

**ENGAGE**  
**January 14, 2018 Morning Service**  
**Titus 3:8**

Take your Bible and let's go to the book of Titus chapter 3 and we will begin this morning as we jump off into a new word for a new year for a new season in Titus 3. In just a few minutes we're going to read verse 8.

I was – well I wasn't absent but I was last Sunday down at our Warrington campus preaching there. My goodness how the new campus is hustling and bustling. I preached to 222 people is what they told me and the nursery was full and children everywhere. It was amazing alive as we baptized one, had one saved, and three joined the church last Sunday and it was just a good day down at the Warrington campus. I'm grateful to God for those people that meet there. I preach to them this morning through our video venue and grateful to God for all that the Lord is doing on that campus and how they are working and engaging that community.

That is our word for the coming year. Now they come here on Sunday evenings and Wednesday nights a lot because so many of them are involved in our AWANAS and those kinds of things. Years to come we'll grow that program but right now Sunday morning and then they're back with us over here Wednesday night and Sunday night as we're one family together. We're grateful to God for all of our friends down at Warrington that the good work that they are doing there and for that that we're doing together.

Well we're in Titus chapter 3 and our theme verse for the year is verse number 8. I challenge you to memorize this verse. I challenge you to tattoo this word on your heart and put it there so that you can remember. So I'm going to ask you one more time to rise with me. I want us to read out loud with gusto this text today in Titus chapter 3, verse number 8. You'll see it come here on the screen and we will read together these words. Read together with me now Titus 3 and verse 8.

*This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.<sup>1</sup>*

Those that have believed, we want you confidently to engage, engage, engage, *proistemi*. That's our word right there. It means to stand over alongside of, to be right

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there with it, to be engaged if you will. That we are together engaging. Engaging the Lord. Engaging one another. We must engage our lost community. We must engage the University of West Florida. We must engage every campus. That's what our special speaker tonight at 5:30 is going to help us understand. Our rights and the how-to of taking the gospel to a secular school campus, be it middle school, high school, or the University setting.

Brad will be here tonight, Brad Schilling, and will help us from First Priority of knowing how to engage the community. We're not there to fight. We're not here to set something on fire. We're here to engage with the gospel. Let the Spirit of God bring the fire. Engage the Lord. Engage one another and then engage our lost community with the gospel. We must engage. As a matter of fact, out loud with gusto I want you to spell that word with me today. Can you spell it? Alright. Here we go. Let's spell it out loud together. Here we go. E-N-G-A-G-E. Engage. Engage.

I'm praying that we have more young men get engaged this year than ever. Some of them need a swift kick to get in the game, alright? But that's not the engagement though it's a beautiful picture of it because you get involved and you're committed. You're all in when you engage. That's what I'm praying God will help us do.

Father, I love you and I pray that we might engage with You first, with each other, and with a lost and dying world. Teach us the principles of engagement. I ask for your honor and glory in Jesus' name. Amen. God love you and be seated please.

Listen to me. Complacent, uninvolved, sit and watch others kind of Christians are killing the church and its missional endeavor. Hear me once again. Complacent, uninvolved, sit and watch Christians are killing the church and its missional endeavor. It is time to engage, to stand over with others, to get involved, be connected, to be engaged.

Tomorrow is a holiday in our nation. Martin Luther King Day. As we look back on that situation of the 50's and 60's with Dr. King, now there was a man that engaged the culture. He got engaged. He saw what others could not see. He heard what others could not hear. He felt what others could not feel and he did what others were not willing to do. He said that he would not be satisfied until Amos chapter 5 and verse 24 became a reality and that was that justice rolled down like waters and righteousness like an ever flowing stream. That was his verse.

He stood on those steps in Washington. That was thematic in his Martin Luther King speech. He would not be satisfied until justice rolled down like waters. He got engaged til righteousness came. Like an ever flowing stream, he engaged his culture. He engaged leaders. He engaged his own community. He called for action. No longer would being complacent get it done. You could not be uninvolved and see something

happen. You couldn't just sit and watch. Someone had to rise up and engage in the situation.

Let me tell you, friend, if the church is going to be the church is going to be the church today, we must engage. We must engage the Lord in your personal quiet time. You must engage one another in this room. Then we must engage the culture with the gospel, taking it to the highways and byways, taking it to the board room, to the classroom, to every room, to where there's not any room. We must take the gospel. That takes gospel engagement.

