

THE OUTLINE OF THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS

This epistle and 1 and 2 Timothy are the Apostle Paul's *Pastoral Epistles*. They are so-called because they have to do with pastors and with churches.

- I. The salutation (Titus 1:1-4).**
- II. The qualification for church leaders (Titus 1:5-9).**
- III. The special need for strong, spiritual leadership: the false teachers (Titus 1:10-16).**
- IV. The spiritual standards for various groups in the church--including Titus himself (Titus 2:1-10).**
- V. Godliness the object of the grace of God in salvation (Titus 2:11-15).** It is only through the Gospel that we can become what God wants us to be.
- VI. Believers and their relationship with the world (Titus 3:1-11).** Again Paul brought the Gospel into his instructions to believers to show that the Gospel prepares us to live in the world as God wants us to live. See verses 4-8.
- VII. The conclusion (Titus 3:12-15).**

A more general outline of the epistle would be as follows:

- I. Chapter 1 — The Qualifications for Leaders in the Church (Titus 1).**
- II. Chapter 2 — The Standards of Life for the People of the Church (Titus 2).**
- III. Chapter 3 — The Behavior of the Church toward the World (Tit. 3).**

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The Epistle of the Apostle Paul to Titus

Introduction and Outline

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Titus is mentioned in only four books in the NT: 2 Corinthians, Galatians, the epistle which bears his name, and 2 Timothy. It has worried some commentators that he is not mentioned in the book of Acts, nor are we told in Acts that Paul ever went to Crete (which the epistle to Titus says that he was; see Tit. 1:5). Neither are we told that Paul ever wintered in Nicopolis (see Tit. 3:12). And so there have been many who have questioned the claim that Paul was the writer of this epistle.

But these problems do not need to bother us. The book of Acts only takes us to the time of Paul's first imprisonment. And so since it is generally agreed that 1 Timothy, Titus, and 2 Timothy were Paul's last letters, it is very possible that they contain information about what Paul did in the time between his first imprisonment and his second imprisonment and death. In addition, the early church was overwhelmingly in support of Paul as the writer of this epistle to Titus. So we really do not need to be bothered that some question that this was Paul's letter.

We do not know when the Gospel went to Crete, but like Rome, Crete is mentioned in Acts 2 (see v. 11), and it is very possible that people from Crete were saved under the ministry of the Apostle Peter, and they went back home to establish a church in Crete. But this is only a suggestion. God had many ways of getting the Gospel to Crete. It may have been that Paul was the one who did it. However, we do not need to bother ourselves with this problem. The fact is that there was a church in Crete--in many of their cities.

From Galatians 2 we learn that Titus was with Paul and Barnabas early in their ministry when the two men went to Jerusalem. We also learn from Gal. 2:3 that Titus was a Greek, a Gentile, and so he was not circumcised.

As Paul addressed Titus in the letter written to him, he called Titus "mine own son after the common faith," which meant that he had led Titus to Christ. Titus was Paul's spiritual son, as was Timothy. Both of these men were very dear to the Apostle Paul, and he, Paul, placed a great deal of responsibility in their hands--Timothy, in his ministry in Ephesus; Titus, in his ministry in Crete. In 2 Cor. 2:13 Paul referred to Timothy as his "brother," and in 2 Cor. 8:23, "my partner and fellowhelper concerning you."

The book of the Bible which gives us the most information about Titus is 2 Corinthians. See 2 Cor. 2:13; 7:6, 13, 14; 8:6, 16, 23; 12:18 (2x). And this means that Titus had a close relationship with the church at Corinth. It seems that Titus was the one who delivered 1 Corinthians to the believers in Corinth. Afterwards Paul could not find Titus, but when Titus finally returned he comforted Paul with the message from Titus that the Corinthians were not offended with him, but had responded to his letter with a desire to get things right in their fellowship. See 2 Cor. 7:7.

Titus was also trustworthy in financial matters. He was to encourage the believers in Corinth to finish getting together their gift for needy saints, probably in Jerusalem. See 2 Cor. 8. (If time permits, read the whole chapter. Point out from v. 16 that God had put the same concern in Titus' heart for the Corinthians, and for needy saints, that was in the heart of Paul himself.

Notice also in 2 Cor. 12:17, 18 that Titus and the brother who had been sent by Paul with Titus (Hodge suggested that it could have been Luke, or John Mark, or Trophimus, but declared that we do not know and that "it is useless to conjecture" [p. 584].) The main point of Paul's reference to Titus was that he went to Corinth just as Paul would have gone, with no idea of making some gain for himself. So Titus, like Timothy, was a faithful man, and one whom Paul trusted in the Lord.

The last reference to Titus is in 2 Tim. 4:10 where Paul said that Titus had gone to Dalmatia. Although he is mentioned along with Demas, it does not appear that Titus had gone away from the Lord, but quite possibly was on another mission for the Apostle Paul. Dalmatia was north of Greece and in the same vicinity as Illyricum where Paul had preached. See Rom. 15:19.

This epistle along with 1 and 2 Timothy are the Apostle Paul's *Pastoral Epistles*. They are so-called because they have to do with pastors and with churches.

The outline:

- I. The salutation (Titus 1:1-4).**
- II. The qualification for church leaders (Titus 1:5-9).**
- III. One special need for strong, spiritual leadership (Titus 1:10-16).**
- IV. The spiritual standards for various groups in the church--including Titus himself (Titus 2:1-10).**
- V. Godliness the object of the grace of God in salvation (Titus 2:11-15).** It is only through the Gospel that we can become what God wants us to be.
- VI. Believers and their relationship with the world (Titus 3:1-11).** Again Paul brought the Gospel into his instructions to believers to show that the Gospel prepares us to live in the world as God wants us to live.
- VII. The conclusion (Titus 3:12-15).**

A more general outline of the epistle would be as follows:

- I. Chapter 1 — The Qualifications for Leaders in the Church (Titus 1).**
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- III. Chapter 3 — The Behavior of the Church toward the World (Tit. 3).**

(Read the epistle to the class pointing out the divisions and their relationship to each other.)

When did the Apostle Paul write this letter to Titus? It is generally believed that it was shortly before his death by execution during the reign of Nero, probably in A. D. 67 or 68. It was between his first and second imprisonments. Paul was drawn to Christ shortly after the death and resurrection of Christ. The article in Holman's Bible Dictionary places the date at A. D. 35. This, of course, can only be approximate. But it does seem that Paul's ministry extended over a period of a little more than thirty years, and it is generally agreed that his Pastoral Epistles were his last. We can only guess at the date for his epistle to Titus. It seems that A. D. 66 or 67 would be very probable, but some date it as early as 65. The date is not the important detail. If it were, the Holy Spirit would have made that very clear. The important fact is *what* Paul wrote, and that we understand that what He wrote, He wrote under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

I will conclude this introduction by raising and answering two questions:

- 1) Why would Paul write to Titus when he had been in Crete with Titus?
- 2) Why is it important for us today to study his Paul's epistle to Titus?

Titus--Introduction and Outline (3)

We know that Paul was in Crete with Titus because of what he said in Titus 1:5. We can be sure that the two men had talked over the matters contained in this epistle and that Titus was well-acquainted with everything that Paul wrote. But what we need to realize is that Titus, the younger of the two, would have needed some authority for teaching what he would teach the Cretans. This letter would give him that authority--apostolic authority! With Paul's authority behind him Titus could not be accused of coming up with his own ideas about how the church should function, and how the people of God should live. And so Titus had his authority in this epistle. To oppose Titus as he followed Paul's teaching was to oppose the Apostle Paul. And to oppose the Apostle Paul was to oppose the Holy Spirit. As I have said many times before (and it is not original with me), the authority of the New Testament rests upon the authority of the apostles because they were the men whom God chose to give us the New Testament. If writers of NT books were not apostles, such as John Mark and Luke, it is important to establish their relationship with the apostles in order to prove their authority. Paul said in Eph. 2:20 that the church is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone."

Now in the light of the fact that Titus needed apostolic authority for the work that he was to do with the believers in Crete, it is important that we realize that the same is true for us today--and it has always been true for the Lord's people from that day to this. Beware of people who go around conducting seminars on the family and the church or Christian living, claiming that they have "new" insights into the problems that we face today. Check everything you hear by the Word of God. We have in Scripture everything that is necessary for us today, and so stay away from people who think they know more than what the Holy Spirit knew when He led Paul and others to write the New Testament. Times may have changed, but God has not changed, and people have not changed, and the answers to personal problems, family problems, church problems, and the problems of nations are the same today that they were in the first century--and even before that.

This is really the answer to the second question I raised. Why do we study this letter which Paul wrote to Titus? We study it because it is a part of the infallible and unchanging Word of God. But we also study it because it applies to us just as much as it applied to Titus and to the believers in Crete. God's standards for His people do not change, and neither do His ways change. If we want to see the blessing of God upon our work, we have to do His work in His way. To take up the ways of the world as the church of the twentieth century is doing, is apostasy. It grieves the Holy Spirit, and is an indication of how far the church today has moved away from the Word of God. There may be many people involved in our larger churches today, and much excitement, but it is false fire, and we need to stay away from the modern things that are going on, and get back to what God tells us to do in His Word. So let us read Paul's epistle to Titus very prayerfully and very carefully, making sure that this epistle is "a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path" today as we face our own personal needs, and as we seek to do the Lord's work for His glory. The Lord's work must be done in the Lord's way, or we cannot expect the true blessing of God.

