

Furnished Unto Good Works
2 Timothy 3:16-17
Bill Parker
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Open your Bibles with me to 2 Timothy chapter 3. A couple of weeks ago, I preached a message, and even the week before that, talking about good works. And I want to talk to you about that today. The title of the message is “Furnished Unto Good Works”, from 2 Timothy chapter 3. And I'm going to begin at verse 12 just to read, instead of reading the whole chapter. Not that the other words are unimportant, but it kind of sets things up here. But one of the things that I want to do, I want to preach the message. I want it to be simple, but I want you to understand how profound this is. and how important it is for us as believers to be well-versed, have it clear in our minds what these issues of good works are.

If you'll look at verse 12, Paul writes, he says, **“Yea, and all that will live godly...”** Godly living, now that includes good works, **“all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”** And that persecution we suffer is over the gospel. The gospel that we preach, the gospel that we live by, the gospel that we stand for, that which we witness. And he says, **“But evil men and seducers shall wax worse,”** they'll grow worse **“and worse, deceiving and being deceived.”** We've seen this in the book of Revelation, we've seen it all over the scripture, and Paul talked about it in the first part of this chapter. I do want to go back to this part in verse one, look back at verse one. **“This know also that in the last days,”** now that's the days of the new covenant, the church age that we're in now, and as we grow nearer and nearer to the second coming of Christ, he says **“perilous times shall come”**. Troublesome, perilous, the people of God will be in peril, that's what that means. And he says in verse two, **“For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection.”** Look at this, you can see it in our world, even in the religious world now. And understand that, don't relegate this only to what men and women by nature measure as immorality, that's part of it. And we certainly don't want to go along with that. But even in the highest religions, these things can be applied in a spiritual sense. You know, when we talk about fornication, for example, which is sex outside of marriage, you know, that's evil in God's sight. But there's also a worse thing called spiritual fornication. And that's worshiping of idols, preaching that which is wrong concerning Christ and His work, all of that. So understand that. That's how we develop a biblical view of things. And that's real important on this issue of good works, and I'll show you in just a minute. He says in verse three, **“Without natural affection”**, that would include things like homosexuality and things like that, it's unnatural. It's not according to how God created man and woman. **“...trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good.”** And in the Bible, we know that those who are good are sinners saved by grace. I'm going refer to this later on in Romans 3 in verse 11, where he says, **“there's none good, no, not one.”** What he's talking about there is us in our natural state before regeneration and conversion. And you know, God makes his people good in his sight through Christ. And we'll see that. But he says in verse four, **“traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness.”** They look on the outside, religious. Like the Pharisees, you do indeed appear righteous unto men, but inwardly, death. **“But denying the power thereof,”** because the power thereof is in the gospel, empowered by the spirit. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. So what he's saying is they will appear good and they will appear godly to people, that they'll deny the gospel. And that means everything. It's the gospel that sets us apart. The gospel of God's free and sovereign grace in Christ. How God saves sinners by His grace through the merits of the glorious person and

finished work of Christ. Not conditioned on us, but conditioned on Christ. The righteousness of God in Christ. ***“Denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”*** He says, ***“For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,”***

Now this kind of language is unpopular in our culture today because we want to say, well, there's no difference between men and women. But there's a big difference. I got news for you. News flash. There's a big difference. And it's not any inequality in intelligence, now there is an inequality in power. I mean, strength. Debbie and I were talking about this yesterday. We were working outside in the yard. I realize right now she could whip me. You know, I carry this (a cane) around. But there's a big difference and we don't need to act as if there's not. And in the church especially, men are to hold the positions of authority, and women are to be subservient. Now, women have a very important place now, needed. Godly women, you know, the Bible talks about that, and that's what Paul's talking about. But anyway, most false religion, a lot of false religion is led by women. Because it's emotionalism and not truth. I know that's offensive to a lot of people, but I'm sorry, I'm preaching the Bible. You live in whatever world you want to live in. I'm living by the word of God. But this is what he's saying.

