

- I. My Notes ... WWC message 3/7
- II. Series: Finding Rest in a Restless World
 - Title: Living in a Healthy Community
 - Text: Titus 2:1-8
 - Quote: We are the most 'connected' generation in history, but we are also the most lonely. We have replaced the warmth of a neighbor's kitchen table with the cold glow of a screen, and we wonder why our souls are shivering. Attributed to various modern sociologists (often summarized from Sherry Turkle's *Alone Together*)
- III. Introduction
 - "We are currently living through what sociologists call the 'Loneliness Epidemic.' It is a strange irony: we are the most digitally 'connected' generation in human history, yet we are arguably the most isolated, anxious, and restless. We have thousands of 'friends' and 'followers,' but very few people who actually know the weight we are carrying.
 - This hyper-connection without true community creates a state of permanent restlessness. Our souls are on high alert because, deep down, we feel unprotected. We feel like we have to pioneer every path, solve every crisis, and carry every burden by ourselves."

Proverbs 18:24 reminds us, "*Some friends may ruin you, but a real friend will be more loyal than a brother.*" (NCV). You can have 5,000 digital companions and still "come to ruin" because none of them are carrying the weight you are under with you. True rest comes from the "stick-closer-than-a-brother" kind of community Paul is telling Titus and telling us about.
 - This wasn't just a 21st-century problem; it was a 1st-century Crete problem. As we saw last week in Titus chapter 1, Crete was a culture of 'liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons.' It was a dog-eat-dog world where no one was safe, and no one could relax.
 - But as we move into Titus chapter 2, Paul gives Titus a radical blueprint (yes, we are back to blueprints and building something). He basically says, 'The world outside is a storm, but the Church must be a harbor.' He doesn't just give them a list of rules; he gives them a relational architecture. He describes a community so tightly knit—from the oldest man to the youngest servant—that the weight of life is distributed across everyone's shoulders.
 - In an arch bridge, no single stone carries the full load. The weight moves from one to the other until it hits the foundation. Today, we're going to see that Rest isn't found in escaping our world; it's found in the 'Us' that God designed to withstand it."

- The Tower of Babel (Genesis 11) was the first attempt at hyper-connectivity without God, and it ended in a lot of noise and zero rest. The lessons Jesus taught, the message Paul is giving us, is God's way of bringing us back to a common language of love and service.

IV. Healthy Doctrine, Healthy Life

- If "Sound Doctrine" is just a list of "bad things to avoid," it actually makes us more restless. We become like people walking through a minefield—constantly looking down, terrified of making a wrong move. That's not rest; that's hyper-vigilance.
- Sound Doctrine is far more about the "Who" than the "What."
- **Titus 2:1 CSB** - *But you are to proclaim things consistent with sound teaching.*
- Remember what Paul had written to Titus just before this passage. He spoke about people who "claim to know God" (vs. 16) and yet their claims didn't match their behaviors. Paul said they weren't fit for any good work and they were detestable.
- Now, he is encouraging Titus to bring a clean and clear message to the people of Crete. He is telling Titus to help others understand the character of God and come into a genuine relationship with Him. Paul, the Apostle of Grace, wants others to know how grace can transform them and lead them to a lifestyle that honors and glorifies the Lord.
- Pay attention to what Paul is telling Titus ... "proclaim things consistent with sound teaching." It isn't just a list of rules to check off. Because we are human, we are not going to be able to "check all the boxes." We are flawed. The list leads to legalism – making the rules and actions "god." Many have tried to live this way, it doesn't lead to rest, you can't find peace. There is always something else that can be done better or something more to do.
- Proclaiming what is consistent with "sound teaching" is letting others see and know the mercy and grace that Jesus demonstrated. On the Cross, His words – "It is finished" (tetelestai) – signified the transaction was complete, the debt had been paid. The work (of grace) was in the present and ongoing indefinitely.
- Because Jesus finished the work, we can stop living at the frantic pace we try to maintain. Doing more to find acceptance, checking the boxes to prove one's worth, is not the lifestyle that God has called us to.
- The writer of Hebrews reminds us of this. *"So there is a special rest still waiting for the people of God. For all who have entered into God's rest have rested from their labors, just as God did after creating the world."* (**Hebrews 4:9-10 NLT**). God rested from the work of Creation. So too, we are able to rest from our efforts and lean into His grace.