The Epistle of the Apostle Paul to Titus

Titus 1:1-4

October 2, 1995

I. The Salutation (Titus 1:1-4).

In these verses we have Paul's greeting to Titus. It is similar to Paul's greetings in his other epistles except for the fact that what he has to say about himself is more lengthy than usual. The reason for this is not difficult to understand.

As I mentioned in our introductory lesson last week, Paul and Titus had both been in Crete together, but Paul had gone on and had left Titus there with a difficult assignment. He was to appoint elders. He was to teach the people how they were to live, and as Paul mentioned in 1:5, Titus was to set in order things that had not been taken care of with the believers in the cities of Crete. This was no small assignment, and it was to be expected that while the believers would follow Paul gladly, they might feel differently about Titus. Paul was an apostle; Titus was not. Paul was an experienced servant of the Lord. Titus, while not a novice, was not as mature as the Apostle Paul was. We would be very naive not to think that Paul and Titus had talked over everything that is in this epistle. It is doubtful that there is anything in this epistle that Paul had not discussed thoroughly with Titus. Why, then, would Paul write to Titus about things that they had already spent much time going over?

It, of course, would have been a great reminder for Titus of the things that Paul wanted him to do. But beyond that, this epistle would serve as a credential for Titus. If anyone objected to what he was teaching, he could let them read this letter from Paul which would give him that authority that he needed to do the work that Paul had left him to do. So, in a sense, while this letter was addressed to Titus, it was intended to be for all of the believers in every city throughout Crete. And we know that it was intended for believers in every succeeding generation right down to our own, and until the Lord comes. What is our authority for the way we do the work of the Lord? It is certainly not that we know what we should be doing. Our authority goes back to the authority of the apostles, and that authority we find in the books of Scripture.

So if people wanted to question what Timothy was doing, or what he was teaching, he could pull out this letter and let the objectors see that he was doing what the Apostle Paul told him to do. If churches were required to go to Scripture to find their authority for doing what they are doing, many churches would be very different from what they are. And yet this is exactly what all of us need to be able to do. The Bible is our authority not only for what we are to believe as Christians, but it is our authority, and our only authority, for the way in which we do the work of the Lord. If we learned nothing more than this in studying Paul's epistle to Titus, our time in this book would be well worth every minute we put into it. So when you read this epistle, read it like you would read it if Paul had written it to you. And I will read it as though he had written it to me.

Anyway, this is why Paul went to such lengths to describe himself as he wrote to his young son in the faith. Now let us look at the first four verses of chapter 1.

1:1 How wise the ancients were to begin their letters with their own names, the name of the person writing the letter. We have to look at the end of our letters. Paul began with his own name, and followed his name with a title which he took special delight in. He was "a servant of God," a bondservant of God.

There were slaves in those days in the Roman Empire, and no slave really liked being a slave because it meant, as Lenski brought out in his comments on this verse, "a slave's will is entirely the will of his owner" (p. 889). Since Paul was God's slave, he gloried in that, and I wonder if he wasn't indicating that a person cannot be a good apostle unless he was first and foremost a good "servant of God." There were only a few apostles, and they were not replaced with they died. But all of us are servants of God, and that is the highest honor that can

be bestowed upon any person living on the face of the earth.

The main fact that puts such honor upon this title is that this is what our Lord was. We have that wonderful statement in Isa. 42:1ff. where God is the Speaker, and He is speaking about His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ:

- 1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.
- 2 He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.
- 3 A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.
- 4 He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law (Isa. 42:1-4).

When the Lord was here on earth He spoke words several times to show how completely He was a servant of God. For example, John 6:38:

For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

He also said,

28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, **and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.**

29 And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; **for I do always those things that please him** (John 8:28-29).

And so when Paul identified himself as "a servant of God" he was declaring his intention to do nothing but that which was God's will. That would apply also to this letter; he did not want to tell Titus and the Cretans to do anything but the will of God. This again is where we stand in constant need of the Word of God. The will of God is to be found in the Word of God.

For Paul to say that he was "a servant of God," and then "an apostle of Jesus Christ," was like I often say when people say to me, "You are a pastor." I like to respond by saying, "Yes, but I'm a Christian first." If I don't put the emphasis in my life on being a Christian, I can't be a true pastor. The same is true of you. The Lord has given all of us different places in the body of Christ, but our effectiveness in whatever we are doing is traceable to whether or not we are Christians first. Or, as Paul said here, a servant of God first, and then an apostle of Jesus Christ.

Paul's authority for calling himself a "servant of God," came from God; his authority for calling himself "an apostle of Jesus Christ," came from Jesus Christ. But also from God. He made this clear in the first verse of his letter to the Galatian churches:

Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead).

This one statement would silence any opposition that the believers in Crete might raise against Titus. His authorization came from an apostle, one particularly appointed by God to lay the foundation of the New Testament church.

We understand what Paul was saying thus far, but what did he mean when he said, "According to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth, which is after godliness"?

He was saying that his service and his apostleship would be in full accord with the faith of God's elect people, and of what they knew about the truth, both of which were aimed at producing a godly people.

Paul probably was anticipating what he was going to say shortly about false teachers. These false teachers were not acting as the elect of God because the true elect of God know that salvation comes through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And while no child of God knows all of the truth, and babes in Christ know very little of the truth, yet he was assuring them that nothing that he had to teach them would be in any way contrary to what believers understand to be the truth of God.

So Paul was not coming with any additions to the doctrine of salvation, nor was he going to alter anything that the people of God have recognized as truth, but he was going to build upon, and clarify the truth as they already knew it.

But there was this one additional point: his ministry, and Titus' ministry, were designed, under the blessing of God, toward producing godly people on the island of Crete. THIS WAS SOMETHING WHICH THE FALSE TEACHERS WERE NOT ABLE TO DO. GODLINESS IS ALWAYS THE FRUIT OF THE TRUTH OF GOD IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER.

Those of you who went with me through 1 Timothy earlier this year will remember this word *godly*, or *godliness*. Paul had a lot to say to Timothy about *godliness*. What is the emphasis in this word? It speaks of a right relationship with God. We can also speak of it as a life lived in fellowship with God. And to be godly we must live lives that are pleasing to God. A godly person wants to live for the glory of God. This is what we all need to be concerned about. The believers at Crete could not find anything wrong with this statement. Our relationship with God begins when we are saved, through the Gospel. It progresses as we learn more about the truth of God, and not only believe it, but obey it. The result: a godly person who lives a godly life.

But we are not finished with Paul's description of himself and his work. Let us go on to verse 2.

1:2 All of this work of God in the hearts of His people which is going on throughout time is "in hope of eternal life." Now this phrase needs some explanation.

When Paul said, "In hope of eternal life," he was not suggesting that believers do not have eternal life NOW! Nor was he indicating by the word "hope" that the future of a Christian has some uncertainty connected with it. As we have had the opportunity to see before, "hope" in Scripture in a passage like this is not with a kind of "hope so" idea, but the Bible uses this word "hope" to speak of something future which nevertheless is absolutely certain. Our Lord's coming is spoken of in the second chapter of this epistle as a "blessed hope." Did Paul mean that we *hope* that the Lord is coming, but we are not sure? Absolutely not! He meant that He hasn't come yet, and so it is our hope, but it is certain that He is coming some time in the future, and we are to be looking for "that blessed hope."

"The hope of eternal life" means that when the Lord comes we are going to experience the fulness of what it means to have eternal life. We have it now, and we have it forever. But only in heaven will we fully understand and fully experience what it means that we have eternal life.

Why can we speak of it as being so certain when we know that we often fail the Lord, and often, to our sorrow, sin grievously against Him. We know it is certain because it rests upon the promise of a God Who cannot lie! Paul did not say that God would not lie to us, but that He "cannot lie." If He were to lie, He would not be God because lying is a sin and a holy God cannot sin.

When was this promise made? Did God give this promise to Paul? Not originally. This promise was made "before the world began." You see, before there was a world, before there were any people living, before creation itself, God laid out the whole plan of redemption, from start to finish--even to making the choice of

the people who were going to be saved: "God's elect"!

Paul was giving Titus (and the believers at Crete) the big picture of salvation. It is tragic how limited our view is concerning salvation, and that is the reason many of the Lord's people have trouble believing all of the Word of God. God doesn't do things our way, or the way we think things should be done, and so we reject the clear teaching of Scripture concerning what God has done, what He is still doing, and what yet remains to be fulfilled.

So Paul did not go to Crete with some new doctrine; he went with a doctrine that predated creation, doctrine which God had gradually been unfolding through time as men of God spoke as they were moved to speak by the Holy Spirit.

