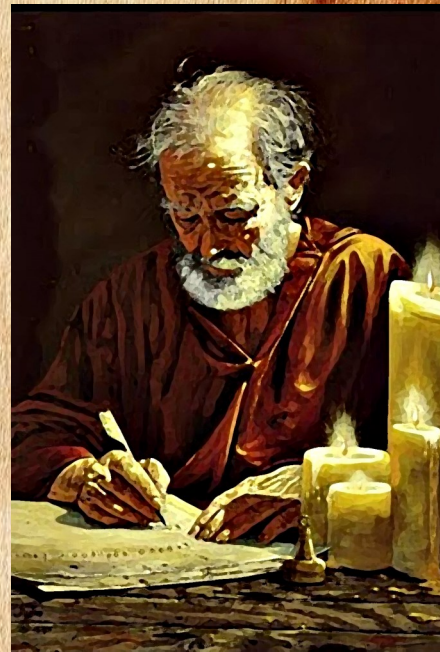


Truths For Titus And Today



A Bible Study By Terry L. Peer

Course Outline

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From Crete to Cincinnati and _____ ? _____

Lesson 1

“For this reason I left you in Crete...” (Titus 1:5a NASB)

Titus 1:1-5a

A Brief Bit of Background

Most New Testament scholars believe this letter was written from Corinth around A.D. 64. The author, Paul the apostle was getting ready to head to Nicopolis or was already enroute, where he planned to spend the winter. (see 3:12). It seems that this letter was written after the completion of the narrative of the Book of Acts after Paul's first Roman imprisonment was complete and his trial resulted in a dismissal of the capital charges against him.

Titus is not mentioned in the Acts as one of Paul's understudies or traveling companions, but we are provided some information about him in the New Testament letters. Titus was a Gentile convert who became “exhibit A” in Paul's argument that Gentiles converted to Christ need not be circumcised in order to be saved. (See Galatians 2:1-3).

It is believed from references in the text that Titus was a convert of Paul's some time in the past, with some suggesting that he may have been won to Christ during Paul's time in Antioch of Syria. (Acts 11:25-26). Titus is a participant in some tedious and critical ministry assignments as is noted in regards to the ministry at Corinth. Note:

- **2nd Corinthians 2:3-4, 13**—Refers to a letter that possibly Titus delivered to Corinth in the wake of lots of concern over the immorality that had prevailed in the church and which Paul boldly confronted. Paul was anxious to know of the response from Titus' report.
- **2nd Corinthians 7:6-16**—Titus' report to Paul of the resolution of the immoral issue brought him great joy and an explanation of how godly sorrow is designed to produce repentance.
- **2nd Corinthians 8:1-6, 16-24**—Titus is one of the trusted brothers to deal with the collection of the promised gifts for emergency relief of the saints in Judea and the administration of those benevolent gifts gathered up by Corinthian Christians.
- **2nd Corinthians 8:23 indicates that there was an established relationship and partnership of trust and proven reliability from Paul towards Titus.**

At some point, Paul, along with Titus' help launched some gospel work on the island of Crete, southeast of Greece in the Mediterranean. The time came for Paul to head on to other

fields of ministry, but he left Titus there to continue the work with the young congregations that had been planted, with more to come. Thus the work there was not so much in established congregations like Ephesus or Corinth, rather in a relatively young church.

The reader should make not of the challenge Titus is instructed to give the people in the area of good works in their Christian service:

- Titus 1:8,16
- Titus 2:7, 14
- Titus 3:1,8, 14

Crete was not Titus' last ministry of record. Later before Paul's execution in Rome, Titus would be sent to Dalmatia. (See 2nd Ti.4:10)

Some Characteristics of the Letter

Paul's letter to Titus may have been written about the same time as his first letter to Timothy. That would explain a lot of parallel material and emphasis in the two letters. Gareth Reese points out that these two letters to these two evangelists describe in great detail the work of preaching—one who is in an established congregation and the other in a younger one. These provide something of a “job description” for the preacher/evangelist. This is still applicable and relevant to preachers and congregations today. Often a church will write out a job description for their preacher without really examining these two Bible letters which were written apparently for that very purpose. A list of the expectations for the preacher/evangelist should be studied carefully by any congregation sincerely wanting to restore New Testament Christianity and New Testament church polity to their congregation. (I once drafted a list of the duties specified in 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus which described the role and work of the evangelist for a congregation.) The question is: do we know what those Biblically stated duties are? They are still valid. They are still relevant. Hence this letter is applicable FROM CRETE TO CINCINNATI and ____? ____.

The Text

1:1

- The author—Paul. He identifies himself as a bond-servant as he did in Romans 1:1, Philippians 1:1 and Galatians 1:10. This was a New Testament version of the designation of the prophets of old... “My servants the prophets”. Paul believed he was called to serve as a mouthpiece for God. A bondservant is more than one who serves a cause. It is a person completely sold out to the one who is his master. And Paul's master is clearly Jesus Christ.

