



VERSE BY VERSE MINISTRY
INTERNATIONAL

TEACHING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

Titus 1A

Chapter 1:1-4

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- This morning we begin our dive into the letter of Paul to Titus, looking at the topic of the Enduring Truth.
 - We'll begin today with Titus 1:1-4

Titus 1:1 Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness,

Titus 1:2 in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,

Titus 1:3 but at the proper time manifested, even His word, in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior,

Titus 1:4 To Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

- A.W Tozer in his book “Man- The Dwelling Place of God” Chapter 37: The Importance of Sound Doctrine, Tozer states these profound words:

Each generation of Christians must look to its beliefs. While truth itself is unchanging, the minds of men are porous vessels out of which truth can leak and into which error may seep to dilute the truth they contain. The human heart is heretical by nature and runs to error as naturally as a garden to weeds. All a man, a church or a denomination needs to guarantee deterioration of doctrine is to take everything for granted and do nothing. The unattended garden will soon be overrun with weeds; the heart that fails to cultivate truth and root out error will shortly be a theological wilderness; the church or denomination that grows careless on the highway of truth will before long find itself astray, bogged down in some mud flat from which there is no escape.

- A.W Tozer expresses in his book the necessity for sound doctrine and teaching for the Christian.
 - He mentions that truth, if left unguarded and unattended, will cause the church to move into error, eventually becoming a “theological wilderness”.
 - My prayer for us this morning is that we understand 4 things:
 - Truth in the hearts of every believer must be closely cultivated, carefully examined, courageously taught, and lived with conviction.
 - If we fall short of rooting out error and false teaching, we make room for the watering down of the Gospel.
- Paul’s letter to Titus addresses a few things:
 - There are several churches that have been established through the Gospel Ministry of Paul, established in a city full of secularism and sin.
 - This city is called Crete

- The existing churches and believers within this network of churches are experiencing a rise in false teachers.
 - False doctrine is creeping into the church and Paul implores Titus to “put what remained into order.”
 - Paul will express his reasoning for Titus to remain in Crete in Titus 1:5 where he states:

Titus 1:5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you,

- What we have to understand is, those who are bringing in false doctrine profess to be Christian but yet their lives and actions show no Gospel characteristics.
 - In other words, they profess to know God but their lives have nothing to show for it.
 - Paul mentions this further in the text in Titus 1:16 where he says:

Titus 1:16 They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.

- Paul’s letter to Titus is quite similar in nature to that of his first letter to Timothy regarding oversight and dealing with false teachers.
 - There is a dire need in the churches in Crete to establish overseers and organization within the church.
 - Paul’s apostolic appeal to Titus will bring about a deep concern that Paul has for these churches, but more importantly, the Gospel message.
- Paul addresses, at the beginning of his letter to Titus, a greeting of sorts that is unique from his other letters.
 - We will see in the text why Paul’s wording and word choice is so very important, both to Titus, the churches in Crete, and to you and I today.
 - However, before we explore this letter further, I want to set the scene and provide some geographical and historical context.
- Although we do not know who delivered this letter to young Titus in Crete, we are able to approximate a date, somewhere between AD. 64-66, when this letter was written.
 - Interestingly enough, Paul’s letter to Titus was written around the same time that Paul writes the pastoral epistle to Timothy.
 - Paul’s first letter to young Timothy would be similar in focus but different in emphasis.
 - In 1 Timothy, the emphasis would be on leaders in the local church, whereas the emphasis in Titus is on the organization of the local church.
 - It could be seen that the churches that Timothy was over were much older and established than that at Crete.
 - So I gave us a snapshot of the book and what it will be about. I now want to

ground us in some geography and history on Crete.

- Understanding this next piece will give us context into Paul’s urgency in the text as well as his emphasis on such strong theological matters.
- Crete was considered one of the largest islands in the Mediterranean Sea and was also well known for its notorious Cretan culture.
 - To give you an example of how notorious Cretans truly were, one of the words in Greek for being a liar was *kretizo*.
 - Literally “to be a Cretan”
 - The people who lived on Crete were known for treachery, violence, sexual corruption, and a love for money.
 - Many men on this island were known to be mercenary soldiers that worked for the highest bidder.
 - Men sleeping with other men’s wives...the list goes on and on.
 - Imagine pure anarchy at its best with no moral compass by which to live and behave, and you have Crete.
 - This place was corrupt, to say the least, and Titus was charged to set what remained.
- In Titus 1:12-13, Paul quotes a man by the name of Epimenides, one of Crete’s own prophets, that makes a profound statement about his own people.
 - Epimenides states, “Cretans are always liars, evil beast, lazy gluttons.”
- One could imagine that the believers in Crete were faced with many challenges.
 - They have surrendered their lives to Christ and are seeking to obey Him and live well while seeing the lives of those they know continue in sin and secularism.
 - The Cretan Christians’ allegiance is no longer to sin but to their Savior.
 - One takeaway is very clear: There is a desperate need for sound churches in unchurched areas with godly leaders setting the example.
 - Crete is the ideal place for a strong church with properly taught doctrine to be placed to encourage righteous living amongst believers.
- Paul is not remiss of the message of mercy within the Gospel.
 - A part of knowing sound doctrine is knowing how you came into this glorious salvation. Don’t forget...God’s mercy also met you!