But there is still more to this salutation.

1:3 We are dealing with truths established by God "before the world began," but in this verse Paul was saying that "in due times," or at God's appointed time, He manifested through preaching, the preaching of His Word where we find the promise of salvation, and this ministry of preaching was committed to Paul by "the commandment of God our Saviour." God is called our Savior, not because He died for us, but because He is the Author of our salvation.

You will notice in the writing of Paul that he placed a special emphasis on preaching where the spreading of the message of salvation is concerned. In these days when there seems to be a minimizing of the importance of preaching in our churches, preaching the Word, we need to get back to the emphasis which was so strong in his ministry on preaching. His ministry was preaching. We learn this in 1 Cor. 1. For example, in 1 Cor. 1:17, 18:

17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

And 1 Cor. 1:21-24:

21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

The word "committed" which Paul used in Tit. 1:3 means that God entrusted Paul with the Gospel message, and all that is related to it. So he would not be about to encourage Titus to do anything that would be a violation of the ministry which God had entrusted to him. I think you can see that everything that Paul said in this salutation would cause the Cretian believers to see that for Titus to depart from the truth would have been a failure on Paul's part to stand for the Word because Paul was supporting Titus in what he was doing.

It never has been easy to find men like Titus and Timothy who will be faithful to the work that the Lord has called His servants to do.

Now we come to Paul's special greeting to Titus.

1:4 What love Paul expressed here for Titus when he greeted him as "mine own son after the common faith"! Calling Titus his own (lit.) child, born one, is an indication of the genuineness of Titus' salvation. This meant that Paul was sure that Titus really knew the Lord.

And Paul prayed that Titus would experience the grace, mercy, and peace of God and Christ in his personal life as well as in his ministry (which would necessarily have been intertwined with each other). In some of the MSS the word "mercy" is not found even though it is in 1 and 2 Timothy. Titus needed the strength to be faithful and to persevere through all of the trials that were before him. That takes ~~g~~ grace. He would also need to see the hand of God working in his circumstances as well as in the hearts of others in order that he might accomplish that which the Lord had given him to do. That is where the mercy of God comes in. And the result of God's grace and God's mercy in his life would be peace--resting in the Lord, contented with His way and the fruit that God is pleased to give. The fact that grace, mercy, and peace come from both the Father and the Savior is an indication not only of the united support of the Godhead, but of the inexhaustible supply from which Titus could continually draw.

Titus must have let his mind go back to this salutation many, many times during the days ahead when he labored alone in Crete. It would have been a great encouragement and blessing to work with the Apostle Paul. But to work with him, and to work alone, was another thing. Even the Lord saw the wisdom of sending His disciples out by two's. But there are times when it is necessary for the servant of the Lord to work alone. Then he is cast upon the Lord in a special way, and there he learns to trust the Lord in ways he never had to trust the Lord before. But there he learns also how sufficient God is in meeting every need, and so "grace, mercy, and peace" become his main support. May the Lord cause us to know that our resources are not in our education, nor in the years of experience we have had, nor in the people we work with, not even in our families, but that our sufficiency is of God. Great days were ahead for Titus as he learned to walk in greater dependence upon God.

The Epistle of the Apostle Paul to Titus

Titus 1:5-9

October 9, 1995

II. The Qualifications for Church Leaders (Tit. 1:5-9).

1:5 It is clear from this verse, as I have been saying, that Paul and Titus had been in Crete together. How long we were there, we do not know, but not long enough. There was still much work to be done with the believers, and Paul had left Titus there to "set in order the things that are wanting," or lacking, "and ordain elders in every city..."

There are two things which seem to indicate that a work of God had been going on in Crete for some time:

1) It seems that there were believers, perhaps many believers, in many cities scattered through-out the island. It was not a situation where there were a few believers in one of the cities, but Titus was to go lit., from city to city, ordaining elders.

2) The work of the Lord must have been of some considerable length of time for Paul to think that there were men throughout Crete who would have been able to serve as elders. All growth is slow, and the same is true of spiritual growth. It takes time for believers to become saintly in character and life. And so this would indicate that the work of the Lord had been going on for several years in Crete. Why more had not been done to establish churches, we cannot say, but that was Titus' responsibility. Paul had "appointed" Titus to "ordain elders in every city." Paul was the leader, and Titus willingly submitted himself to Paul. Titus would devote himself to the work so that it would be done exactly as Paul would have done it himself. Paul must have thanked the Lord many times that he had such a fellow-servant as Titus was. Titus was to ordain elders, and Paul had actually ordained Titus (in a different way) to carry on the work that apparently both of them had been doing, and to stay with it until the work was completed.

Please note that Paul used three words to describe those who were to be leaders in the churches which would thus be established throughout the island:

- 1) Elders, in verse 5.
- 2) Bishops, in verse 7.
- 3) Stewards, also in verse 7.

If we understand these words, we will have a better idea as to what they were to do.

The Greek word for *elder* is πρεσβύτερος. In 1 Tim. 5:17 the verb "rule" is used in connection with the work of the elders. It speaks of presiding over the church. Thayer said that it is a term denoting the dignity of the office. The people were to submit to the elders, and the elders were the leaders, determining the life and ministry of the church, making sure that it was according to the Word of God. The Presbyterians get their name from this term. In their churches the elders are the men with the most authority.

But elders were also *bishops*, ἐπίσκοπος. The Episcopalians get their name from this word. As bishops the elders were to oversee the lives of the people of the church. Thayer said that this term described their function. This term is described by Peter in 1 Pet. 5:1-4:

- 1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:
- 2 **Feed the flock of God** which is among you, **taking the oversight thereof**, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;
- 3 **Neither as being lords** over God's heritage, **but being ensamples to the flock.**
- 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

As bishops the leaders were to feed the people of God on the truth of the Word of God, and they were to see how the believers were doing in their relationship with the Lord. But it was not the job of the bishops to be bossy. They were to be examples to the people of God. But they were not to hesitate to speak to people if and when they felt that they were not doing what they should be doing as the Lord's people.

The word for a *steward* is οἰκονόμος. Paul made this statement in 1 Cor. 4:1, 2:

1 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

A steward was a man in a household whose master had entrusted him with the care of the household, and he was responsible to see that the family life was conducted in accordance with the master's wishes.

The elders as stewards have been entrusted with the Word of God, and they are responsible to see that the Word of God is ministered in the meetings of the church, and that the Lord's work is carried on as the Lord intends for it to be done. There is never even the suggestion in the Bible that leaders are free to conduct the work of the Lord anyway that they think that it should be done. They are to be faithful to the Lord, which means that they are to be faithful to the Word of God. In fact, as Paul said in the verses which I have just read to you, the main concern of a steward is that he be faithful! It is significant that, in verse 7 of our text when Paul referred to elders as stewards, he said that they were not to be "selfwilled." It is regrettable that in many churches the leaders are busy carrying out their own programs instead of following the guidance that God has given us in His Word.

And so, going back to verse 5, Titus was to "set in order the things that are wanting" (on Old English expression meaning, lacking). The churches lacked leadership, and from chapter 2 we would assume that particular groups in the churches lacked instruction as to how they should please the Lord in the place in life that they had. Titus had a big job, but we know that Paul trusted him in the Lord to do what needed to be done among the people of God in Crete.

1:6 Now we are going to learn that as much as the believers of Crete needed leaders, it was never Paul's intention that they should just get anyone who was willing to assume the position of an elder, but it was expected that they were measure up to certain spiritual standards. Here again we see a great need in the church today. We are not accustomed to choosing men because of their spiritual stature. Many times the work is given to anyone who will take it, as long as he is not a troublemaker. But a church will rarely go any higher than her leaders, and it is extremely important that the elders be men who are known for their love for the truth, and for their love for the Lord. Men who love the Lord and His Word are going to be men of obedience to the Word of the Lord.

Now let us look at the qualifications. We had many of these in 1 Timothy 3, but it will do all of us good to look at the qualifications that Paul mentioned here to Titus.

At the head of the list, an elder must be a man who is "blameless." This does not mean that he has to be perfect. It would be good if the church had perfect men, but no one is perfect. We are all sinners, and still capable of grieving the Lord with our sins. No, Paul did not mean perfect. But he did mean that an elder could not be a man who had some charge against him. A man who doesn't pay his bills, is not "blameless." A man who sometimes does not tell the truth, is not "blameless." A man who does not work to support his family, is not "blameless." A man who is not discreet in his relationship with women, is not "blameless." A man who is careless about his attendance at the meetings of the church, is not "blameless." And you could add many other illustrations. You see, a blameless person is not perfect, but he wants to be, and he does everything to keep his life above reproach. We can thank the Lord that while there are no perfect men in the church, there are many

who are "blameless."

Second and third, he must be a man who is a good husband, and a good father. He is "the husband of one wife." As I said when we were studying 1 Timothy, we need to remember the deplorable conditions men lived under in paganism, often having multiple wives at one time. Paul was saying that they needed to have just one wife, and so, for many of the men, when they were saved, it meant getting rid of all of their wives but one--probably he would keep the first one he had.

