Chapter & verse – Derek Estill (page 24)
Read Titus 3:1-11, followed by Derek Estill’s article.

1. The article’s first paragraph suggests that giving money to people less fortunate than ourselves is one way of putting Christian faith into action. Can you think of any problems that giving money can cause? Are there right or wrong ways to give?

2. Paul tells Titus ‘to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarrelling, to be gentle, and to show every courtesy to everyone’. What other rules would you add for Christians to adhere to today? Would you change or remove any of Paul’s rules for Titus?

3. To quote from Derek’s second paragraph: ‘Help is needed more and more – even in the UK, which has the fifth largest economy in the world. What does that say about our society?’ What does it say? And, as Derek asks in the third paragraph: ‘Have we got our priorities wrong?’

4. Summarising the Bible text, Derek highlights that anyone ‘could easily and unexpectedly fall foul of circumstances beyond our control, rendering us in need of help’. Who do you know that needs help today? Do you know of people that need help but might be perceived as not needing help?

5. The biblical text reminds us that God loves and saves us ‘not because of any works of righteousness ... but according to his mercy’. Is this a comforting, or troubling prospect? What are the incentives of doing good works? Who benefits?

6. In paragraph six, Derek talks about the challenge of building up a Christian community against the odds. Do you agree that encouraging Christian communities is a challenge? What are the challenges, and how can we meet them?

7. Derek ends the article saying: ‘By living out the love of God in all we do and say, we become custodians of [God’s love]’. How is your community living out God’s love? Can you think of examples in wider society?
For further reflection: ‘Take good care to ... love the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to keep his commandments, and to hold fast to him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.’ Joshua 22:5

Prayer: Father, who gives unstintingly the things that we need in order to thrive and grow, make us generous and wise givers we pray. Help us, together, in all we do, to live out your love. Amen.