

Introduction to Titus Part 2.  
Titus 1:1-5

Colossians 2:1-10  
Colossians 2:11-23  
Responsive Psalm 1

This morning we are going to pick back up where we left off last week, my original intention last week was to get through the first 9 verses of this first chapter, but we only made it through 3. So this morning we are going to pick back up at verse 4, and this is actually going to be part 2 of the introduction of this letter. So let us just go ahead this morning and read starting again at verse 1, and read to verse 9. After Paul's introduction in his letter, in verse 4 we see this greetings to Titus, of who we talked a little about last week. Titus was a companion of Paul in the mission field, he was one of Paul's "trouble shooters." Paul had 2 of these spiritual trouble shooters, Titus, and Timothy, both young men who Paul would send on sensitive missions to work out some very serious problems within a church.

Paul viewed both of these men as his spiritual children, what I mean by that, is they were younger men who Paul had mentored, who journeyed with him, who learned from him, and they had become like his own sons, growing a very close and personal relationship. This is recognized in Paul's greeting, "To Titus, a true son in our common faith." Just like Timothy, Paul knew he could rely upon Titus to get the job done, but yet handle it with the appropriate grace, and love. As I had mentioned last week, Paul would send Titus to trouble churches, as he did the church in Corinth, and now in this letter we find him in Crete. And since he was sent by Paul, especially in the case in Corinth where Paul had written a letter to them which Titus delivered, he would be there as Paul's envoy and as such would have the authority of Paul in that given situation, which would be an important piece of the puzzle if one was to go and set order, to appoint leaders among the fellowship, and root out false teaching.

This is not something that some perfect stranger would have the authority to do. Modern corporations like to bring in outside council, they will hire a firm to come in and look at the situation to make cuts, to clean house because these outsiders don't know anyone, don't really care about the people or the company, they are hired to do a job so they do it. The church is not like that, there is a relational element in all of Christendom as we are all connected together through Christ. So this isn't what Titus is doing, yes, there is an element where he is an outsider who is coming in to right the ship sort a speak, but it isn't with the same cold calculating purpose as a corporate consultant may be. Paul knew and loved these people, he established many of these churches, setting them in order, and on a path and sometimes they strayed so he needed to send an envoy in his authority to correct them. That is what Titus was, that is what Timothy was, a brother in Christ both to Paul, and to these churches, who out of love for the people of God came to do what was right by and for the people of God.

Titus' name occurs 13 times in the new Testament, so he is one who is rather well known by churches as he was also the traveling companion of Paul's. So he would have known some of these people as well. The first time that we see Titus mentioned is in Galatians, which we talked about last week. Paul brought Titus with him to the Jerusalem Council as a sort of proof of God's work among the Gentiles. the topic of discussion, was the principle of grace verse the law. Specifically circumcision, the sign of the covenant given to Abraham. Titus was Paul's proof of salvation outside the law, outside of that old covenant, the question was is such a salvation sufficient, or does one need to become a ceremonial Jew to be a part of God's chosen people. Though this point was resolved at that council,

generations ago, this is a question that seems to still come up in churches today as some have created new standards, new lists, new laws that one must adhere to be seen or known as a true believer.

The point of this council was to show, that true, saving faith and belief, was by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Titus was a true believer, a Gentile, not under the law, not bound by the Jewish Traditions, and there is no reason to retroactively put him under the law, for he is already a son of God, one of God's chosen children. This was a monumental moment in the early church for it shaped its future, answering the question is grace sufficient, or must we add ritual, the classic conflict between grace and legalism. Paul, and those with him did not give one inch of ground in their stance, Titus was a true brother, a gentile, not ever having been under the law has come to believe. The Jewish Council understood this, and did not argue or compel the gentiles to become ceremonial Jews to be recognized as brothers and sisters in Christ. Then from that council meeting, Titus accompanied Paul on his missionary journeys, learning from Paul, growing in his faith and understanding to the point where Paul was confident that he could send Titus on his behalf into the church at Corinth to help set them straight. ( and we know that ministry was successful, for we see it in Paul's follow up letter 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians, in chapter 7, verse 5 "For indeed when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears. Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not only by his coming , but also by his consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more."

2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians was Paul's response to Titus' report, to which Titus returned for a second mission to deal with with a collection of money and charity that was for the poor churches in Judea, and in that letter Paul urged the church to receive Titus back again with love chapter 8 vs 16. "But thanks be to God who puts the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus. For he not only accepted the exhortation, but being more diligent, he went to you of his own accord. And we have sent with him the brother whose praise is in the gospel throughout the churches, and not only that, but who was also chosen by the churches to travel with us with this gift, which is administered by us to the glory of the Lord himself and to show your ready mind, avoiding this; that anyone should blame us in this lavish gift which is administered by us- proving honorable things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also but also in the sight of men. And we have sent with them our brother whom we have often proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, because of the great confidence which we have in you, if anyone inquires about Titus, , he is my partner and fellow worker concerning you Or if our brethren are inquired about, they are messengers of the churches, the glory. of Christ. Therefore show to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love and of our boasting on your behalf."

We are getting a picture of who Titus was, a young, passionate, diligent, go gett'er of a person, who was trustworthy, patient, and caring. Later after Paul was released from his second imprisonment in Rome, both he and Titus went to Crete where there were several problems within the church. And Paul and left Titus there to sort it out and that is what this letter is about, as Paul is instructing and encouraging Titus on this latest task. We don't know what became of Titus in the end, church tradition says that he returned to Crete after going to visit Paul in Nicopolis for the winter, and he remained there ministering to the people until he died of old age. One of the stand out things in Titus, is that he and Paul were drastically different, yet worked together for the one common mission of God's glory. Paul was an old man by this time, and Titus was young, yet they were dear friends and colleagues sharing in the same ministry. Paul was a Jewish Pharisee, Titus was a Gentile but despite those differences they were united in the gospel of Christ, brothers and fellow soldiers in the spiritual war for the souls of God's people. Paul was also trained in the highest universities, had been in his own youth making a

name for himself amongst the Pharisee's having studied with some of the finest teachers. Titus on the other hand, we have no record of any such formal training at all.

I think one of the take aways here is this stark difference that we see in these 2, is that God has a use and purpose, it doesn't matter how far apart people may be financially, socially, or in education, Jesus abolishes those differences when we are all united in him, we become one in him, loving and caring for one another. No civil law, or religious traditions could accomplish this sort of relationship. Only grace, through faith and the ministering of the holy spirit. Pre-conversion Paul would not have even talked with Titus, a Gentile, let alone been a travel partner, speaking of him so highly, and counting him as a son in the faith. Christ destroys barriers, he transforms lives, and creates a new reality within his children. God calls people from all walks of life, who are in many different seasons or stages, and he puts them all together for his glory, each fulfilling a role, each having a purpose in this ministry. I think the marriage relationship is a small picture of this, 2 people who can be completely different in many ways, come together as one filling in the gaps and strengthening one another. IT is the same with the relationships within the church body, God puts his people together who may in many ways never have been together, so that we may make one another better people, growing together in our faith and understanding, learning grace, mercy, humility, and love.

Despite all of our differences as individuals in this body of Christ, we have Christ who binds us together, we have a total savior who completely gives each believer his grace and this is a reality whether we know it or not, whether we feel it or not, for it doesn't matter what we think, or feel, God said it, God gives it, and as Paul wrote, God can not lie. In Christ we also have peace, this is a common shared thing among all believers, ever believer has peace with God as Paul wrote in Roman's chapter 5, "Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." We have peace, no longer in fear of the judgment for our sins are forgiven, no longer in fear of punishment for those sins for they have been wiped clean. God made peace through the blood of Christ on the Cross, our guilt is gone, our sins are forgiven and we can rejoice together knowing we have this peace with God.

But it doesn't end there, each believer also has direct access to God, we have become children, not mere servants or slaves, but we have the privilege to be able to come directly to the father. Again Roman's 5 "through whom we also have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. It doesn't matter our backgrounds, or social status, whether Jew or Gentile, whether old or young, formally educated or not, we who are Christs all have the same access to God. This is really what the Jerusalem Council confirmed with the acceptance of Titus, as they did not compel him to become a ceremonial Jew. It was the acknowledgment that all in Christ are equal in God no matter the background, history, or status. No matter who you are individually, all who believe are partakers of these realities, and we share them together in this one body, in the person Jesus.

In verse 5 we see what Titus was charged to do, set in order the things that are lacking in the church at Crete and appoint elders. The Island of Crete is in the Mediterranean sea, south of what is Turkey today. Little is known about that formation of the church there, as there is no recorded missionary journeys to that Island, but there were Cretans at Pentecost and it is likely they brought the gospel back home with them. There is a recording of Paul going to Crete, but it was while he was being transported as a Roman prisoner. So it is likely that any church gathering on the Island were organically formed from those who were at Pentecost. So now, Paul is sending Titus, as his envoy to strengthen

those churches, to set them on the right path, and establish them in good order by identifying and appointing solid leadership.

It doesn't seem to take long, wherever a church is established there is a challenge of false teaching issues, and just like in Galatia, it would seem that almost everywhere a Christ following church arose, in would come the Judaizers to bring in the law and legalism, trying to add tradition and rules to the grace and mercy of God. One way to combat such, was to raise up men of good standing, strong men in the faith to stand against such teachings, that is why this was a very important part of what This, and Timothy were to do when Paul sent them to their respective missions. It would seem that the churches in Crete were very disorganized, and still quite new, Paul's charge here is to appoint elders in every city, so evidently someone had previously shared the gospel across much of the island, but now the faithful where sort of left on their own. Titus was given full authority by Paul to appoint men as leaders within those local church bodies.

In the following verses Paul sets forth some guidelines in appointing these leaders, and these things are important for those who would be the leaders of a congregation have a higher accountability then those who are not leadership. By that I mean, those who would be leaders of a local church body are examples to everyone else, their faith, their life, their ministry is constantly going to be scrutinized, watched, and looked at. Often times the church scandals that we hear about is about the Leadership, and less about the issues with the congregation. It is devastating to a church body when the leadership is caught not practicing what they are preaching. Therefore Paul says in verse 6, here are the things to look for when appointing leaders, "If a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children and not accused of dissipation or insubordination."

Over the next few verses in this section of the letter there are 17 such qualifications to look for in one who would be leading a church body, which we will dive into next week, but a few notes about those qualifications is that these qualities should really be found in any christian, but it is important to be sure that those appointed to any leadership role reflects these qualities for they are the face of the church, they are the ones who the outside see, and who the church will be judge by, they are the model of the church. That is why Paul says that he must be found blameless. This should be one in whom there can be found no accusations of overtly sinful behavior among the church, and the community in which he exists. The unbelieving world loves to try to tear down Christians, especially those in leadership roles, in an attempt to prove that they are hypocrites, so it is important that any leader be above board and live above reproach to avoid such criticism. It isn't as though we should order ourselves as the world dictates or judges, but the goal of the church is to minister the gospel, to build up the faithful, and equip the saints in their christian walk. If a leader of a congregation is proven to be a hypocrite, and is not living the life he is calling others to live then that destroys his reputation, and ministry.

But this also does not mean that such a person has reached some level of perfection either. Congregations can at times elevate their leadership to such high roles that it seems that the leadership can do no wrong. The reality is that even though the goal is to appoint leaders who exemplify the Christian traits, they are still human, they are still in this flesh, and they still struggle with sin and temptations just like everyone else. We are all sinners saved by grace. Over the next week or so we will dive deeper into the requirements that Paul lays out here for Titus, in appointing leaders, and setting

order within the church, much of it has to do with this concept of “being blameless” and I think that is sort of the lens that we should see these in, it isn’t to be sinless, it is to be blameless, for no one is sinless, but we strive to be blameless before the Lord. So next week, we will begin looking at the meat of this letter, as we begin to dig into what Paul would have Titus do in the churches at Crete.