This expression has been explained many different ways. Some feel that if a man has ever been divorced, even before he was saved, he cannot serve as an elder. There are those who feel that if a man's wife dies and he gets married to another Christian lady who is a widow, he cannot serve as an elder. Personally I don't see that that would be a problem at all. And I am inclined to feel that a divorce before salvation would not disqualify a man. But it seems that if a man is divorced after he has been saved, he would be disqualified. It is best to consider this question on an individual basis since there can be so many different situations arise in marriages. But there is no question but that a man's home is very important before the Lord when he is being considered for leadership as an elder.

The same thing can be said about a man's family. He must have "faithful children, not accused of riot or unruly." "Riot" is a word we did not have in 1 Timothy. Strong suggests the term, *unsavedness*. By this he means one who seems beyond all hope. This word describes the prodigal son which the Lord described in Luke 15--but it is significant that he came back to his Father! And "unruly" child is one who is unsubdued (by definition), and one who refuses to be brought under control. Both of these words are the opposite of being "faithful." A "faithful" child is trustworthy, one who is true to the faith.

These are qualifications that a man must have when he enters upon the office of an elder. The Bible does not address itself to a situation where a child becomes guilty of "riot" and becomes "unruly" afterwards. And I don't of any illustration of such a condition in the Bible. If the child of an elder turns against his parents and against the Lord as he or she gets older, it seems that this would be a special call to the church to plead with the Lord for the salvation or restoration of such a child. If a father is neglectful of his children, and does not discipline them, then, of course, he would be disqualified from being considered as an elder.

1:7 In this verse Paul seems to have elaborated upon the word "blameless" which he mentioned in verse 6, but here the emphasis is particularly upon the way he has shown himself to be a "steward of God." Men must demonstrate that they are acting as elders should act before they are asked to become an elder. If a man does not himself live in subjection to the Word of God, then he cannot serve as an elder.

And it is in this connection that Paul said he must not be "selfwilled." This means that he must be a humble man, not arrogant nor wanting to have his own way. But he will stand unswerv-ingly for the teaching of the Word of God.

"Not soon angry" means that he is a man of self-control. He is not easily provoked, and so he would be a man motivated by love for the Lord, and love for people. Our Lord was the supreme Example of a man who was "not soon angry" as He faced all of the provocations which came upon Him daily.

"Not given to wine" means not addicted to it. Wine was used in Bible times in place of water, and sometimes, as was Timothy's case, for medicinal reasons. But there are also many warnings in Scripture against drunkenness and excessive drinking. Here again a man to be qualified as an elder must show self-control, and must show that he did not get his pleasure from a bottle of wine.

A "striker" is a person who is always getting into arguments, a person who is hard to get along with, one who resists the opinion of others without giving them proper consideration. He is unreasonable.

"Not given to filthy lucre." This is the person who lives to make money, and always, when that is a person's object in life, sooner or later he resorts to illegitimate means to gain that which will do him more harm than good--and that which he can lose so quickly. Remember what Solomon said about money: Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven (Prov. 23:5).

And we need to remember what Paul told Timothy in 1 Tim. 6:9, 10:

9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

1:8 In contrast with what we have just had, Paul in this verse turned himself to some of the more positive characteristics Titus was to look for when considering men to be elders.

"A lover of hospitality" was defined by Paul in 1 Tim. 5:10 when he was speaking of the kind of a widow for whom the church should provide care. She must be:

Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

In Hebrews 13:2 we have this exhortation:

Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

This, of course, was written with Abraham and Sarah in mind when the Lord and two angels came to their home appearing as men. Some of the greatest blessings we have experienced as a family have been when we have opened our home to servants of the Lord, or some of the Lord's people who were here in Portland for a short time.

"A lover of good men" must be a man who loves the people of God. A man whose best friends are the people of the world should not be considered to become an elder. Instead, he must be one who pursues fellowship with others who know the Lord.

A "sober" person is a person with a sound mind. He is not foolish, on the one hand, nor is he extreme in his reactions, on the other hand. He is steady in all circumstances, and he can always be counted on to be the same way. Self-control enters into making a person "sober." He is sane and sensible.

He must be "just." He is concerned about righteousness. To him wrong is wrong, and right is right. Truth is not something that can be compromised. Truth is absolute, never relative. His word can be depended upon. People trust him.

He also must be "holy." He wants to be like the Lord. He hates evil and avoids anything that is displeasing to the Lord. He does not follow the ways of the world, but delights himself in the ways of the Lord. His main desire in life is to please the Lord.

And almost as though he felt that Titus might forget the importance of self-control, he mentions it by name even though it has been implied several times by the characteristics which Paul had already mentioned.

1:9 The last qualification has to do with his attitude toward the Word of God. He will hold it fast! He is

going to adhere to the Word of God, the true Word of God. He is going to support the ministry of the Word, and will guard that ministry against all intrusions. He believes that God works through His Word, and that believers can only grow as they are instructed in the Word, and as they live in obedience to the Word. He offers no apologies for the fact that his church is a place where people can come to hear the Word taught and preached. He is the kind of a man who is a delight to any pastor who knows that he has been called to preach the Word.

But he also believes that the Word of God is his greatest weapon in meeting the spiritual needs of others. "Gainsayers" are people who talk back, who argue against the truth and reject the truth. They refuse the truth, and deny that it is the truth. A true elder must believe that it is by "sound doctrine" that people are won to Christ. "To convince the gainsayers" does not mean that he is out to win arguments, but that his object is to see people turn to the Lord. The Greek word translated "convince" means to convict, and so to see people brought out of their unbelief, by the grace of God, to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Concl: We can't read through a list of qualifications like this without asking the question which Paul asked when he was speaking of the ministry: "And who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Cor. 2:16). But his answer is our answer:

5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;

6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life (2 Cor. 3:5-6).

No man can feel that he qualifies to serve the Lord and the church as an elder. And we don't in a perfect sense. But we seek by the grace of God to be what He wants us to be because, as I sought to emphasize with you when we were studying 1 Timothy, the standards for elders are what they are because elders are to be examples to all of the people of God. And so it is not that elders are the only ones who need to be interested in a passage like this, but all of us do! These are the distinguishing characteristics, not only for elders, but for all of the people of God. And when we get back to these that Paul has mentioned, and everything else that becomes us as the Lord's people, then and only then can we expect to cause the world to see that God's people are different, and that there is nothing else on earth like the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. When this happens, then the church will again become the mighty force in the world that it has been in past generations.

God's work must be done in God's way if we want to experience the fulness of His blessing.

The Epistle of Paul to Titus

Titus 1:10-16

October 16, 1995

III. The special need for strong, spiritual leadership: the false teachers (Titus 1:10-16).

Intro: Error has existed from the beginning of time in the Garden of Eden when Satan tempted Eve by questioning, and then denying, the Word of God. Those who read the OT know that the people of God have always been troubled with false prophets--and often have believed them. The Pharisees in our Lord's day were teaching as doctrines to be believed, the commandments of men. Many times in His teaching our Lord warned His disciples about false prophets. The book of Acts gives us the record of the struggle that the early church had with false teachers and false teaching. And all through the NT epistles and even into the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, we see that false teachers continued to be a problem. Wherever the truth went, false teaching was close behind. And wherever the truth of the Gospel went, false teaching had preceded the servants of God. Tragically, people are more inclined to believe error than they are the truth because of the depravity of their hearts. This is what makes every servant of the Lord realize that the success of the Gospel depends entirely upon the blessing of the Lord.

In Paul's epistle to Titus we are concerned with the work of the Lord in Crete. As I have said before, we do not know how the work in Crete got started, nor how old the work was when Paul and Titus went there. But we do know that false teaching was already there, and that it was a problem to the church in Crete. Paul was not long in getting to this subject. However, before he raised the subject of the false teachers, in his introductory remarks he firmly established himself as an apostle with all of the authority that his position in the church carried, and he also stressed the fact that the churches needed strong, spiritual leadership. The church in Crete needed godly men as their elders whose lives were above reproach, but also men who know the truth of God. We see this latter point in verse 9. Elders must be men who will hold fast to the teaching of Scripture. They must not compromise with the truth under any conditions. All teaching which is not in accord with Scripture must be immediately and permanently rejected. Paul called the false teachers, "gainsayers," in this ninth verse. A gainsayer is one who talks back, one who speaks against the truth. But Paul was not just concerned about winning the battle, he was concerned that he might "convince," to convict, those who stood against the truth.

Now let us notice what Paul had to say about the false teachers.

1:10 First of all, notice that there were "many" of them. The influence that false teachers have is often increased because there are so "many" of them, or the fact that they have many followers. We must remember that the truth or error of teaching is not decided by the number of adherents that teachers have. It cannot be emphasized too strongly that teaching must be judged in the light of Scripture. In fact, large numbers may often be an indication that a system of teaching is false. Remember what the Apostle Peter wrote about false teachers in 2 Pet. 2:1-3:

1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

2 And **many** shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

We can add to Peter's words what our Lord said in Matt. 7:13-14:

13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and **many** there be which go in thereat:

14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and **few** there be

that find it.