There's perilous times. And it's gonna grow worse and worse and worse as we near the end of this world. But now look at verse 14 now. Here's what Paul says to this young man Timothy. ***“But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures,”*** You see, any learning concerning salvation, concerning a right relationship with God, and any activity, any walk that is not consistent with the Holy Scriptures is bad, evil. So he says, you've known the Holy Scriptures, that's the written word of God, ***“which are able to make thee wise unto salvation,”*** and we know that that's by the power of the Spirit sent by God under the preaching of the gospel. Christ is the wisdom, the righteousness, the sanctification, and the redemption that God has given us, through faith which is in Christ Jesus, God-given faith. And the first message that I preached on this was Ephesians 2: 8, 9, and 10. ***“For by grace are you saved through faith, that not of yourselves, it's the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast, for we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works.”*** Not because of good works. Unto good works, that's the result, the fruit, the effect, the product, ***“which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”*** And so he says in verse 16, ***“all scripture is given by inspiration of God.”*** You know that means literally, God breathed. This is the word of God. It's ***“profitable for doctrine.”*** Where do I get my doctrine from? Do I get it from some creed? Or do I get it from God's word? We talk about the doctrine of grace, the doctrine of sovereign grace. That's the word of God. I know people throw these terms around and a lot of people don't understand them. You hear the term Arminianism and you hear the term Calvinism. And Arminianism is the term of free will, works-based religion. Calvinism is a sovereign grace of God. But we didn't get our doctrine from a guy named Jacob Arminius. And we don't get our doctrine from a man named John Calvin. We get our doctrine right here from the word of God. And that's what we're talking about. Profitable ***“for reproof.”*** That's when we need to be disciplined. Are you a disciple of Christ? Disciple means discipline, doesn't it? And then ***“for correction,”*** when we need to be corrected, like children. That's what chastisement is about. It's the correction of our father to his children. It's an act of love. ***“For instruction in righteousness”***. Now that's important. What do I know about righteousness? I know what the word of God teaches. And what does it teach me? It teaches me that the only way that I can stand before a holy God and be counted righteous is through the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed, charged, accounted, credited to me. That's my justification.

10:24: And then it says in verse 17, now here's my main text, **"that the man of God,"** that's a sinner saved by grace, a justified person, born again by the Spirit, **"may be perfect."** The word perfect there means complete. We want to be complete believers. **"thoroughly"** or thoroughly furnished, equipped. That's what that means. **"Unto"**, not because of, not by or out of, but **"unto all good works."** Furnished unto good works. Now let me say this about good works, that word good, works, all of that. And I'm going to give you some statements here and I'll ask some questions that we're going to answer. And I want this to be prevalent on the minds of every true believer, because this is important for us. This is the way we live, the way we act, by faith in Christ. And the first thing that we need to see about this issue of good works is what we're talking about. Number one is works that are good, not according to man's standard, but works that are good according to God's standard. Do you understand that? Man has his standard of goodness and it's way lower than God's standard of goodness. In other words, it has to be good as God declares it and accepts it as He instructs in His Word.

Now let me give you an example of what I'm talking about. Two people can do the same act. Let's say an act of charity. Right now, because of the disasters that have taken place in Georgia and in Florida and North Carolina and South Carolina, people are giving money, and that's great, to help those people. They need help. And if you donate to give money to help people, that's something that you should do. So two people can do the same act of charity, for example, and for one, in God's sight now, it's evil deeds. It's dead works. It's fruit unto death. Well, does that mean that they shouldn't do that? No, they should give the money, but they should do it in a different way, for a different reason, and that's what we're going to get into. For the other, in God's sight, it's good works. Acceptable unto God, fruit unto God. Now, what's the difference? Well, look with me over in John chapter three. I've got a lot of scripture with this, but I'm not going to be able to turn to all of them. But I want you to see this. John chapter three. What's the difference? Well, one person whose works of charity are evil deeds, fruit unto death, that's a person who is a servant of sin. Now, what is a servant of sin? Well, is that's the immoral people of the world? No, a servant of sin is an unbeliever. Now think about that.