- Paul received his call and commission directly from Jesus. (Ac.26:16-18)
- “According to the faith”—his calling and his role is consistent with the ministry of the Christian faith and gospel. This calling and dual role (bondservant and apostle) is in connection with those “chosen of God”. (Those who have responded to God’s gospel call, He chose/elected.) And it is in connection with the “knowledge of the truth”
 - Paul’s calling and responsibilities were to bring about the ministry of gospel truth to all who became believers.
 - This “knowledge of the truth” is witnessed, taught and to be learned from the apostles of Christ who were commissioned for this very purpose. These young Christians need not look to the Gnostic (those professing some deep insight into the mystery of God). The apostles knew, preached and wrote down the gospel truths necessary for all believers to know the faith and grow in the faith.
- “According to godliness—And this message is always consistent with and leads to godliness. Here is a test for the message preached as to its effectiveness—does it lead to godliness? That is still a test for gospel preaching today. Godliness speaks to one’s attitude and life lived out before God.

1:2

- “In the hope of eternal life”—This is not an “I hope so” attitude about the future. Hope (elpis) is an expectation which naturally grows out of Biblical faith and true knowledge and the pursuit of godliness. This is a promise of God.
 - Its guarantor is God, who cannot lie. God cannot and does not lie. Were He to do so, He would not be, could not be God. (See Hebrews 6:18)
 - This promise for God’s people to have eternal life was made “long ages ago” or “before time eternal”. This is a testimony to God’s eternally conceived plan of redemption. (See Ephesians 1:4 and 2nd Tim.1:9) Salvation is no afterthought of God. This has always been His plan, His intention to save sinners through Christ.

1:3

- “At the proper time”—this is the “fullness of time” as mentioned in Galatians 4:4. God chose this time in history to be perfect for revealing His Son to the world can carrying out His atoning work for sinners. All through the O.T., God was providentially setting the stage and preparing the way for His Son to come.
 - “even His Word”—Jesus is that Word, that is His pre-existent identity before the Bethlehem incarnation.

- “the proclamation”—this is the gospel message that Paul and others, even now Titus has been entrusted. It is what is to be done with the message—it is to be proclaimed.
- Paul’s apostleship and ministry of the Word was by “commandment”. Jesus Himself called him to this ministry work. And this preached/proclaimed Word is the declaration, heralded forth for the world, so this world can know of Christ. And this ministry is a sacred trust for Paul and for every preacher of the gospel. We dare not take it lightly.

1:4

- To Titus—Paul’s own “child in the faith”. This suggests that Paul himself probably led Titus to faith in Christ.
 - “child” refers to one legitimately born into a family, and synonymous with an obedient spirit toward those who parent them.
 - Jude, a half-brother to Jesus calls the “faith once for all delivered to the saints”, that is this meaning of faith refers to the whole body of salvific doctrinal truths of Christianity.
- “Grace and peace”—the blessed gospel gifts to offer as a greeting between those who share this like precious faith.
 - From God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

1:5a

- “For this cause/reason, I left you in Crete” –Crete was a large, well populated island SE of Greece in the Mediterranean. It went by Caphtor (see Deut. 2:23; Jer.47:4 & Amos 9:7) Some people were in attendance at the Pentecost event when the church of Christ was launched. (See Ac. 2:11)

So a brief, but meaningful letter is written by the Apostle Paul to Titus, a faithful ministry partner to address his ministry responsibilities on Crete. But by application, this letter is relevant to all gospel preachers across the centuries of time who serve in local churches of Christ.

The Need for Godly and Capable Overseers

Lesson 2

“...set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city...” (Titus 1:5 NASB)

Titus 1:5-16

Titus’ Work on Crete

It is Jesus’ desire and design that churches (local congregations) have men to provide spiritual oversight for the people. The congregation(s) on the island of Crete were very young and lacked some key aspects for full functionality in their ministry and fellowship. One of those elements which was lacking was a Biblically based, sound-in-faith group of men set aside to be overseers. This passage provides a well-rounded overview of the evangelist’s role in the local church, the development of congregational leadership, the characteristics and qualification for overseers, and examples of the kinds of situations that can and does arise in congregational life from time to time. These kinds of situations require a mature, godly leadership team to address them or the church can be left in dire straits and high risk for spiritual loss.

1:5 Titus’ roles in staying Crete

- He is to set in order what remains to be addressed. “Setting in order” has the same connotation of a doctor who sets a broken bone.
 - There were some things unfinished in the establishment of these congregations that kept them from functioning effectively and be spiritually healthy overall.
 - One of the tasks for Titus as an evangelist was to “appoint” or ordain men into the leadership role of elder. The word “appoint” is *katastesis*, which does not necessarily mean the evangelist personally does all the choosing or selecting—the congregation or existing leaders can and maybe should have a voice in that, but he must have a role in them being set apart for service.
 - An example of this is found in Acts 6 when the people of the Jerusalem congregation were instructed to “look out among them and choose” some men to serve in specific roles on the basis of apostle-directed criteria, and once those men were identified, they were presented to the apostles for their appointment or ordination to their role of service in the church. There is no reason to believe that the situation of Titus is any different.

- For the interchangeable and inter-related terms for “elders”, please see **ATTACHMENT #1** to this lesson. Those interchangeable terms are “elder”, “overseer”, “pastor”, and “teacher”.
- There would have been no need to detail all the different qualifications for elders unless the people of the church needed to know as well as Titus the criteria for their selection.
- Each congregation/city was to have its own body of overseers. This pattern was established by Paul in Acts 14:23 at the close of the first missionary journey. Each congregation had elders (plural) and they were set apart to their work with prayer and fasting.
 - It is a denominational substitution to have a single elder overseeing one congregation or over many congregations in a region. This is NOT New Testament polity.
 - See **ATTACHMENT #2** to see the Temporary Leaders in the Lord’s church (apostles and prophets) and the Permanent Leaders in the Lord’s church (evangelists and elders). This is the Lord’s plan for church of Christ leadership in the church.

1:6-9 Qualifications and Life Qualities for Church Elders

- These verses provide a list of the life and faith qualities for men being considered for the eldership of a congregation. This is a demanding and rigorous work to be done for and among the Lord’s people.
 - There is a significant overlap in the list given here to Titus and the list given to Timothy. (1st Timothy 3: 1-7). In my opinion, the most responsible thing for an evangelist and a congregation to do today is to work from a composite of both lists to use as a Biblical guide in making spiritual choices of spiritual men.
 - QUALIFICATION DEMANDS EXAMINATION—These qualifications are not here just for our reading pleasure. They are given as specific guidelines and criteria for the whole selection and retention process.
 - See **ATTACHMENT #3** for a composite chart of the Qualifications of Overseers/Elders/Pastors/and Teachers. (I will review the life and faith qualities from this side by side list)
 - See **ATTACHMENT #4** to see these characteristics grouped into categories of life. You can see that some apply to Home and Family Life, Personal and Emotional and Ethical Life, Spiritual Life and Public Life. This is an interesting way to see the need for fully rounded men of God.
- V.9—explains a Biblical purpose for godly and capable overseers.

- The elders must have a solid faith, be true to the Word for his own standing with God.
- He must be able to encourage others in their pursuit of faith.
- He must be able to refute those who oppose the faith and contradict the Scriptural message.

1:10-16 The Conditions and Circumstances Requiring the Presence of Godly Leaders

- There are at times rebellious, (insubordinate), empty talkers (false teachers) whose talk is meaningless. Their teaching is subversive and deceptive to the church. Many of these in Crete appear to be from a Jewish background, who if true to form, were in the habit of insisting on Law-keeping being added to the terms of the Gospel for salvation. (Timothy was dealing with many of the same types in Ephesus—see 1st Timothy 1:3-11)
- V.11—The must be stopped and silenced. They must be removed from any and all teaching posts, not be allowed to teach in the assembly and their false “doctrines” must be counteracted with Gospel truth.
 - Whole families were being upset and disrupted. (The NIV says that they were ruining whole households.)
 - They should not be permitted to use their teaching to advance their greed and gain from the pockets of the people.
- V.12—Many Cretan had this reputation—liars, evil brutes and lazy bums. A quote from one of their own from the past just underscored their reputation. And Paul comments in the beginning of v. 13 that this assessment of them is true. This characterizes so many of these false teachers and this has no place in the church.
- V. 13—They are to be reprovved or rebuked. And the reasons is that all who take the gospel seriously will make every effort to be sound in the faith, not led off track by such deceivers.
- V. 14—Godly elders are needed to get this under control immediately, so a place will not be given to these men who are using every available platform to promote their myths that will lead God’s people away from the truth.
 - The faith of these young believers and congregations must be protected and elders must take on the task of doing this.
- V.15-16—All that God has created is good if received with thanksgiving and used within its boundaries of good purpose.
 - But some people can corruption anything. Nothing is pure and sacred to them. They can corrupt even the most spiritual of things with their impure hearts and lives.

- They PROFESS or claim to know God. It is so easy to make a claim, but church leaders cannot be naïve here—they must look closer than one's profession and see the real essence of what a person stands for, believes and advocates. An agenda like this, left unchecked in the church will spell disaster for any fellowship.
- Their actions and deeds really display their true values.
 - They deny the Lord in reality
 - They are detestable
 - They are disobedient
 - They are worthless to do any real good.

So that is something of the challenging work of Godly overseers. These men must be carefully selected, set apart to work under the Lordship of Christ, alongside a faithful evangelist to face and deal with these kinds of situations... and countless others. No wonder such rigorous qualifications are given for these positions.

THE ELDERSHIP

Represent the church. (Ac.11:30, 20:17, 21:17-18.)

Oversee the church. (1 Ti.3:5; He.13:17; 1 Pe.5:2)

Watch for souls. (He.13:17)

Administer Discipline (1 Th.5:12-13)

Take Care of the Church. (1 Ti.3:5, Ac.20:28)

Minister To Sick (Jm.5:14-15)

Tend the Flock. (1 Pe.5:2)

Protect the Flock. (Ac.20:29-31)

Help the Weak. (Ac.20:35)

Be an Example. (1 Pe.5:3)

Labor in the Word. (Ti.1:9 & 1 Ti.5:17)

Exhort & Encourage with Word. (Ti.1:9)

Refute Those Who Oppose the Word (Ti.1:9)

- **ELDER**- “presbuteros” “of age” of Hebrew origin. (See Ge.24:2; Nu. 11:16-17)

- 1 Pe.5:1; 1 Ti.4:14 & 5:17; 2 Jn.1; Ac. 11:30 & 14:23

- **BISHOP**- OVERSEER- “episkopos” Gr. “overseer, guardian, superintendent, to rule, to look over.”