So we must not be deceived by teachers just because there are many of them, and many who follow them. False teachers are "blind leaders of the blind" (Matt. 15:14).

Paul called these false teachers "unruly and vain talkers and deceivers." An "unruly" person is one who is in rebellion against the truth, and he refuses to be controlled by the truth. He is not impressed if you point out from Scripture that what he is teaching is wrong.

A "vain talker" is one who doesn't make sense. There is no reasonable, and certainly no Scriptural basis, for Mormonism to say that spirit children are waiting to come to the earth, and that we must provide bodies for them to come. This is their argument for polygamy. It doesn't make sense. Nor did it make sense for Jewish teachers to say that circumcision was a requirement for salvation. That was not the teaching of the OT. It would leave women without any hope for salvation. It just didn't make sense.

They were also "deceivers." They were "mind-misleaders," as Strong indicated. This is what Satan did to Eve. Paul said this in 2 Cor. 11:3:

But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Christ was not hypocritical when He preached the Gospel. He was not self-seeking. He was doing the will of the Father for the salvation of sinners. But false teachers have sinister motives, and often their object is money.

When Paul mentioned "the circumcision," he was designating the particular false teachers who were disturbing the believers in Crete. They were like those mentioned by Luke in Acts 15:1 who went from Jerusalem to Antioch. This is what Luke said:

And certain men which came down from Judaea [to Antioch] taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

This made salvation, at least in part, a matter of works, and it was a denial of salvation by grace. Luke continued by saying that "Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation" (Acts 15:2) with those false teachers. And then it was decided that Paul and Barnabas should go to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about the problem. Then Luke had this to say:

6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.

8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;

9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they (Acts 15:6-11).

The apostles were always jealous for the grace of God and for the glory of God, and so any denial of salvation by grace was strongly opposed by them.

But let us go on:

1:11 This verse tells us what Paul said must be done to the false teachers, and why.

How would they stop their mouths? Would they seek some kind of legislation against them? They could not have done that. Would they physically attack the false teachers, or threaten them in some way? How do the believers at Crete stop their mouths?

Well, it is certain that they could not keep the false teachers from speaking. Paul was not thinking of that. What he was thinking about was that their mouths should be stopped in the sense that they could no longer be effective in deceiving the people. And the only way that can be done is by making sure that the people really know the truth of the Gospel. That was primarily the ministry of the elders. But the people who understood the Gospel would be responsible, as well, to teach those whose understanding was not as clear as it should have been. Error is always best answered by the truth. The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. To take the sword of the Spirit is, first of all, to understand it, and then to teach it. The false teachers themselves needed to be confronted with the Word of God. Dr. Mitchell used to say that false teachers have their best results with ignorant Christians, or even non-Christians who would obviously be ignorant of the truth of the Gospel.

What were the false teachers doing?

They were subverting "whole houses". This means that they were winning whole families over to their false teaching. To subvert is to overthrow, or to destroy. Whole families were being taken captive by false teachers. Those who were subverted were not getting more light, but they were being plunged into the darkness. Families were being ruined by the false teachers and their teaching. And the tragedy was that if they were not turned back, they would be ruined eternally! The battle between truth and error is no insignificant thing. It is a battle between eternal life and eternal death.

The false teachers were not only bringing about the spiritual destruction of whole families, but they were doing this by teaching things which they ought not be teaching. Nothing should be taught but the truth. That applies to all areas of knowledge, but it is especially true where man's eternal salvation is concerned. "Ought not" is our old friend, must, or must not! The elders are just as responsible to see that error is "not" taught as they are to see that the truth is taught.

But that which makes false teaching even more despicable is that it is done "for filthy lucre's sake." Now not all money is filthy lucre. Money becomes filthy lucre when it is taken dishonestly, or with sinful motives. Money that the drug dealer obtains by selling his drugs is filthy lucre. We don't use the word "lucre" these days, but we do say that a certain business is very lucrative. Lucre is a word meaning money. The Greek word for "filthy" means shameful, or dishonest.

Cf. 1 Tim. 3:3, 8; 1 Pet. 5:2. The false teacher is a confirmation of what Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 6:10, that "the love of money is the root of all evil"--all kinds of evil.

1:12 The quotation here from one of their prophets would indicate that the false teachers which Paul was opposing were Cretans, and this would make Titus' job that much more difficult because the other Cretans would naturally be more inclined to side with one of their own than with Titus who was an outsider. You would not expect that "one of themselves," and a man whom they considered to be "a prophet," would testify against them, but he did! The prophet's name was Epimenedes. His date is uncertain, but Hendriksen (p. 352) says that it was somewhere between 630 and 500 B.C. Paul did not consider him a prophet, nor did he consider Epimenedes an authority, but the Cretans did! And so Paul quoted him to add strength to his argument.

Three times do we learn in the NT that Paul quoted from heathen authors. The other two were in 1 Cor. 15:33 and Acts 17:28. The first reads as follows: "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners." The NIV renders it this way: "Do not be misled: 'Bad company corrupts good character.'" So the latter part of the verse was the quotation. The one in Acts 17:28 said this:

For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said,
For we are also his offspring.

Again, the latter part of the verse is the quotation. These quotations obviously mean that God has given a limited understanding of the truth even to men who did not know Him, just as He does today, which makes such sources very valuable. Note in each connection, Paul did not begin with the quotations, but he used the quotations in support of what he was saying.

How did Epimenedes describe his people? He said three things about them:

- 1) "The Cretians are always liars."
- 2) "The Cretians are always...evil beasts."
- 3) "The Cretians are always...slow bellies."

This would mean that:

- 1) They would have no preference for the truth, no special interest in something because it was the truth.
- 2) To quote William Hendriksen, "evil beasts" "describes the savage and cruel character of the Cretans of the days of Epimenedes and of the days of Paul and Titus. They would push everyone out of the way in order to gain an advantage for themselves" (p. 353). Hendriksen also referred to a Cretan mythological character who was half man and half bull who ate Athenian young men and women each nine years who were sent as offerings to him. So the violence of the Cretans would not make reaching them with the Gospel an easy task.

"Slow bellies" meant two things: they were lazy, and they were gluttons. They wanted all of the necessities, and even the comforts, of life without having to work for them.

From these statements we can see that the people would not have been alarmed by the methods and objectives of the false teachers. It was a way of life that they were familiar with.

1:13 Paul agreed with their "prophet." A people's nature and culture are not changed generation after generation. What the Cretans had been hundreds of years before Paul and Titus went there, they still were. So what was Titus to do in ministering to the church?

First, "rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith." To rebuke them meant that he was to call attention to their fault, to reprimand them for the way they had been, and were still inclined to be, all with the objective of getting them to change. In order to change they would have to depend upon the Lord to change them. But we see here that Paul believed that in spite of what a person might be by nature, God was able to change him into the kind of a person he wanted him to be. There are no impossible cases with God! "Sharply" means severely so that everyone would get the point. The greater the problem, and the more deeply ingrained a matter might be, the stronger should be the methods that Titus would use.

But what was his objective? It was "that they may be sound in the faith." See verse 9. The believers were to be healthy doctrinally and in their day to day living. They could not do either without being brought back to the apostles' teaching, and to all of the Scriptures as they existed at that time. Paul and Titus both knew that it was through the Word of God that they not only would learn what they needed to know and to do, but that through the Word the Spirit of God would enable to them to believe the truth, and to "behave" the truth. But strong teaching, if it were done in love, could produce strong saints--and this is what was needed on the island of Crete.

But there was also the negative side which is stated in verse 14. Note in passing that Paul placed the positive first, and then came to the negative.

1:14 There were both Jews and Gentiles on the isle of Crete--many of both groups. An unbelieving Jew and an unbelieving Gentile are equally inclined to reject the truth and to accept error. The Jewish Cretans had influenced the Gentile Cretans to accept the wrong things, among them, "Jewish fables."

What is a fable? The Greek word for fable is the word from which we get our word myth. It is interesting that a myth usually has something to do with God, or gods. They are things that generally are not true, and yet are taught as true. "Jewish fables" would be stories about God and things which God had supposedly said which He had never said. And when our doctrine of God becomes confused, it is inevitable that our practical teaching would become the "commandments of men." It all might sound very moral and good, but the actual fact is that they are not true, and they are bad--bad especially when they keep people from coming to the truth, or turn them away from the truth. And that is exactly how Paul concluded this verse--"that turn from the truth." Those who taught the fables had turned from the truth, and those they taught did the same thing.

In Paul's second letter to Timothy he said this after exhorting Timothy to be faithful in preaching the Word:

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

This was going on in our Lord's day. Listen to what He said on one occasion:

7 Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,

8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.

9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men (Matt. 15:7-9).

