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A JOURNEY THROUGH THE BIBLE

Reading: Titus 1:1-9

57. THE BOOK OF TITUS

Someone has said that, a lot of people are like a wheel barrow, not good unless pushed. Some are like canoes, they have to be paddled. Some are like kites, if you don't keep them on a string they fly away. Some are like footballs, you can't tell which way they'll bounce next. Some are like balloons, full of wind and ready to blow up. Some are like trailers, they have to be pulled. Some are like a good watch, open face, pure gold, quietly busy and full of good works. *What are you like ?* We all should be a good watch. Like Titus, we should acknowledge God's authority and accept His assignment. Now we find reference to Titus 13 times in the Bible. His name means "pleasing," and indeed, he was one who brought much pleasure to the heart of Paul. But who was Titus ? Well let's think for a moment about,

1. THE PERSON:

Do you see (1:4) ? *" To Titus mine own son in the faith,"* Apparently Titus had been won to Christ at an early period in Paul's ministry. We know this because he accompanied Paul and Barnabas as part of the Antioch delegation to settle the matter of Gentile freedom from the ceremonial law. (Gal 2:1-4) It's a remarkable fact that

Titus is not mentioned in the Book of Acts. All we know of Titus we gather from the writings of Paul. We know for example that Titus was a Gentile, a Greek (Gal 2:3) that his home was probably in Antioch. (Gal 2:1) That he became a very loyal, valuable assistant to Paul in his ministry. It was Titus that Paul sent to Corinth to straighten out certain disorders in the church and to initiate an offering for the poor saints at Jerusalem. (2 Cor 2:12-13 7:6-13-15) That Paul would entrust him with such a task reveals his spiritual maturity and stability. Titus later caught up with Paul in Macedonia with good news (2 Cor 7:5-6) and was sent back bearing 2 Corinthians and charged by Paul to complete the collection for the believers at Jerusalem. (2 Cor 8:6-17) After this little is known of Titus until we read of him in the Pastoral letters. *It seems that after Paul's first Roman imprisonment Titus accompanied Paul to the Island of Crete and there Paul left him to correct the things that were wrong.*

Later Titus received this letter from Paul to guide him and support him in his task. *You know Paul was very wise in the use he made of the young men around him.* You see, Titus was completely different from Timothy. Both were young, both were gifted, and both were appreciated by Paul. Both were sent on delicate and difficult missions Timothy to Ephesus and Titus to Crete for Paul appointed *" these spiritual trouble-shooters,"* to tasks for which he considered them to be suitable. I mean look at these two for a moment. Timothy had been brought up a Jew though his father was Greek, Titus was a pure Gentile. Timothy was circumcised but Titus was not. (Gal 2:3) Timothy

seems to have been younger than Titus, and certainly Titus seems to have been a stronger man physically and spiritually for Paul seems less concerned about the conduct of Titus and the way others might treat him than he was about Timothy. Do you know something ? How important it is in the Lord's work to have the right man for the job. You see, here was Titus and he realized that service is always the outcome of salvation.

*I will not work my soul to save
For that my Lord has done
But I will work like any slave
For love of God's dear Son*

2. THE PLACE:

Do you see (1:4) ? Anybody ever been to Crete for their holidays ? Crete one of the largest islands in the Mediterranean Sea, lying south east of Greece measured 160 miles long by 35 miles at its widest. (Acts 27:7-9) Crete was a very difficult place to establish a church. You see, the Cretians had a bad reputation. (1:12-13) Here Paul was quoting a sixth century BC Cretan poet by the name of Epimenides who refers to his own people as “ *liars, evil beasts and lazy gluttons.*” Just as calling someone Corinthian was to describe them as being destitute of morals so “ *to cretanize,*” meant habitual lying and cheating. Not a very promising place for the gospel. Did the gospel reach Crete by those who were present at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost ? (Acts 2:11) Or was it through Paul and Titus that these island people heard the gospel for the very first time ?

