

# Kings Norton Baptist Church

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2022 10 am

Active for Jesus.

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Welcome to all

Opening Scripture

Hymn MP 476 My Lord what love is this

Scripture Isaiah 54:1-10 (page 741)

Prayer

Children's talk The 'Too' film of someone's life

Notices Conversion T, HG at 33 WHR, Joyce, CW, T&I

Hymn MP 326 Immanuel, O Immanuel

Sharing and prayer time

Reading Matthew 20:1-16 (p.987), Titus 3:12-15 (Page 1199)

Hymn We praise thee O God for the Son of thy love (Bulletin)

Sermon Active for Jesus

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.”  
Ro 12:1

ymn MP 162 From heaven you came helpless babe

Closing Prayer:

Close \_\_\_\_\_



## Welcome and pray

- As a boy at school I remember a visit to the 200 year old London stock exchange. Ever been there? That was before the 'big bang', the deregulation in 1986 which ended what was known as the "open outcry" and replaced it with electronic trading. Before that there was much noise, Jobbers and brokers purposely rushing around, there was a buzz, a hive of activity driven by the strong desire to do the best they could for the one they represented.

That is in a way how churches should be. Not busy investing to make money but busy for the Kingdom, working and investing for the Lord.

- In the C19 an American reporter visiting the Met Tab church evening by evening found to his surprise an unexpected scene. The basement and rooms of the building were constantly alive with activity. Groups assembled for District visitation, prayer gatherings, ragged school classes, Sunday school preparations and prayer and a host of other activities.
- There were many special ministries, such as the literature distribution, many worked away at making things to give to the poor or the women's ministry to provide material support for poor ministers, suits, shoes, bibles commentaries etc. Spurgeon's wife running a scripture and clothing programme for poor ministers.
- In his visit he had discovered a working church. The teaching laid the foundations for all the work. College training of 1000's of ministers resulting in more than 200 churches planted, not to mention the orphanages. It was a hive of activity for the Lord.

This morning we are looking in at, getting a glimpse of, a working church.

Our text is Titus 3:12-15. It is the postscript, a final set of instructions, and like the epilogue in a book it is easy to 'speed read' these end parts, or overlook them as one does with the greyed strip at the bottom of a webpage. Don't do that, here we look in on Christians active in their faith.

A Christian's faith is an active faith, that is doing things for the Lord, going places for the Lord, and for Him, helping and providing for others.

- ✚ This is "faith in action". There is no genuine faith - without action.

- My next door neighbor loves sport especially football, but he is an arm chair enthusiast, If it's not the telly it's Talk Sport Radio. He always has a comment to make about the performance of others.
- There may be Talk Sport, but there is no Talk Faith x2

Here we meet Artemas, and Apollus, Zenas and Tychicus. But don't forget there's Paul and Titus. It's more than 6 a side though, there are many others.

Look at the previous page 2 Tim 4:19 and there's another 9. Look at the next page in Philemon and there are another 5. So there's already 20 people. Turn to Romans 16, (page 1142) and there are 35 mentioned. In fact, there are about 60 people in all that Paul mentions in his thirteen letters.

Here in this passage there are two people coming, one leaving, two others travelling through. This is all for the kingdom, things are happening, there's activity, focused activity.

So don't skip over this section as less important. Here you see the way the teaching of the letter is worked out in the life of the church. Here is the 'GO' of our faith. Here are the runners in the race of faith, like all those in the list of Faith in Hebrews 11 - who were commended for what they did.

✚ Faith must = action, it is not passive but active.

James reminds the church **As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.** Jas 2:26

James went on to say that **Abraham was considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.**" Jas 2:21-22

In this passage Titus 3 v12 we have faith which is **active in going**, in v 13 Faith which is **active in helping** and v14 Faith that is **active in providing**.

### **Active in going**

**As soon as I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, because I have decided to winter there.**

Paul is calling Titus to join him in Nicopolis (a Greek port town in mainland Europe) to help him in the work. Paul, a strategic planner calls for Titus.

As for Artemas there's no mention of him anywhere else. Tychicus is often spoken of; - and spoken of highly - by the apostle, Paul says in Eph 6:21 **"Tychicus is a dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord."**

Both were ministers of the Gospel, and Paul who was overseeing the churches being planted, would not remove a minister from one place to another, without making a provision and provide a replacement. Continuity is important: Artemas and Tychicus are coming to Crete, but they're not on

Holiday (it is fine to have a holiday by the way) They are coming to take over while Titus heads off to assist Paul. Here are people busy in the Lord's work, here are people running the race.

