriving Christian community?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Apostolic Instruction:** Teaching given by the apostles, who were the early authoritative leaders of the Christian church, meant to guide believers in faith and practice.
- **Grace:** Unmerited favor and love from God, which is the basis of salvation and empowerment for Christian living, not earned or deserved.
- **Good Works:** Actions motivated by faith and love that are in accordance with God's will, resulting from a transformed life, and not as a way to gain salvation.
- **Justification:** Being declared righteous in God's sight not based on any merit of our own, but through faith in Jesus Christ and the gift of his grace.
- **Rebirth/Regeneration:** Spiritual transformation brought about by the Holy Spirit, giving a new life in Christ.
- **Renewal:** The ongoing process of the Holy Spirit making believers more like Christ in their thoughts, feelings, and actions.
- **Holy Spirit:** The third person of the Trinity, who empowers, guides, and indwells believers.
- **Heirs:** Those who inherit the promises of God as members of the family of God, inheriting all the privileges that come with such a relationship.
- **Eternal Life:** The life of the age to come already experienced in the present, a transformed quality of life in relationship with God that will extend into unending future.
- **Divisive Person:** An individual who promotes discord, controversy, and division within the church by contradicting core Christian teaching or living in a manner that contradicts the gospel.

5. FAQs on Yarbrough, Pastoral Epistles, Session 14, Titus 3, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions About Titus 3

1. **Why does Titus 3 emphasize "good works" so strongly?** While Titus 3 highlights the importance of good works, it's crucial to understand that it's not a moralistic code. Instead, the emphasis on good works is a direct outflow of God's grace and our salvation through Christ. The letter emphasizes that believers are saved "not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy." Good works are the natural and transformative expression of a relationship with God and a changed heart, not the means to earn salvation. It's a practical outworking of the profound theological truths of the gospel, reflecting a transformed life in Christ. This is also particularly important to those in the Greco-Roman world where morality was not a part of their religion.
2. **What specific "good works" does Titus 3 encourage?** The text emphasizes several key practical behaviors: being subject to rulers and authorities, being ready to do whatever is good, slandering no one, being peaceable, being considerate of others (cutting them slack), and always being gentle toward everyone. These actions are rooted in recognizing our own past failings and God's grace. It's not about merely being nice but about actively choosing to treat others with kindness and respect, even those who are different from us. It also includes practical acts of providing for the needs of church workers and others as they travel.
3. **What does it mean to "cut other people slack" as mentioned in the text?** "Cutting people slack" in this context means having consideration for others, not being dismissive or judgmental because they are different from you. This includes avoiding judging based on race, class, education, or any other social or cultural differences. It acknowledges that everyone, including ourselves, was once "foolish, disobedient, deceived, and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures." This recognition fosters humility and prevents us from looking down on others. It involves a genuine effort to understand others and treat them with compassion and patience.

4. **How does Titus 3 connect the ideas of salvation and good works?** The passage connects salvation and good works in a cause-and-effect relationship. We are not saved *by* good works, but *for* good works. We are saved by God's mercy and grace, through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, which transforms us from the inside out. This transformation leads to a natural desire and effort to perform good works. This means that good works are not an addition or a later consideration, but the direct and expected result of the transformative power of the gospel. It's not a "do good now" after a purely intellectual understanding of theology, but rather, our doing good should flow out of the same spirit that saves.
5. **What does Titus 3 say about dealing with divisive people in the church?** Titus 3 instructs that divisive people should be warned once, and then if they persist in their divisiveness, warned a second time. If they do not change, they should be avoided. This is because their actions are a self-condemnation; they are choosing to stand apart from the apostolic teaching and the community of believers. It's important to note the focus is not on condemning them, but recognizing that they have already placed themselves outside the bounds of what the Bible teaches. This approach follows a principle similar to Jesus' instructions in Matthew 18 regarding dealing with sin within the church.
6. **What is the significance of the Holy Spirit being "poured out" as described in Titus 3?** The imagery of the Holy Spirit being "poured out" is a reference to the abundance and generosity of God's provision. It echoes Old Testament prophecies, such as the one in Joel, and connects to the events of Pentecost. The outpouring of the Spirit results in more than just emotional experience; it signifies a deeper spiritual transformation, and for the church in particular, unity and reconciliation in the body of Christ. This often means overcoming deeply rooted social, cultural, and ethnic divisions. It demonstrates the healing power of the Gospel that brings disparate groups into fellowship and mutual service.
7. **Why does the text emphasize the importance of community at the end?** The ending of Titus emphasizes community because the Christian life is not meant to be lived in isolation, but within a network of believers. The letter's closing greetings underscore the idea that faith is a shared experience, rooted in the common grace that unites believers. The need for community is not limited to just social interaction but includes practical expressions of support such as providing for traveling workers. This shared life is a result of the grace of God. It's a life lived with God, with each other, and for the world.

8. **How does the letter end and why is the final pronouncement of grace important?** The letter concludes with the pronouncement of "grace be with you all," which is a critical element of the Christian life. This emphasizes that grace is the foundation and sustaining power for all believers. This is significant because it reinforces the idea that salvation, daily living, and ministry are all dependent on the unearned favor of God. It also signifies that grace extends beyond individuals and connects the church together across time and space, linking them together into one global body. Ultimately, the grace of God will continue to transform people until the very end when God's promise of redemption is completed. It is in this grace that we are to believe, trust, and be rich in good works.