One thing is sure. Paul had a firm conviction in his heart. He believed that the grace of God that could save him could do the same for anybody anywhere. And he was not disappointed. For when he and Titus preached the gospel in Crete they saw folk saved and a church was formed. On leaving the island Paul wrote to encourage and instruct Titus and to “ set in order the things that are wanting.” (1:5) Indeed is that not,

(3) THE PURPOSE:

Of this letter. Do you see (1:5) ? You see, these churches were not fully established according to New Testament church principles, for elders were not yet appointed. This was one of the reasons why Paul wrote this letter but it was more than that. There was to be godly leadership, but there was to be godly living. Paul puts it like this in (3:8) “ *be careful to maintain good works.*” That is a major emphasis in this book. (1:16 2:7,14 3:1,5,8,14) Saved by grace means saved unto good works. *You see, in 1 Timothy we are to protect the gospel: in 2 Timothy we are to proclaim the gospel, but in Titus we are to practice the gospel.* There ought to be a life of godliness not worldliness. (1:1 2:12) So Paul is writing this letter to establish godly *Leadership*, and godly *Living*. But I think there is something else here, he is writing to establish godly *Labouring*.

One scholar says “ *God and Christ are regularly referred to as Saviour (1:3-4 2,10,13 3:4-6) and the saving plan is so emphasized in (2:11-14) that it indicates the major thrust of the epistle is that of equipping the churches of*

Crete for effective evangelism.” How do you evangelize effectively ? How do you win people who are “ *liars, evil beasts and lazy gluttons* ?” You live before them

“ *soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.*”

(2:12) My do you why our evangelism has lost its edge ? Because our living contradicts our speaking. Our works do not match our words, our conduct is not in keeping with our creed, our lifestyle is not in step with our language. Now tell me this, would you have fancied a position in Crete ? I tell you it would have been easy for Titus like many others to have “ *heard God’s call to go elsewhere,*” but he stuck it out and finished his work. Tradition tells that after Paul’s death, Titus who had been with Paul in Rome during his second imprisonment returned to Crete to continue the work of God until his death at the age of 94. Now the book of Titus has three chapters and I want to divide our study accordingly.

1. The Organization of the Church: 1:1-16

Some folk tell us that the church should have no organization for the church is an organism, that is a living body. (Col 1:18) Yet in these pastoral epistles we find Paul instructing Timothy and Titus to establish the church into a regular and orderly community. There is meant to be in the words of Dr. Sidlow Baxter “ *adequate even though simple organization.*” It would seem from this letter that there were a number of churches on the island of Crete. (1:5) And the striking thing seems to be that they were autonomous, that is self-governing. Sidlow Baxter says,

It is a significant thing that although the New Testament gives counsels and directions as to the organizing of local assemblies or churches it nowhere even hints at any central board of administration such as those which have since developed and which exist with such wide spread powers today. There may well be voluntary unions of churches which do not infringe local autonomy, but there must be no governing executives, for these while seeming to accomplish a useful outward unity, almost invariably violate and often destroy that inward unity, which comes of free and direct loyalty to the apostolic word. (Explore the Book by Sidlow Baxter p, 247)

So here is Paul writing to Titus to bring some organization to these local autonomous churches on the island of Crete. What does such organization involve ? Well, first and foremost,

(a) GOD’s WORD Must be Expounded: 1:1-4

It’s interesting how Paul presents himself in his introduction to this letter. In regard to the Father he was a bond slaves: in regard to the Son he was an apostle: in regard to Titus he was a spiritual parent: (1:4) but in regard to the Word he was preacher. (1:3) Do you see the place Paul gives to the Word of God in the life of the local church ? Paul talks here about,

The Power of the Word: “ *Paul a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ according to the faith of God’s elect,*” (1:1) The “ *faith,*” is that body of truth contained

in the Word. This “*faith*,” is what Jude calls “*the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*” (Jude 3) It is that deposit of truth that God gave to Paul and he in turn gave to Timothy and Titus. You see, even our personal salvation commences with an honest reception of the factual and theological statements of the gospel. How can you be a Christian and deny the deity of Jesus Christ ? (1:3) How can you be a believer and deny the once and for all sacrifice of the cross ? You cannot. *Paul is talking here about the Word in relation to our salvation.*

The Purpose of the Word:

“*The truth which is after godliness,*” (1:1) The truth of the gospel changes a life from ungodliness to holy living. Was this not one of the problems in Crete ? They were saying, “*God has saved us by grace so we are free to sin.*” Paul answers this teaching from the start by defining the faith as the “*truth which is after godliness.*”

“*Godliness,*” is a favourite word with Paul (1 Tim 2:2 3:16 4:7-8 6:3 Titus 3:5) and simply means practical holiness in every day life. *Paul is talking here about the Word in relation to our sanctification.*

The Priority of the Word:

How does God reveal his message of “*eternal life* ?” Through preaching. You see, God’s ordained method for communicating His Word is not through personal dialogue but through pulpit delivery. *Paul is talking here about the Word in relation to our service.* You know, as you consider this opening paragraph you can see that Paul related

everything in his life to the ministry of the Word of God. Did he not want Timothy to grasp this fact ? Did he not want Titus to grasp this fact ? He wanted these preacher boys to make the Word of God a priority in their ministries. My do we not need to get back to the Bible ? Do you recall the cry of those in Nehemiah’s day ? “*Bring the book.*” (Neh 8:2) Is this your desire ? Is this the longing of our churches ? That the Word might be expounded ? That the place of preaching must always be central. That our local churches might be “*Bible schools,*” where the Word is taught ? (a)

(b) GODLY LEADERSHIP Must be Established: 1:5-9

I wonder there is a hint here that Titus wanted to resign ? There was certainly opposition to his ministry, but if you are going to be a pastor or elder and a good one you need to stand fast and not wavier even in difficult times. A little boy had an old horse, more of a nag than a steed. A man was making fun of the boy’s horse and he said, “*Son, can he run fast ?*” He said, “*No sir, but he can stand fast.*” Now what we need are some preachers, pastors, and elders who can stand fast. Paul says “*Titus this is why I left you in Crete, if there were no problems to solve the church would not need you. I mean Titus was there “ to set in order,” the things that were lacking.*” That is a medical term meaning “*to set a broken bone or straighten a crooked limb.*” Now that is a metaphor that sometimes churches can be broken. Sometimes churches can have problems. One of the elder’s requirements is to be a spiritual physician in orthopedics who can put things

together. He is to be a mender of things. So he is to, with tender loving care, care for the flock. And when things are out of order, he is to put things in order. Now Titus was not the spiritual dictator of the island but he was Paul's official apostolic representative with authority to work. Do you recall it was Paul's policy to ordain elders in the churches he had established ? (Acts 14:23) He had not been able to stay long enough in Crete so he says

" Timothy here is priority number one, ' ordain elders in every city.' " I am sure you have noticed before the **Plurality that is Stressed:** *" Ordain elders,"* these letters are certainly not a mandate for a one man leadership.

Gender is also Stressed: *" the husband of one wife,"*

Can a woman be an elder ? David Pawson says *" this is possible if she is married to one wife."* Have you also noticed that **Spiritual Character** is emphasised over gift ? Leaders often grumble that their problems would be solved if only the members would follow them. I wonder at times is the real problem not really with those of us who are in leadership ? Inevitably people subconsciously follow their leaders. They may not follow what the leaders say but they do follow what the leaders do.

One of the things that you see as a church leader is this. You see your own strengths and weaknesses appearing in the church. *Is this not why the qualifications of leaders focus more on character than gift ?* It is not so much what a leader can do that makes him a leader but what he is both at home and in public. Is this not why character is more important than ability ? Church leadership is about being a good model as well as a good manager, about

being visible as well as being audible. Did you notice that Paul uses three words to describe leaders in the church ?

' Elder's,' (1:5) ' bishop,' (1:7) and ' steward,' (1:7)

The word elder emphasizes *his maturity*, the word bishop emphasizes his *ministry*, and the word steward emphasizes his *authority*. In ancient Greek and Roman societies, a **steward** managed a household on behalf of the owner. He had authority. But notice not only the names of an elder, look at the nature of an elder. Paul speaks about him,

Morally: *" blameless,"* The word *" blameless,"* means *" unaccused,"* and *" irreproachable."* The idea is that the elder cannot be charged with wrongdoing. There is nothing the enemy can lay hold of to hinder the work or ruin the witness.

Domestically: *" the husband of one wife,"* a one woman man. That makes it hard for a woman to be a minister.

" Having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly," This may mean believing children. One thing is sure if a man's household is not under control he is an unwise choice to guide the saints. (1 Tim 3:4-5)

Socially: *" blameless,"* above reproach. *" Not self-willed,"* An elder must not be wrapped up in himself, only doing what he does for self-interest. *" Not soon angry,"* He must not be quick-tempered, one with a short fuse and easily provoked. *" Not given to wine,"* He must not be someone who is addicted to wine or strong drink. *" No striker,"* The word literally means *" fist-fighter."* *" Not given to filthy lucre,"* or *" Not greedy for gain,"* materialism and covetous destroy credibility with the

flock and distract an elder from his true tasks of shepherding. Can you see the elder morally, domestically, socially, can you see him,

Spiritually: “ *a lover of hospitality,*” hospitality is the gateway to dealing with people’s problems as well as offering personal instruction in the faith. “ *a lover of good men,*” or “ *a lover of what is good,*” and this would include good men. A man is a good man because he has a good heart and because he surrounds himself with good things. “ *Sober,*” is prudent. “ *Just,*” or “ *Upright,*” he is a person of integrity who sticks by his word and practices what he preaches. “ *holy,*” unstained is the idea.

“ *temperate,*” “ *self-controlled,*” is the meaning and it applies to a man’s appetites and actions. My can you see the picture that Paul is painting ? Can you see the elder, *Morally: Domestically: Socially: Spiritually:* look at him,

Doctrinally:

Look at (1:9) The elder or pastor must know the Word for two reasons. He must be able to Exhort the Saints: do you see that word “ *exhort,*” it means “ *to call near, to invite,*” is this not our task ? To call people to a closer walk with the Lord ? But we must be able also to Expose the Rebels: the word “ *gainsayers,*” means “ *those who say against, those who contradict.*” In the context of Titus it means refuting the false teachers who spread unhealthy doctrine. My we have to get into the Word. Do you ever folk say “ *We don’t want doctrine, just give us helpful devotional thoughts.*” I tell you such people don’t

what they are saying for apart from truth Bible doctrine there can be no spiritual help or health. I remember a man saying to me “ *I could come on Sunday morning and just look at the text on the wall and go home.*” Did he never read these letters ? The word “ *gainsayers,*” be also mean to “ *dispute or to refuse.*” I mean we are never short of those in the church who want to dispute ? I heard about a church member who objected to anything that went on in the church. In every business meeting he always argued and gripped about what was discussed. One Sunday the pastor announced that someone had given the Church a large and beautiful chandelier. As usual the man got up and objected to the church taking it. The pastor said, “ *It is being given to us. It is not costing us a single penny. Why would you be against it ?*” He replied, “ *Well, first of all, we don’t have anyone who can play it. Secondly, what we need around here is more light.*” I’ll tell you what we need. We need, (a) and (b) but something else

(c) GRAVE ERROR Must Be Exposed: 1:10-17

Now what was this error ? Well, it was similar to what Timothy had to deal with in Ephesus. Do you see how it is described in (1:14) ? There was in Crete a group of people who contradicted the teachings of Paul and taught instead Jewish fables (legalism) and the commandments of men (traditionalism) Paul describes them further in (1:10) as those “ *of the circumcision.*” Were these not the people who had battled with Paul from Jerusalem to Rome and they are still opposing the truth ? When we mix law with grace we end up with false doctrine. The motivation of these false teachers was financial gain,

(1:11) and the local people's natural feelings made them easy pray for these charlatans (1:12) Dietary laws and asceticism were key doctrines to these false teachers and Paul attacked these people in (1:15) It's sad that this verse has been used by some professing Christians to support their immoral sinful practices saying, "*to the pure all things are pure so what I am doing is not wrong.*" But Paul had not morals in mind when he wrote these words. You see, these false teachers were teaching that Jewish dietary laws still applied to Christian believers. (1 Tim 4:3-5) They were saying "*if you ate forbidden food you defiled yourself but if you refused that food you became holier.*" Paul says it's just the opposite it's not the food which are defiling the teachers it's the teachers who are defiling the food. Moral purity is not a matter of diets it's a matter of a clean heart and a pure conscience. (Matt 6:22-23 Rom 14:14) Now how was Titus to treat these false teachers ?

He was to *reject them*: (1:11-12) he was to *rebuke them*: (1:13-14) and he was to *refuse them*: (1:15-16) My are there still not false teachers with us today ? Some of them may preach to thousands of people and they will throw in a Bible verse here and here. You could say they throw in a little Bible, but it's all about positive thinking: how to improve your self-image: how to feel good: how to climb the social ladder, its pure psychology and thousands fall for it.

"*Sure it makes no difference what you believe just as long as you believe something.*" Do you know something ? It's make all the difference between life and

death whether or not you believe the truth of the Word or the lies of the Devil. (Jn 8:32) Sure, you can choose what you believe but you cannot choose the consequences. (1)

(2) The Operation of the Church 2:1-15

You know if Titus had spent all his time dealing with the false teachers he would have neglected other matters that are necessary for a healthy church. It's important that the elders have a balanced ministry, teaching the saints as well as refuting the enemies. Here Paul deals with different groups in the church and shows us how the church is to act or operate. Notice,

(a) *THE PRACTICAL EXHORTATIONS: 2:1-9*

To the Older Saints: (2:2-3) Someone has written that you know you're getting older when,

Everything that works hurts, and what doesn't hurt doesn't work. You feel like the morning after, and you haven't been anywhere. Your little black book only contains names ending in M.D. Your children are beginning to look middle-aged. Your mind makes contracts your body can't keep. You look forward to a dull evening. Your knees buckle and your belt won't. Your back goes out more than you do. You sink your teeth into a steak, and they stay there. You know all the answers, but nobody asks the questions.

Someone once said,

*My deafness I endure
To dentures I'm resigned
Bifocals I can manage
But how I miss my mind*

But is not a blessing when a local church has older believers who have long walked with the Lord ? These older Christians are privileged to live so long but with that privilege comes serious responsibility. The aged men: are to be sober or vigilant, grave, easy to respect, temperate self-controlled, and sound or healthy in the faith. Which do you think is the most important ? Physical or spiritual health ? I wonder are we who are older patient with the younger generation ? (2:2) The aged women: what an opportunity they have to teach the younger women both by precept and example.

To the Younger Saints: To the Young Women: she needs to be sober and take a serious attitude to marriage and to the home. To the Young Men: they need to be clean, sincere and serious. (2:6-8) There are also practical exhortations here,

To the Servant: as Paul warned these Christian slaves about three sins they must avoid. Disobedience, talking back and stealing. There are no slaves today, but what about as employees ? Do we obey orders ? Do we talk back ? Do we steal from our employers ? Paul gave a good reason why a Christian employee should be trustworthy. “ *That they may adornall things.* ” (2:10) Wuest translates it we “ *will embellish with honour the Word of God.* ” In other words when we serve faithfully

we “ *beautify the Bible,* ” and make the Christian message attractive to the lost. These practical instructions given to old, young, men and women, and to slaves are interesting in view of the character of people on the island of Crete.

Do you recall what they were like ? “ *liars, evil beasts and lazy gluttons.* ” (1:12) But the gospel changes people. And the great incentive to godly living is the Cross and the Coming, for undergirding these practical exhortations is,

(b) THE DOCTRINAL FOUNDATION: 2:10-15

And the emphasis here is on grace. Remember there were some wanted to turn grace into license. “ *We can live in sin we are no longer under law,* ” but grace brings an even greater responsibility. Do you see here the three tenses of the Christian life ?

Past: “ *The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,* ” (2:11)

Present: “ *teaching us that,* ”

Future: “ *looking for that blessed hope,* ”

Saved from the **Penalty of sin:** (2:11) Saved from the

Power of sin: (2:12) Saved from the **Presence of Sin:**

(2:13) Do you see here the three aspects of the Christian life ?

The Selfward Aspect: “ *we should live soberly,* ”

The Manward Aspect: “ *we are to live righteously,* ”

The Godward Aspect: “ *we are to live godly,* ” Notice also the teaching concerning the Lord’s Advent in two stages.

“ *That blessed hope,* ” that is the hope of meeting Christ in the air (1 Thes 4:15) “ *the glorious appearing,* ” that is the appearing of Christ with His church when He comes

to the earth. (2 Thes 2:1) Do you know what the great inspiration for godly living is ? The second coming of Christ and the tremendous cost of Calvary. We look back to the Cross, and we look forward to the Coming, and those twin truths motivate us to “ *live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.* ” (2:12) (1) (2)

(3) The Obligation of the Church: 3:1-5

Do you see how Paul put it to Titus ? “ *Put them in mind,* ” (3:1) There are certain things Paul wants Titus to call to their attention and cause them to remember. What are they ? He wants them to remember they have an obligation to,

(a) *THE STATE: 3:1-8*

It has often been said that a Christian is someone who is in the world but not of this world. (Phil 3:20) However, Christians still live in the world and we ought to be good citizens. Of course if the laws contradict the Word of God our first allegiance is to the Lord. (Acts 4:19 5:29) The word “ *gentle,* ” in (3:2) means “ *sweet reasonableness.* ” Paul says “ *Don’t be too hard on these sinners around you, that’s what you were like before you were saved.* ” (3:2) You see, in (2:3) he talks about our Past: in (2:4-5) he talks about our Present: and in (3:7) he talks about our Future. What a wonderful salvation is ours. Do you not think it ought to motivate us to be better citizens so that the lost around us might see Christ in us ?

(b) *THE SCRIPTURES: 3:9-11*

And the Bible has a lot to say about discipline in the local church. (Matt 18:15-20 1 Cor 5:5) The word “ *heretic,* ” suggests a person who causes division in the church because he forces people to decide or choose. “ *Are you for me or for the elders ?* ” This is a work of the flesh (Gal 5:20) And such a person should be admonished it implies publicly warned and then dismissed from the fellowship. You see, the elements in good church government are sound doctrine, sound discipleship and sound discipline. (a) (b)

(c) *THE SERVANTS: 3:12-15*

What a blessing it is to have reliable colleagues ? Paul mentions four of them. He informs Titus that “ *reinforcements are coming,* ” in the persons of Artemas or Tychicus for one of them was going to replace Titus. Isn’t it encouraging to know that when God moves a servant He has a replacement ready to step in. Its possible that Zenas and Apollos carried this letter to Titus. (Acts 18:24 3:13) Whatever they were God’s servants and Titus was to “ *see that they have everything they need.* ” Thank God for faithful servants. Faithful Sunday School teachers, faithful elders, deacons and faithful preachers of the Word. But tell me, do we do everything we can to help the Lord’s servants ? Paul says “ *And let our people also learn to maintain good works to meet urgent needs that they may not be unfruitful.* ” (3:14) Do you want to be a faithful Christian ? Do you want to be a fruitful Christian ? Then are you willing to stand by others who ***Protect the Word: (1 Timothy) Preach the Word: (2 Timothy) and Practice the Word. (Titus) ?***