Let me quote again from William Hendricksen:

The Cretan deceivers...busied themselves with Talmudic anecdotes and hair-splitting for which the claim was made that they were derived from the law. The injunctions which they praised and tried to force upon others were actually the commands of "men who turn their backs upon the truth." By these men *the Jews* are meant, particularly Jewish rabbis and scribes. The situation, then, was as follows:

The steadfast believers in the island of Crete mingled daily with other church-members who were not so steadfast but were willing to lend an ear to loud-mouthed Judaistic deceivers, tinged with gnosticism. These false teachers, in turn, were under the influence of men who stood entirely outside the church, namely, Jews, Pharisaic propagandists, who completely rejected Christ, turning their backs upon God's redemptive truth as revealed in his Son (p. 355).

After reading these verses we can see what a difficult job Titus had before him, and why he needed to be supported by an epistle written by the Apostle Paul.

1:15 Titus would find a sharp division between people as he went to them with the Word of God. And it all had to do with the word "pure." There are people who are "pure" and who are interested in becoming increasingly "pure." But there are others who are not "pure," and to them, "nothing is pure." What did Paul mean by "pure"?

To be "pure" is to be clean, and to be clean is to be holy, and to be holy is to be like God. This is the sense in which Paul would speak of those who are "pure." But he certainly was not saying that everything in life was "pure." Instead, it seems that he was saying that when a person knows the Lord, there is a sacredness about all of life. In our work, in our relationships, in every detail of our lives, we look for what is pleasing to the Lord, and for ways in which we can glorify Him. And if there are ways in which we cannot glorify Him, we stay away from them. But we have a completely different purpose in life from those who do not know the Lord.

On the other hand, "to them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure." There is nothing clean and holy and sacred to the unbeliever. They have no hesitation about using the name of the Lord blasphemously because there is no fear of God in their hearts. They can joke about the most sacred things, and ridicule that

which is holy and good in the sight of God. On the other hand, they sanction that which is abominable in the sight of God. Whatever they want to do, they do, regardless of what it is. And all of this is because their "mind and conscience is defiled." People violate their conscience to the point that they have no conscience. They can do that which is evil, and go to bed and sleep like a baby. They are "defiled" by their sins, stained with a stain which only the blood of Christ can cleanse. And they do not believe. They have no real faith in God nor in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Cf. 1 Tim. 4:1-11.

1:16 Paul continues here to speak of those who are "defiled and unbelieving" (v. 15).

"They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him." There have always been those who profess, but do not possess. Do you remember what the Lord said about this?

15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matt 7:15-23).

And the Lord followed this with the parable of the man who built his house on a rock, and then the man who built his house on the sand. What a warning this should be to everyone who professes to know the Lord! We need to know what the evidences of salvation are, and to make sure that they are descriptive of us. Nothing can be worse than to "deny" God. They reject Him and the salvation that he offers to sinners through Christ.

And why is all of this the case? Because they are, and continue to be ("being") three things:

1) "Abominable."

2) "Disobedient."

3) "Unto every good work reprobate."

Geoffrey Wilson explain it this way:

Such men are 'abominable' or detestable in the sight of God, because they are 'disobedient' in their resolve to cling to the traditions of men rather than yield to the truth of the Gospel, and are therefore disqualified from doing anything good (p. 107).

To quote Hendricksen again, "They *do* what they do because of what they *are* in their inner nature" (p. 357). The works of the Law never saved a soul from death, nor has the Law every made a believer saintly. Only Christ can save, apart from any works of our own, and only Christ can make us holy and present us completely acceptable to God. Again, let us make sure that our hope of salvation is in Christ, and in Him alone.

The Epistle of the Apostle Paul to Titus

Titus 2:1-10

October 23, 1995

IV. The spiritual standards for various groups in the church--including Titus himself (Titus 2:1-10).

Up to this point we have seen that Paul was concerned about two matters:

- 1) The need for godly leaders in the churches of Crete. He had left Titus there to take care of this important matter.
- 2) The presence and actions of false teachers among the believers in Crete. They were already causing a great deal of damage in Crete, sometimes pulling whole families away. And not only was their teaching corrupt, but the false teachers were corrupt in their lives. Only the truth can produce godly people; error always has a defiling effect upon people's lives. Paul insisted that their mouths might be stopped (1:11), and that could only be done by causing the truth to be known so well that the people themselves would be able to detect the difference between the truth and error.

And so Paul laid out the pattern which Titus was to follow in his teaching.

2:1 "The things which become sound doctrine" are the things that are consistent with sound doctrine.

Illus: It is like you were looking at a balance scale with two containers or pans on each side of equal weight.

It used to be that if you wanted a pound of sugar, the proprietor of the store would put a one pound weight on one side of the scale, and then weigh out enough sugar so that the weight and the sugar would balance each other equally. Solomon had much to say about false balances. Sometimes dishonest people would have a weight which they claimed weighed a pound, but it might have weighed only half a pound. But the purchaser would go away thinking that he had a pound of whatever he was buying, but actually he only had half a pound. This is what Solomon said: "A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight" (Prov. 11:1).

It is good to apply this verse to teaching. People may think that they are getting the truth when in fact they are getting error. If the truth is sound, it will balance off perfectly with godly character and godly living. But if the teaching is erroneous, there can never be a perfect balance with a practical application. Sound, healthy teaching produces sound, healthy living. False teaching produces diseased living. And this applies to any degree of false teaching. One reason we have seen instances of people who have failed in their living is because of some problem in what they believe. The two always go together. Paul was exhorting Titus to teach the truth, and then to make the practical application consistent with good, healthy, Biblical doctrine. The first step in seeing the people of God become saintly in their living is to make sure that they are getting the truth of the Word of God. And then it must be followed by the sound application of the truth.

It is impossible to overemphasize the importance of correct doctrine. It is true, as Paul said, that "the letter killeth" (2 Cor. 3:6), but he was speaking about the Law without the Spirit. Teachers can be so heavy on doctrine that they forget the need for the Holy Spirit to bless the truth in people's lives. That is true. Or they may be so heavy on the truth that they do not really pay any attention to the application of the truth. But these failures do not deny the importance of "sound doctrine. It is impossible for people to be godly and to live godly lives unless they are firmly established in the truth. No one knows all of the truth, but however far each one of us has gone in our understanding of the truth, it must be "sound."

2:2 Paul began with "the aged men."

The word that he used for the men to whom he was referring has the same root as the word "elders" in verse 5.

It does not mean just “the senior citizens” (although it includes them), but it means any older man. This is the word that Paul used for himself in writing to Philemon. See Ph. 9. The older men in any congregation were “to set the pace,” were to be examples, for the younger men. Paul here mentioned six characteristics which were to be cultivated by every older man, and these qualities were to be seen in their lives.

1) “Sober” -- This word can mean that they were not to be given to much wine, but it also can include excesses in any one of their lives. Drinking must have been quite a serious problem even in those days for Paul to have said so much about it. Wine was used in place of water. It was used also as medicine. And some obviously became addicted to wine. This was what Paul was condemning in the older men. But this word comes from a verb which means “to be calm and collected in spirit” (Thayer on *νήφω*, p. 425). He must be a man who is constantly on his guard against anything that could be a threat to his walk with the Lord, any way in which he could become a victim of spiritual dangers. (See Thayer, p. 9, under *ἀγρυπνέω*.)

2) “Grave” -- He needs to be serious and respectable (Hendriksen, p. 363). Thayer says that he needs to be “venerated” [respected and honored] for his character (p. 573). He is to be a man of dignity whom people respect. And implied in this word (*σεμνός*) is the idea that those who know such a man will desire to be like him.

3) “Temperate” -- The older men need to be sensible, self-controlled, disciplined, and they are never to act contrary to these characteristics.

4) “Sound in faith” -- Lit., this is sound in the faith. He is one who is free from any false doctrine, and one who keeps himself doctrinally sound and strong (Thayer, p. 634). Eph. 4:14, 15 describe him:

14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.

5) “Sound...in charity” -- The word “sound” goes with this and the following word. He must be a person who is loving in character. The emphasis here is probably toward the people of God, but not exclusively. But this kind of a person is inclined to be understanding and sympathetic toward others, but not to the point where he would compromise with what is wrong. But he is more interested in building up than in criticizing, or tearing down.

6) “Sound...in patience” -- Here we see what the older men were to be when faced with their own trials and testings. They persevere. They continue to be in times of trial what they are when things are going well. They remember that God is in control, that God has purposes for their trials, and they peacefully submit to Him.

These are very high standards, and would be the marks of spiritual maturity.

2:3 Next Paul turned his attention to the older ladies. And in verses 4 and 5 we see that they had a big responsibility toward the younger women in the church.

1) In their “behaviour” they were to be holy. The expression, “as becometh holiness,” is the translation of a single Greek word. This obviously would cause those who know such a person to desire to be reverential in life and worshipful toward God. And this is important if the older women were to minister to the younger women. Older people have the responsibility not only of teaching the younger ones the truth, but of living before them so that the younger ones will want to be like them.

