



Titus: Introduction

Titus 1:1-4

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thanks, men, for the workday.

Prayer for ISRAEL

BIBLE PASSAGE

Titus 1:1-4 (NKJV - New King James Version)

¹ Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness,

² in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,

³ but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior;

⁴ To Titus, a true son in our common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.

ILLUSTRATION

Some of you have the keen ability to see details that everyone else misses. Maybe it's OCD, and maybe it's just a passion for excellence, but you're good at finding the things that don't quite fit.

My wife has that ability. She will see a picture that it is 1/16th of an inch crooked. Many of the things I do, if they have any modicum of excellence to them, are probably because after I was finished, my wife came behind me, pointed out something I missed, and encouraged me to finish the job.

That's not a criticism; it's a praise. Sometimes, it's difficult to hear when you've missed something or that you need to grow, expand, or fill in a gap in an area, but thankfully, there are people who care enough to see and act when something is falling up short.

APPLICATION

Paul was a man uniquely called and qualified as an apostle to have an eye for the church... not church building aesthetics, but the spiritual status and beauty of the church. Paul could praise areas of strength, and identify areas of weakness or repair.

- Paul was a man who started many churches during all his missionary journeys. While we don't know the exact number, the book of Acts tells us of at least 11 regions where he planted multiple churches.
- Not only did he plant these churches, he deeply cared about their ongoing spiritual health and safety. In Acts 13:56, we read, "**Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, 'Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.'**"
- Paul was an apostle with a pastor's heart. When recounting his many apostolic trials and burdens, Paul tells the Corinthians, "***In addition to all these things, my daily concern for all the churches.***"
- Paul cared about the church but realized he was only one man. The church needed **structure, leaders, traditions, and sound doctrine and practices** to keep them grounded in the truth and effective for the Lord.
- This is why Paul was always invested in others, raising them up to be those who would care for the church.

- Two of those men were **Timothy** and **Titus**, both of whom Paul refers to as **"true sons in the faith."**

Titus was Paul's right-hand repairman. He trusted him to see the intricate details of what made a healthy church. Paul often sent Titus on apostolic assignments to help bring order and health to churches. From the biblical accounts, we get the sense that Titus was a bit of an itinerant preacher, meaning that he went multiple places to help shepherd and care for churches for a specific season as God saw fit and as assigned by Paul.

- Titus worked at the church of Corinth and in the region of Dalmatia (his name is mentioned nine times in the book of 2nd Corinthians).
- Titus was also involved in collecting missionary funds for the suffering saints in Jerusalem.
- In this letter, Titus was helping the church in Crete, a large island in the eastern Mediterranean Sea. **[map] It is situated south of the Aegean Sea, southeast of mainland Greece, and southwest of Turkey.**

Paul's letter to Titus outlines the steps and items needed to ensure that the local church operates efficiently and in proper order. Like anything, the church can fall victim to the laws of entropy and begin to become sluggish, dysfunctional, and, God forbid, even contaminated by worldliness and false doctrine if it's not regularly aligned with the standards of God's Word.

We see this tone right from the offset as Paul the Apostle writes to Titus. In verse 5 of chapter 1, he states the purpose of Titus' assignment, **"I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking..."**

And things were lacking because wherever there's a church, there are people... and wherever there are people, there are problems! One look at some book titles within evangelical Christianity can expose this.

- Doctor Marshall Shelley wrote a book called **"Well Intentioned Dragons,"** about people who, sometimes with the right intentions, act more like dragons than sheep, blowing the fire of their carnal ambitions and self-will through the church and steamrolling church leadership in the process.
- Years back, the late pastor Leslie Flynn wrote a book called **"Great Church Fights."** In it, he outlines documented cases of some of the most bizarre incidents of church conflicts, revealing how mean, selfish, and outright hostile some church members can be.
- Most pastors can attest that ministry can be like a **"full-contact" sport.** Sadly, many ill-equipped, wrongly appointed pastors and elders contribute more to making the church a cage fight rather than healing wounds.