V. Relational Rhythms

- Jesus gave many examples of what the Kingdom of God (or Heaven) was like. I think we have another one here. Paul frames it with this idea ... In God's family, those who have walked with Jesus longer become living rhythms of grace for those still learning the steps (my paraphrase of the next few verses).
- **Titus 2:2-6 CSB**
2 Older men are to be self-controlled, worthy of respect, sensible, and sound in faith, love, and endurance. 3 In the same way, older women are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not slaves to excessive drinking. They are to teach what is good, 4 so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands and to love their children, 5 to be self-controlled, pure, workers at home, kind, and in submission to their husbands, so that God's word will not be slandered.
6 In the same way, encourage the young men to be self-controlled in everything.
- These are the virtues that don't come from a weekend conference — they come from years of walking with God through storms, disappointments, and joys. They are the rhythms of a life that has learned to rest in God.
- Notice something: every virtue Paul lists is a stabilizing virtue. These aren't the gifts that make someone impressive; they're the qualities that make someone safe. When someone has lived long enough with Jesus to become steady, sensible, and sound in love, they become a place of rest for others. Their presence slows the room down. Their words carry weight without pressure. Their lives become a rhythm others can sync to.
- Older believers breathe in a slower, deeper rhythm — not because life is easier, but because they've learned they don't have to gasp for spiritual air. Younger believers often breathe fast — anxious, hurried, unsure. In a healthy community, the slow, steady breathing of mature believers helps regulate the spiritual breathing of those who are still learning to trust God.
- Wherever you may be in your faith journey, you don't need to feel out of step or left behind. We all find our rhythm through different experiences. Growing in grace is a continual process. The task of the community is to walk with you and help you find it. Your job isn't to be perfect. It is to find others to help you along the way. Those that can model spiritual maturity because of their life experience.
- Imagine being with a group of believers where no one has to pretend, where the experienced don't look down on the inexperienced, and where the inexperienced don't feel ashamed of their journey. Imagine a community where the wisdom of years becomes a gift, not a weapon — where the young find rest in the presence of the mature, and the mature find purpose in lifting up the young. Sounds like a restful place to me.

VI. Be an Example

- The Apostle Paul told the church at Corinth (and left the message for us), *“Follow my example [imitate me], as I follow the example of [imitate] Christ.”* (1 Corinthians 11:1 EXB). This is the path of discipleship.
- In this letter to Titus, Paul is telling him to be an example that others can (and will) follow.
- **Titus 2:7-8 CSB**
Make yourself an example of good works with integrity and dignity in your teaching. Your message is to be sound beyond reproach, so that any opponent will be ashamed, because he doesn't have anything bad to say about us.
- The truth is that a healthy community isn't built on perfect people. We all have those flaws that we are working on. It is built on people who are visible, who choose to be there for others and show them the way. People that choose this are open and dependable. They want to make a difference so that others can make a difference in the lives they touch.
- But it is more than that. Those who are mature can show those fooling them that rest is found in who they trust. Trusting the Lord God makes sense, it makes our journey to the throne of grace a place where peace and rest can be found.
- Following a mentor is the formal way of saying that you are allowing someone to guide you along your journey. Most of us have done this in one way or another. When my kids were getting ready to get their drivers license, I taught them how to drive by showing them and then riding along as they did their best to “mimic” what I did. When they were ready to take their driver's test they had practiced enough to be proficient at driving. It was teaching them the rules and responsibilities that came with this step in their journey.
- It's that way in our faith journey. Aligning yourself with someone who reflects Christ to you in ways that you can grow into. When you are walking in step with a mature believer the burden of the journey becomes easier. Why? Because you have yoked yourself to someone who has been through the battles and continues to live faithfully to the Lord.
- Paul told the church at Philippi, *“Model your conduct on what you have learned from me, on what I have told you and shown you, and you will find the God of peace will be with you.”* (Philippians 4:9 Phillips NT). Listen to what he is saying. That as we align ourselves with those who are mature, the result will be finding peace because of our Lord.
- This points back to what we talked about a few weeks ago. Putting on the yolk that Jesus designed for us keeps us stepping at the right pace for growth to occur, for God to be glorified, and for others to see how God works in our lives.
- In other words, stay close enough to someone who has learned the rhythm of grace, and you'll begin to move with it too.

VII. Wrapping Up

- What Paul is telling Titus in this part of his letter isn't simply good advice — it's God doing a new thing among His people. **Isaiah 43:19** says, "Look at the new thing I am going to do. It is already happening. Don't you see it? I will make a road in the desert and rivers in the dry land." (**NCV**). Crete was a wilderness. Our culture can feel like one too. But God forms new rhythms in barren places. He creates new community where isolation once ruled. He builds harbors in the middle of storms. Titus 2 is God saying, 'Watch Me make something new among you.'
- As we yoke ourselves to Jesus, we begin to move at His pace — not hurried, not frantic, but steady and grace-filled. And as we walk close to those who have learned that rhythm before us, we start to mirror their calm, their trust, their settled confidence in God. This is how the Spirit forms a new kind of community among us. We don't create it by striving; we join it by following. And as we do, something beautiful happens: we find peace in the very places that once exhausted us, and God receives the glory for the transformation we could never produce on our own. This is the miracle of grace — that when we walk with Jesus and imitate the faithful, we step into the new thing God is doing right here in our midst.
- Let's Pray
- Grace First, Grace Always