- 1 Ti.3:1-2; Ti.1:7; Phil.1:1, He.13:7, 1 Pe.5:2

- Used interchangeably with “elder” - (Note: Ac.20:17 & 28; Ti.1:5 & 7 and “shepherd” (1 Pet.5:2)

- **PASTOR**- “poimen” “SHEPHERD”

- Ep.4:11; Ac.20:28- “feed” (verb form.) 1 Pe.5:2- “tend” (verb) 1 Pe.5:4- Jesus- CHIEF Shepherd.

- **TEACHER**- “didaskalous”

- Ep.4:11; Ac.13:1; 1 Ti.3:2; 1 Ti.5:17; Ti.1:9

Biblical Church Leadership

Ephesians 4:11, 1st Ti.3:, Ti.1:, Ac.6: & 20:

TEMPORARY LEADERS (For the BIRTH and INFANCY of the Church)

APOSTLES—

- Personally called and trained by Jesus.
- Keys of the kingdom.
- Baptism in Holy Spirit.
- Receive revelation directly from Lord.

PROPHETS—

- Called and selected by apostles.
- Empowered by laying on of apostles' hands.
- Receive revelation through Spirit.

PERMANENT LEADERS (For the ONGOING ministry of the church)

EVANGELISTS—

- Called and commissioned by the local church and eldership.
- Proclaim apostolic/prophetic revelation recorded in Scripture.

PASTOR/TEACHERS... i.e. ELDERS

- Called and commissioned by the local church, elders and evangelists
- Minister with the apostolic / prophetic Word of Scripture

Purposes:

Minister the Word of God & Prayer! Shepherd the flock! Prepare God's people for works of kingdom service in evangelism and edification and ministry!

The Qualifications of: Overseers/ Elders/ Pastor– Teachers...

(These are one in the same position of ministry!)

1 Timothy 3 : 1-7

- Above reproach.
- Husband of one wife.
- Temperate
- Prudent
- Respectable
- Hospitable
- Able to teach.
- Not addicted to wine
- Not pugnacious.
- Gentle.
- Uncontentious.
- Free from the love of money.
- Manages his own household well.
- Keeps his children under control with all dignity.
- Not a new convert.
- Good reputation among those outside the church.

Titus 1 : 5-9

- Above reproach.
- Husband of one wife.
- Hospitable.
- Not addicted to wine.
- Not pugnacious.
- Not fond of sordid gain.
- Having children who believe.
- Children not accused of dissipation or rebellion.
- Above reproach as God's steward.
- Not self-willed.
- Not quick-tempered.
- Loving what is good.
- Sensible.
- Just.
- Devout.
- Self-controlled.
- Holding fast the faithful Word.

From New American Standard Version-1963

Overseers/ Elders/ Pastor– Teachers...

Qualifications By Category of Life

Home-life and Family Life

- Husband of one wife.
- Manages his own household well.
- Having children who believe.
- Keeps his children under control with all dignity.
(“If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church? 1 Ti.3:5)

Personal and Emotional Life

- Temperate.
- Prudent
- Not addicted to wine.
- Free from the love of money. (not fond of sordid gain)
- Not self-willed.
- Not quick-tempered.
- Not pugnacious.
- Gentle
- Uncontentious.
- Loving what is good.
- Sensible.
- Just
- Self-controlled.

Spiritual Life

- Not a new convert.
- Devout
- Able to teach.
- Holding fast the faithful Word.
- Above reproach as God’s steward.

Public and Community Life

- Respectable.
- Hospitable
- Good reputation among those outside the church.

Sound Instructions For Every Christian

Lesson 3

“Speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine.” (Titus 2:1 NASB)

Titus 2:1-3:3

Specific Instructions for Titus’ Teaching Ministry

As with most every congregation, there are men and women of faith in various generations. And the apostle wants Titus to be prepared to address specific matters for each group. Obviously some instructions on Christian living are broad and general enough that they fit every category of believers in all times and places. And yet other instructions are age and gender specific and some things need special emphasis in certain locations. Crete had its reputation. The wise evangelist in the church understands this and prepares himself to effectively minister the needed words for the whole church, not one particular group which he circulates in himself. Paul spoke similar instructions to Timothy, who at the time was serving in Ephesus. (See 1st Timothy 5:1-2) His instructions though to Titus offers much greater detail to these specific groups.

His motivation for this is found in the section related to those Christians who were still slaves at the time... “... showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.” (v.10b). That principle holds truth for every subgroup in the church.

2:1 The General Rule for All Speaking/Teaching Ministries

- This section begins with a conjunction (su de), “but you...”. This is specifically for Titus to follow in his own teaching manner, methods, and message.
 - The word for teach is “lalei” which applies to his speaking, all speaking.
 - All of his speaking ministry is to be characterized by sound doctrine. It is to promote the overall health of the church and to be doctrinal in nature.
 - Doctrine has a vital place in the church and for all church ministries, but especially for the work of the evangelist.

2:2 What Titus is To Teach the Older Christian Men

- The older men are to be temperate, that is they must be men who are sober-minded, having a quality of taking things seriously. Additional qualities of their lives are to be:
 - Dignified, or grave. This means to be honorable and worthy of respect
 - Sensible—using a sound mind in all things

- Sound in faith, love and perseverance—Soundness has to do with attaining a measure of spiritual health in these virtues.
- One can see an overlap in these qualities when placed beside the qualities of an elder candidate. That makes sense, since it would primarily be from this group that elders would be chosen.

2:3-5 What Titus is To Teach the Women

- “Likewise...”—there is a closeness to these qualities with what is fitting for all Christians of any age or gender.
- V.3—For the older ladies of the faith. They are to be:
 - Reverent in their behavior (quite literally having a lifestyle that demonstrates that which is sacred)
 - Not malicious gossips—what trouble is stirred by Christian ladies who just love to spread news, not caring whether it is true or not or embellished beyond the real story.
 - Not enslaved to much wine—while wine was the drink of choice in a society and time when water was generally impure, the excesses of the Cretan culture had no place in the church.
 - On a positive side, the older Christian ladies were to be teachers. (The next verses explain exactly who and what they were to teach.
 - This is NOT to be the formal instruction of men of the church—that prohibition is stated clearly in 1st Timothy 2:12-14, along with the Biblical rationale for that restriction.
 - V.4 makes it clear the ones the older Christian ladies were to be teaching. Younger Christian women need both encouragement and instruction and Timothy nor Titus, being young evangelists who were presumably still single, would not have the experience to do so.
 - Here is what the older Christian women were to teach the younger Christian women. (v.5)
 - Love their husbands
 - Love their children
 - Be sensible
 - Be pure—meaning morally pure
 - Be workers at home—(literally “home-workers”) fulfilling the duties that the home requires.
 - Kind- (literally, a good woman)

- Be subject to their husbands. Showing respect and submission to their husband does not imply inferiority. (And husbands, if you want respect, be respectable!—*mine*)
- The rationale—“so the Word will not be dishonored.”

2:6-8 What Titus is to Teach the Young Men

- Be sensible—(literally to be self-controlled) Some say this word means to “keep their heads” (as in 2nd Timothy 4:5) or to keep a tight reign on every aspect of one’s desires by thinking carefully through every decision and choice.
- Titus is personally in this category and he can and must personally set an example as to what a godly Christian man is to be like. (v.7)
 - His teaching is to be pure in doctrine and his life have dignity. (be worthy of respect, even though he is still a younger man.)
 - He is to be sound in speech and live beyond reproach.
 - The rationale—This life is necessary so that those opposed to the gospel have no grounds for criticism (about the church in general or him personally).

2:9-10 What Titus is to Teach the Slaves

- Some early Christians, maybe many of them were slaves. But slavery was not with the same indignities then usually as we think of slavery of the African people here in the 19th century. It had little to do with race and often carried the idea of one being gainfully employed by a wealthier master. (See 1st Timothy 6:1-2) This “arrangement” may have been for economic reasons (to pay back a debt) or the result of a war situation, where outsiders were pressed into the services of the victor. Regardless of the cause, Christian slaves had an obligation to their master and to their Master.
 - Slaves were to show their masters respect and make an honest effort to please them.
 - The place of becoming a believer was no excuse or reason under normal circumstances to become disrespectful and disobedient.
- Slaves were not to pilfer (steal), but rather to show themselves worthy of trust.
 - This attitude and behavior shows that the gospel makes positive changes in people—all people. What greater witness can there be!
 - Christianity can elevate and transform a person in the most difficult of life situations.

2:11-14 How Grace Becomes a Difference-Maker in Life

- V.11—While God has always exercised grace to some measure, grace came on the scene most fully in Jesus. (see John 1:17). And personal grace extends salvation to all peoples. “God is not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance.” (2nd Pe.3:9).
- What Graces Teaches... (v.12-13)
 - Say “NO” to ungodliness and worldly desires.
 - Say “YES” to spiritual virtues including...
 - Living sensibly
 - Living righteously
 - Living godly
 - Living expectantly (v.13-15) **“Waiting for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of our Great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”**
- Jesus is the God-man of grace. (v.14)
 - He gave Himself for us!
 - He gave Himself to redeem us from all lawlessness!
 - He gave Himself to purify a people to belong to Him. (This is our identity, to be a peculiar people, different from the world, set apart)
 - And we are to be zealous/eager to do good.

2:15-3:3 **HOW Titus is To Conduct His Teaching Ministry in the Church**

- V.15—His methodology—He is to speak (*lalei*), encourage (*parakalei*) and rebuke (*elenche*). There are appropriate for all the various aspects of the evangelist’s speaking work. Wisdom is necessary to know which aspect to apply in which situation.
 - His ministry of teaching is to be done with the full authority of the gospel.
 - No one is to disregard or despise him in this role or as he uses his gifts to fulfill his ministry. (Disregard means to think around him.) Titus, every evangelist is to be a roadblock of sorts to all inappropriate behavior, unbecoming to the Christian life.
- 3:1-2—The Content of His Teaching... He is to keep on reminding them, that as Christians they are to be:
 - Subject and obedient to rulers and authorities (referring to secular government officials).
 - Ready themselves for good deeds.
 - To malign or slander no one.
 - To be peaceable
 - To be considerate.
- 3:3—A description of our former life.

- The grace of Jesus has changed us. Now more than ever, the believer is no longer to be:
 - Foolish—without understanding
 - Disobedient—to God and man’s authority
 - Deceived—easily led astray
 - Enslaved to various lusts and pleasures
 - Spending life in malice and envy
 - Being hateful
 - Being hated
- These may be reflective of one’s typical life B.C. (Before Christ), as in one’s pre-Christian days. But these attitudes and behaviors have no place in the Christian’s life, now that grace has come, been received, and has begun its work in the heart of a person who is now possessed of the Lord. (2:14)
- And Titus is to keep reminding the Christians of these truths. So will every faithful evangelist in the church.

“Waiting for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of our Great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”

The Mercy System

Lesson 4

“He saved us... according to His mercy...” (Titus 3:5 NASB)

Titus 3:4-7

Celebrating the Change in The Whole Trajectory of Our Life

At the close of the last segment, Paul makes a statement about how our lives once were lived prior to conversion. And he gives just a sampling of some of the sins which previously had characterized the unconverted sinner. This is not a comprehensive list of course, but may have been some of the attitudes and behaviors these Cretans could readily identify with from their pre-baptism days. They are:

- Foolishness
- Disobedient
- Deceived
- Enslaved to various lusts and pleasures
- Life energies and resources spent in malice and envy
- Being hateful and hated

It is likely that every person might have his/her own list of things which dominated life before coming to Christ. And then again, possibly most of our own pre-baptism sins would fit under the umbrella of one of more of these headings. Either way, Paul’s point is that before becoming a Christian, our life was not characterized by godliness or righteousness—not even close.

For one to get to heaven, something had to change. In fact, a lot of somethings had to change:

- Our state had to change from lostness to being saved.
- Our master had to change from being enslaved to sin and Satan to the Lordship of Jesus.
- Our standing with God had to change from being a hostile enemy to being His child and friend and disciple.
- Our name had to change from being a sinner to Christian.
- Our citizenship had to change from being a citizen of this world to being a citizen of the kingdom of heaven.

- Our life aim and purpose had to change from living to satisfy the desires of the flesh to living to pleasing God.
- Our life focus had to change from being centered on self to being Christ-centered and then others-centered.

Everything about us had to be made new. And God's plan of salvation does just that. So this lengthy sentence (vv.4—7) is given to describe in detail just how God does all this... it is called "**The Mercy System**".

This matter of being saved, getting saved is addressed in every tense in the New Testament.

- **HE saves!** (Present tense)... as in 1st Peter 3:21—HE... "at baptism now saves us".
- **HE will save!** (Future tense)... as in Matthew 1:21—"He will save His people from their sins." And in 1st Timothy 4:16—"Take heed to yourself and your doctrine, for in continuing to do so, you will save both yourself and those who hear you."
- **HE SAVED us...** Titus 3:5—"He saved us...". In the original Greek language, this is called the aorist tense—a specific action and time in the past.

So the Biblical truth is that God's salvation—His act of saving us is:

- Something that He did!
- Something that He is doing!
- Something that He will do!

But our text is referring to something that He has already done for the believer. The past tense is the tense of our text.

3:4 Consider the Initiative that God took toward sinners in the world

- God took action. He took the initiative. "**But God demonstrated His love for us in this... while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**" (Rom.5:8). God rolled up His heavenly sleeves and stepped into this human drama and did something about our dilemma. That dilemma was that we were lost and could do nothing to save ourselves from ultimately perishing. We couldn't do a thing on our own to reverse the curse. So God didn't just talk about it, He didn't just teach a lesson about it, He didn't just write a novel about it... He SHOWED US with the personal appearance of His own Son, Jesus Christ who came to demonstrate God's kindness and love for all mankind.
 - This is a reference to the incarnation of the Word of God into human existence. (See Jn.1:14)

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- Now there are only THREE possible ways for man to try and experience salvation:
 - **A miracle system**—This is proposed by those who say that man is so deprave and man’s will is so enslaved as the result of Adam and Eve’s sin in the garden and that sin and guilt was passed down to every human being since. It is called “Original Sin”. This view holds that man is so deprave that he couldn’t do anything to be saved even if he understood the need or wanted to do something about it. According to this view (called “Calvinism), if man were to be saved, it would take a miracle. And many believe this is how it happens. God supernaturally chooses who He is going to elect to be saved and then “zaps” them of sorts with an infusion of faith and gives them some “experience” of being saved, like being struck by a thunderbolt in a hayfield on a tractor or having a deep mystical dream of some super-out-of-this-world experience that just had to be from God. People say... since man was so enslaved by Adam’s guilt and sin, God just had to do it miraculously. That’s one claim.
 - **A merit system**—This is the view of the person who thinks that he can do enough good deeds to punch his ticket to heaven. So he tries to be the best moral person he can be, keeping the law, helping others, never telling a lie, not cheating on his spouse, etc. All that kind of good moral living supposedly earn enough merits to offset the few incidental sins that he might have committed along the way. He/she believes that just living a good life will settle the score with God and allow an entrance into glory on the basis of his/her goodness and relatively clean living or the performance of doing many religious deeds... attending church, giving to the orphanage, or supporting the food pantry and such.
 - **THE MERCY SYSTEM...** this is the ONLY way that man can be saved. Not by some miraculous experience in a hayfield or by racking up personal merits to earn salvation, but rather yielding to God’s way of saving sinners. Remember grace is getting something we could never deserve and mercy is not getting what we do deserve.
 - **AN ILLUSTRATION**—When I was a kid and I broke a rule, grace would be like dad saying, “Come on son, let’s go to town, I’m going to buy you a new bicycle since I love you.” And mercy would be like dad saying, “Son, I’m not going to give you that whipping that you really deserve.” Grace is getting something we could never deserve and mercy is not getting what we actually deserve.
 - So there are really not three ways for a sinner to be saved... there is only **ONE WAY!**

- And that way is initiated and demonstrated by God showing His lovingkindness to all of mankind through Jesus.

3:5-6 HOW God saved us!

- **“Not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness”**—Even performing “religious deeds” like being good morally and tithing every seed from the garden or offering a lamb as a sacrifice from the flock in and of itself does gain God’s forgiveness. There is no “work” we can do to earn saving merits to gain purchase or earn salvation.
 - Romans 10:2-4 tells how the Jews made this terrible mistake of thinking they could be saved by establishing their own righteousness. [READ]. A person could claim that “I’ve never stolen anything, and never committed adultery, and never testified against my neighbor falsely” just like the Ten Commandments say. But even so, not doing those things can never make up for the sin of coveting your neighbor’s new Ford SUV. It only takes ONE sin to make a person a transgressor. (See James 2:10—**“For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.”**)
 - So no amount of good, even righteous deeds can offset the personal sins of one’s life. It is not on the basis of the MERIT-SYSTEM. It is by the MERCY SYSTEM!
- **“But according to His MERCY”**
- **“By the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit”**
 - This “regeneration” is the new birth or being “born-again” just like Jesus taught Nicodemus. (See John 3:3-5). That new birth involves two elements according to Jesus—water and Holy Spirit. ONLY ONE ACT IS THE GOSPEL INVOLVES BOTH WATER AND HOLY SPIRIT and that act is one’s baptism into Christ. The terminology is used as the washing or “laver of cleansing”, an allusion to the priests who were washed in the laver before entering the tabernacle for ministry and service.
 - This word here translated regeneration is describing the sinner’s NEW BEGINNING. (*palingenesia*). Hence Romans 6:4 concludes the teaching of the impact of baptism as one being “raised to walk in the newness of life.”
 - And the sinner’s “renewal” is by the work of Holy Spirit, not our own!
 - HOLY SPIRIT is “poured out upon us richly”... this is the promise of Acts 2:38—**“Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”** Jesus gives to the born-again sinner His own Holy Spirit to indwell us from the occasion of our baptism forward.

3:7 Further implications of this new beginning and renewal

- “so that”... this phrase is found repeatedly throughout Titus... indicating the outcome and purpose of the action taken... (See 1:5; 1:9; 1:13; 2:4; 2:5; 2:8; 2:10; 3:7; 3:8; 3:13; 1:14) It answers the question here of the outcome and purpose of the saving mercies of God toward the sinner who is born-again.
 - **“Justified by grace”**—Justified is a legal term which means to be declared “not guilty”. But this declaration is not issued on the basis of the sinner’s own merits or personal works. Forgiveness is granted on the basis of God’s grace as the new birth is completed. The Scriptures are replete with the teachings of the benefits of grace being given at the sinner’s baptism into Christ. (Galatians 3:24-27; Romans 6:3-5; 1st Peter 3:21; Acts 2:38...)
 - Being justified, (being declared not-guilty) is our current state in Christ.
 - **“Made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”** So salvation not only has the present benefit and effect; it has a future, end-time effect as well. We have been written into God’s will as an heir. (See Romans 8:16-17). Jesus, as God’s only begotten Son is certainly entitled to all of heaven’s riches. But notice now, because of God’s mercy, we are written into the will as a joint-heir with Jesus. That is part of the hope of eternal life. As a good friend of mine says... “Mercy—mercy!”

So think of our salvation this way... We have been saved... by the MIRACLE of His resurrection, by the MERITS of His perfect life and by the MERCIES of our gracious Father through His Son, Jesus Christ!

