



Bible Study

Titus

Titus 1

Titus is another fellow-worker, serving the Lord Jesus alongside Paul. Titus has been sent to Crete and has a big challenge to establish the church there. This letter is similar to Paul's letter to Timothy but is of great value to us, as we seek to build the church where God has placed us.

The Call on Paul's Life

Paul describes himself as a servant who fulfils an apostolic call on his life. His mission is to bring people to faith in Jesus and then strengthen and establish them in their faith. This precious faith brings truth, which results in godliness and the sure hope of eternal life. Faith comes by hearing and obeying God's call and the apostle counts it a privilege to preach God's word and to see the fruit of lives coming to Christ.

Who was Titus?

Titus is referred to as a true son in our common faith. There is no record that Paul led him to Christ but it is clear that they found a real bond in serving Jesus together. Like Timothy, Titus shared common vision and goals to Paul and so much so, that Paul trusted Titus with ministry in Crete, which needed Paul-like help. The faith that they shared in Jesus and the power of God, was essential in establishing a partnership that furthered the progress of the gospel.

Titus' Task

It seems that Paul had left a number of converts in many parts of the island but he had not had the time to establish good leaders in all of those places. Titus was to go to these groups of believers and prayerfully identify those who could be set aside for leadership responsibility. His task was to go to every town. It was a very big work but Paul trusted him to achieve it. Appointing overseers, who will guard, teach and watch over the flock is so important. He was to appoint elders - that is, more than one. Sometimes, it may be that there is only one person suitable but looking for others and establishing a team is much more effective than just having one person. Having the opportunity to fellowship, pray and seek Christ's mind, is far less onerous when we have others in leadership beside us.

Key Qualities for Leaders

We must be blameless. People who cannot be accused by others. There is no mud that sticks! Now in Christ we are blameless, because his precious blood covers our sins and God sees Christ's righteousness protecting us. Leaders may be imperfect but we must not walk

before God and his people knowing that there are sinful issues in our lives of which we have not repented and, indeed, are covering up.

Our married life and our family life must be open to scrutiny and there must be no grounds for accusations of immorality or lack of control in how we run our home.

Our personal demeanour and reactions must be measured. We must exercise self-control, not outbursts of rage and anger. Hospitality is important. As we open our homes we show practically, the love of God and demonstrate openness for others to see our lives.

Money is necessary in ministry but it should not control us and we must not seek to acquire money or anything else, by being dishonest.

Drunkenness or violence cannot be acceptable for a Christian leader.

It is vital that a Christian leader is always able to hold tenaciously to the word of God and to handle scripture well. Not only to confound and defeat heresy but also to strengthen and develop the flock!

Deception and Falsehood

Sin is infectious, so it is important that clear Biblical teaching is the foundation upon which we build belief and practice in our lives for Christ.

There are those who make a profession out of being 'Christian' but their lives demonstrate that they are not in possession of Christ's salvation and they do not have a living relationship with him!

Points to Consider:

1. Paul was always clear about who he was and what he was doing. Do we demonstrate the same clarity in our lives?
2. God gave Titus and Timothy to Paul. Are we able to identify those that He has given to us, to help us serve Him?
3. When you are looking to appoint a new leader, how much time do you take to seek God's direction?
4. Paul's criteria are very searching. Note the importance of a person's standing in the community. Also, note the importance of marriage and family life. Self-control is very important. One sign of maturity is to behave well, however badly you are being treated. Do we measure up?
5. The best way to combat heresy and bad behaviour is to teach the truth. Are we careful not to waste time on vain arguments but, rather, to open up and explain the scriptures?

Titus 2

Paul continues to exhort Titus to be committed to sound doctrine and he now speaks in very practical ways. He wants Titus to teach and encourage, according to the needs of older men, older women and younger women, young men and slaves.

Sound Doctrine

God's people need to be clear regarding their beliefs in essential areas of faith. This includes an understanding of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. It will involve an understanding of the nature of man, the nature of sin and the need of salvation. It will obviously require a good grasp of what Jesus did in his coming, his death, his resurrection and his ascension. All of these require practical application. Sound doctrine is not just to fill the mind but it is to transform our lives, so that we become more like Jesus. Any Bible teacher needs to have a basic foundation and understanding of these areas of faith.

Older Men

Potentially, any older man is able to bring the benefit of their many years of life experience, to the body of Christ. Older men must be self-controlled. There is never an excuse to be lax regarding behaviour or beliefs. If older men are to be respected then they must live in a way that encourages that. Their love for God, their endurance and the fact that they persist in living the Christian life, should be a source of inspiration and encouragement to others in the body of Christ.

Older Women and Younger Women

Older women have a vital role in the body of Christ. Titus is told to teach them to be respectful, self-controlled and reverent, not gossips or addicted to alcohol. This clearly suggests that older women in society were often reckless in their lifestyles. Christian women need to be different. One of the key roles of older women is to help the younger women in their walk with God. Younger women need training regarding their marriages and their care of children. Without Christ, it is easy to be selfish and to disregard the needs of others. The examples of humility and self-sacrifice seen in Christ and in older sisters can be invaluable. Good marriages speak powerfully to a sinful world. Purity and faithfulness do not come naturally. They come out of a life walking with God and, when we witness living examples of how God wants us to behave, that clearly helps a lot.

Maligning the Word of God

This is a small phrase in the chapter but well worth highlighting. God's word is precious. It reveals God's ways and God's standards. The way that Christians live can honour and lift up

God's word or it can make God's word appear to be rubbish and irrelevant. Obviously, we want to honour God's word.

Young Men

It is great to have young men in the Church but they need to be disciplined and they need a good example. Titus is probably quite young and, through his ministry of life and in the word of God, he is able to exhort younger men to be godly. Paul also mentions speech. How we talk and what we say, are very important.

Slaves (and Masters)

Remember that Paul in no way condones slavery but he has to face the real world in which he is living, where slavery is a stark reality. Christians that are slaves need to show the love of Christ, through their integrity and honesty. In no way must they dishonour Jesus, however badly they are treated. Paul, when writing to the Ephesians (6:9), also urges masters to behave in godly ways towards their slaves.

The Grace of God

Salvation has come and if we really receive Jesus, the best way that we can say 'thank you' is by saying 'no' to sin. We wait for a glorious Saviour to return. He is the Redeemer. He has taken us out of the slavery of sin and made us God's people. Paul encourages Titus to share confidently and as fully as possible, what it means to have such a great salvation!

Points to Consider:

1. How committed are we to sound doctrine? Do we reflect regularly to make sure that we are thoroughly biblical in all that we teach and do?
2. Paul's advice to men and women still applies today. How are we helping Christian men and women in practical ways to be strong and to function well, to bless the body of Christ?
3. In our behaviour and lifestyle, how well are we honouring God's word rather than, in any sense, bringing it into disrepute?
4. Do we truly value the tremendous salvation that has come to us, through the grace of God?

Titus 3

Paul continues his theme with Titus of encouraging the Church to live in the good of the grace of God, to avoid false teaching and heresy and to be devoted to that which is good.

Attitude to Authority

The biblical response to those in authority is to be obedient, to be considerate and to respect those who have positions of power. The Bible shows us that no-one has authority unless God allows it and that all will be accountable to Him. They will only stay in authority until He changes it.

Speech

How we talk to others is very important. We should not criticise and be destructive of others in our words. We should endeavour to build people up and to have a humble heart in the way that we deal with others.

Our Life Before and After Finding Christ

When we were unbelievers, we were foolish and deceived. We were slaves and we were caught up in all sorts of behaviour which displeased God. It is the grace of God which has saved us. The grace and kindness of God has brought us to a very different place. We must not forget how far from God we once were. This does not mean that we condone sin in others but we must be very careful not to judge. It is only the goodness of God that has given us a totally fresh start and opened our eyes to see the foolishness of sin.

God's Salvation

To be born again and to be renewed by the work of the Holy Spirit, is a generous and gracious act of God. We did not deserve this. We are now heirs of eternal life and the best way that we can say 'thank you', is to be devoted to Christ and to seek to live in a way that pleases him.

False Teaching

Paul continues to exhort Titus to avoid wasting time on discussions and arguments, which have no profit and only entrench people in their foolishness. Paul is very clear. He says to bring a warning to a divisive person and, if necessary, warn them again. If they do not respond after two warnings, have nothing to do with them. This may seem harsh but we need to use our time wisely and must not be distracted by those who are simply time-wasters.

Paul's Conclusion

Paul enjoyed companionship and, when it was possible for people to accompany him on mission, he was delighted to have their support. He also wants Titus to help other workers to be equipped and assisted to get on with the work of God. God's people must care for one another. Paul greets those who share faith in Jesus.

Points to Consider:

1. It is important to keep an eye on our attitude towards those in authority. Are we responding biblically to such people or are we going along with current trends?
2. It is good to think about how much we have changed since becoming Christians. Are we intolerant of those who have not yet come to Christ and do we appreciate how much Christ has done for us and wants to do for them?
3. How tenacious are we regarding time-wasting? Do we get involved with fruitless discussions too easily?
4. Paul clearly valued fellow-workers in Christ. Do we also value people who serve God? Do we pray for them and encourage them?