Motto text, "Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us"

What is going on here? Titus is not the fixed pastor but a church planter. The church is young and in need of pastoral oversight – A church always is!

Pastors moving on or retiring leave big gaps, unless there's a healthy eldership they are leaving the church rudderless and unprotected. One retiring Pastor said *"The church will have some time to hear what the Lord is saying to them"*. Sounds good but what the Lord is saying to them is what he has already said, what he said 20 years ago, 100 years ago and what he will be saying in 20 years' time. The Pastors role is to enact and apply it. If we fulfill our duties properly there should be no change in how the church is when one pastor goes and another comes. Ken Mullis delayed his departure from here until there was a replacement lined up. To leave a flock, those we purport to love, shepherd-less because it doesn't suit my plan is the height of irresponsibility.

Because of Paul's concern to make sure this does not happen the church in Crete he **sends Artemas or Tychicus** there. They are going there. Titus will then go to Nicopolis. All so that the work of the Gospel will continue.

For Christ's church to be strengthened and continue it will mean going. Maybe not across the world, but maybe somewhere, even across the road.

✚ An obedient faith is an active faith.

In Isaiah 6 we read: **Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And Isaiah said, "Here am I. Send me!"** Isa 6:8

Can you say that? Will you say that? Think of Jesus who left heaven and said **"I have come to do your will Oh Lord"**. If he is your Lord could you now not now say to him **"I am willing send me"**

**"Lord Jesus after all you have done for me, help me to be zealous for you"**

It may be that you don't go, you help others go.

■ Like a wife preparing the lunch for her husband as he goes to work, - or on mission somewhere.

✚ Last week we were reminded that every true Christian is an Ambassador. An ambassador is away from home serving their masters in another country, a foreign land, so every Christian is in this world.

### *Active in going - now active in helping*

v13 **Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need.**

Here we have Zenas the Lawyer, in our day Lawyers are pretty well healed, they need little assistance! Perhaps Zenas is a different type of lawyer, perhaps he specializes on the Mosaic Law, this would certainly make him good company for Apollus a Jew born at Alexandria. He is described in Acts 18:24 **as a learned man with a thorough knowledge of the scriptures.**

Paul says the church there should **help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need.** **Help** them

We don't know the details of their journey, where from or where to, but that doesn't really matter the point is they are here - and they are in the Lord's work. My job is to help them the best I can – how much? To **see that they have everything they need** x2. Like the man on another journey who was helped by the Samaritan, helped by someone who you would think the most unlikely one to help. He helped him with everything he needed.

BCM Intern sitting on a wall outside a messianic church (the door locked) was helped and provided for by an Asian family across the road who came with tea, then invited in for meal and then give her £20 for a taxi because there were no buses running, and followed up.

I know that is rare – so it stands out - but what a challenge that is to us.

In those days helping them on their way is not waving goodbye as you stand at the door as they leave - but going with them part of the way, probably some distance with them along the road.

- We still have the legacy of this when we wait to see the person is safely on the road before we close the front door.
- Often today you leave someone's house and the door is closed bang before you are halfway out of the porch!

This escorting, this helping of travellers was a major part of CE 1<sup>st</sup> life and a sweet reminder of the grace of helping one another. Today in our developed technological age we are told we can take care of everything ourselves.

Where is the scope for helping others? **Doing good** is the major theme of the letter. 1:8 an elder is to show hospitality and love **what is good** as an example to the flock. 2:3 Titus is to **teach what is good** and **set an example by doing what is good** 2:7 so that Christians for whom Christ died are **eager to do what is good**. 2:14 God's people we are told in 3:1 are to be obedient

and ready **to do whatever is good** Tit 3:8 says that a mark that someone **has trusted in God is that we devote ourselves to doing what is good.**

And here in Tit 3:14 right at the end he sums up by saying again **Our people must learn to devote themselves to - doing what is good**

It requires an **eye** for the needs of others, and a **heart** to help or **vice versa**?

20 years ago, Valdir a Christian brother from Brazil said one of the things that stuck with him was the quickness for KNBC to welcome him, largely unknown to us - to stay in the house. It was rare to see it.

John says in 3 Jo 1:6 **They have told the church about your love. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. Worthy of God!!**

So we must never say “have a good journey as they head off with empty bags”. No we must welcome and assist others, a mark of a Christian's love for God. This having enough to provide for needs is seen in verse 14

*Active in going, active in helping, active in providing.*

**Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, - in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives.**

So we should have something to give - or some means to provide.