2) “Not false accusers” -- The older women were not to slander others. Interestingly, this word is the same word that is a name for the Devil. A gossip is serving the Devil’s purpose. He is the accuser of the brethren. If the older women saw something in a younger woman’s life that was not right, she was not to talk *about* that person, but *to* that person, *or at least to pray for them*. Solomon had a good word for all of us here:

A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter (Prov. 11:13).

3) “Not given to much wine” -- She was to use wine properly, but never excessively. People today become addicted to prescription drugs which would fall into the same category as being “given to much wine” in Bible times. Prescription drugs can be beneficial if used as they were intended to be used, but when used excessively, they can ruin lives -- as wine can.

4) “Teachers of good things” -- The idea of “good” in Scripture usually carries with it that which is like God, or that which is pleasing to God, or both. An older woman of God seeks to be pleasing to the Lord in her own life, and that is what she teaches to others, particularly the younger women, in word and her own behavior. Paul was thinking about women teaching in church when he wrote 1 Tim. 2:12, but it generally follows that women teach women on a personal basis, and that men teach men. This is what Paul wrote to Timothy:

But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence (1 Tim. 2:12).

2:4 Here are some of the “good things” that the older women are to teach the younger women. Paul could have addressed the younger women, telling them what they needed to be and do, but he placed this special responsibility on the older ladies.

What were they to teach the young women?

1) “To be sober” -- It seems to be generally agreed among students of the Greek text that the proper translation here is: *Then they can teach the younger women to love their husbands*, etc.

2) “To love their husbands” -- Lit., a husband-lover.

3) “To love their children” -- Lit., children-lovers. These two terms mean that a young woman’s husband and her children must occupy the first place in her life among all of the people she has anything to do with. She leaves her father and mother, and cleaves to her husband. She delights in adapting her life to that of her husband. She takes special pleasure in being submissive to him. And she is not going to do anything that would jeopardize the welfare of her children. So Paul was thinking here of young married women, and also of preparing single women for marriage. It is important for us to note that while women have a natural inclination to be a good wives and good mothers, they need to be taught what God wants them to be in these roles. It is very different from what the people of the world think about marriage and the family.

2:5 The list continues here.

4) “To be discreet” -- This is the same word as “temperate” which we had in verse 2 when Paul was writing about the men. The older ladies are to teach the younger ladies to be sensible, to curb their desires and impulses (Thayer, p. 613). They were to be self-controlled, restraining themselves because they knew it was right and because they wanted to be satisfied and not always desiring something more or something better. The older ladies would teach them that it is God who works in them to will and to do of His good pleasure. Cf. Phil. 2:12, 13.

5) “To be...chaste” -- They are to be pure, clean, modest, innocent of anything that might even be construed as

a violation of the marriage bond. They need to be taught this.

6) “Keepers at home” -- She works at home. She takes care of the home. But Strong suggests also that a *housekeeper* is one who guards the home. It is not just preparing meals, doing dishes, washing clothes, ironing and vacuuming, and taking care of children, but it means guarding the home from ungodly influences which can turn her family from following the Lord and doing His will. A wife has an awesome place of responsibilities, and only the Lord can give her the grace to fulfill the place that He has given her.

7) “Good” -- This speaks of what she is to be within herself, God-like, striving always to be pleasing to God. She is an example both to her husband and to her children. She strives to be by the grace of God what she wants them to be.

8) “Obedient to their own husbands” -- This is where we need to read the first six verses of 1 Peter 3:

1 Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

2 While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.

3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

The NASB translates the last part of verse 6, “if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.” And then Paul added, “that the word of God be not blasphemed.” William Hendriksen had this to say about Paul’s words here at the end of verse 5. He obviously applied this conclusion to all that the older women were to teach the younger women. Listen to his words:

Wrong conduct on the part of the young married women would easily lead to slanderous remarks with respect to the gospel. Not only do *the Greeks* judge a doctrine by its practical effect upon everyday life (Chrysostom), but so does the world in general. If young mothers, professing to be Christians, should manifest lack of love for their husbands and for their children, lack of self-control, of purity, domesticity, kindness, and submissiveness, they would cause the message of salvation to be evil spoken of by outsiders. It must be borne in mind, moreover, that when Paul says “in order that the word of God *may not be reviled*,” he means, “in order that the word of God *may be honored*” (*Thessalonians, Timothy, and Titus*, p. 366).

Older ladies and young ladies have a very important place in the life of the church as well as in their homes.

At this point Paul turned his attention to the “young men” and to Titus himself.

2:6 While Paul had only one thing to say to the young men, yet what he said to Timothy in verses 7 and 8 would also apply to the young men since it was Timothy’s responsibility to be an example in particular to the young men, and so what he was to be, they were to be, too.

“To be sober minded” -- Some grammarians feel that the first three words of verse 7 belong with verse 6 so the verse would read, “Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded in all things.” But whether we put it with verse 6 or verse 7, the exhortation would apply to every detail of a young man’s life.

If there is one word which has dominated Paul’s words to Timothy about all groups of people in the church it is

the Greek word and its cognates, σωφρονέω. We had it in verse 2 where it is translated, “temperate.” We had it in verse where it is translated, “discreet.” And we have it again here in verse 6 where it is translated, “sober minded.” It means to be of a sound mind, to be reasonable, serious, to keep one’s head. In the case of the young women it meant to be virtuous and chaste. Titus was to encourage, to advise, to urge young men in this direction. This also speaks of being self-controlled, and curbing our desires so that they do not control our lives. How thankful we can be that Paul could tell Timothy in 2 Tim. 1:7,

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, **and of a sound mind**” -
- the same word.

The world encourages us to satisfy our desire for all things -- material possessions, pleasures, sexual desires, ambitions. The Lord encourages us in His Word to be satisfied with His provision for us, and to seek above all else, not what we desire, but what He desires for us.

2:7 This is addressed to Titus because of the important place he had among the churches in Crete, but it applied equally to other young men as well since he was to be their “pattern,” or lit. their type.

“Shewing thyself” -- The verb is παρέχω. It does not mean that Titus set himself up as an example of the way young men should live, as though it were a matter of pride, but that humbly walking with the Lord he would conduct himself so that other young men would be safe in following him, and that he would never be one to cause any of them to stumble, or to turn away from the Lord.

“Good works” are not to be taken as applying only to what we might call Christian service, but “good works” had to do with the way Titus lived. It included what he did, what he said, where he went, and even what he thought (because our thoughts have such a powerful effect upon what we do).

Specifically Paul mention four things:

1) “In doctrine shewing uncorruptness” -- This, too, was a special point that Paul made more than once in this section. Titus’ teaching was to be pure doctrine. He must not deviate in any way from the revealed Word of God. This would call for Titus to be carefully searching the Scriptures continually to make sure that he was teaching nothing but the true Word of God.

2) But he must also show “gravity.” We had this in verse 2 with regard to the older men. They were to be “grave.” There was to be a seriousness about their lives, a heavenly character, that would not repel others, but would make them want to be like Titus was. This was a God-like, Christ-like character, which could be seen by all. It is a rare thing to see this in young men, but it is the will of God for young and old alike. This is what Peter was talking about in 1 Pet. 3:15.

3) “Sincerity” -- This word does not appear in all of the MSS, but it is in the Received Text. It means that Titus must give evidence in his life that he was real! This meant that he was to avoid anything that even appeared to be hypocrisy. He was to be a young man who really believed what he taught, and who really practiced what he preached.

2:8 Here we have a final point for Titus:

4) “Sound speech” -- True doctrine was considered by Paul to be healthy teaching; false doctrine was sick! Paul was clearly referring to the teaching that Titus would do. People would disagree with him (as Paul went on to say), but they must never be able to accuse him rightly of turning aside from the Word of God. Those who oppose the Gospel are always looking for faults in our lives or faults in our teaching, and will often bring accusations against us of things they assume to be wrong. But Titus was to live in such a way, and to serve the Lord in such a way, that his enemies would be the ones who would be ashamed, not he!

Two passages from 1 Peter support what Paul was telling Titus:

1) 1 Pet. 2:11, 12:

11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

2) The second follows in the same chapter -- 1 Pet. 2:15:

For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:

What a tragedy it is that we have not paid more attention to Paul's writings in the Pastoral Epistles! We overlook the solemn truth of Scripture that what we are is inseparably joined with what we preach. As Matthew Henry said, if we try to separate them, then we pull down with one hand what we seek to build up with another. No child of God can be perfect, but that should be our goal because our purpose in life is not just to win arguments with those who disagree with us, but it is to build up our fellow-believers in Christ, and to win to Christ those who do not know Him. And the work calls upon us to be what God wants us to be personally, in our homes, and as we seek to tell others the unchanging Gospel message.

October 30, 1995

Last on Paul's list were the "servants." We see what he had to say to them in verses 9, 10.

2:9 First, let me point out the passages in Paul's epistles in which he instructed servants in a way very similar to what we have here. It was just as important for believing servants to please the Lord as for anyone else. The churches were the one place where masters and servants had contact with each other in such a unique way as they did in the church.

These are the words which we find in Ephesians 6:

5 Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free (Eph. 6:5-8).

In Colossians 3 this is what Paul wrote to the servants:

22 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:

23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons (Col. 3:22-25).