- ***The church in Crete had some problems: People problems, leadership problems, doctrinal problems, witness problems, and righteousness problems.***

Paul speaks of some of the characters in the church at Crete, and he describes them in verse 12 of chapter 1 as ***"always liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons..."*** ***That's what the church had to work with! Sounds like a winner of a church! And this is where Titus gets assigned to "set the things that are lacking in order!"***

APPLICATION: What does that tell us immediately about the church in general?

- Sometimes, we get our priorities mixed up, get bent out of shape, and lack the necessary elements to be effective and fruitful. We need to be put back in order.
- Every church is prone to areas of needed repair, gaps that need to be filled, and instruction that needs to be headed.

Titus deals with what might seem like elementary principles, but they are the foundational bedrock of a healthy, safe, functional, and fruitful church.

BACKGROUND

Historically, Titus and 1 & 2 Timothy have been clumped together and referred to as "The Pastoral epistles (letters)."

- Chronologically speaking, Titus was probably written in between 1 & 2 Timothy.
- While Titus is not mentioned in the book of Acts, Titus was a "true son in the faith." This indicates that he was probably a convert from Paul's preaching, perhaps while Paul was in Galatia..
- Titus was also uniquely different from Timothy. Timothy was half-Jew and half-Greek, but Titus was a full-blooded Gentile.
- Why is this significant? Because Titus is a picture of one of the main themes in the letter: ***The Grace of God.***

There was a significant event in Titus' life with Paul, which brings much context to the book for Titus. In Galatians 2 we read:

BIBLE PASSAGE

Galatians 2:1-5 (NKJV - New King James Version)

¹ Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me.

² And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.

³ Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.

⁴ And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage),

⁵ to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

APPLICATION

Titus was a young Greek man, a gentile, a non-Jew. After he was converted under Paul's ministry, Satan immediately sent wolves to try and rob him of his newfound faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ. The tactic? You are sure you want to convert to Christianity because that means you have to get snipped and follow our interpretation of all the laws of Moses.

Paul would have none of it. Titus didn't want to be circumcised; God is good with that! Paul and Titus did not yield to this deceptive persuasion "even for an hour." For if they had compromised at that moment, it would have marred the beautiful image of the grace of God through faith apart from the world of the law.

Titus was a picture of the events that led to the Jerusalem council, where the church had to decide whether these newfound gentile converts would have to obey the law of Moses as part of their journey with Christ. It all started with the miraculous event that took place through Peter at the home of the Roman centurion Cornelius, when a Gentile and his family were all born again and filled with the Spirit. Through these events, God was declaring that **"Grace unto faith and salvation is available to all people, not only the Jew."** Not only that, but one didn't have to adhere to Jewish tradition or law to receive the grace of God and be saved and transformed.

For Paul, Titus became a living image and walking testimony of God's amazing, saving, and sanctifying grace. That is why the letter of Titus is peppered with the theme of grace and all

that it accomplishes, both in the life of the believer and the church. Through the ministry of Titus, the church in Crete would be fueled by grace. In 3 chapters, we find the word grace four times.

Grace:

- ***Brings Salvation (Titus 2:11)***
- ***Builds Godliness (Titus 2:12)***
- ***Bestows Eternal Life (Titus 3:7)***
- In fact, chapter 3:4-7 might as well be a picture of Titus' testimony: **[Tit 3:4-7 NKJV] [4] But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, [5] not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, [6] whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, [7] that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.**

Without question, the gospel of grace is at the center and heart of Titus, because it should be at the center and heart of every church. We will also discover that this gospel of grace is not something we merely believe in but something that transforms the way we live and the way the church functions from the pulpit to the pew.

APPLICATION

As we break Titus down, I want to point out three main divisions that we will study:

- 1. Chapter 1 deals with the Church's Structure**
- 2. Chapter 2 deals with the Church's Sanctification**
- 3. Chapter 3 deals with the Church's Standing**

In other words:

1. Why does the church need leaders? What kind of leaders should they be, and what should those leaders be doing?
2. How should the people within the church conduct themselves in a way that is formed into the image of Christ?
3. What kind of standing does the church have in the community because of the way it engages the world around it?

APPLICATION

The letter begins in typical Pauline fashion. The first 5 verses are one long run-on sentence that builds a rabbit trail of ideas.

