

****READ THE TEXT****

INTRO-

Introductory Illustration

- Rightly is this called a “Pastoral Letter”. Paul writes to Titus about *local church* ministry -- things to have, what to avoid, what to emphasize, and how to minister.
- So much has been said in this letter in such a short space:
- Church leadership (1) & Christian living (2-3)
- Christian Pastors (1) & Christian practice (2-3)
- Paul has given much clarity on
- Qualifications for church leaders/elders, false teachings
- Discipleship, preaching & teaching
- gospel truth
- how to live in an ungodly society
- theological precision
- church discipline
 - (1) PROTECTING sound doctrine (ch.1)
 - (2) PRACTICING sound doctrine (ch.2-3)
- and now some concluding words (as Paul often does)

Background to Titus 3

- Paul has penned this remarkable **Pastoral Letter** to Titus to oversee churches on Crete & “Set *things in Order*” -- key verse is 1.5 & 3.8. All that Paul says is undergirded & standing upon *Gospel Truth* (1.1-3; 2.11-14; 3.4-8!).
- In other words — your Christian walk *builds on* Christ’s work!
- What’s the **WORK?** We are chosen of God, we have the hope of eternal life, Christ gave himself for us, God regenerated & renewed us, we are justified by his grace, and we are a people for his own possession & inheritors of eternal life as God’s children! ***Oh what a gospel! What hope! What glory! What a motivation! What work of Christ!***
- God’s gospel is the *foundation*; now you serve, labor, disciple & love, interact & pursue holiness with that motivation!
- Paul has dealt with devotion to God, Deceivers, God’s deliverance, Discipleship, Discipline, >> now some final words as he closes the letter.
 - ***Here are the final words*** -- and far from being neglected or unimportant or peripheral, they give ***helpful instructions!***

THESIS — *These closing verses will give us four final, crucial exhortations* (=some helpful applications) ***for me and you!***

I. STRATEGIZE! Think intentionally about gospel advancement! (12)

- A. Now when Paul writes Titus, we don’t know exactly **where** he is. We know he was imprisoned in Rome a 1st time -- and has been released and is now traveling around -- and he will be

imprisoned a 2nd time & there he'll die. But for now, in this brief period, Paul is strategically, intentionally, carefully & prayerfully **thinking gospel advancement!**

- B. V.12 - Paul affirms that he will send either Artemis or Tychicus to Titus on Crete to replace him and relieve him of his task. We hardly know anything about Artemas and Tychicus was a missionary companion of Paul's (Acts 20). Was a faithful & diligent servant of Paul who took letters back and forth (Eph, Col) & was sent by Paul back to Ephesus for gospel work (2 Tim 4.12). Though we don't know much, we know that Paul had faithful men to help carry on the work of ministry.
 - 1. Like EM Bounds: The Church is always looking for better methods; God is looking for better men. What the Church needs today is not more machinery, but more men whom the Holy Spirit can use; and the Holy Spirit does not anoint plans – he anoints PEOPLE (EM Bounds)
- C. V.12b - WHY? - Paul wanted Titus to 'make every effort' [intensity of purpose + intensity of effort] to leave Crete & re-join Paul in Nicopolis. **Why?**
 - 1. Nicopolis was a port town. About 200 miles NW of Athens & north of Corinth on the West side of Greece. It was known for its harsh winters. It was an ideal location for Paul to continue meeting people and spreading the gospel because lots of people spent the winter at this spot. Its location was west and indicated that he still wanted to push further and further west (even to Spain)
 - a) The town was large in size and it would have afforded sufficient opportunities among those who were also laid up until the passing of the winter months.