The Jews had a saying: he who does not teach his son a trade, is as one as if he taught him to rob or steal”. Hence their teachers were brought up to learn trades. The Apostle Paul, though he was an academic with an education under the celebrated Rabbi Gamaliel still had a trade; tent making. Why? So as to be able to maintain himself with what is necessary,

**“You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions.”** Ac 20:34. Paul had a trade to supply his family; to assist others in need; to support the Gospel often relieving poor saints from whom he would normally expect support.

✚ Christianity is not a fruitless profession; once we profess faith - the proof of it is to be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

**“Lord Jesus after all you have done for me, help me to be zealous for you”**

*Let's pull this together*

✚ They were: Active in going, Active in helping, Active in providing

Faith needs to be active – like software you must activate it to get it working. Although you download software - you can't download faith.

It is not enough that we as Christians avoid evil - we must be active in doing good, that is what the Lord did - it is '**JIM**' **Jesus in me** that stirs us up to act.

Jesus is described as one who went around **doing good**. – we his followers are to do the same. In the story of the good Samaritan Jesus answers the expert in the law by telling him to "**Go and do likewise**." Lu 10:37

Jesus showed how we should live, he continued to the point of exhaustion in teaching and helping the people he saw. Let us **go and do likewise**. That is the way the God is honoured, and the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus is built.

✚ If Jesus lived like this and he is now in me - how can I not do likewise?

Didn't Jesus say: "**If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me**." Lu 9:23

Deny self, put behind me my wants for Christ's - take up my cross daily what does that mean? To do what the Lord has determined for you. The Cross was Jesus's great work, he had his - you have yours, that is showing that you follow Him, His will, not mine, His way not mine, going where he sends you. It is the seal of my faith as being genuine. Stamp

✚ You can 'do good' without genuine faith – but you cannot have genuine faith without 'doing good' x2

There is the test - that is how we see genuine faith, - Paul challenges the listener to examine himself to see whether or not you are in the faith??

■ In other words - If you were arrested for being a Christian would they find enough evidence to convict you? Would they?

Coming to church once a week, for some less. And the rest of the week? for some who profess faith would there be any evidence of serving the Lord they profess to love and follow?

We are all doing something each day, if it is not for the Lord and his kingdom - then it must be for me or someone else.

Mt 12:30 "**He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters**. also Lu 11:23 **We are either builders or breakers**.

✚ As we used to say "if you are not part of the answer you are part of the problem."

In the list most are positive examples, those who had run well - But not all, some haven't, some are mentioned for us not to copy but as a warning, No-one can serve two masters. Here we see some busy for the Lord. But some are busy against the Lord.

**Demas, Diotrophes** (3 Jo) They are not building but breaking Paul warns about them in v10. Those who end up being divisive.

The parable of the workers in the vineyard, though primarily about God's generosity reminds us that all Christians are called to worker in God's vineyard.

If you are not - then confess to the Lord - turn from that way to His way and seek forgiveness and help through the **Cross**.

Christ left heaven, entered this world and through the giving up of his own perfect life made a way of salvation from the judgment to come.

Now he is calling you and I to deny self, take up my cross daily and follow him. **As he has been active for me - I must now be active for him**

Not only Godly in my character but working that out in: serving, going, helping, providing.

**I am Saved to serve** - If Christ died for me I cannot now get up in the morning and plan my day with no thought of what I can do for Him.

No more making excuses, that is the end of "Sorry I'm not available"

■ Wes coming into the church building at 9pm on Sat evening to find an elderly lady on her knees reaching into the recesses of a cupboard. She is looking for 'Oasis' (that green stuff). He said if only some of the other women who struggle to find an hour once a week on Sunday could be here to see this lady's servant heart.

Last week we heard that true followers are Christ's ambassadors. We are those who make an effort to speak to people, find out we can help and when possible bring the truth of the gospel to them praying that they will be saved

■ The KNBC membership list is an 'active members' list

Do all of this and you are running well - **When I look back I can easily see I am my most happiest and content when working for the Lord, it is in serving we are so closely aligned to the Lord and know His Joy**

Let us not in our running flag or lose momentum, being active for the Lord means we will **run with perseverance the race marked out for us**.

**"Lord Jesus after all you have done for me, help me to be zealous for you"**

Let us be that working church, busy for the Lord, and let us encourage each other in this – as was happening there in the church in Crete all those years ago – So we see at the end - **Everyone with me sends you greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.**" Titus 3:15 \_\_\_\_\_END