- You get the sense that Paul was so full of knowledge, grace, and spiritual fervency that he couldn't ever say just one thing. It's like the kid who just got home from an exciting trip and can't wait to tell everyone...
 - *It was so fun, we went on this awesome hike with Johnny and Sam, and Sam's grandpa was there who flew an airplane in Vietnam and once his parachute almost didn't open and his gun fell out of his hand before he landed, but he lived and got married to Sam's grandma, and she lived in Illinois in a town that was famous for making real amazing sourdough bread that they make with a special starter that's been around for like 100 years, and they lived on a farm that went back into the woods where we went on this really amazing hike...*
- **Unlike that silly analogy, Paul's sentence, while difficult to read in one breath, is cleverly connected into a central thought and message that outlines what the entire letter will emphasize.**
 - **Paul begins his letter by establishing His calling and authority to instruct Titus on all matters relating to the church.**
 - **The Posture of Paul's Calling**
 - **The Purposes of Paul's Calling**
 - **The Products of Paul's Calling**

1 The Posture of Paul's Calling

BIBLE PASSAGE**Titus 1:1 (NKJV - New King James Version)**

¹ Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness,

TITLES: A BONDSERVANT AND APOSTLE

I don't think the order in which Paul introduces himself is accidental.

- The term "apostle" (GREEK: Apostolos) means "sent one." We can have the image of an ambassador who represents another kingdom or king within a specific location. Paul was sent by Jesus (quite literally) to convey the mystery of the gospel. The term Apostle also carries a weight of authority. The "Apostles" were those who walked with Jesus as His chosen disciples. Paul was the only one grafted into the ranks of the Apostles by the risen Jesus.
- When a true Apostle spoke, it carried the weight of inspiration directly from the Holy Spirit. These were the men whose doctrine the entire faith is built upon, and when an apostle came to town or visited your church, their authority required submission.

So isn't it beautiful that with so much authority, Paul introduced himself primarily as a servant (slave) of God.

- Bondservant (**GREEK: Doulos**) was a freed slave who wilfully bonded himself to his master.
- ***devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interests***
- ***The symbol of that bond was a wooden dowel that would be driven through the ear of the slave as a symbol of his willing, lifelong service to the master.***
- In Galatians 6:17, Paul declared, "**...I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus in my body.**" These were the marks of willing servitude to the master.

But even in his introduction, Paul makes a powerful statement about spiritual authority and position.

QUOTE

“In the Kingdom, servanthood precedes and presides over authority.

Pastor Josh

APPLICATION

Paul did not view His authority and position as something that entitled him to be served, but that bonded him to become the servant of all. He placed within himself the mind of Christ, who said twice, according to Matthew's gospel:

"...just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

And this is Jesus's way. He clearly taught his entitled, power-seeking disciples this when he illustrated that the greatest in the Kingdom must be the servant of all and that authority in the Kingdom was not like that of the Gentiles, who lorded it over each other, but instead, that authority was a pathway to lifting others and pointing them to the true king.

In the world, and sadly in the church, power and authority corrupt the self-seeking, selfishly ambitious human heart.

James Madison, the 4th President of the United States, wisely observed:

"The truth is that all men having power ought to be mistrusted."

In a celebritized Christian culture, many see the pastorate, or leadership in the church, as a pathway to power, an avenue for authority, a doorway to the praise of men. This is why every pastor, in his training, should be put through the hard work of doing things that don't allow them to be seen, noticed, praised, or acknowledged.

- As soon as I was ordained, I was given the jobs of cleaning the bathrooms, mowing the church lawn, setting up and tearing down for all church events, designing and printing the church bulletin, and picking up the trash in the parking lot. Oh, yeah... I led worship on Sundays, too!
- I always tell young men who aspire to the role of pastor or elder this very important statement, and it applies to all believers:

QUOTE

“How you serve in the shadows will determine how you respond to the spotlight.”

Pastor Josh

APPLICATION

Do you want to be great? Do you want to be used? Do you want to embrace your calling? Become a bondservant of Christ and servant of all.

- A slave does not have power over his own will.
- A slave doesn't call the shots and direction of his life, but is led by the master.
- A slave is not entitled to receive but is required to give.

[Gal 2:20 NKJV] [20] "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

2 The Purposes of Paul's Calling

BIBLE PASSAGE

Titus 1:1-3 (NKJV - New King James Version)

¹ Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness,

² in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,

³ but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior;

APPLICATION

"According" to the faith - In other words, Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ according to a specific set of purposes. Some translations use the word **"for"** to communicate that Paul's calling had a divine purpose attached to it.

- Paul wasn't an apostle because he made himself one or because someone else wanted him to be. He wasn't an Apostle because he had a selfish ambition to capitalize off of the name of Jesus and make a name for himself.
- No, He was an Apostle of Jesus Christ because God, in His sovereign time, desired that the world should understand Faith, truth, godliness, and eternal life, and the way He would communicate that was through the preaching of a chosen servant.

And this needs to be the testimony of everyone who follows Christ and serves Him. Jesus chose you for this time and this season to use you for His glory. He wants to convey something about himself through us to the seen and unseen worlds, and our calling in His kingdom is not according to our own will but according to the sovereign plan of God.

APPLICATION

This should have a humbling effect on us.

- We each probably have plans for our lives and time on this earth, but it's humbling to realize that God also has eternal, unseen kingdom plans prepared for us here and now. Yes, it's humbling that God wants to use us, but what's more humbling is that it's not even about us.

○ **[Eph 2:8-10 NKJV] [8] For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, [9] not of works, lest anyone**

should boast. [10] For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

- God didn't choose us because we were worthy or qualified. He chose us **BY His grace** and **FOR His purposes**.
 - So, let's examine the purposes of Paul's calling as an apostle.

A. FAITH OF GOD'S ELECT

APPLICATION

I think it's important to note that when Paul used the term "elect," he did not do so to be theologically divisive or controversial.

- ***When people hear that phrase today, their ears perk up... Are we talking about Calvinism or Armenianism, conditional election or abrogated election, limited atonement or unlimited atonement, TULIP or DAISY... If I've lost you already, don't feel bad. I love a good theological hotbed issue just as much as the next guy, but we always need to return to the fact that Paul wasn't voicing a controversial statement when he used this word.***
- When Paul spoke about election, he simply meant that God chose us to be ***sanctified, justified, and glorified***, and that's great news!
- How did God choose us? Did he choose some for heaven and some for judgment? Those are all great questions and debates, but one truth is not debatable: if you are born again and part of the church, you are part of God's elect people.

APPLICATION

I've prayed and debated... I could take the rest of our time today and for the next six weeks to break down every view of election, regeneration, and faith in the process of election and salvation. I think there's a valuable place for that, but I also recognize that for 2000 the

greatest minds in the church have debated this issue without arriving at the same conclusion. If anything, it's created a great divide within the body of Christ and has sent many people (myself included) into a tailspin of confusion and concern over their faith. So, I want to focus on the truth behind the statement:

Q. Am I chosen? What if I'm not chosen?

A. If you care about being chosen and you want to be with God forever, forgiven of your sins, and born again, you are chosen! Don't resist it. Place your complete, unreserved faith and trust in Christ today and rejoice that He has chosen you.

Q. What if my husband, wife, mom, or dad is not chosen!

A. You don't know who's chosen. God's election is according to His foreknowledge and His divinely established purposes. You are responsible for sharing the gospel, which is the light and truth of God that shines into the darkness. Trust the results to God.

Q. Why does God choose some and not choose others?

A. Some say he chooses based on his foreknowledge of who will choose Him. Some say his election is based on nothing more than His grace. Some scriptures support both those views depending on how you read and interpret them. What I do believe with all my heart is that God's divine election does not negate my responsibility to respond with repentance and faith to the message of the gospel.

That's what Paul is communicating: ***"I was called for this time and to this ministry so that the elect of God might respond to the gospel's message by faith."***

B. ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE TRUTH WHICH ACCORDS TO GODLINESS

APPLICATION

This statement outlines another key theme in Titus: The truth of God's grace is always in accordance with godliness. In other words:

Wherever grace is received, godliness is produced.

You cannot divorce the two from each other. Truth never contradicts what is right and godly. This is another reason the statement "Live your truth" is the greatest lie. If your truth doesn't accord with what God says is godly, moral, or righteous, your not walking in the truth.

- Paul would decry this thought that someone could claim to walk in the truth and live a lie or embrace the very things that God has clearly established as righteous in His word.

[Isa 5:20 NKJV] [20] Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

APPLICATION

We also recognize that Paul establishes order in his statement. Faith in the truth comes first, then godliness is produced. I love how pastor and commentator Kent Hughes frames it:

QUOTE

“Godly conduct itself does not lead to a relationship with God. Rather, the relationship with God that gospel faith establishes leads to righteous actions.”

Kent Hughes, Commentary

APPLICATION

There's no amount of human goodness or right living that will earn or establish you as righteous before God. Righteousness before God is by faith in the only truly righteous One, Jesus Christ. But when the seeds of faith are planted, and the soil of our hearts is touched by forgiveness and the power of the Holy Spirit, godliness begins to grow in us and sprout out of us.

C. HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE PROMISED BY GOD

APPLICATION

Paul always reminds us that while what we do in this life matters, we should not forget that this life is not the end, and this world is not our home!

IMPORTANT: When Paul speaks of hope, it's not the unsure hope (ie I hope this sermon ends soon..."), it is a certain hope, an expectation based on reality.

- The "hope" is never about **IF**, it's always about **WHEN**.
- The IF has been sealed by the promise of God, who cannot lie. It has been delivered by the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus from the dead. We simply await, either by death or the return of Christ, the complete fulfillment of that promise.
- In addition, God wasn't responding on the fly. Before time began, his sovereign purpose and will were established. **You couldn't remove God's promise of eternal life in Christ any more than you could remove an author's idea from the words of the story he wrote.**

A study I recommend is to go through the Bible and create a list of all that God cannot do... In Malachi 3:6 the Lord says, Malachi 3:6 "I change not." James 1:13, James 1:13 "God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone." 2 Timothy 2:13, 2 Timothy 2:13 "(God) cannot deny Himself." He is always acts true to His character. There are some things that God cannot do - and one is to lie.

This statement also encourages me in this life.

- In difficult moments, sometimes this life feels like an eternity, but the reality is that we have a true eternity ahead of us where the pain, sorrow, lies, and imperfections of this life and world will be in the rearview mirror.

[Rom 8:38-39 NKJV] [38] For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, [39] nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

D. PREACHING OF THE WORD

Paul closes by declaring that God's message of Salvation isn't something that invisibly floats through the air and just lands people. God chose preaching to be the method and vehicle of the promise of salvation. This is why Paul so strongly told Timothy,

[2Ti 4:2 NKJV] [2] Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

APPLICATION

The faith, the truth, and the gospel were "committed" to Paul by God. He saw himself as a steward of something that God entrusted to Him.

1 Corinthians 4:2 - it is required of stewards to be found faithful.

3 The Product of Paul's calling

BIBLE PASSAGE

Titus 1:4 (NKJV - New King James Version)

⁴ To Titus, a true son in our common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.

APPLICATION

In short, we shouldn't miss that every time Paul write a letter it was because of relationship. These were relationships established because of the gospel.

- Timothy was a true son in the faith.
- Titus was a true son in the faith.
- Paul saw many in the church as His spiritual children, co-laborers, brothers, sisters, and friends.

Part of the outflow of every faithful ministry are kingdom focused, Christ centered, mutually edifying relationships with others.

APPLICATION

NOTE: I'd also like you to notice something else in these first 4 verses that is a theme in Titus: The recognition of the co-equal divine nature of God the Father and Jesus the son. In verse 4 he calls Jesus Christ "Our Savior."

In Verse 3, he speaks to the command of "God our Savior."

To the Gentile mind, this might seem rather trivial, but the Jewish mind understands that there is only 1 Savior, Yahweh.

- **[Isa 42:8 NIV] [8] "I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not yield my glory to another..."**
- **[Isa 43:11 NKJV] [11] I, even I, am the LORD, and besides Me there is no savior.**

APPLICATION

Next week we will begin to look at the form and function of church leadership.

Communion