II. **HELP!** Diligently provide for God's people! (13)

- A. Now a word of exhortation to Titus & the churches -- diligently help two Christian travelers. In a world of credit cards, and nice hotels, rental cars, Uber, and cell phones, we forget that in the Ancient world, Christian travelers (=missionaries and Christian teachers) depended on ***Fellow Christians*** to provide for their needs.
 - 1. So that nothing is lacking: food, travel, lodging, safety, refreshment, assistance, provisions.
 - 2. Paul said to the leaders of the Ephesian church: "help the weak" (Acts 20.35); the Roman church was to help Phoebe" (Rom 16.2). What a high honor to help God's people! So often in the OT God is our "Help" (Ps 115 & Ps 121) -- so we now in turn *help others!*
- B. help with regular giving - to the local ministry.
- C. help with prioritized focus - focus on local church & faithful ministries.
- D. help with gospel advancement - those who are faithful & fervent in propagating the gospel.
- E. help with specific needs - as needs come up -- financial, needs. Paul says to help **with** **diligence** -- with earnestness, being intent & thoughtful.

III. **WORK!** Intentionally engage in good deeds (14)

- Paul already called for this in Titus 3.1, 8, 14 — our people must learn to ****ENGAGE**** in good deeds. This is the *fleshing out* of Eph 2.10 - we are created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we walk in them!

- Titus 2.14 - zealous for good deeds! O how little we often think of *living in good deeds*! We (rightly!) can fight against a *performance*-type mindset that *works-based* mindset to earn/maintain God’s favor -- but we don’t want to *swing too far & forget God cares about our GOOD WORKS!*
- We are to be rich in good works (1 Tim 6.18); Godly women are to have a reputation for good works (1 Tim 5.10); we are to let our light shine before men that they see our good works (Matt 5.16); and we’re all *created in Christ for good works* (Eph 2.10). Faith without works is dead (James 2.26).

Why intentionally work? Engage in good deeds?

- A. for God’s glory (Eph 2.10)
- B. for Saints’ refreshment (Titus 3; Heb 10.24)
- C. for your joy (John 15)
- D. for gospel witness (Matt 5.16)

IV. **GREET!** Greet each other with love & grace (15)


- One way that Christians are *so different* is we live in this committed and caring and close community of LOVE for one another! We’re all *bound together & wedded in love*.
 - Paul talks about greeting with a holy kiss. The main verb is “**greet**” - the supporting, descriptive clause is *how to greet*. That “kiss” was cultural b/c sometimes people would bow down, sometimes they kissed the hand, they kissed the cheek, they fell on each other’s neck, they wept. The idea is: Take the physical, familial expression of endearment and use it in a way that is genuine & affectionate & Christ-like to express your love for one another.
- A. Greet with affection (1 Thess 5.26) - a “holy kiss” - with holy, Christ-like affection
 - B. Greet with specificity (Rom 16; 3 John 15) - greet the saints; greet them ‘by name’ (3 John 15)
 - C. Greet with intentionality (Rom 16) - note the care of mentioning & remarking about them! Sign of love, care, thoughtfulness, brotherly-love, intentionality, interest.
 - D. Greet with impartiality (=all the saints) (Phil 4.21) -- greet every saint: *the young*, the older, the quiet, the loud, the extroverted, the introverted, those sitting in the front & those in the back; those who are leaders & those who are not; those who initiate and come to you and those who don’t; those who are like you and those who are different from you.
 - E. Greet with grace (Titus 3.15) - Grace be with you all! This greeting is lavished by a prayer for God’s grace to be upon His people.!

CONCL-

Concluding Illustration

- And how do we do all this? It all builds on the kindness & love of God our Savior (Titus 3.4). He loved us and saved us! He changed us & renewed us! He accepts us & adopted us! He secures us & satisfies us! He has bound us together in a bond of brotherly & Christ-demonstrating love!
- **Let’s (1) strategize; (2) help; (3) work; (4) greet!**

We end our study where we began when we started the exposition. In the Book of Titus, Paul will deal with:

- spiritual maturity
 - true leadership
 - godliness
 - priority of the home
 - the high calling of biblical womanhood & motherhood
 - wholesome, sacrificial relationships
 - sexual purity
 - credibility and public testimony
 - church discipline
 - false teachers
 - preaching & application
 - the importance of your local church
 - the gospel
 - the zeal for good deeds
-  Praise be to the Lord who gives clarity on such issues from His Word -- and in the Book of Titus!