Look at John chapter 3 and verse 18. It says, **"he that believeth on him,"** that is Christ, **"is not condemned."** If you believe on Christ, you're not condemned. Now that state of justification - You're justified if you're in Christ - That didn't come about because you believe. You believe because you were already justified in God's sight. But if you don't believe, that gives evidence that you're in a state of condemnation. Now what that's talking about is people who are in unbelief and continue on through their lives and die in unbelief. That's what that's talking about. If you'll jump over to verse 36, listen to this, John 3:36. **"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."** If you believe, that's a sign of life, spiritual life. You've been born again by the Spirit. **"And he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."** That's a non-elect, it's a reprobate. Going through this life, he may be religious, sincere, he may give all his money to charity, all of that, but if you don't have Christ, if you don't have his blood to wash away your sins and his righteousness to justify it, the wrath of God abides on you. Now that's so. And our prayer is when we see unbelievers. and we have opportunity to witness the gospel, our prayer is that God will bring them to faith in Christ and repentance and we find out they're not condemned. They're not under the wrath of God. They're justified in Christ. We'll go back to verse 18 now. **"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he had not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."** What he's showing us there is our state in this world has to do with our relationship with Christ. I'll tell you, you know, the Bible says without faith it's all sin. And verse 19 says, **"this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world."** Well, what is that light? That's Christ. That's the gospel of how God saves sinners. **"and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil."**

16:40 Think about Christ speaking to the Pharisees of His day. The Pharisees were the ultra moral and religious people as others saw them. Even Christ said you appear righteous outwardly, but inwardly it's death. The Bible says the spirit convicts us of sin because we believe not on him. Here Christ came and they thought they were okay, they thought they were righteous by their works, and he tells them no, that's no good. That'll be your death, that'll be your condemnation. The only way of righteousness and goodness in God's sight is through Christ, who is our righteousness. And all your attempts to make yourself so, to save yourself by your works, are evil deeds. You say, well, what's evil about it? It denies the glory of God. It denies the glorious person and finished work of Christ. It's an act of religious pride. It's an act of unbelief. And he says in verse 20, he says, **"for everyone that doeth evil, hateth the light."** They hate the gospel. They hate the light of Christ. **"neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved,"** exposed. You see, the gospel of Christ, when it's preached or right, exposes the works of men and women aimed at trying to save themselves, their evil deeds. Their dead works. But now look at verse 21. **"But he that doeth truth"** Notice the way that's put. He didn't say he that doeth good works, but now that would be included. To do truth is to what? It's to believe in Christ. And that's a gift from God. You're not going to do that on your own. **"He that doeth truth cometh to the light."** We enjoy hearing the gospel, preaching the righteousness of God in Christ, and showing us that our works have absolutely nothing to do with saving us, or keeping us saved, or bringing us to glory. I love to hear that. You do too. Because we know the truth. We do truth. And it says, **"he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest"**, made known, **"that they are"**: what? Look at that. **"wrought in God."** In other words, it's God doing that work through us. Philippians chapter 2:13 says, **"for it is God that worketh in you to do his will and his good pleasure."** That's the reality of it. We have the Spirit of God who has brought us to the truth of the gospel.

Look over at 1 John 3. Here's talking about Cain and Abel. Cain was rejected. What did he do? He brought his works, the works of his hands to God for acceptance. Abel was accepted. What did he do? He brought the blood of the Lamb, which pictured Christ. And it says in verse 11 of 1 John 3, **"For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 12 Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore (or why) slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous."** Now what was righteous about Abel's work? It's the Lamb, it's Christ. See? The only righteousness that we have before God is Christ; the merits of his obedience unto death, the glory of his person, the power of his finished work. So, going back to God's standard of goodness: one person's works are accepted, ones are rejected. Well, that one who's rejected, he's a servant of sin, lost, unbelieving, unregenerate, not born again, with evil motives, legalism, fear of punishment, promise of mercenary earned rewards and evil goals. It's not to glorify God and to honor God. The other who is accepted, he's a servant of righteousness. Now to be a servant of righteousness is to be a servant of Christ: walking by the grace of God, saved by God's grace, born again by the Spirit, which evidences that they've been justified before God, forgiven of all their sins on the ground and basis of the blood of Jesus Christ, not because of anything we do or don't do. Declared righteous in God's sight, again, based upon the obedience unto death, the merits of Christ, not based upon what we do or don't do. We've been given a new heart, A new spirit, new motives, good motives. What are the motives? Grace, love, and gratitude. We'll talk about that in just a moment. All of that by the grace of God.

