

Our Journey Through Paul's Letter to Titus

Mike Butler
Southside Baptist Church
First Edition
August 2026

Unless otherwise noted all Scripture is taken from the New King James Version

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Lesson #1 - Introduction

Welcome to Paul's Letter to Titus

Setting the Stage:

Titus had never felt so alone. For the first time in a long time he was by himself. He wasn't scared or concerned, but after several years of traveling with the apostle Paul he'd been left on the Island of Crete to help the fledgling church get their feet on the ground and stay true to the gospel of Jesus.

But in one sense, being alone on Crete brought a bit of relief. Traveling with Paul hadn't been easy. Together they had crossed thousands of miles on foot, in donkey carts and even ships. They visited both small towns and large cities. Some Titus had never even heard of. But everywhere they went they found one thing in common - conflict. The Jews didn't like them and neither did the Gentiles, so the turmoil they created attracted the attention of the Roman authorities. And that was never a good thing. As a result, Paul and his followers were often subjected to persecution. Sometimes they were simply asked to leave. Other times they were beaten or whipped, and even imprisoned. That meant life with Paul was never easy, but it was also never boring and always rewarding.

The rewards were obvious, though some might not see it that way. They had been called by God to share the gospel message of Jesus. The Lord told them to go to all the world to declare His truth and disciple new believers. And that's exactly what they did. As difficult as that might be. But it was rewarding because they were doing what the Lord told them to do. Even though it sometimes got really tough.

But now he was on Crete where Paul had left him to accomplish several tasks. He was to select leaders for the new church, help them learn how to shepherd God's flock of believers, and then equip them to evangelize their pagan neighbors. He was then tasked to help the new believers understand how a Christian was supposed to act. These were

tasks Titus had never managed on his own and that was discouraging, but he'd recently received a letter from Paul to guide him through his new role, and that would help. The letter was typical of Paul's writing. He wrote a lot, and he was always trying to help young pastors like himself, Timothy and Apollos. Paul would constantly instruct them in doctrine and in their duties as an undershepherd, and if he wasn't with them he'd instruct them with a letter. The reminders were good because Paul was uncompromising when it came to teaching doctrine and evangelism. He cut no corners to make it easier.

So with years of Paul's training under his belt Titus felt confident in his new role. Even so, the letter from Paul would be a huge help and encouragement. The type of encouragement he would need because the people of Crete were not easy to deal with. But that's okay too. The easy way was not always the best way, and Titus knew that.

So let's join the young pastor Titus as he reads through his letter from Paul. Not only will we learn about Titus, but we'll learn many truths the Lord has passed down to us.

Lesson #2

Introduction Continued

Author and Timing

Around 65AD, the apostle Paul wrote a letter to his close friend. A young pastor named Titus. They had traveled together preaching the gospel but now Paul had asked Titus to stay in Crete to help the new church grow in their faith. This was not an easy task so Paul wrote Titus a letter with instructions. Not only for guidance but also for encouragement. As we'll see, the letter Paul wrote to Titus is very similar to the first instructional letter he wrote to Timothy (1st Timothy). That makes sense considering they were both young pastors sharing the gospel during a very difficult period.

Titus was a "*Greek*", a universal term often used to describe any non-Jew. It's what we commonly know as a "*Gentile*" (see Galatians 2:3). That means Titus was probably born into an idol worshipping pagan family and had converted to Christianity as a young man. Probably under the teaching of Paul during his first mission trip around 46-48AD. During that period Paul's travel with Barnabas included a visit to Jerusalem with several coworkers to attend the *Jerusalem Council*. A meeting of church leaders who clarified that salvation was by faith alone and not by adherence to Jewish customs. This heresy was being taught by a group called the Judaizers and was confusing a lot of early believers. So Paul went to the council for clarification (Acts 15:6-21). One of the coworkers who accompanied Paul is believed to have been Titus, (Galatians 2:1-3). If that's the case, Titus, as a believing Gentile, would have been clear evidence to the Council that following Jewish customs was not required for salvation.

Titus' role in Paul's ministry must have been significant because he's mentioned thirteen times in the New Testament. Given that, it might be a good idea to start our study by quickly reviewing each of these verses to help us better understand Titus, his character and his relationship with Paul:

Titus 1:4

- **"4. To Titus, a true son in our common faith."**
- Just as he did with Timothy (1 Timothy 1:2) Paul considered Titus to be like his own son. This would have given Titus the unique opportunity to learn from the master evangelist.
- The phrase **"...a true son..."** may also indicate the strength of Titus' faith.

Galatians 2:1-3

- **1. Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me. 2. And I went up by revelation [from the Holy Spirit] , and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain. 3. Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.”.**
- In this passage we see confirmation of Titus traveling with Paul and Barnabas in preparation for the Jerusalem Council (see Acts 15).
- Paul's reference to the fact Titus, a Gentile, was a believer, discounted the Judaizers belief that circumcision was required for salvation.

2 Timothy 4:9-10&13

- **“9. Be diligent to come to me quickly; 10. for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia.”.**
- **“13. Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments.”**
- Paul knew the time of his death may be near (see 2 Timothy 4:6) so he called for Timothy to come quickly to him. He undoubtedly wanted Timothy with him for moral support but he also asked Timothy to bring his **“...books and parchments...”**. The Bible doesn't indicate what these were, but the **“...books...”** may have been scrolls of the Old Testament, and the **“...parchments...”** may have been Paul's writing materials or even his letters.
- Demas (2 Timothy 4:10) had been one of **“...my fellow laborers”** (Philemon 24), but somewhere along the way something happened and Demas deserted Paul and left his ministry.
- Paul's other helpers, including Titus, had been sent to other regions to preach. Titus was sent to **“...Dalmatia...”** also known as *Illyricum* (Romans 15:19) which is in modern Croatia (Yugoslavia).
- Interestingly, Titus may have witnessed the fall of Demas who left the ministry to pursue the world. If Titus saw this happen it may have taught him a valuable lesson about being obedient.

2 Corinthians 2:12-13

- **“12. Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord, 13. I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I departed for Macedonia.”.**

- Paul was distressed by events occurring in the church at Corinth. This was due in part to the continued influence of the Judaizers and the wishy-washy faith of the Corinthian believers. This caused Paul to have ***“...no rest in my spirit...”***. Earlier he had sent Titus to Corinth with a letter of reprimand we do not have sometimes called the ***“severe letter”*** (refer to 2 Corinthians 2:4 / 7:5-16).
- But Paul had not heard from Titus with news of what was happening in Corinth. So he went first to Troas, but not finding Titus there, he went on to Macedonia (Greece) in hopes of meeting him along the way.
- This reaffirms Paul's trust and close relationship with Titus who he calls ***“...my brother...”***.

2 Corinthians 7:5-7

- ***“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. 6. Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, 7. and not only by his coming, but also by the 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.”***
- This is an important passage because it shows that even Paul could become weary and worn from ministry. While Paul was in Ephesus the church at Corinth was splintered by division and false teaching.
- But Paul's ***“severe letter”*** brought them to repentance and they welcomed Titus. But news traveled very slowly in those days so Paul was ***“...troubled on every side...”*** waiting for a report from Titus.
- Eventually it was Titus who comforted Paul by bringing news that the church in Corinth had repented and wanted to reestablish their relationship with Paul.
- It seems that Titus was often entrusted with bringing resolution to church problems. That may be why Paul would send Titus to Crete to deal with the church there.
- But either way, Titus was more than the bearer of good news. Paul was comforted by his presence and his ability to work with others. Can you imagine the personality of someone God used to encourage and comfort the apostle Paul? Maybe we can learn a lesson from that.

2 Corinthians 7:13-16

- ***“13. Therefore we have been comforted in your comfort. And we rejoiced exceedingly more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. 14. For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I am not ashamed. But as we spoke all things to you in truth, even so our boasting to Titus was found true. 15. And his affections are greater for you as he remembers the obedience of you all,***

how with fear and trembling you received him. 16. Therefore I rejoice that I have confidence in you in everything."

- Again Paul is praising the church at Corinth for their repentance, spiritual recovery and for the refreshing way they treated Titus. But he is also confirming the ***"...joy of Titus..."*** who had been encouraged by the repentance of Corinth. Paul had boasted to Titus about the Corinthian believers and now they were both encouraged by their return to the true faith.

2 Corinthians 8:5-6

- ***"5. And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God. 6. So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well."***

2 Corinthians 8:16-21

- ***"16. But thanks be to God who puts the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus. 17. For he not only accepted the exhortation, but being more diligent, he went to you of his own accord. 18. And we have sent with him the brother whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches. 19. 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, 20. avoiding this: that anyone should blame us in this lavish gift which is administered by us— 21. providing honorable things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men."***
- The churches in Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea) were poor but they had given liberally to the church at Jerusalem who were suffering. Paul implored the church at Corinth to also make a donation. This effort was led by Titus but it included another ***"...brother..."*** with impeccable character. This would ensure no one could claim Paul or Titus used the money for any other purpose.
- This shows the trust Paul had for Titus.

2 Corinthians 8:23-24

- ***"23 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. 24. Therefore show to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love and of our boasting on your behalf."***
- This passage is another clear indication of Paul's close relationship with Titus whom he considered a ***"...partner and fellow worker..."***.

2 Corinthians 12:16-18

- ***“16. But be that as it may, I did not burden you. Nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you by cunning! 17. Did I take advantage of you by any of those whom I sent to you? 18. I urged Titus, and sent our brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not walk in the same spirit? Did we not walk in the same steps?”***
- Here Paul is speaking facetiously in an attempt to discredit his critics who accused him of tricking the church (see 2 Corinthians 4:2 / 8:16-21). Specifically, they said he was collecting funds for the Jerusalem church but would keep it for himself. Paul refutes this by reminding them he had sent Titus and another faithful brother to collect the funds.

All of these passages have one thing in common. They paint a clear picture of Titus. A faithful man, loved and respected by Paul, and trusted by all. He was not only solid in doctrine, and courageous in evangelism, but also comforting in spirit. This made him uniquely suited for the tasks Paul gave him. To mediate differences and to set an example of unity within the body. Taken together these represent a skill set so important on the rough road of bringing the gospel to the Roman Empire. And that's why Paul left him on Crete.

Audience and Theme

Crete is a mountainous island in the Mediterranean Sea. Approximately 160 miles long and 33 miles wide it's the largest of the Greek islands. Known for its ancient culture, the Minoans, Crete was a region steeped in idol worship. Paul briefly visited there on his voyage to Rome (Acts 27:7-21) but it's very possible early Christians may have already been there because Cretans were present when Peter preached at Pentecost when thousands were saved. (Acts 2:11).

The Cretan people were known for being difficult to deal with. The ancient philosopher Epimenides, a 6th century BC Greek poet and a native of Crete, considered his own people to be the dregs of society. This may have been the ***“12...prophet of their own...”*** Paul was referring to when he said, ***“12...Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons...”***. Supporting this characterization is the Greek word *“Kretizo”*, which means, *“To lie, cheat and deceive”*, and was often translated *“To act like a Cretan”*. Given all that, Paul had instructed Titus to ***“13...rebuke them sharply...”*** (Titus 1:12a/b&13b). That's not the most encouraging way to start an instructional letter, but Paul pulled no punches.

The theme of Paul's letter was fairly simple:

- He wanted to encourage the young pastor ministering in a difficult place.
- He provided criteria and qualifications for selecting pastors for the new Cretan churches.

- He instructed Titus how to train new leaders to undershepherd their flock.
- He outlined the character of a faithful church and its members.
- He stressed the need to bring clarity to the gospel and an obedient Christian life.
- And he emphasized the need to evangelize their pagan neighbors.

The World of Titus

In our study through the Books of Romans and Philippians we went into great detail about the Roman Empire, its government, people, economy, world influence and unbridled sin, so we won't go to that level of detail here. Both of those studies can be found on our church website under "*Resources*" and "*Bible Studies*".

But suffice to say Titus lived in a very difficult time when both Jews and Christians came under great persecution. He had seen this firsthand during his ministry travels with Paul. That made his world the perfect backdrop for Paul's letter which sought to instruct Titus on how to lead and encourage a new church in a very difficult area and time.

But the world of Titus is not much different than our own. Corrupt governments, open and violent antisemitism, antiChristian rhetoric and an almost universal increase in chaos has resulted in a society drawing further and further from the truth of God's word and the offer of God's grace. That being the case, both the encouragement and instructions from Paul apply to us as much as they did Titus.

Our approach to Titus will not be deep in theology. Instead, we'll use Paul's letter just as Titus did. As a platform for understanding how we should be leading and acting as a body of believers in a difficult society.

Chapter 1

Lesson #3

Quick Recap:

Titus, a young Gentile pastor, had traveled with the apostle Paul for several years. This meant he had probably suffered persecution from both Jews and Gentiles. But Titus had a unique skill set. He was strong doctrinally, he got along well with others, and he had a knack for dealing with disgruntled people. He had proven that when he won the hearts of the disobedient Corinthian church and helped lead them back to strong faith and unity. Those skills made him the right person for Paul to leave on the Island of Crete to help sort things out and train their leaders.

But given the reputation of the Cretans, it would not be an easy task.

Titus chapter 1 verses 1-4

Paul begins his letter to Titus by reminding us he was “**...a bondservant of God...**”. This is very similar to how James and Jude also began their letters:

- Jude - “**1. Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.**” (Jude 1a).
- James - “**1. James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,**” (James 1:1).

Paul introduced himself in similar fashion in his letter to the church in Rome, “**1. Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God.**”. (Romans 1:1), and Peter did likewise in his second Epistle, “**1. Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.**” (2 Peter 1:1).

So why is that type of introduction so important? Because the title “**...bondservant...**” reflects a testimony of humility. Based on the Greek word “*doulos*”, it could be used to describe someone who willingly commits himself to serving his master, “**5...I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out free...**” (Exodus 21:5b). In other words, the term is used to describe Paul's willing desire to live under Christ's sole authority and be seen as His servant. That's important, because once we're saved we should all desire to serve the Lord. Not for fame or recognition for ourselves, but to magnify the

name of the One who paid for our eternal life with His sacrifice. By using the term **“...bondservant...”** Paul and the others signify the fact they are more than just a bonded servant. They are men who were once slaves to sin (John 8:34) but are now a willing slave of our Lord Jesus. Something he undoubtedly wanted Titus to see in himself.

So Paul clarified his **“...bondservant...”** role as **“...an apostle of Jesus Christ...”**. The word **“...apostle...”** is an important qualification. In Greek it means, *“A messenger; one sent on a mission.”* To distinguish himself from false teachers Paul clarifies the fact he was sent by Jesus to share the gospel truth. He began his first letter to Timothy in a similar way, **“1. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope.”** (1 Timothy 1:1). The early church, just like the modern church today, was infiltrated by false teachers and deceiving doctrine. John, James, Peter, Jude and Paul had all warned us about this. So to separate himself from the heretical preachers Paul clarifies that he was called directly by Jesus (Acts 9:15) to proclaim **“1...the faith of God’s elect and the acknowledgment of the truth...”**. Paul wasn’t teaching a heretical gospel. He was teaching the true gospel of Jesus. The word of God accepted by **“...God’s elect...”**. Those who had trusted in Jesus as their Savior through the **“...truth...”** of the gospel.

Paul's emphasis on **“...godliness...”** is found in all of his writings. It simply means our testimony. Our life lived for Jesus which is what the Cretans needed to see in Titus to bring credibility to his message. They needed to see the love, compassion and forgiveness in his life to understand it is possible in their own lives. Paul will stress the opposite of **“...godliness...”** a little later when he reminds Titus, **“11. For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12. teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.”** (Titus 2:11-12). The desire to live a Godly life comes through our salvation and the promise of an **“...eternal life...”** with God. It's the plan of redemption put in place before Eve ever ate the fruit (**“...before time began...”**) which was presented to the world through Jesus; the ultimate **“...word...”** of truth (John 1 :1-14). God's entire **“...word...”** is truth, but in reality, the entire **“...word...”** is about Jesus, about whom Paul was **“...committed...”** to preach by the **“...commandment of God...”**.

In a lengthy and somewhat heavy introduction to his letter, Paul wanted Titus to understand the importance of their assignment. Titus wasn't there to simply establish a church in a new area. He was there to proclaim the gospel truth of God's **“...word...”**. That was a serious task assigned to Paul by God, and now by extension to Titus.

He then reaffirms and encourages Titus by calling him a **“...True son of our common faith...”**. This expresses the admiration Paul had for Titus, as if he was his own son (1

Timothy 1:2), but it also emphasizes their brotherhood in the “**...common faith...**”. Jude made a similar comment in his letter to the early church, “**3. Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation.**” (Jude 3). The thing that is “**...common...**” between all true born again believers is our faith in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Nothing added and nothing subtracted. Titus would have to make this clear to the Cretans to help them understand salvation did not come by works or religion, or by any other gospel (Galatians 2:8) but by faith in “**...Jesus Christ our Savior...**”. Paul also stresses the term “**...Savior...**” to clarify that Jesus He is the sole source of our salvation. Paul will use this terminology again in chapter 2 verse 13.

Strong defines the Greek term for “**...common...**” to mean, “*Though culture, ethnicity, and social status vary, the faith entrusted to the saints is indivisible. False teachers fracture that unity; sound doctrine preserves it.*”. This was important because when Titus established the church and taught God's word, false teachers would bring in uncommon beliefs to sway the young believers. Titus would have to stay true to the “**...common faith...**” by being solid in doctrine. To allow the church to follow after multiple doctrinal opinions would result in confusion and disunity. That's why a thorough review of a church's *Statement of Faith* is so important. They need to clearly state what they believe, with a solid scriptural foundation, and not allow deviations. There's no quicker way for Satan to cause disunity in a church body than to influence wishy-washy doctrine.

As our society falls further away from the truth of God's word, followers of Christ must bond securely in the unity of solid Biblical doctrine and not be carried away by false teaching that has been watered-down or modified to discount the role of Jesus as the sole source of salvation. But the Lord has warned us this would happen so we need to be alert, “**2. Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4. and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. 5. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.**”. (2 Timothy 4:2-5).

But, as Paul stressed to both Titus and Timothy, if you're not in God's word how will you know “**...fables...**” from truth?

So get in the word and “**...be watchful...**”.

Chapter 1

Lesson #4

Quick Recap:

In a fairly lengthy introduction to his letter Paul reflects on his role as a “...**bondservant**...”. A title representing his humility and willingness to serve our Lord. He reminds Titus of his God-given commission to proclaim the gospel of our Lord Jesus. This is serious business given to them as a commandment from God. Paul then talks about the “...**godliness**...” that must be seen in a believer's life to bring credibility to the gospel message. This is the “...**common faith**...” of solid Biblical doctrine found in all true believers.

Now Paul will begin to explain the tasks Titus has been given.

Titus chapter 1 verses 5-9

One of the most important tasks assigned to Titus was the selection of pastors for the Cretan churches. These were not simply men who were assigned to manage the church's affairs, but were men, called by God, to undershepherd His flock, teach His word and proclaim the true gospel of Jesus. Making the selection even more critical was the fact these men would be leading a congregation in a very difficult society infiltrated by false teaching. That meant the pastors would probably come under persecution, and would need the skills to rebuke heretical doctrine.

It was a tough assignment for sure.

But before we dig into the leadership qualifications Paul was looking for, let's quickly discuss the Biblical role of “*pastor*”.

Throughout the New Testament church pastors are viewed in plurality. In other words, churches are not to be led by one man in a dictatorial role. Nor are they to be led by a committee. Pastors in the Bible are selected men who work in plurality; meaning they work closely together to foster unity amongst themselves. Key decisions, doctrinal positions, conflict resolution, church vision and discipline are always preceded by unity amongst the leadership. No matter how long it takes to prayerfully come to an agreement. That's why plurality is so critical. It eliminates the issue of decisions being made by one person or the conflict that often arises in committees. Plurality relies on the Spirit-driven

unity across leadership. We see this plurality in verse 5 where Paul tells Titus to “...appoint elders...” (pastors) using the plural tense of the word.

The Greek word used here for “...elders...” is “*Presbuteros*”. It's one of three Greek terms used to describe men in the position of pastor:

- *Presbuteros*
 - This Greek term is translated as spiritually mature men, “*Who preside over the assemblies.*”
- *Poimen*
 - This term is translated to mean a “*Shepherd who leads, feeds and protects.*”
- *Episcopos*
 - Also called an “*Overseer*” or “*Bishop*” signifies the role of leading the local church by guidance through the Holy Spirit.

Taken together these three terms describe someone who is guided by the Holy Spirit to lead, feed and protect the flock under their care. It's the role we commonly call an “*Undershepherd*”. A role reflective of what Jesus told Peter in John 21:16, when He said, “...*Tend My sheep...*”. That is the action of a “*shepherd*”.

The Bible uses all of these terms depending on the context. So let's look at a few examples:

- Peter used all three terms to describe these select men.
 - “**1. The elders** [presbuteros / plural] **who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2. Shepherd** [poimen] **the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers,** [episcopos / plural] **not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly.**” (1 Peter 5:1-2).
- Likewise Paul used all three terms to discuss leaders at the church of Ephesus.
 - “**17. From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders** [presbuteros / plural] **of the church. 18. And when they had come to him, he said to them: “You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you,”** (Acts 20:17-18)
 - “**28. Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers,** [episcopos / plural] **to shepherd** [poimen] **the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.**” (Acts 20:28).

- Paul also used the term “*presbuteros*” to describe the leaders (plural) they appointed in “*...Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch...*”.
 - ***“21. And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, 22. strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.” 23. So when they had appointed elders [presbuteros / plural] in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”***

In each case not only did Peter and Paul use all three terms to discuss “*pastors*” and their role, but they also discussed them in plurality. That's because it's the combination of these tasks assigned to different men working together in unity under the guidance of the Holy Spirit that results in the strongest and most Biblically sound type of church administration. That's why at Southside we always speak of our pastors (plural) and seek Spirit led unity in all decision making. This is never done in haste, never in conflict, but through discussion and prayer. No matter how long it takes.

Paul gave both Titus and Timothy specific qualifications for the role of pastor. This was necessary for both of them to consistently select the right men. Timothy had been sent by Paul to help several churches, but at the time of receiving Paul's first letter (1st Timothy) the young pastor was probably in Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3). Paul warned Timothy about the influence of false teaching and emphasized, ***“3...that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies...”*** (1 Timothy 1:3b-4a). The church at Ephesus often had excellent teachers. Paul taught there for three years (Acts 20:31), followed by Timothy and Apollos. Even the elderly apostle John was serving there when he was arrested and imprisoned on Patmos. And yet, Ephesus, a church known for its hard work and faithfulness, eventually became so self-centered they fell in disgrace because they prioritized their efforts over their devotion to the Lord. In Revelation 2:4 Jesus said to them, ***“4. Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.”*** They had lost their love for Jesus. We see this so prevalent today across a broad spectrum of churches. Whole denominations have pushed Jesus to the side to focus first on entertainment, feel-good messages, prosperity and liturgy. In doing so, Jesus is no longer their ***“...first love...”*** because their first love is themselves.

So Paul sent Timothy to deal with various problems in the church at Ephesus, and sent Titus to deal with issues in Crete. In both cases their task included the selection of faithful men to be pastors.

The church in Crete was fairly new and in a rough society, so Paul sent Titus who had a proven track record of mitigating disagreements, just as he had done in Corinth. Both Timothy and Titus had similar assignments but in different places with different cultural dynamics. One of the primary tasks of both men was to appoint Godly men to lead their respective churches. To help them identify the right men Paul gave them specific qualifications to guide their selection. These are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Let's read both passages then break them down.

1 Timothy 3:1-7

“1. This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop [pastor], he desires a good work. 2. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; 3. not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; 4. one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence 5. (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); 6. not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. 7. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”.

Titus 1:5-9

“5. For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you— 6. if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. 7. For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, 8. but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, 9. holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.”.

Understandably there are a lot of similarities between these passages so let's go over a few of the common themes:

Titus

“6. if a man is blameless...”

Timothy

“2. A bishop then must be blameless...”

This is not saying a pastor must be perfect. That's not possible in our human state. The term translated “**...blameless...**” in Greek means *“That cannot be laid hold of”*. In other words, you can find no flagrant or open sin in their lives. It speaks of a testimony reflecting Jesus that is beyond reproach. For Titus, Paul used a different Greek word meaning, *“Cannot be called to account, unreprouvable, unaccused”*. Both words have essentially the same meaning and both are translated in English as “**...blameless...**”.

Titus

“6...the husband of one wife...”

“6....having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination...”

Timothy

“2....the husband of one wife...”

“4-5...one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence 5. (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?)...”

These verses speak to a pastor's family. His wife and his children. This does not mean a pastor must be married, but if he is married he needs to be devoted to his wife above his devotion to others. Literally, *“A one woman man.”*

But this passage also speaks to the condition of the pastor's family. In his instructions to Timothy Paul goes so far as to say *“How can a man manage a church if he can't manage his family?”*. The thought is that a pastor's life of obedience should be reflected in the faith of his children.

Titus

“7. For a bishop [pastor] must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money...”

Timothy

“3...not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous...”

These passages speak to several characteristics of a pastor's life. It highlights the fact they should be hospitable, humble and conciliatory, **“...not self-willed, not quick-tempered...”** and **“...gentle...”**. These character traits are similar to the *“Fruit of the Spirit”* in Galatians 5:22-23 which applies to all believers. Pastors should also be good stewards of God's financial provision, **“...not greedy for money...”** and they should be

sober so their judgment is never clouded by drinking, ***“...not given to wine...”***. All of these taken together speak of a man whose life is fundamentally different from the world.

Titus

“8...but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled...”

Timothy

“4...temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable...”

These qualifications speak further to a man's actions and his personality. He needs to be a man of good judgment and spiritual wisdom, forgiving, nurturing and comforting. Quick to listen and slow to speak (James 1:19), and one who can control his temper and his tongue (James 3:1-12).

Titus

“9...holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict...”

Timothy

4...able to teach...”

This qualification is very critical. A pastor must be doctrinally sound, deep in God's word and ***“...able to teach...”*** by accurately navigating the church through scripture. He must be able to defend the faith against false teachers, which means he must be well grounded in Biblical doctrine and able to teach it clearly and accurately. This is an area where so many pastors fail today. They may be able to encourage their congregation and motivate them by good sounding sermons, but they lack ***“...sound doctrine...”*** and become a contradiction themselves.

When taken together, all of these qualifications speak to a man's testimony. A man who is faithful to God's word, courageous in his convictions, humble and hospitable in his life, who strives to live a testimony of Jesus every day. Paul summarized this in his letter to Timothy, ***“7. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”*** (1 Timothy 3:7).

And that can be said for all of us. Not just pastors.

Chapter 1

Lesson #5

Quick Recap:

Paul wrote instructional letters to two young pastors. Timothy in Ephesus and Titus in Crete. In both cases he provided specific instructions for the selection of pastors. These must be Godly men whose lives represent Jesus with credibility. Their selection was dependent on certain personality traits, a solid doctrinal foundation and the ability to accurately teach and defend God's word. Given that criteria there was no doubt Timothy and Titus would have their hands full.

Now Paul will clarify why their selection is so critical.

Titus chapter 1 verses 10-16

Paul prepares Titus by helping him understand some of the roadblocks he would encounter. This included false teachers as well as a society known for being corrupt. He starts by warning Titus of their character using three interesting words:

- **“...insubordinate...”** - In Greek this word means those who, *“Cannot be subjected to control, disobedient, unruly”*.
- **“...idle talkers...”** - This word means *“One who utters empty, senseless things”*.
- **“...deceivers...”** - Means *“A mind-misleader and seducer”*.

When you combine the underlying meaning of these words you come away with an understanding of who Titus would be dealing with, *“Disobedient and unruly people who use senseless and empty words to mislead your mind.”*. That pretty much summarizes the people of Crete and their false teachers. It's no wonder then that one of their own philosophers said, **“12...Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.”**. To which Paul confirmed, **“13. This testimony is true.”**. But in addition to dealing with the general population Titus would also have to contend with false teachers who, **“11...subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.”**. This included **“10...those of the circumcision...”** which indicates Jews and may have been speaking of the Judaizers.

It's interesting when you compare these observations with the qualifications Paul provided for pastors. It helps us understand why the men Titus would choose must be fundamentally different from the culture they will minister to. So Paul tells Titus the false

teachers, ***“11...mouths must be stopped...”***. In order to do this they must, ***“13...rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith. 14. not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth. 15. To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.”***.

This is very similar to what Paul told Timothy, ***“1. I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: 2. Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4. and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. 5. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”*** (2 Timothy 4:1-5).

These are stern commands from Paul but they are essential. In fact, they are as much or maybe more important today than at any time in the past. That's because our modern society is in chaos. Significant political unrest, a penchant for violence, and the rise of antisemitism all add to a society in decline. All contribute to a society begging for any aberrant ideology they can anchor to. A situation is made even worse by the advent of social media and the ability to spread false information at an alarming rate. So Paul warns us this situation not only exists in society but in the church as well, ***“16. They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.”***.

So how do we address false teachers and heretical doctrine? Well, according to Paul, very aggressively. In his instructions to Titus and Timothy he uses phrases like:

- ***“11...mouths must be stopped...”***.
- ***“13...rebuke them sharply...”***
- ***“14...not giving heed...”***
- ***“2...Convince, rebuke, exhort...”***
- ***“5...be watchful...”***

These are not passive commands. These are words of action. Actions to identify, root out and rebuke false teachers. So how does this compare with the pastor's character of being, ***“...not violent but gentle...”***, ***“...hospitable...”*** and ***“...not quick tempered...”***? They actually go together. The pastor's demeanor must be kind, conciliatory and reflect grace, but at the same time, they must be relentless and firm when it comes to defending the

faith and rooting out false teachers. There can be no gray areas because false teachers are a significant risk to the church.

So given the fact the role of a shepherd is the model for a pastor, where do we see an example of a shepherd who is also a warrior for Christ? Let's look at David, of whom God described as, ***"14...a man after His own heart..."*** (1 Samuel 13:14).

David was arguably the most famous shepherd in the Bible (of course with the exception of Jesus who is the *Good Shepherd*). In 1st Samuel chapter 17 we're first introduced to the story of the young shepherd David. Israel was at war with the Philistines who had selected their most famous warrior Goliath. He would represent the Philistines and fight against a single warrior selected by Israel. After much debate the person chosen for Israel was a fearless young shepherd named David. He was not a warrior, he had no battle experience and he owned no armor. And yet, his resume was one of a fearless combatant protecting his flock.

- ***"34. But David said to Saul, 'Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, 35. I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it. 36. Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God.' 37. Moreover David said, 'The Lord, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.'"*** (1 Samuel 17:34-37).

Pay close attention to what David said. When danger threatened his flock, ***"35. I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth..."***. David didn't wait to see what would happen and he didn't seek to mediate a reconciliation between the lion and the lamb. He ***"...went out after it and struck it..."***. He saw the danger and went after it to bring his sheep back. So how do we apply this lesson to the role of a pastor? Let's consider false teachers and false doctrine. If a pastor identifies false teachers influencing his church, or realizes some in his flock are drawn to heretical doctrine, should he be passive or active to remove it? Based on the lesson from David he should go after it to correct the teacher and remove the false doctrine. Paul goes so far as to tell Titus to, ***"13...rebuke them sharply..."*** so their ***"11...mouths must be stopped..."***. We can never turn a blind eye or ear to the presence of false teaching. It must be rooted out and removed.

To understand the danger of permitting false teaching let's go back to our study of Jude.

The Book of Jude is a call to arms by asking its readers to take action and do something about false teaching. Jude tells us to, **"3...contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. 4. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.** (Jude 3-4). This statement is more serious than it may appear and is basically a call-to-arms that emphasizes our role in defending the faith against false teachers. In essence it's the same thing Paul told Titus, **"9. holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict."** (Titus 1:9).

So why is defending the faith so important? Because as Paul warned us, **"29. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock."** (Acts 20:29). And just as Peter had also warned us, **"1. But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed."** (2 Peter 2:1-2). This was no joking matter so the church had to be warned. But what is most startling isn't the fact there are **"...false teachers..."** but that they would come from **"...among you..."**. From within the church. As Paul warned the church in Galatia, **"4. And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage)." (Galatians 2:4).** That's why at Southside we're laser focused on accurately teaching scripture by taking an uncompromising stand on Biblical doctrine. We realize any complacency on our part could allow the **"...false brethren..."** to silently work their way in.

These warnings alert us of impending danger. That's why Paul called the false teachers, **"...savage wolves..."**. Picturing them as being vicious and hungry, set on destruction, and **"...not sparing the flock..."**. They are in essence emissaries of satan because they are spreading false doctrine about Jesus. Jude also called his readers to combat, telling them to **"...contend..." "...for the faith..."**. In the original Greek the word translated as **"...contend..."** is an athletic or military term describing a *struggle*. It's calling us to be active and not passive. In this case, to defend the faith against false teachers. But in order to identify and fight false doctrine you must be well versed in true doctrine. That's why Paul calls us to, **"2. Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season.**

Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.” (2 Timothy 4:2). Here Paul tells us to, “***...convince, rebuke, exhort...***”. That's the same thing he's telling Titus to do. He's raising our awareness of false teachers and the destructive doctrine they bring.

So given that let's dig a little deeper into the critical role of church leaders and the battle against false doctrine.

We typically think of church leaders as Pastors and Deacons, but if we think about it scripturally we would include Teachers as well. God entrusts several layers of leaders to guide His flock. Pastors, Deacons and Teachers are entrusted with the care of God's children and that brings with it certain leadership responsibilities that make them Shepherds for the little flocks entrusted to them. This is the role Paul wanted Titus and Timothy to fully embrace. They needed to see themselves as a Shepherd, and the men they selected as Pastors and Teachers must have the same Shepherd's heart.

So Biblically what does a Shepherd do? Basically the pastoral qualifications Paul had provided boil down to feeding, nourishing, leading and protecting. That means their role is much more than simply providing church administration. Actually much more. As a Shepherd Titus and Timothy were entrusted with the Lord's sheep and the responsibility to fully care for them. That includes walking through life with them, helping them deal with problems they face, comforting them during suffering, teaching them to walk in the Spirit, teaching them how to raise a Godly family, guiding them through scripture and helping them see and defeat their own sin. When you think of Shepherding from that perspective it helps us better understand what they were entrusted with, and how important their responsibility is. Their church was a flock and they were their Shepherds.

But is that viewpoint really important? Yes it is. James 3:1 the Lord tells us, “***1. My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.***”. That's a serious warning we should take to heart. As believers we will all stand in judgment before Christ to assess what we did after our salvation (2 Corinthians 5:10 / Romans 14:10-12). But for leaders like Titus and Timothy, Pastors, Deacons and Teachers there will be a “***...stricter judgment...***”. Not only will it be a judgment of how carefully they led God's church as a leader, but how carefully they handled God's children as a Shepherd.

When we begin to think of leaders as a Shepherd we probably think of two role models. Jesus of course (John 10:11) and David (Psalm 78:70-71). From these two men we are given the Biblical model of what a Shepherd does. Jesus shows us love, grace, nurturing and feeding. This was expressed beautifully in the 23rd Psalm, “***23. The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads***

me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake." (Verses 1-3).

But what do we see in David? David faced the greatest obstacle of his young life when he protected the flock of Israel by fighting the Philistine giant. But in declaring his qualifications what did he say? He cited the qualifications of a Warrior when he cited the qualifications of a Shepherd, (see 1 Samuel 17:34-37 above). When danger threatened his flock he ***"...went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth..."***. That role would apply to Titus and Timothy and any other church leader. They are all entrusted with a portion of God's flock under our care, so in addition to feeding and nurturing them, we must also protect them.

But how would they protect them and what would they protect them from? Of course they would start with doctrinally sound teaching, and by helping their flock walk through the seasons of life. But what else? What about outside influences that would confuse them? Influences used by the enemy to silently bring in a lion and a bear? It was their role to help their flock navigate the danger of those false influences.

But where does this destructive influence come from?

In Titus' time false influence came primarily from heretical doctrine like that presented by the Judaizers and Gnostics. But what about today? In today's society false teaching most often comes from the pulpit, the classroom and social media. The modern pulpit, which includes any teaching platform, is often a place reserved for motivational speakers with encouraging and comforting words. Now don't misunderstand that. There's nothing wrong with a sermon that motivates, encourages and comforts. In fact, the Bible is full of motivating, encouraging and comforting passages. But modern teaching is often devoid of corresponding messages on sin, the need for obedience, the cruelty of the cross, the reality of sin, or the fact Jesus is the only source of redemption. Why? Because those topics don't draw big crowds or Youtube subscribers. The crowds are drawn to a message of temporary prosperity rather than a message of eternal condemnation. But isn't it a tragedy when the message of prosperity is more popular than the message of the cross? When Pastors and Teachers placate their flock with feel-good messages rather than bringing them to a conviction of sin and the need to live a Godly life. When internet influencers step in the picture a whole rash of poor doctrine is presented. That's why Paul pulled no punches. He wants us to understand the responsibility we have to go after the beast of false doctrine.

But do we really have this problem today?

Yes. Probably more than at any time in the past. But why? Two primary reasons:

First, because the modern church has a large percentage of people who are Biblically shallow. Their knowledge of the word is often limited to what they hear in the pulpit and classroom. This is insufficient to develop a seasoned believer.

Second, is where the teaching originates. Today many Christians are taught more by social media than their pastors and teachers. Primarily from “Christian” content on the internet and its gaggle of false influencers. Paul warns us about them too, **“13. For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. 14. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. 15. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.”** (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). Isn't that interesting. False teachers don't come across as false teachers. They present themselves in YouTube click bait, interesting looking Internet sites, AI and good sounding book titles as **“...apostles of Christ...”** and **“...ministers of righteousness...”** when they are in fact the **“...savage wolves...”** we're warned about.

So given all that, let's ask ourselves a couple of questions. Who is our flock being influenced by? And what are we reading, and what are we watching ourselves? Do we even think about that? Do we realize we might be fed more by false teaching during the week than by good teaching in just an hour on Sunday? Maybe what we are reading or watching is the **“...lion and the bear...”** trying to infiltrate the pasture of our mind?

So what do we do about this situation? We do what we're told to do and go **“...out after it...”**. We should all seek to understand what is influencing our flocks' spiritual life (and our own). Then warn them, educate them and guide them. By doing that we protect them. But how do we do that? We have to identify and expose **“...the lion and the bear...”**. We need to understand what they watch, the Youtube teachers they like, the “Christian” blogs they follow, the books they read, and how often they take their Biblical questions to AI. When we do this we're simply being obedient to God's direction, **“4. Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”** (1 John 4:1). To **“..test the spirits...”** is simply seeking to understand the doctrinal basis of what our flock, or ourselves, are influenced by.

We need to really think this through to understand what we're watching and reading. Are our sources Biblically solid or potentially the “**...savage wolves...**” masquerading as “**...ministers of righteousness...**”? We need to remind ourselves it is often the best looking Internet sites and the best sounding Youtube Preachers and bloggers that are in fact those Paul calls “**...false apostles, deceitful workers...**”.

This is important because in today's world the Internet and other social media platforms provide our enemy an almost unlimited tool for spreading false information. And unfortunately, our social media driven society is quickly caught-up in whatever they watch and hear. Often taking it as Biblical when it is not.

But as shepherds Titus and Timothy were the first line of defense against the intrusion of false influencers. It's the same role we should all play as we protect those in our flock.

This is why rooting out false teachers and their destructive doctrine is so important.

Chapter 2

Lesson #6

Quick Recap:

Paul had given both Timothy and Titus specific instructions for selecting qualified pastors. This was important. The early church, and particularly the church at Crete, had a rough congregation. They were either converted from Judaism or pagan idolatry, but either way they brought with them a lot of false ideology. But equally challenging was the external influence of false teachers who sought to bring in heretical doctrine. This is important to understand because in today's church the advent of the Internet, Youtube, Christian blogs and AI give our enemy unique platforms to confuse and conflict. Maybe more than ever before

Now that Paul has defined the qualifications of a pastor he will emphasize the proper character of a healthy church and its members.

Titus chapter 2 verses 1-10

In the first part of his letter Paul gave Titus instructions on how to select men for the role of pastor. They must be doctrinally sound and have specific character traits, but they must also be able to defend the faith against the onslaught of heretical influence.

But there would be another hurdle for Titus to overcome. The people of Crete. Paul had already pointed out the fact that one of the Cretan philosophers described the island's inhabitants as **"12...liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons..."** (Titus 1:12). They were a mix of converted Jews and pagans who brought with them a wide range of religious practices. Now they would need to come together as a unified body of believers. So Paul directed Titus to **"13...rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith..."** (Titus 2:13). To help Titus do this Paul described the characteristics of a healthy congregation who are focused on living a Godly life.

Paul starts by telling Titus **"1. But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine."** (Titus 2:1). Titus must set the example by teaching sound Biblical doctrine. There could be no compromise and they must combat the **"...savage wolves..."** and their heretical doctrine. (Acts 20:29). So Titus would have to teach **"...things which are proper..."** so a healthy church could be started on a solid doctrinal foundation.

To accomplish this task Titus would have to help the congregation understand how they are supposed to behave as Christians. This would be very different from what they were accustomed to. So Paul provided guidance for “**...older men...**”, “**...older women...**”, “**...young women...**”, “**...young men...**” and even “**...bondservants...**”. Combined, these groups would constitute the total membership of the church. Paul gave Timothy similar instructions, “**1. Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, all with purity.**” (1 Timothy 5:1 / 6:1-2 for bondservants).

The congregation's actions and behavior was important because this would be the testimony the island's other inhabitants would see. If their actions outside of church didn't match their actions inside of church then they would be seen as hypocritical. This was important because the residents of Crete already had cultural norms reflected in how they lived, so they would have to learn to live a completely different way.

So Paul gave Titus some standards the church should live by. These expectations are just as applicable today as they were then. So as we go through Paul's list in detail we should think about whether or not these are the characteristics the world sees in us.

Let's look closely at Paul's list with reference to their original Greek translation.

Older Men

For the most part people in the ancient world didn't live as long as we do today, so an “**...older...**” man or woman might be as young as their 40s. Particularly for lower or middle class individuals. But whatever their age older members of the congregation should set an example for the rest.

Older men should be:

- “**...sober...**”
 - These men should be “*sober-minded*” with clear and unclouded judgment, free from excesses and able to manage serious matters. It also means abstinence from alcohol or other substances and their negative influences. They should also show moral steadiness and mental clarity and self-control.
- “**...reverent...**”
 - This means to be *dignified*. Older men of the church should be honorable and respected. Not aloof or egotistical.
- “**...temperate...**”

- To have self-control and a sound mind, sensible, prudent and well balanced in their opinions.
- **“...sound in faith, in love, in patience...”**
 - They should be a model of doctrinal clarity. Strong in their faith and unwavering during difficulties. A man of God's word. The Greek word used here for **“...love...”** is *agape*. It is used 116 times in the New Testament. It is never used to describe romantic passion, but is a holy love originating in Jesus. It is the love we show each other as believers. The word **“...patience ...”** means endurance and perseverance. Particularly under pressure.

Older Women

This was probably speaking to women beyond their child-bearing years. Like the older men, the older women should set an example. Particularly for younger women.

Older women should be:

- **“...likewise...”**
 - The older women should have a character similar to that of the older men, plus a few more.
- **“...reverent in behavior...”**
 - Verse 2:3 uses a different Greek word translated as **“...reverent...”** than verse 2:2. In Greek it literally means *“suited for the temple”*. It is an attitude of Godliness and holiness.
- **“...not slanderers...”**
 - Gossip and backbiting fall in this category. Few things destroy the unity of the body more than spreading gossip. This word can also be translated as *the accuser, slanderer* or *the devil*. Those definitions help us understand the destructive power of gossip.
- **“...not given to much wine...”**
 - Believers should not be under the influence of any substance. We cannot glorify the Lord when our mind is artificially altered.
- **“...teachers of good things...”**
 - This means *to train*. This includes guiding and teaching someone to do the right thing. As in teaching a child or younger person in the way they should go. In this case to **“...admonish the young women...”**. The older women have a responsibility to teach the younger women to be faithful Christian wives and mothers.

Younger Women

Younger women should:

- ***“...love their husbands...”***
 - The phrase means a heartfelt adoration and respect for her husband. To be a steward of their relationship. This is the only place in the New Testament where this Greek word is used. It might seem odd to remind a wife to love her husband, but in the first century Middle East arranged marriages were common and not based solely on love.
- ***“...to love their children...”***
 - Parental love includes affectionate nurturing, protection, instruction, and discipline. Also includes training and admonition to the Lord.
- ***“...to be discreet...”***
 - To be self-controlled, prudent and temperate.
- ***“...chaste...”***
 - Pure, clean and innocent. A Godly woman.
- ***“...homemakers...”***
 - The stewards of their home. Reflective of the *“Virtuous Wife”* in Proverbs 31:10-31
- ***“...good...”***
 - The Greek definition uses words like beautiful, handsome, excellent, eminent, choice, surpassing, precious, useful, suitable, commendable, and admirable.
- ***“... obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed...”***
 - Women should honor their husband to reflect God's desire for a loving and fruitful marriage.

Younger Men

Younger Men should be

- ***“...sober-minded...”***
 - As with the older men, the younger men should show clear and unclouded judgment, free from excesses and able to manage serious matters. It also means abstinence from alcohol or other substances and their influences. They should also show moral steadiness and mental clarity and self-control.
- ***“...showing yourself to be a pattern of good works...”***

- This speaks to our testimony which should reflect a **pattern** of Godly living. It's where we get the English word *type*. It's not a one-trick-pony but should be seen consistently in our lives.
- **“...doctrine showing integrity...”**
 - Our life should reflect the doctrine of God's word with integrity
- **“... reverence...”**
 - To be dignified. Men of the church should be honorable and respected. Not aloof or egotistical.
- **“...incorruptibility...”**
 - In Greek it means *above reproach*
- **“...speech that cannot be condemned...”**
 - Our words should reflect a testimony of Jesus that is not seen as hypocritical.
- **“...having nothing evil to say of you...”**
 - It should be difficult for others to find fault in our lives.

Bondservants

Let's pause just a moment to discuss the ancient role of bondservant. For one person to own another was never part of God's original plan. In His tenth commandment we are told, **“17. You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's.”** (Exodus 20:17). We are not to **“...covet...”** or desire to have anything that is not ours. That would include desiring to own other people. But by His complete omniscience God knows every sin every person will ever commit, so He tells us how to react during those times of moral failure. In the ancient world slavery, servitude and bondage were common. Often they were soldiers or civilians captured by conquering armies. Other times they were indentured servants who could eventually work for their freedom. Other times they were bondservants. A person legally bonded to another as a source of labor. In other cases it could be an employee. Was forced servitude right? No. But it was a part of ancient society we need to understand. As a result, Paul needed to provide guidelines for the actions of a Christian servant to be a viable member of the congregation. In today's society an employer and employee should consider the same criteria.

A Bondservant should be:

- **“...obedient to their own masters...”**
 - A servant should seek to please their master, overseer or employer. In the original Greek it means, *“slaves or employees are to submit in everything that is morally right”*.
- **“...well pleasing in all things...”**
 - To be acceptable and not argumentative.
- **“...not answering back...”**
 - Translated from the Greek word meaning *gain saving*. The ability to speak properly, not voicing opposition to contradict, especially in a hostile and argumentative way.
- **“...not pilfering...”**
 - Do not steal from your master, overseer or employer.
- **“...showing all good fidelity...”**
 - In Greek the word translated as **“...fidelity...”** can mean belief, faith, faithfulness, and proof.
- **“... that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.”**
 - Here Paul reflects that salvation is available to all. Even the servants and slaves of society. As he explained in Galatians 3:28, **“28. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”**. This reminds us that we were all once slaves to sin but we are set free by our faith in Jesus (Titus 3:3 / John 8:34 / Romans 6:6).

So why are these standards so important and why discuss them in so much detail? Because they are timeless, and just as applicable today as they were when given to Titus. The character of the church is the collective character of the individual members and it is our combined testimony the world sees. One of the most common criticisms of Christians is that we are hypocrites. But it's easy to understand that perspective if what the world sees in our members does not reflect the character Paul outlines here. The disconnect results when individual members act one way in church and another way in the world. When even a few people do that it reflects poorly on the whole body.

We need to keep that in mind to ensure that when the world looks at us they see Jesus.

Chapter 2

Lesson #7

Quick Recap:

In the first part of his letter to Titus the apostle Paul gave instructions for how to select qualified pastors. He followed this by providing characteristics of how individual members of the church should live. This is important because what the lost world observes in the lives of a church's members may result in how they view Christianity as a whole. If we live hypocritically then the church will have no credibility. But if we seek to live Godly lives then the lost world will be drawn to Jesus through our example.

Now Paul will reaffirm why our testimony is so important. Because our lives, and collectively the church, represent Jesus to the lost world.

Titus chapter 2 verses 11-15

Selecting pastors, equipping believers and watching after God's flock are all important tasks. But as Paul often stressed our real focus is the ***"18...message of the cross..."*** (1 Corinthians 1:18b), As he explained, ***"22. For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23. but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, 24. but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."*** (1 Corinthians 1:22-24). Key to this verse is the charge, ***"23...we preach Christ crucified..."***. That's because at the end of the day that's why we select pastors and equip the body. So we can all go out to the world and share the path to salvation through faith in Christ's redemptive work on the cross. Unfortunately that core message is often lost in weak pulpits or it goes no further than the church doors.

But in other cases, the true message of the cross is lost in false doctrine. In Titus' day it was the Judaizers who spread false teaching, and in our day we see it in the *Prosperity Gospel* movement and the focus on works-based salvation. But in either case it is a false doctrine because it discounts or distracts from the core ***"18...message of the cross..."*** (1 Corinthians 1:18b),

We need to remember that redemption through the cross is central to our salvation and our salvation comes only by God's grace through Jesus. Because, ***"12. Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men"***

by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12). But it's also important to clarify that the opportunity for salvation is not limited to a select few, **“11. For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.”** (Titus 2:11). In one way or another, everyone is given knowledge of God and His redemptive work. Paul explained this to the church in Rome when he clarified, **“18. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19. because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 20. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21. because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22. Professing to be wise, they became fools.”** (Romans 1:18-22).

The existence of God is made known **“...to all men...”** even though we may not fully understand how God has presented Himself to everyone throughout time. But in our time, in the *Age of Grace*, we have the completely revealed word of God and a full understanding of His redemptive plan through Jesus. In other words, we have no excuse. That's why Paul told Titus, **“1. But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine.”** (Titus 2:1). And he gave similar guidance to Timothy, **“6. If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed.”** (1 Timothy 4:6). It is this **“6...good doctrine...”** that brings us to the **“18...message of the cross...”** (1 Corinthians 1:18a), and it is that message that needs to be reflected in our testimony.

But our salvation is more than belief. Salvation is change. Salvation is transformational. As Paul explained to the church at Ephesus, **“22. If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23. and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and 24. that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”** (Ephesians 4:21-24). Pay close attention to four words in this passage - **“...put off...”** and **“...put on...”**. These are not passive words. They are words of action. They are actions we must take once we're saved. That's because salvation should change the way we think, what we do, where we go and how we live. It transforms us into a new person as it changes us from **“...old...”** to **“...new...”** as we are born again. So Paul tells Titus, **“12. teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.”** The life of a believer is a testimony of Jesus. If we live with **“12...ungodliness and worldly lusts...”** we do a poor

job of representing Jesus. But, if we live ***“12...soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age...”*** then the world will be drawn to Jesus through our lives. That's the reason we need qualified pastors and teachers, and the reason for being an obedient body of believers. Because the world's view of Jesus comes through us, and how we live and how we present ourselves may be the determining factor in whether someone accepts Jesus or walks away because of our hypocritical life.

As Christians we have so much to offer the lost world. Not only the redemption of sin and the opportunity to walk through life and eternity with Jesus, but the, ***“13...glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ...”***. This ***“...appearing...”*** includes:

- His *First Coming* (Luke 2:1-20)
- His *Resurrection* (Matthew 28:6),
- The *Rapture* of the church (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18),
- The *Second Coming* (Revelation 19:11),
- The earthly *Millennial Kingdom* (Revelation 20:4-6),
- And our eternity with the Lord (Revelation 22&23).

All of these are events that reflect the eternal nature of our faith. But each of them also point to Jesus and His ***“...appearing...”*** as the things we look forward to as a believer. All of these events go back to the message of the cross and the first appearance of Jesus, but none of this has anything to do with our own prosperity or works. It's all about Jesus. As Paul reminds us, ***“14. ...who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. 15. Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.”*** (Titus 2:14-15).

As followers of Jesus we have been forgiven of every sin and made to be a ***“14...special people...”***. Special in the sense that we are children of God, redeemed by Jesus and indwelt by the Spirit. The ones Peter described as, ***“9. But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10. who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”*** (1 Peter 2:9-10).

As God's ***“9...special people.. “*** we should desire to be ***“14...zealous for good works...”***. This doesn't mean ***“...works...”*** to earn salvation but the actions we take to present the Lord to the world through our life. This is our testimony. The life we live of service and witness in order to support the body and represent Jesus to those around us. So Paul tells Titus, and us, ***“15. Speak these things, exhort and rebuke with all***

authority...". As a **"24...special people..."** we are not supposed to be silent observers but active participants. Telling others about Jesus and clarifying doctrine to those who misrepresent the truth of God's word. And to do that where do we get the **"15...authority..."** Paul is talking about? Through God's word. The source of all truth. If you're not in God's word how can you **"15. Speak these things..."**, and how could you **"...exhort and rebuke..."**? You can't. God's word is the singular source of truth the Lord wants us to share with the world.

And when we do that He will give us **"15...all authority..."** we will ever need because we are sharing with the world the words God first shared with us.

Chapter 3

Lesson #8

Quick Recap:

In chapter 2 Paul began instructing Titus on the characteristics of a healthy church. This not only covers how individual members should live, but also how we should function as a collective body. This is important because what the world knows about Jesus is often seen in what they know about us. What they see in our individual lives and their view of the church as a whole will often determine whether or not they are drawn to Jesus or driven away.

Now Paul will continue his teaching on the character of a Godly church. Beginning with a topic that is front and center in our own society today.

Titus chapter 3 verses 1-8

Verses 1-2

Paul continues his instructions for church members by telling Titus to ***“1. Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work.”***. Unfortunately this verse results in a lot of debate because our society has become so politically charged and divided. But in essence what Paul is saying is very simple. Our individual testimony, and collectively the testimony of the church, should show us to be law abiding citizens. He addresses the same topic in his letter to the church in Rome, ***“1. Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.”*** (Romans 13:1). And Peter addressed the same issue in 1 Peter 2:13-15, ***“13. Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme, 14. or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. 15. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.”***

Obviously, it can be very difficult to comply with this direction at a time like ours. When parts of our government and many of its leaders are clearly in the enemy's camp. But we have to remember, when Paul was inspired to write this passage he was a Jewish-Christian living in the Roman Empire. A persecuted person in a society much more sinful and hedonistic than our own. But also consider the fact that when the Lord gave these words to Paul He already knew how every society would act in the future. Including ours.

That makes His direction timeless. So given that, how do we accomplish the Lord's direction in a society that seems to be politically and morally failing on every front? First and foremost we have the legal power of our Christian influence and vote. Even in our society that still carries a bit of weight. But even if we lose politically that doesn't mean we should break the law. We still need to be seen as law abiding citizens even though we may not support or participate in what our government legislates. That's important. Because how the lost world sees the church reacting during stressful times like these is how they will most likely see a reflection of Jesus. Is this easy to do? Absolutely not. Particularly in our society today. But it wasn't easy for Paul either.

We can clearly see this paradox played out over the last several years in our own politically divided country. Those on the progressive or "left" side of issues most often resort to angry protest, activism and even violence to get their point across. Conversely, those on the conservative or "right" side of the fence are more likely to seek a diplomatic solution and are less prone to anger. But when either side becomes the extreme "far left" or "far right" they often act in ways that defy logic. Although the conservative approach may seem "weaker" to some, it is clearly in obedience with the Lord's direction, so that, **"15...by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."** (1 Peter 2:15b).

So what else does the word say to help us navigate the conundrum of living in our failing society?

Let's look at two great examples:

The apostle Paul had many opportunities to protest Roman rule, their laws and the treatment of Jews and Christians. Paul spoke often in public places of debate (Acts 17:23-31), and he was given an audience before several Roman governors (Acts 26:28). He could have used any of these platforms to protest Roman rule. And yet, instead of spending his energy protesting the government's actions he used these opportunities to share the gospel.

Likewise, during His earthly ministry Jesus had many opportunities to speak to both the Roman and Jewish leadership. In fact, as God, He could have simply wiped out the government and established all new laws. But He didn't. He didn't try to change their laws, He focused on redeeming them for their sin.

And that's our prime directive. To share the gospel. Although we hold great power through our vote, we hold much greater power through the gospel. That's because our ability to change someone's political position is very limited. In fact, you could debate most

politicians until you're blue in the face and never change their mind. But, if we lead them to Jesus, they will change their own minds. So that's our task. Just like Paul and Jesus. To be seen as law abiding citizens, but to be clear and direct with the gospel. That's the real power we yield.

Before wrapping up this passage there is a prophetic view that comes to mind related to this discussion. In Revelation 13:8 the Bible gives us a future view of our society under the antichrist, ***"8. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."*** The entire world, including our own nation, state and community will not only follow the antichrist, but will ***"8...worship him..."***. That means the ungodly mindset and attitude we see emerging today indicates satan is actively influencing our society to achieve this goal. How long will that take? The Bible doesn't say. But we can look around us and see our society headed that way at a fever pitch. Does that mean we give up and just wait for the Rapture? Absolutely not. It places even more emphasis on sharing the gospel.

For example, will God forsake mankind during the Tribulation? Not at all. But He won't spend time trying to change the antichrist's laws. Instead He will send 144,000 Jewish evangelists (Revelation 7&14), Two Witnesses (Revelation 11) and Three Proclaiming Angels (Revelation 14). Their sole task will be to spread the gospel of Jesus to a world on the edge of total destruction.

But beyond politics Paul also stresses the point that we should be ***"1...ready for every good work."*** This isn't talking about works for salvation but speaks to the efforts of the church to improve our society. We should all be actively engaged in humanitarian efforts and community outreach to benefit our society and show the love of Jesus in tangible ways. In other words, as our society crumbles, let's be seen as building up rather than tearing down. We often think that serving in the church has something to do with directly supporting the body. And it often does. But our service efforts should go outside the church and into the community. This gives us a chance to show the love of Jesus, but it also opens doors to take the gospel into our dark world. But to do this effectively, we must approach our society as peaceful law abiding, with our attitude reflecting Jesus in every situation. That attitude is expressed in verse 2 where Paul implores us to, ***"2...speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men..."***. Only God knows their heart, but it stands to reason that most people we encounter who support ungodly and immoral legislation are probably lost. That means our primary focus should not be the condition of their politics, but the condition of our soul. Debating their position with anger and protest will get us nowhere because that's what they're accustomed to. But approaching them with the love of Jesus may open a door for the gospel.

And even if it doesn't, it will still show them where to find the love they seek but cannot find.

Verses 3-8

Paul then reminds us of a very important fact, ***“3. For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.”*** We are all sinners saved by grace, ***“8. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.”*** (Ephesians 2:8). We didn't earn it, nor did we deserve it. We have been born again into an eternal life with the Lord simply because we accepted His work on the cross by faith. That means we can't look down on others just because they are lost and living a life we don't agree with. Even if their political position is diametrically opposed to ours. Instead, we need to see them as we once were. Lost and needing Jesus. Then we need to take every opportunity to show them the love of Christ's gospel and seek to bring them into the fold. And that's exactly what Jesus did. He was manifest as the, ***“4... kindness and the love of God...”*** who gave His life to be ***“...our Savior...”***. The one who snatched us from the fires of hell by giving His life for us. He didn't do that so we could earn salvation by, ***“5...works of righteousness which we have done...”*** but He saved us through faith by ***“...washing...”*** us spotless with His blood because, ***“7...the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”*** (1 John 1:7b), so that we, ***“7...should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”*** (Titus 3:7b - also see Romans 8:16-17 / Galatians 4:17). Paul calls these, ***“8...a faithful saying...”*** that we should ***“...affirm constantly...”***. They are the truth of God's world that should guide our own testimony and the testimony of the broader church as a whole. By doing this, ***“8...those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.”***

This is our task. To reach our society for the gospel. No matter how difficult it may be the reach them.

Chapter 3

Lesson #9

Quick Recap:

In the previous sections of his instructions to Titus the apostle Paul gave guidance for pastors and then outlined the actions and attitudes of a faithful church body. This included a discussion about God's direction for being law abiding citizens. A direction that can be very difficult to accomplish in our fallen society. But it's probably not as difficult as it was in Paul's day under the sinful and savage Roman Empire.

But there's a reason we should take a diplomatic approach when facing our divided society. It gives us the opportunity to reflect the love of Jesus, and not reflect our ability to debate contentious political issues.

Now Paul will close out his letter with a final admonition about our behavior, and he ends with instructions for future ministry work.

Titus chapter 3 verses 9-15

Verses 9-11

Paul ends his instructions to Titus with a warning. No matter how unified a church body might be there will often be someone who is discontent. The problem arises when they allow their discontentment to cause division. Whether arguing politics, doctrine or simply complaining Paul calls them **“...unprofitable and useless...”**. Stern words for sure, but sometimes identifying and rooting out these sources of discord is necessary. Paul addressed a similar issue in his letter to the church at Philippi by calling out two women whose disunity risked affecting the entire church (Philippians 4:2-3). But here Paul goes a step further and tells Titus to **“...reject a divisive man ...”** after you have given him multiple chances to repent and change. In the original Greek the word translated in English as **“...divisive...”** means a **“fractious man”**. Someone set on division. Maybe they're bringing in false teaching and causing doctrinal division. Maybe they are a source of gossip. Or they may be creating disunity in a number of other ways that is driving wedges within the body. Jesus spoke to this in Matthew 18:15-17 where He provides a three-step process for addressing issues like this in the church. Paul may be referencing this process here when he cites, **“10...after the first and second admonition...”**.

Church discipline is unfortunate and it must be addressed Biblically and with grace. But when a person is ***“12...warped and sinning, being self-condemned.”*** they may need to move on rather than staying and continuing to cause disunity. This is a reminder of how important unity is to our Lord. ***“1. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”*** (Psalm 133:1).

Conclusion

Paul ends his letter with some ministry instructions. At some point he plans to send either ***“12...Artemis to you, or Tychicus...”*** to replace Titus. That would allow Titus to join Paul in Nicopolis where Paul had planned to spend the winter. The Bible doesn't tell us who ***“...Artemis...”*** is but apparently Paul thought well of him. But ***“...Tychicus...”*** is mentioned in Colossians 4:7b where Paul called him ***“7... a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord.”*** He's mentioned again in Acts 20:4 and may have been the one who carried Paul's letters to Colosse and possibly to Ephesus (Colossians 4.7 / Ephesians 6:21).

Paul mentions wintering in ***“12...Nicopolis...”***. A city on the coast of Greece which would have been an ideal location to prepare for resuming his travels in the spring. Established in 29 BC by Octavian - Emperor Augustus, it served as the capital city of the Roman province of Epirus and was called the *“City of Victory”* to commemorate the Emperor's defeat of Mark Antony and Cleopatra at the Battle of Actium.

Paul then directs Titus to quickly send ***“13...Zenas the lawyer and Apollos...”***. The Bible only mentions ***“...Zenas...”*** here but we know a little more about ***“...Apollos...”***, ***“24. Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. 25. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26. So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.”*** (Acts 18:24-26). Originally from Alexandria Egypt ***“...Apollos...”*** had converted to Christianity under the teaching of John the Baptist. That meant he was probably not aware of the resurrection of Jesus. An oversight corrected by instruction from Aquilla and Priscilla. After that he, ***“28...vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.”*** (Acts 18:28).

Paul ended his letter with one final request, ***“14. And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.”*** This was his parting statement which is basically a recap of the whole letter reminding us to

be a fruitful pastor and a fruitful member of the body. It's unclear who Paul meant when he said, ***“15. All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.”***. In Romans chapter 16 Paul acknowledges a large number of people by name who were partners in his ministry. Whoever they were, they were rocks of the faith.

I hope you've enjoyed our journey with Titus as we've looked over his shoulder to read the guidance from his mentor Paul. Titus was given a big task. He would start a new church in a very rough area, select and train qualified pastors, and lead the congregation to be doctrinally sound, have a strong testimony and foster unity in the body. A difficult task indeed. But any service for Jesus that's easy, is not much service at all. It is the challenges we face that make us more dependent on the Lord, that helps us achieve the tasks our Lord assigns for us to do.

“15. Grace be with you all...”.