Titus 3:3 At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another.

Titus 3:4 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared,

Titus 3:5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,

- So far we understand that the state of these churches were in grave danger and in need to be “set in order.”

- Disorder has been brought into the church by false teachers who professed to be believers yet their behavior showed differently.
 - Titus is charged to establish elders or overseers in these churches so that the truth would be made known and false teaching weeded out.
- Lastly, you might be asking why Titus?
 - What experience or background did Titus have that Paul was confident enough to leave him in Crete to establish organization in this chaotic mess.
 - Titus' background was that he was a Greek Christian amongst a largely Jewish group.
 - Titus' time with Paul was very much indicative of the ministry that he would take on himself.
- It is apparent that Paul picked the right man for the job.
 - Titus' time with Paul was reflected in the ministry he would take on at Crete.
 - There's a quote from Pastor Bryan Loritts that says, "If you want to know what God is calling you to do in ministry, take an inventory of your pain."
 - Titus was not foreign to false teachers along his journey with Paul.
 - It was under Paul's leadership that Titus grew in his faith and would recognize false teachers from a mile away.
- Now that we have some historical and geographical background out of the way, let's dive into the text.

Titus 1:1 Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness

- Paul begins with the similar framework of a traditional Pauline greeting, however he does not start with his role in the church, he starts with his position in Christ.
 - He mentions that he is a bond-servant of God. The Greek word for bondservant is *doulos* which simply means slave.
 - He then establishes his apostolic authority in the letter by saying "and an apostle of Jesus Christ".
 - Paul could have addressed the letter in this way for a multitude of reasons but here is one:
 - Judaizers had crept into the churches and were attempting to have new Gentile/Jewish Christians and existing Christians conform to the Mosaic Law.
 - They taught it was necessary to be circumcised in order to be saved.
 - Paul addressed the council in Jerusalem in Acts 15 and Galatians 2:1-5 regarding these false teachings.

Gal. 2:1 Then after fourteen years, I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also.

Gal. 2:2 I went in response to a revelation and, meeting privately with those

esteemed as leaders, I presented to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. I wanted to be sure I was not running and had not been running my race in vain.

Gal. 2:3 Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek.

Gal. 2:4 This matter arose because some false believers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves.

Gal. 2:5 We did not give in to them for a moment so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

- I believe Paul begins with his position in Christ versus his spiritual role because it places Christ as the head, not Paul or any other man or religious custom for that matter.
 - It places emphasis on the One whom calls all men and women to Himself and for Himself.
 - These false teachers were placing emphasis on position regarding Jewishness within a Pharisaical context.
 - However the Gospel emphasizes the fact that deeds don't make you "righteous", it is God who makes you righteous.

1 Tim. 6:3 If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness,

1 Tim. 6:4 he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a sick craving for controversial questions and disputes about words, from which come envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions,

1 Tim. 6:5 and constant friction between people of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.

- These false teachers were seeking "shameful gain" in their own right versus seeking Christ.
 - The false teachers were Pharisees at heart: All talk and no action.
 - Paul describes them more accurately in Titus 1:10-11, this way:

Titus 1:10 For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision,

Titus 1:11 who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain.

- He continues in verse 1 by stating, "for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness"
- Paul makes it clear that being chosen by God is possessional, not positional.
 - Salvation is based upon Christ's work and not our work.