Personal Preacher Stuff

Lesson 5

“... These things are good and profitable for men.” (Titus 3:8 NASB)

Titus 3:8-15

Important Closing Matters

As this meaningful letter comes to its close, there has been much counsel for New Testament congregations, their health and effective functioning in any era. The directives here are not just for the congregations in first century Crete. Surely the gospel work on Crete has come specific needs at the time, but those needs are not really unique to them. Just think of the primary subjects addressed in this short letter:

1. The Need for Godly and Capable Church Leaders
2. Sound Instructions for Every Age of Church Membership
3. The Mercy System of Salvation

And what even transcends these specific concerns and needs is the work of an evangelist as it is carried out in the local congregation. Paul (an apostle) writes to Titus (an evangelist) for the congregation(s) on the Mediterranean Island of Crete to set things in order. (Titus 1: 5). The role of Jesus' apostles began with the fact that they were handpicked by Jesus Himself, personally called and trained by Him and empowered to carry out the launch of Christianity on earth. There were 13 of these men. First there was 12, then 11 after Judas took himself out of the picture, then 12 again when Matthias was chosen by the Lord to take his place, and finally 13, once Saul/Paul was added to the number. No others were included in that specific role of church leadership. And when they departed this life, (John being the last of them), that was it. The apostles were the eyewitnesses of Jesus, the first gospel preachers, the first church planters and they account for the writing and supervision of the writing of most of the New Testament. They were cited as foundational building blocks for the church (see Ephesians 2:20). In the first century, there were also prophets who were supernaturally gifted men who also received revelations from the Lord through the Spirit and contributed to the early decades of the church. They were appointed through the laying on of the apostles' hands.

Then there were evangelists and elders to continue to fill the leadership roles of the church during and after the times that the roles of apostles and prophets came to a close (by the end of the first century or so), and the evangelists and elders serve in their capacities of leadership to this day. Evangelists serve side by side with elders in local

congregations as Timothy did at Ephesus, as Luke did at Philippi and as Titus did at Crete. Evangelists and elders still serve as church leaders today when a congregation is organized by a polity system ordained and designed by Jesus Himself. (See Ephesians 4:11). So Paul's instructions to Timothy and Titus serve as a model of instructions for evangelists and elders in the Lord's church, even today. We in the Restoration Movement claim to have restored the New Testament church in the last couple of centuries, yet some aspects of church polity seem to be woefully lacking in many settings. For example, the role of the evangelist is hardly mentioned among many congregations today. In many places, there is more a denominational pattern followed instead of the N.T. one.

So while we all benefit and grow from the specific applications of this instruction, the underlying lesson is that of the role and responsibilities of an evangelist in the church.

3:8-11 Things to Embrace and Things to Avoid

- **3:8—Trustworthy statements...** The “trustworthy statements” found in the “pastoral/evangelist” letters highlight specific and universal gospel truths to be embraced by the church and all who are a part of it. There are FIVE of them:
 - 1st Timothy 1:15—The grace of our Lord is more than abundant along with faith and love.
 - 1st Timothy 3:1—A Christian man who aspires to the work of overseer desires a good work.
 - 1st Timothy 4:9—Godliness is profitable to all things, since it holds promise for the present life and the life to come.
 - 2nd Timothy 2:11—If one dies with Christ, they will live with Christ.
 - Titus 3:8—Sinners are saved according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of Holy Spirit.
 - V.8 instructs evangelists to speak confidently of the mercy system of salvation which Paul has just detailed in vv.5-7.
 - The aim of this is that it will result in good deeds being accomplished in the kingdom. (Remember all the references to good deeds mentioned in the letter. (1:16; 2:3; 2:7; 2:14; 3:1; 3:8; 3:14))
- **3:9—The things to avoid**
 - Foolish controversies such as debates over genealogies, strife, disputes about the Law.
 - These things hold no value for church ministry.
- **3:10—The factious man** (hairesis=heretic). This is the man who makes a huge case for a non-Scriptural issue and demands his way or the high way. It is a serious thing to divide the family over God over a non-Biblical issue.

- The evangelist is to warn him once, then a second time, and then call him out and the church is to avoid him.
- The outcomes of this man's efforts display perversion/distortion and sin and are self-condemned. He is warped and sinful and does nothing but harm to the body of Jesus.

3:12-15—Personal Preacher Assignments and Needs

The mission work of this era around the empire was varied and at times complex and required key individuals to fill specific roles in order to meet various need areas in the congregations. Individual strengths and gifts were resident in the various evangelists and needed to be placed in strategic roles in order to maximize gospel effectiveness.

- **3:12—Paul speaks of his plans for an eventual replacement for Titus on Crete.** It would be either Artemas or Tychicus that he would send to Crete so Titus could meet Paul at Nicopolis where he was planning to winter. Tychicus had been a faithful and dependable traveling assistant to Paul during his 3rd missionary journey, at his side during his first Roman imprisonment, traveled with him after his release, and then was with him at his 2nd and final imprisonment in Rome. From 2nd Timothy 4:10, it appears by then Paul has decided to send Tychicus to Ephesus, leavening Artemas to replace Titus on Crete and Titus would be sent to Dalmatia.
- **3:13—Titus was to provide all the assistance** he could to Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their assigned journeys. (Apollos had proved to be a trustworthy minister of the gospel since Aquila and Priscilla helped to enlighten him on salvation doctrines recorded at the end of Acts 18)
- **3:14—The support provided by the good deeds of the church members** prove to be the resources that God uses to meet pressing needs of the kingdom work throughout the entire Mediterranean world.
 - Fruitfulness comes from this sharing and resourcing gospel ministry both in their own locations and far beyond. This is the principle of supporting on the field missionaries today who serve the cause of Christ far beyond the scope of our own locations.
- **3:15—A final greeting.** Those with Paul send greetings to those who love all of God's gospel workers. What a fellowship!

GRACE BE WITH YOU ALL!