Now, go back to our text, 2 Timothy chapter three. What's Paul's point here about these good works and all of salvation? And here's the thing. Everything we need to be saved, everything we need to be kept, preserved under glory, has already been furnished for us by God in His grace through Christ. All these things for a believer have been furnished. You know what that means. That means you're equipped already. That means you've got everything that's

required and needed. Have you ever rented a furnished apartment? That means you don't have to bring your own furniture. If you ever go to a furnished supper, that means you don't have to bring your own food. It's already there. That's what the gospel is. There's a metaphor in the Old Testament about a furnished table. Everything's been prepared. Come dine, come eat. Don't bring your own dishes. That'd be evil deeds. It's all been furnished for you by God in Christ and we didn't furnish any of it. Salvation is of the Lord. And good works are the fruit, the product, the result of that which has already been furnished. Is that sealed in your heart and mind? To do good works, acceptable of God. We're not trying to earn anything from God. Yes, we want to be blessed of God, not because we earn it, but because this is the way God freely and fully furnishes it. So before there can be any good works, there's got to be a furnishing.

Go back to Romans chapter six. The last time I preached on this subject, I took you to this verse, but I want you to see it again. Romans chapter six and chapter seven. And it's really important that we have this sealed in our minds. He's talking about a believer's identification with Christ in his death, his burial, his resurrection. Christ as our representative, Christ as our surety, Christ as our substitute, so much so that when He died, I died. Now I didn't die literally, I wasn't there with Him on the cross, but I was there with Him, He as my representative, He as my surety, my sins having been imputed to Him, His righteousness to me. I was with him, he was my substitute. He died for his sheep. Am I one of his sheep? Well, what does he say? My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me. That's the gospel. I was with him as my substitute, as my redeemer. I'm with him now as my intercessor, my protector and preserver. And so he says, In verse 6, look at Romans 6, "**Knowing this, that our old man** (our old identification with Adam in his sin and death) **is crucified with him** (Christ)", My sins were laid upon Christ, and He put them away, "**that the body of sin might be destroyed,**" everything that sin is, and "**that henceforth we should not serve sin,**" 7 "**for he that is dead is** (justified) **freed from sin.**" Our justification is already furnished for us by God through Christ. We don't do any good works in order to be justified. Now I'm going to talk about, Lord willing, next week in the book of James where James says that we're justified by works. James is not talking about this subject here. He's talking about a different subject altogether. And we'll talk about that next week. I have already furnished for me by the grace of God in Christ, all the righteousness that God requires and that I need to save me and bring me to glory. That's grace. Reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

26:51 And then I have furnished for me before I can do any good works, spiritual life from the dead in the new birth. Look at verse 17 of Romans six. He says, "**But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin,**" that is in unbelief, unregenerate, not born again, spiritually dead and totally depraved, "**but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine**" (that's the gospel) "**which was delivered you**" (or you were delivered to) 18 "**being then made free from sin**", that is liberated, it doesn't mean that we're not sinners still, we are, but we're not condemned, we're not deceived unto unbelief, "**ye became the servants of righteousness.**" And it's only the servants of righteousness who can do good works. That means a servant of Christ.

Look down at chapter seven, verse four. Now listen to this. This supports the point that I'm making. "**Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ;**" Now what is it to be dead to the law? It means the law cannot condemn us for our sins. "**There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ.**" We cannot be condemned. "**Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It's God that justifies.**" You realize that? Doesn't that just thrill you? I mean, we deserve to be condemned, and we've earned it, but we cannot be condemned. We are righteous in God's sight. And you can't tell that by looking at me. Because I'm a dying man. And if you watched me throughout the week, there'd be plenty of times I'm sure you'd say, "you're righteous?" I'm telling you the truth. Dead

to the law. But how did I get that way? Not by my good works, not by my morality, by the body of Christ. That's his death on the cross. ***"That you should be married to another,"*** united to him spiritually. We've been united to Christ representatively before the foundation of the world as our surety. And when he came to earth to die on the cross under the law, we were united to him as our substitute, our surety, and our redeemer. But when we're married to him, it says, ***"even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."*** Now that's the good works. The fruit unto God. And that's what this furnishing unto good works means. Our salvation, totally in him. Look at verse five. ***"For when we were in the flesh,"*** when we were servants of sin, unbelievers, unregenerate, ***"the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work on our members to bring forth fruit unto death."*** That's man's religious moral activities aimed at saving themselves, aimed at making themselves righteous.