- It's not a matter of tradition, but a matter of revelation by the Spirit of God because of God's personal election.
 - Nor is it a matter of Jewishness, but rather a matter of God's sovereign choosing.
 - God chose a people for Himself in the Children of Israel, out of all the nations in the world.
 - Not because they were better or more desirable than any other nation, but simply because He chose them.
 - R.C Sproul states: "God chooses whomever He chooses for reasons that are wholly his."
 - There is nothing that you or I have done or can do that qualifies us to be considered qualified for being called by God.
- Legalism and traditionalism says I have to work my way to God to be this good person.
 - The Gospel says, God came to us and gave us His goodness so that we may do the good.
 - Paul in the first verse alone is calling out these false teachers as Titus reads the letter out loud.
 - I can imagine them cringing in their seats as Titus is proclaiming this into the hearing of these Cretan churches.
 - It is recognizing the knowledge of the truth of the Gospel that our lives are transformed by Christ and nothing else.
- We can't forget the second half of verse 1 where Paul says "which accords with godliness".
 - Paul lets us know, it is the truth of the word of God that transforms us and the Spirit of God that conforms us into the image of Christ.
 - This process of being sanctified comes with being taught soundly and being trained up soundly.
 - My wife and I have a 5 and 4yr old, and they have their own rooms. However, as a parent, you know if unmanaged, those rooms can become atrocious.
 - One day my wife was so frustrated she took to Facebook because she felt like she had a complete mom fail because their rooms were dirty.
 - We had shown them before how to do it and what we expected, but it just didn't stick.
 - Our previous Pastor's wife commented and said:
 - Teach and train what you want to see. Training and modeling is the strategy with lots of encouraging words.
 - Training does not take after you have said it once or twice. It's ongoing.
- Here is what Paul is saying in this verse: The knowledge of the truth of God's Word is accompanied by rightful living and constant teaching and training which brings glory to God.

1 Tim. 4:6 In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good

servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.

1 Tim. 4:7 But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness;

1 Tim. 4:8 for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

- When we have been truly transformed by the truth of His word it moves us to live to the Glory of God.
 - Training our bodies in the truth of God's word is not just a Sunday activity, it's a daily activity.
 - What does your time with Jesus look like?
 - How is the truth of the Gospel producing transformation in every area of your life?
- Paul continues on in verse 2.

Titus 1:2 in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,

- Paul makes mention that it is in the knowledge of the Gospel through the work of Jesus Christ that we have something to live for and look towards, and this is with a promise!
 - This hope of eternal life is foundational and fundamental to the faith and hope of every believer.
 - This is not an empty hope that temporarily satisfies a portion of our lives.
 - This hope satisfies all that we are and is to produce something in us that bears fruit or evidence of what has happened inwardly.
 - In other words when we realize what has been done for us it moves us to godly action!

Titus 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,

Titus 2:14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, eager for good deeds.

- There should be a yearning and longing to live for the Glory of God in all that we do.
 - Our living simply becomes an anticipated response for the hope we know we have and the Hope that is coming!
 - We don't live as if we have no hope. But we live well in trying times because we do have hope.
 - When our Christian loved ones pass away, we don't need to mourn the loss simply because they are no longer here with us
 - We KNOW where they are going to be, in glory with the Father, and we KNOW we will join them

- We are confident in this hope because God promised it! And because God promised this He cannot lie!
 - Why is this so important to pause and consider? It's important because it hinges upon something being true.
 - Either God is true and His promises are also true or these false teachers are not liars at all.
 - Paul is creating this contrast between God's trustworthiness and humanity's lawlessness and wickedness, more specifically, Cretans.

Jer. 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? **Jeremiah 17:10** “I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve.”

- In a culture of relative truth and perceived truth, we must first recognize what absolute truth truly is.
 - As followers of Jesus, we recognize that the absolute truth is based upon scripture.
 - God cannot lie. If God were to be a liar, He would cease to be God.
 - God is trustworthy.

Hebrews 6:18 so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us.

- Truth is hinged upon Christ alone and nothing else and it is important to know the truth well in order to spot out the lie.
 - We must identify truth not by our own biases, perspective, or traditions, but rather based upon God's Holy Word and what Christ did on the cross.
- Not only was this hope promised long ago, but Paul lets us know God prepared it at the right time. Check out verse 3.

Titus 1:3 but at the proper time manifested, even His word, in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior,

- Paul mentions that the eternal hope, Jesus Christ, was promised long ages ago and came at the “proper time”
 - The phrase “proper time” in the Greek is *kairos*.
 - This word means appointed time or designated time.
 - To put it another way, it's a particular point in time related to other points in time with a focus that this time is designated by an authority.

- To put it plainly, God’s revelation of the Messiah, Jesus Christ was on God’s timing to bring about His good and perfect will in human history.