Now in our text today there are five times in the Bible that Paul says this is a trustworthy statement and here is one of them. He says, "Concerning these things, I want to speak confidently so that those who have believed in God...." Have you believed God today? If you believe God you're a saved man or woman. Those that have believed God would be careful to engage in good deeds, that we do good works. Do the right thing at the right time in the right place with the right attitude in the right way. Lord, we've got enough stinkin' thinkin'. We need the right attitude. We need the God attitude. We need the God engagement in our culture.

Now in this text just three quick things I want you to see before I lay out the message for the morning. Number one. The first principle found in this text is that saved people are changed people. Friend, if you've never been changed you've never been saved. If you're just like you've always been, you're lost.

I want you to notice in verse 3, in Titus 3. It says: *We also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. That's the way we were when we were lost. But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us.*

Written right out next to this verse I have two letters. E-E. That's for Eddie Echarri. These were his favorite verses. As a matter of fact, Eddie who got gloriously saved in our church over in the old building, when God saved him and brought him out of the balcony one Sunday morning when he walked forward, gave his heart and life to Christ. Big fellow. Eddie and I were born three days apart. I was born the 14<sup>th</sup> day of December 1953. He was born the 17<sup>th</sup> day of December 1953. I was born in Detroit, Michigan. He was born in Brooklyn, New York. We used to kid and say, "God knew back in 1953 He was going to run us together down here in Pensacola, Florida."

I got saved when I was a ten-year-old boy but Eddie didn't get saved until he was a grown man. He walked down the aisle over in Passmore Hall and took me by the hand. He said, "Preacher, I'm ready to come try this Jesus you've been talking about." He'd been in Rikers Island and Sing Sing for running drug money in New York City. He

jumped out of a third story building and broke his leg. He got out on early release because of abuse. I asked him. I said, "Why'd you jump out of that window?" He said, "I ran out of bullets before they did."

God saved him. He said, "Preacher, I used to be verse number 3. Disobedient, deceived, enslaved to lust, pleasure, envy, malice, hateful. I hated people but when the mercy of God came He saved me." I buried him a few years ago. He's right out here in the north part of the county and this verse is on his tombstone.

Let me tell you, friend, if you've never been saved, God'll save you if you'll trust Him and saved people are changed people. The day God saved him he went cold turkey. No more drugs in his life. He liked to never got over cigarettes but I'm telling you, he got off of drugs. It took him two years to get off of Nicotine. He kicked that heroin habit, walked right off of it and God just literally changed him immediately.

I've been to the prisons with him, jails with him, watched him preach. I've preached my guts out in those jails. Those guys look at me like a stone. Eddie would step up there and he'd say, "You're going to cry yourself to sleep tonight because you miss your mamma." They'd just cry, "Oh God, have mercy." They'd just weep. I'd think, "What is going on?" He knew he'd been where they were. He'd give the invitation and they'd come get saved and I'd just sit there like, well I don't even know why I'm here.

Saved people are changed people. Let me tell you, friend, in that balcony around, this ground floor, if you used to sit in this choir and now you're out there, if God's never changed you, He's never saved you. If He's saved you, He's changed you. You're not what you used to be because the grace of God has come to your life.

Number one. I want you to understand saved people are changed people. Number two. Saved people are confident people. Confident people. Look in verse 8. He said: *I want you to speak confidently.* Confidently. You see, when you get saved, you know you're saved. You don't doubt you're saved. You know you're going to heaven when you die. Nobody can steal what you've got. You are assured that heaven is your home. Saved people are changed people. Saved people are confident people.

I'm not sure of a whole lot of stuff but let me tell you, I am sure I'm going to heaven when I die. Confident. Not only are saved people changed people, not only are saved people confident people, but saved people are engaged people because when you get saved and you get changed and you're confident of what God's done, then you begin to engage the culture with the gospel. That's what he says right here in verse 8. *So that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds.*

Good works. Good deeds. Now we always say it. I don't know why we have to. We've said it a million times in a Baptist church. You do not get saved by good works but you get saved so you will do good works. What you engage in, listen to me, Olive. If you're just coming sitting like a stump in a service for 90 minutes, you need to get gloriously saved and engage with your culture sharing the gospel in a lost, dying world wherever you are, wherever God's put you, wherever your job is. That's your mission field. God's put you there as a missionary.

Now this is the one Sunday a year I say something about football. Only one. Every year whoever wins the national championship I wear their colors in my tie. If it's my team like it is this year I do it. Last year it was Clemson. I wore Clemson's colors. It popped up on my Facebook page this morning four years ago when Florida State won I had on Florida State's colors. I had three or four of my deacons around me. I didn't believe I'd do it. I wear it every year. I was at that ballgame on Monday night. God put me there as a missionary. I slid into my seat and introduced myself to a guy and I said, "Where are you from?" He said, "Pensacola, Florida." He looked at me and he said, "Where are you from? I know you." There wasn't as much beer sold on that row after I got there.

Why did God put me there? God put me there as a missionary. Friend, wherever God put you, He's put you there as a missionary and it's time to engage. It's what you're there for. God didn't save you to send you to heaven. If He did, He ought to just kill you and take you straight on. Walk them through the baptistery, shoot them on the other side, take them off to glory. No. God saved you for a purpose and the purpose is to engage this culture with the gospel.

Who are you engaging? You've got a whole year. Are you going to engage someone? God's going to put you in a place where if you'll just be ready, God'll use you. It'll be one of the greatest things you've ever seen in your life that God will engage through you people with the gospel. Hallelujah.

So this morning, I want us to think about good works. He said we're supposed to engage in good deeds. So I want to show you five things about good works this morning. Alright here we go. Are you ready? I mean I know it's cold and early but now come on. I'm dying up here. Let me ask you. Are you ready? Alright. Say the word engage out loud. Engage. That's what we're going to do. We engage in good works. Golly, Jack, they're killing me up here. Holler Amen once or twice over there. Help me. Alright. Engage. Engage. Engage.

Number one. We are created for good works. We are created for good works. Ephesians chapter 2, verse number 10. *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for [what?] good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.* Friend, the reason God saves you is that He creates in you this capacity for good

works. You can't do it on your own but when you get saved, the Spirit of God moves into you and you're literally raised from the dead and God creates you for good works. Not for the good works you can do. Not for the money you can make. God created you for the good works you can and should do. That's why He saved you. He's created you. He supernaturally saved you and created you for good works.

Number two. Not only are we created for good works. We, the Bible says, are zealous for good works. Titus chapter 2 and verse 14. *Who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession [here it is], zealous for good deeds.* Zealous. I mean you've got zeal.

Are you fired up about reaching the culture you're in with the gospel? Are you fired up about it? Zealous? Filled with zeal? I'm amazed. People get zealous about lots of stuff. We get zealous about finance. We get zealous about football. We get zealous about family. I'm here to tell you, we've got to get zealous about our faith. Set on fire with the zeal for good works, to do good things. That's what God made you for and now you are to be set on fire with this zeal. It ought to fire you up about what God's going to use you for in 2018, where He's going to place you and put you, that you'd become zealous.

Number one. You're created for good works. Number two. We're zealous for good works. Number three. We glorify God with good works. In Matthew chapter 5 and verse 16 hear the words of our Lord Jesus. *Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works [see your good works], and glorify your Father who is in heaven.* They'd see your good works and glorify back to the Father. They give glory. They give glory unto God. Friend, if you want to glorify God, go to work. Let the Spirit of God rule in you and move through you and when you do good things you glorify God. You can do it for your own good. You can do good works for the wrong reason.

There has never been a man who has done more good work than Al Capone. He ruled Chicago. He stole, pilfered but nobody fed more homeless. No one gave away more clothes. No one created more jobs. No one helped the underprivileged more than Al Capone. Chicago, he ruled the way. Why did he do it? So he could own the people when it came time to vote for a major, an alderman. They looked one way. They looked and said, "What's Al Capone saying?" Whatever Al Capone said – because that's where the good works came from.

You can do good works for the wrong reason and Al Capone did. He finally went to jail on tax evasion. They couldn't get him on his deeds because he was doing so much good. Friend, you can do good things for the wrong reason. The reason you do good works is to glorify God. Not for your own good, not to get elected to something.

Not to get a medal. Not so somebody will put your name up in lights. I'm telling you, you do these things to glorify the one who gave His Son for you.

Number one. You're created for good works. Number two. You're zealous for good works. Number three. We glorify God with good works. Number four. Now watch this. We gain a reputation with our good works. I Timothy chapter 5, verse number 10: *Talking about the widows: having a reputation for good works; and if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work.* He's talking about widows that should be put on the list so that they are cared for. She has a reputation.

Do you know everybody in here's got a reputation? Everybody's got a reputation. You say, "I don't want to think about what mine is." Well you ought to think about it. What's your reputation? You have one. Some people have a reputation of selfishness. Some people have a reputation of it being all about you and yours and against somebody else. Some of you have a reputation for being a conservative political pundit. Others have a reputation for being a liberal political pundit. What's your reputation?

This widow had a reputation for good works. Dear friend, if you'll do the right thing and let God move through you, your reputation should be good works. Oh I need something done. Right there, that guy, he's got the reputation for good works. You're created for it. You're to be zealous for it. You're to glorify God with it. You're to have a reputation for it.

Number five. Our good works. We are to stimulate one another with good works. Hebrews chapter 10 and verse 24: *and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds.* That what we do should stimulate others to say that what they're doing – you see, you bring a crowd along with you. Olive Church, look right here at me. Listen to me. People at Warrington, listen to the pastor. Listen to me now. It just takes a little handful to start a fire in the life of the church, just a few little embers and just blow on them and begin to blaze. They'll say, "Well if he can, I can. If they can, we can." Together we begin to see that this stimulation that we encourage one another not toward selfishness but toward good works. We stimulate one another. Amen. We move one another in the right way.

You don't even have to talk about it. I'm telling you, if you do the right thing long enough people will look. I'm telling you, that's what we need to be. He makes a difference.

I started this text with Eddie Echarri. Those of you that were here long enough ago remember him. New York, God changed him and gave him a reputation. He had a

reputation for driving fast. He'd come through Flomaton and he knew the police on a first name basis. He called it Flomation. He never did learn to say Flomaton. He'd say, "I'm going to Flomation." I said, "Well if you'll back off the pedal of that car a little you can get home."

He came to work here for us. Nobody would hire him and I hired him as a janitor. He was the sorriest janitor God ever made. He couldn't clean the floors for talking to people about the Lord.

I remember right over by the office one day a couple of middle school kids went in and stuffed two big rolls of toilet paper down in the toilet. They made it overflow and blow up and water went everywhere. They called him to clean it up because he was on the maintenance crew. I'd never seen him so mad in all my life. He stood right outside the door. He went in and got it all cleaned up. I said, "You reckon who did this?" He said, "I'll tell you who did it." I said, "How do you know?" He said, "I don't know but I will know." I said, "Really?" He said, "Oh yeah. I'm just going to stand right here. They'll be back." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Every crook, I'm telling you, preacher, every crook can't stand it. They've got to come back and see what they did." I said, "Really?" He said, "They'll come running right back here."

In about 30 minutes he called me. He had one by one collar and one by the other. He said, "These are the two boys that put that toilet paper down in there." I said, "Really?" I said, "How do you know?" He said, "They confessed. They walked right back in here looking. I caught them right there. They did it." Their feet were just a hanging off the ground. He said, "What should I do with them?" I said, "Take them back out there to the ball field and shoot and kill both of them right now." He looked at me and he said, "All right." He started dragging. They started confessing stuff they hadn't even done, I'm telling you. Oh it was a sin how mean Eddie Echarri and I were from time to time.

It became obvious he was no maintenance man and we put him in charge of Most Excellent Way. He started a Tuesday night, then a Thursday night, and a Friday night. Before he died he had Most Excellent Way going at six different churches, six different locations across Pensacola, Florida. When he died, when he died they lined up and I watched drunk after addict come by and kiss him on the face and say, "Thank you for loving me. Not just that you led me to Christ but loving me in my struggle." That's what turned it. It was a lifestyle of loving people who struggled. They wept. I stood there and watched them as they walked by.

I'll have to carry his shoes when we get to glory. He'll have more crowns than I could ever put in a bushel basket. The first time we went to the prison he preached and when we got done we started home. We went in a little 7-11 store to get us a cold drink and something to eat and I came back out and Eddie was sitting on the porch next to

what looked to me like somebody down on his luck, maybe homeless or whatever. I said, "What are you doing? We've got to go home." He said, "Well, pastor, this old boy here." He called his name. He said, "He doesn't know the Lord and he's hungry and he's cold." I said, "We've got to get home, I'm telling you now." He said, "Well I was just taking a little time here to tell him about our Lord and give him a couple of dollars so he can get him a cup of coffee." That was his reputation. I wanted to get in the car and go home. I was tired.

He had an affinity with the down and out. I'm here to tell you, it's hard to me to do that but I know some up and out people. Some of you know some military folks. You've walked right where they walked. You're like me. You've never been in jail. It doesn't mean you can't talk to them. It just means you don't have that close connection but God's got a place for you and you'll stimulate others. Eddie stimulated me when I saw him do that.

We built this building right here. This building was not done. It was just steel. There were big beams running right there. It was just steel and these posts and we'd just gotten the steel out of the ground and a hurricane was in the gulf. I was walking around out here worrying. He stopped me one day. He said, "Pastor, what are you doing?" I said, "What's it look like I'm doing?" He said, "It looks like you're worrying rather than praying." I said, "I've got millions of dollars stuck in the ground out there and it looks like it's going to blow it away." He said, "What happened to you telling me that couldn't nothing happen that God wasn't in charge of." I said, "When I need you, I'll call you."

He was right, you know. His good works stimulated me to believe God. So right over here in this stairwell – it's a big stairwell right out here. They'd already poured the concrete. I sat in that stairwell and ate boiled shrimp while the storm passed by and it just kind of became nothing after it got here and went on up through Alabama. He walked by. He said, "How are you doing?" I said, "I'm just believing God eating shrimp. That's what I'm doing." He said, "Where'd you learn that?" I said, "I don't know. Some old addict over here told me I ought to believe God." His faith, his good works stimulated me to believe God and I sat over there and ate all the shrimp we had out of the kitchen.

Friend, I'm here to tell you, if you'll love God and do right and live by faith, other people will look at you and they'll say, "I want what they've got." If this church will come to live by faith, this community will look at us and say, "I want what they've got." But if you just walk around worrying like everybody else they're going to say, "That bunch down at Olive they don't even act like there is a God." We must stimulate one another with our good works so that they will see God and glorify the one who sits on the throne in heaven.

Now take your Bible and I've got to get done. You're in Titus chapter 3. Now flip over one page to verse 14. Titus 3:14 where Paul goes on to say: *Our people* [that's us, Olive church] *must also learn to engage* [there's our word again, same word, engage] *in good deeds* [why?] *to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful.*

Listen to me, church. Number one, we must learn, we must learn. Learn to engage. I'm telling you, friend, the only way you're going to learn to engage is start engaging. You say, "I don't know how to teach. I don't know how to worship." Some of you need to go to work down in the preschool. That's where you're going to engage. Some of you need to begin to teach children. That's how you're going to engage.

Some of you need to begin to be an outreach leader and get out of your Sunday School class and get in a group working with some other folks. Some of you ought to get out of this room and get into a small group and begin to engage. You say, "Well I'm scared to go in there." That's why you ought to go. You need to be in that small group, that connection group to get connected so you can engage.

You'll only learn by doing that. So we first learn. Then this text says not only do we learn but then we see needs. You've got to learn to see needs. You need to begin to see them all around you. You'll see those needs. You don't know what they are. Some people need to be rebuked. Some people need to be encouraged. Some people need a hug.

Some elderly lady, she stopped me out here this morning. I know she's 85 because she told me she was. She said, "Pastor, I love you." She said, "I've been coming to church here 26 years." She said, "I've never gone to sleep while you're preaching." I said, "Well, thank you. I'll take that as high praise." She said, "It is. You encourage me." She said, "Can I hug you?" I said, "Yes, ma'am." She gave me a hug. She lifted me up.

I got right here. I hadn't read this yet but I know what's in it. This is a thank you note from a lady in our church. I know what went on in her life this week and we took some action trying to encourage her. She came and she said, "I'm not good with words but I just write words." I can't wait to get home to read this. She said, "You know, pastor, I'm not much of a hugger or talker. I just kind of do." I said, "Yes, ma'am." She said, "Thank you."

Do you know how small an effort it takes really to do a good deed? I mean if you're just this much better than everybody else, it doesn't take much. Just be different. Engage. You've got to learn. You've got to see needs. Then bear fruit. Notice he says. The last thing he says in this verse. So that they will not be unfruitful. My Lord, wouldn't it be bad to be a part of a church that's unfruitful? No fruit. I like to be part of a fruitful church. Amen? Where God's doing something. He's saving people. That's

fruit. He's growing up disciples. That's fruit. He's putting marriages back together. That's fruit. Where He's taking people that have lost a spouse and encouraging them. That's fruit where He's taking somebody that's lost somebody and they begin to encourage. That's fruit and we just begin to see that.

Now listen to me and I'm done. The only way, the only way for you to do good deeds is if there is a river. Jesus said, "There is a river that runs in you and then there are rivers that flow out of you." Friend, unless you are tied to Christ and the power of the Holy Ghost is in you flooding through you, rivers, plural. You will never do any more than your flesh can do until you are tied to the wellspring of Christ. That's by faith and out of your innermost being flows rivers, plural, rivers of living water.