Verse six, ***"But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit"*** That's good works, serving in newness of spirit. What is that newness of spirit? It's motivated by grace. Motivated by gratitude. Motivated by faith and love. ***"And not in oldness of the letter."*** That oldness of the letter is legalism. So before there's any good works, there's gotta be a furnishing. And God furnished it all for our justification. God furnished it all for our sanctification. Good works don't sanctify us. They don't make us holier. But our works are sanctified, set apart for God, by God. That's furnished too. Our new birth, our spiritual life, that's been furnished because that's according to God's power and grace, not ours.

Remember John 1:12-13. He talks about those who have received Christ. It didn't come by their fleshly inheritance. It's not by blood, not by the will of the flesh. and not by their works, and not by the will of man. It didn't come by their free will choice, but it came by of God. You have got to be born again. Well, how can I be born again? God has to do it. He furnishes it. He gives us a new heart. That's furnished. He gives us new life. That's furnished. He gives us a new mind and truth, faith, repentance, perseverance. That's all furnished. And that's what he's talking about, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto good works. Isn't that amazing? The unbeliever cannot do any good works before God, because all his works deny the glory of God, deny the grace of God, deny Christ and his righteousness.

You remember Paul in Philippians chapter three, he talked about all those works that men and women admired and that he thought recommended him unto God. When he saw the reality of God's grace in Christ and the personal work of Christ, he said, I count it all but loss, even dung, that I may win Christ and be found in him. Well, what are these good works? What are they? There are people who say that good works are only those related to witnessing the gospel, preaching the gospel, and nothing outside of that. But that's not true. These good works are any action, activity, performed by a sinner saved by grace, justified already, sanctified already, born again, to the praise of the glory of God's grace, And let me say this right now. You've heard people say this. They say, well I'm no judge, but I'm a fruit inspector. That makes me sick. It's not my business to track your good works, and it's not your business to track mine. It's not our business to keep a count. How many good works did I do today? Did I do enough? Let me make this statement to you and let me explain. Good works are important, but they don't count for anything. What do you mean? Our account before God is the imputed righteousness of Christ, not our works. And having been found in Christ at the judgment will be a declaration that our works were accepted with God. Not because of any merit, Not because they contribute to the righteousness that Christ has already furnished me. You see? So it's not our business to go around tracking. That's self-righteous, that's all that is. Well, you haven't done enough good works today. Well, how do you know? That's religion. And it's bad. Somebody says, have I done enough? Enough for what? I know you haven't done enough to save you. I know you haven't done enough to make yourself righteous. None of us have. It's all by the grace of God. And then

another subtle heresy. Some try to gain their assurance by measuring their works. You may have heard the term lordship salvation. That's what that is. It's trying to gain assurance by looking at myself and my work. Well, that's evil. Assurance is to be gained not by looking at yourself and your work. Assurance is to be gained by looking to Christ, the author and finisher or furnisher of our faith. ***“Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.”*** Furnished unto good works. We can talk about acts of charity, acts of kindness, you can go through the scriptures and I'm going to do some more of this. But what are these good works for? What are they for? That classic passage, you don't have to turn there, I'll quote it for you. Matthew 5:16, I quote it all the time. ***“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, (and do what?) and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”*** That's what good works are for. They're not to draw attention to you. They're not to try to gain the key of the city from the mayor or get your name on a statue or something. They're to glorify God. And what is that light? The light is not the good works. The light is the gospel of Christ, who is our light. When anybody sees us do a work that is good in God's sight, acceptable in Christ now, not on its own merit, And they bring it to our attention. They say, “I saw you do that for that person. You gave some money and helped that person. I know you're a Christian now.” What are you going to tell them? That doesn't make me a Christian. And I'm glad I did it. I'm glad I had the ability to do it. I'm glad I have the heart to do it. But that's not my salvation. My salvation is the good works of another, the Lord Jesus Christ. Let your light shine, see? That's what that's about. Good works are not to merit righteousness, not to contribute to our righteousness, they're not for justification, they're not for sanctification, but they're to glorify God in Christ. And we'll talk about some more of this in the next message that I bring on this. Lord willing, if I'm here. I hope that's helpful to you. These are the things I believe have to be sealed in our minds as believers.