

Summary

This sermon introduces a four-week series on 'Living Differently' based on the book of Titus. Pastor Mike explains that after salvation, Christians are called to live differently than they did before accepting Christ. The message focuses on Titus 1:1-9, where Paul instructs Titus to appoint elders in Crete and outlines 14 character qualities that should mark Christian leaders and all believers. These qualities include being blameless, not overbearing, not quick-tempered, hospitable, self-controlled, holy, disciplined, and holding firmly to God's word.

The context is important: Crete was known for corruption, lies, and immorality, yet Christians were called to shine like stars against this dark culture. Paul emphasizes that these aren't just standards for pastors but for all Christians. The sermon challenges believers to examine their lives and ask how they will live differently this week, relying not on their own strength but on the Holy Spirit's power to pursue these godly characteristics.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, as we gather together in this small group, we thank You for Your Word and the truth it contains. We ask that You would open our hearts and minds to receive what You want to teach us today. Help us to be honest with ourselves and with one another as we examine how You're calling us to live differently. Holy Spirit, guide our discussion and show each of us the specific areas where You want to work in our lives. May we leave this time encouraged and equipped to shine like stars in our world. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Ice Breaker

What's one positive change you've made in your life recently, whether big or small, that you're proud of?

Key Verses

1. Titus 1:1-9
2. 2 Corinthians 5:17
3. Ephesians 4:21-24
4. 1 Timothy 6:10

Questions

1. Paul describes Cretans as 'always liars, evil brutes and lazy gluttons,' yet he calls Christians there to live differently. What are some negative characteristics of our current culture that Christians should stand against?
2. The sermon lists 14 qualities that should mark a Christian's life. Which of these qualities do you find most challenging to live out, and why?

3. Paul emphasizes that these standards aren't just for pastors but for all Christians. How does this challenge the idea that there are different levels of Christian living?
4. The pastor mentions that Christians in Crete were called to 'shine like stars' against their dark culture. What does it look like for Christians to shine like stars in today's world?
5. How can we pursue these godly qualities without falling into legalism or trying to earn God's favor through good behavior?
6. The sermon emphasizes being 'hospitable' as loving strangers, even those different from us. In our polarized culture, how can Christians practice this kind of love?
7. What role does holding firmly to God's Word play in living differently? How can we do this while still showing love to those who disagree with biblical truth?
8. The pastor stressed that we cannot live these qualities in our own strength but need the Holy Spirit's power. How do we practically rely on the Holy Spirit in our daily lives?

Life Application

Choose one of the 14 qualities mentioned in the sermon that you feel God is calling you to work on this week. Write it down and identify one specific way you will pursue this quality in your daily life. Share this with someone who can pray for you and hold you accountable. Remember, this isn't about perfection but about pursuing godliness through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Key Takeaways

1. After salvation, Christians are called to live differently than they did before accepting Christ
2. The 14 qualities listed in Titus 1:6-9 are standards for all Christians, not just church leaders
3. Christians should shine like stars against the darkness of their culture by living countercultural lives
4. We cannot live these qualities in our own strength but must rely on the Holy Spirit's power
5. Living differently means pursuing godliness while showing love and hospitality even to those who are different from us

Ending Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for this time of fellowship and discussion around Your Word. We confess that we cannot live these qualities in our own strength, but we need Your Holy Spirit to transform us from the inside out. Help us to be people who live differently in our world - not to earn Your love, but because we are already loved by You. Give us courage to shine like stars in the darkness around us, showing Your love and truth to a world that desperately needs You. May our lives this week reflect the character qualities You've outlined in Your Word. We commit to pursuing godliness and ask for Your grace when we fall short. In Your precious name we pray, Amen.