Romans 16:25 Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past,

Romans 16:26 but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith—

- Paul makes it known that the Gospel that was preached at Crete, when he and Titus were first there, is the true Gospel. The Revealed Gospel. The Enduring Truth.
 - And because our Hope is in Christ who is the very Word of God, we not only have a fixed promise of eternal life, but there is also a demand for obedience.
 - What we know and believe about God through the proclaiming of the Gospel is directly linked to our behavior and how we live.
 - This does not mean we are perfect by any means but rather the Gospel is the anchor and source of your life.
 - What this does mean is that when he comes back and we see Him face to face we will be made perfect in His very presence.
 - This is a promise for believers and it is a promise that we greatly await!
- As Pastor Steve oftentimes mentions, when you preach the bible good things happen.
 - This happens because God Himself is moving upon the hearts and minds of those He chooses and wills for His Own Glory.
- Paul’s emphasis on preaching this message implies that there is to be an ongoing proclamation of this news. It’s not a one and done.
 - This consistent message should be proclaimed not just from the pulpit in your hearing, but from the lives that you are living.
 - You church, are to share this sound faith that you consistently hear with others. The same message of Hope that saved your very lives.
- Being entrusted with this truth presupposes that not only has it been believed but that fruit is evident in your life.
 - This truth will anchor you when everything around you is questionable and seems unconquerable.
- Paul wraps up his greeting in verse 4.

Titus 1:4 To Titus, my true son in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

- Paul makes mention that Titus is his “true son in a common faith”.
 - Paul typically uses this word or phrase to show genuine connection in a sense of being one and the same.

- In other words, Titus believes and trusts the same Gospel that Paul has taught him and entrusted to him.
- This is based upon the Apostles' teachings.

2 Peter 1:1 Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

- What is this “common faith” you may ask?
 - It is the thing that Paul has mentioned that is of first importance in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4:

1 Cor. 15:1 Now I make known to you, brothers and sisters, the gospel which I preached to you, which you also received, in which you also stand,

1 Cor. 15:2 by which you also are saved, if you hold firmly to the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

1 Cor. 15:3 For I handed down to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

1 Cor. 15:4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

- Titus is a “True Child” because he has held firmly to sound doctrine!
 - A scholar by the name Philip Hughes in his book, Paul’s Second Epistle to the Corinthians, states that Andreas Cretensis, Titus’ successor at Crete says these words in Titus’ eulogy.

“The first-foundation-stone of the Cretan church; the pillar of the truth; the stay of the faith; the never silent trumpet of the evangelical message; the exalted echo of Paul’s own voice.

- I don’t know about you but from what history and the scriptures show me, Titus went to Crete as instructed and obeyed Paul’s command by the will of God well.
 - How will people know you and your God, and what will they say about you and your God when you are no longer here?
 - Did you serve to the Glory of God well?
 - Will they see that His promises are true because you remained faithful to His Word?
 - Did you compromise your beliefs to be liked or did you stand flat-footed and unashamed?
 - Did your life reflect Christ even when you were hard pressed on every side?
- The Gospel, when taught soundly, entrusted to faithful men and women well, and lived with conviction and to the Glory of God, will transform lives
 - This is why I thank God for this church and this ministry and our Elders here.

- God has given us a Pastor that teaches soundly.
- God has given us elders that are overseeing, praying for, and carefully making decisions that will help edify this body.
- We as a church are growing in the knowledge and grace of God because of an unwillingness to veer from sound teaching, regardless of the culture.
- Listen to this testimony of a Verse by Verse Ministry online participant

My husband and I were both furloughed from our jobs for a very long time in 2020. I came across Pastor Steve in the podcasts in November which led me to Verse by Verse Ministry. I have struggled with constant worry throughout my life (especially this year) and it was God’s word through your ministry that I’ve learned how to rest in the Lord and what a joy it has been. I had never fully understood what that meant until now and there are no words to describe the peace that follows and the joy, gratitude, and this new insatiable desire to learn how to be an obedient servant of our beautiful loving God!

- Every believer that comes across the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the word takes root by the Power of the Spirit, transformation happens!
 - Your experiential knowledge of God does not leave you the same
 - Every leader here has been entrusted with the work of the ministry because they have been called to shepherd the body.
 - They are here to help equip, train, and see us all grow and be trained in righteousness.
 - The work of the ministry goes forth because of its enduring and trustworthy truth.
 - Don’t just get comfortable because you go to a strong bible-based church. Your training and growth doesn't stop on Sunday or Wednesday.
 - Your growth and my growth must be pursued everyday as we seek to glorify Christ in our living and in knowing Him more.
 - And as Paul would end his greeting I end by saying, “Grace and peace to you from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior”