

Life Group Notes

Sunday 29th January 2023

Speaker: Andy McCullough

Title: Titus: God's Mosaic

Passage: Titus 2:1-11

We are each of us brought into God's mosaic; each different but contributing to the whole picture. Too many people overestimate their individual influence and legacy. Too many people underestimate the beauty and value of being part of God's family.

Older Men (2:2) 6 attributes: the first 3 were culturally celebrated qualities. Second 3 are uniquely Christian – so looking for Christian righteousness to surpass cultural righteousness. Also 'love' is unexpected for older men.

Older women (2:3-4). Churches need fathers and mothers. Reverent - like priestesses. We need the spirituality of mothers in Christ. Wine: Crete was known for a lot of drinking – I think it arose from the boredom of island life. Purpose offsets boredom.

Younger women (2:4-5) In a culture of arranged marriages, the cultural expectation was respect/be faithful... not love. Marriage was not really about love – it was security, a contract between families. Again, we are seeing something that surpasses cultural expectations – this is radically new. 'submissive to their own husbands.' Not all women to all men.

Younger men (2:6) "self-control" is not valued in our culture. We saw this for elders (1.8) young women (2.5) and young men (2.6). Also the whole church in 2.12.

Titus (2:7-8). Titus is from Antioch – the city of gangsters. He is tough. He is completely different to Timothy. So it is right for Timothy to be sent to Ephesus and Titus to be sent to Crete. Your background, your story is precious to God. He has kingdom work for you to do that suits your skills and personality. Don't compare yourself to others from a different background, with a different set of gifts.

Slaves (2:9-10) Slavery was sadly part of the ancient world: Crete being on the trade routes also meant slave-trade routes. Sadly, there have been times when the Church has been directly complicit in slavery – most explicitly the closeness of the church and the establishment during the transatlantic slave trade of the 18th century. Paul does in other places call out slave-traders as particularly guilty, he tells Philemon to treat his slave Onesimus as a brother, and the NT condemnation of Babylon includes judgement on its slave trade. Right from Exodus we see a God who takes sides with a slave people against Pharaoh. There are liberative trajectories all through scripture. Common theme in scripture – the slave who has influence on a pagan king (Moses, Joseph, Daniel, Esther).

Suggested Questions:

1. Why do you think Paul spends so much of this letter talking about relationships?
2. What are some of the challenges and benefits of being part of a diverse local church?
3. Do you feel like you fit in in Reading Family Church? If not, why not?
4. Of the categories of people discussed in the passage, which bit is the most challenging to you in your category?
5. Which one verse/phrase is your personal takeaway from this passage?