Sermon Summary: 'Self-controlled, upright and godly lives' - Dowega Lewin-McKinley

This sermon focused on **Titus 2**, emphasizing that Christian faith must be demonstrated through **godly character, self-control, integrity, and practical obedience** in everyday life.

1. Responding to Conviction with Obedience

The speaker began with a personal example of discovering their car tax had expired. Although it was inconvenient, they chose to stop driving until the issue was resolved rather than continue knowingly breaking the law. This illustrated an important spiritual principle:

- When God reveals wrongdoing in our lives, we face a choice.
- We can ignore conviction because change is uncomfortable, or we can respond in obedience.
- God's grace is not permission to continue in sin; it is the strength to change.
- Conviction is an expression of God's love, not His rejection.

Drawing from James 4:17 and 1 Corinthians 10:13, the speaker reminded the church that God always provides a way to do what is right and gives believers the strength to resist temptation.

2. The Message of Titus

The sermon explored the background of Titus. Paul left Titus in Crete to strengthen young churches, appoint leaders, teach sound doctrine, and encourage godly living in a culture known for:

- Rebellion
- Greed
- Deceit
- Laziness

These attitudes threatened church unity, credibility, and spiritual growth.

3. Character Issues That Damage the Church

The speaker explained how each of these behaviours affects Christian communities:

Rebellion

- Resisting correction, authority, or God's instruction.
- Creates division and hinders growth.

Greed

- A self-centred desire for more.
- Undermines generosity and genuine service.

Deceit

- Misrepresenting truth for personal gain.
- Destroys trust and damages the church's witness.

Laziness

- Avoiding responsibilities and failing to serve.
- Places burdens on others and limits what God can accomplish through the church.

The congregation was challenged to consider: *"Am I placing unfair burdens on others and limiting the good that could be accomplished?"*

4. A Vision for a Healthy Church

The speaker invited the church to imagine what would happen if everyone committed themselves fully to godly character and service.

Responses included:

- Less pressure on church leaders.
- Greater unity and joy.
- Every member functioning like parts of a clock working together, creating something beautiful and effective.

5. Living Faith in Everyday Life

Just as Titus was constantly observed, Christians today are watched in their daily lives.

People notice:

- How we react when corrected.
- How we treat family members.
- How we handle conflict and inconvenience.
- Whether our actions match our beliefs.

When believers display truth, grace, repentance, integrity, and self-control, they give credibility to the gospel.

6. Instructions for Different Groups in the Church

Using Titus 2, the sermon highlighted responsibilities for different groups:

Older Men

They are called to:

- Be self-controlled and spiritually mature.
- Grow in faith, love, and patience.
- Mentor younger men through honesty, wisdom, and personal example.
- Create a safe space where younger men can seek help without shame.

Older Women

They are called to:

- Live reverently.
- Avoid gossip, slander, and drunkenness.
- Demonstrate Christ through their words, behaviour, and attitudes.
- Build relationships with younger women and guide them with patience and compassion.

The speaker strongly emphasised guarding the tongue, encouraging believers to ask before speaking:

- Is it true?
- Is it necessary?
- Is it loving?
- Would I say it if the person was present?

Younger Women

Older women are encouraged to support them through:

- Friendship and mentoring.
- Practical help.
- Prayer and encouragement.
- Guidance through family and life challenges.

Younger Men

They should:

- Be self-controlled and sober-minded.
- Demonstrate integrity and good works.
- Avoid distractions and passions that pull them away from God.
- Follow godly examples.

7. Supporting Church Leadership

The sermon encouraged the congregation to respect and support church leaders.

Rather than resisting leadership simply because of personal preferences, believers should:

- Pray for their leaders.
- Trust God's guidance through them.
- Serve alongside them.
- Help strengthen the church's ministry.

8. Grace Produces Godly Living

A central theme of Titus 2 is that God's grace not only saves us but also teaches us to:

- Reject ungodliness.
- Resist worldly desires.
- Live righteous and self-controlled lives.

This transformation happens as the Holy Spirit:

- Renews our minds.
- Shapes our character.
- Applies God's Word to daily life.

9. Living in Hope of Christ's Return

Because Jesus will return, believers should live with purpose and enthusiasm.

The church was challenged to ask:

- Am I eager to please God?
- Am I enthusiastic about serving others?
- If I've lost that enthusiasm, what needs to change?

Christians are called to be:

- Generous
- Truthful
- Forgiving
- Encouraging
- Service-oriented
- Ready to meet practical needs

Main Takeaway

The core message of the sermon was that **godly character matters**. Salvation is a gift of grace, but genuine faith should produce a life marked by self-control, humility, repentance, service, and love. Christians are called not merely to believe the gospel but to live in a way that makes Christ visible to others, strengthens the church, and brings glory to God.