In 1 Timothy 6 we have these words which you may remember:

1 Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.

2 And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren;

but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort (1 Tim. 6:1-2).

We can add to Paul's words what Peter said to servants:

18 Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully (1 Pet. 2:18-19).

So it is clear that servants needed instruction as to their duties as Christians, and their responsibilities were the same whether their masters were believers, or not.

Slaves had a very difficult time in the Roman Empire. Many of them scarcely had the existence of an animal; others, particularly slaves of believers, were treated as people ought to be treated regardless of their station in life. But because servants were mistreated and often punished cruelly, they retaliated against their masters in ways which were not becoming for those who had believed in Christ. Servants were usually thieves if they thought they could get away with it (and they often did). They were not known for their obedience unless they were forced in some way to do what their masters told them to do. They were known liars. And yet the apostles never encouraged slaves to revolt. Instead, they exhorted them to be the best slaves they could possibly be, seeking to glorify God and trusting God to help them in difficult situations. Slaves were just as dependent upon the enabling grace of God as anyone else in the church. It is especially interesting that it is to the slaves that Paul said, as he did at the end of verse 10, that they should seek to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." Charles Erdman, who taught for many years at Princeton Seminary when Princeton was sound in the faith, had this to say about slaves in the Roman Empire:

That slaves, in the age of Augustus, might be an ornament to a system of divine truth, must have been a startling statement, but it was the very glory of the gospel that it could transform such degraded beings into obedient, honest, chaste, sober men and women. It was possible for slaves so to live that they would reflect honor upon "the doctrine of God" who provided so wonderful a salvation.

It was to the gospel, indeed, that such transformations of life and character were to be attributed; it was also upon its truths that such moral instructions were founded. Truth is in order to goodness, but goodness is not independent of truth; creed affects character, but character cannot be produced without belief; doctrine is not more important than conduct, but conduct is conditioned on faith. It is for this reason that Paul bases all of the exhortations of the chapter upon a summary of gospel truth which for beauty and depth and significance is possibly unsurpassed (The Pastoral Epistles of Paul, pp. 149, 150).

There are changes in everyone's life when he or she is saved, but the contrast in the lives of slaves was the most remarkable of all. And it forever brands as a lie the idea that some people are so far down that they can never be raised up. The truth that a person in Christ is a new creature applied just as much to slaves as it did anyone else, and the changes in their lives were all the more remarkable because of the depths from which they were raised up. Onesimus, the bondservant of Philemon, was a good example. Before he was worthless and useless; after he was saved he became a most useful servant.

But what did Paul tell Titus to tell the servants that they must do?

First and foremost, they were to be obedient to their masters, and to seek to please them well in all things. No duty was exempted from this exhortation. Instead of trying to get by with as little as they could, they were, if possible, to do even more than was required of them, and to do the duties in the best possible way. Doubtless many masters had the surprise of their lives after they had a slave, or slaves, who had trusted in Christ.

Second, they were not to talk back. We saw in Colossians a moment ago that servants were to serve their masters remembering that in reality they were serving the Lord, and that the Lord was going to reward them for faithful service. Many slaves were outspoken in their unhappiness with their lives, but that needed to change after they had come to the Savior.

2:10 “Not purloining” -- This word speaks of setting things apart for yourself. In plain English it means to steal. This was a way of life for slaves who were generally deprived of even the necessities of life.

Many were put to death because of their pilfering. Listen to these words from the Apostle Paul to the Ephesian believers:

Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth (Eph. 4:28).

This was not written especially for slaves, but every slave would have known that these words applied to him (or her).

“Shewing all good fidelity” -- A servant was not only to refrain from taking things away from his master, but he was to seek to improve his master’s resources. Our Lord used parables to illustrate this point. Listen as I read to you Matt. 25:14-30.

Matthew Henry had this to say about a servant “shewing all good fidelity”:

He that increased not his master’s talent is accused of unfaithfulness, though he had not embezzled nor lost it. Faithfulness in a servant lies in the ready, punctual, and thorough execution of his master’s orders; keeping his secrets and counsels, despatching his affairs, and managing with frugality, and to as much just advantage for his master as he is able; looking well to his trusts, and preventing, as far as he can, all spoil, or loss, or damage (Vol. VI, p. 865).

A servant who lived by these exhortations of the Apostle Paul would “adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.” To adorn the doctrine of God is to decorate it, to make it attractive to those who may have scorned it before. A master like Philemon, although he was a believer, would have had added reasons for being thankful for the Gospel when he saw the change that the Lord had made in Onesimus through the Gospel. This is what the Apostle Peter had in mind when he wrote 1 Pet. 3:15, 16

15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

16 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

When people start to ask us about our faith, it is evident that God has used us to adorn the Gospel. How this is needed today! People won’t come to our churches to hear the Gospel. And they won’t read the Bible so they can see the Gospel there. And they don’t want us to talk to them about our Lord. But the testimony of a transformed life is a witness that people can see, and, by God’s grace, will become interested in knowing why we are not like others, and how the change has been made in our lives.

Now following this Paul gave Titus and the Cretans and us what Charles Erdman called “a summary of gospel truth which for beauty and depth and significance is possibly unsurpassed” (*Ibid.*). And the connection between the two section is introduced by the word, “For.” It would be impossible for anyone in this list, from the beginning of the chapter to verse 10 to live as Paul was instructing them to live, if it were not for the Gospel, if it were not for the Lord Jesus Christ. While none of us is what we should be, yet everything about us that is pleasing to God and a blessing to others is only there because of the Gospel of Christ. And our only hope of every achieving perfection in the future, is founded upon our Lord and the Gospel.

Before we leave this section let me point out that the closest application we have today to these words of Paul in verses 9 and 10, is in the working class of our country. How different things would be if employers and

employees were guided by the Word of God. Of course, that is impossible until people are transformed by the Gospel of the grace of God. Servants in Paul's day, more often than not, had to live with and work under unregenerate masters. And many masters had to deal with unregenerate servants. So they had the same problem that we do. But often the key to a difficult situation is discovered when the one with the least authority seeks to do his work the way Paul instructed the servants to do their work. Every believer is a servant of the Lord, and we need to do our work the way the Lord wants us to do it, and to do it to bring glory to Him and to the Gospel message. If we were all more careful about the way we live, the church would undoubtedly have a greater influence in the world.

The Epistle of the Apostle Paul to Titus

Titus 2:11-15

October 30, 1995

V. Godliness the object of the grace of God in salvation (Titus 2:11-15).

After exhorting each of the groups mentioned in the first ten verses of this chapter, the Apostle Paul went on to explain how such godly character and godly living are possible. It is only through the Gospel! The Gospel not only provides us with salvation from the penalty of our sins, but it also provides us with deliverance from the dominion and power of our sins. Therefore, the roots of godliness are in the Gospel itself. It is all traceable directly to the grace of God. We are saved by grace, and we are to live by grace--the grace of God Himself. God has made provision for everything necessary for our ultimate glorification in the Gospel of His Son.

But there is another factor that we need to recognize in coming to this passage. Paul's primary purpose in the Pastoral Epistles is practical, not doctrinal. Timothy and Titus had both been well instructed in the Gospel, and they believed the Gospel. They were committed to teaching the Gospel. But here we come to a passage that is definitely doctrinal although it has some practical features to it. It is brought in here not only to show that holiness is the fruit of the Gospel, but also to stress with Titus the great importance of keeping before the people that they were saved to be holy. The grand object of ministering to the people of God is to see that they not only see the importance of a holy life, but also to make sure that each one was making progress in a life of holiness. In this case with the believers in Crete, Titus was to keep this before the people.

2:11 God's purpose in saving us was not just to save us from hell, nor just to get us to heaven (although He has done both of these). But His purpose in salvation is to make us holy, and eventually that we should be "conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:29).

This grace which brings salvation has "appeared to all men." When Paul said that it has "appeared," he meant that it has been made clearly known. This is very clear in Scripture. Paul used this same word "appeared" again in 3:4. (Read.) That which had been revealed throughout Scripture little by little, has now been completely revealed. And it has been revealed "to all men," not to all men without exception, but to all kinds of men, meaning all kinds of people. In the context of this chapter it would mean to older men and older ladies, to young men and young ladies, to servants (and to masters). Masters are not mentioned here probably because they would have been included with the older men and younger men. It clearly is not God's intention to save everyone, or everyone would be saved. But it is His intention to save people from all classes, and from all nations. The Gospel is for males and females, rich and poor, wise and foolish, slaves and masters, Jews and Gentiles--whatever distinction we want to make. It is for every nation on the face of the earth. There is only one Gospel for all, and only one Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no question about any of this. It is the clear, unmistakable teaching of Scripture.

And we need to remember always that salvation is experienced only by "the grace of God." Human merit is not a factor at all. We are all unworthy, and we are incapable of doing what would need to be done to earn it. In fact, we are under the judgment of God from birth, and no amount of good works can ever atone for even a single sin. So we are dependent upon the grace of God. It brings salvation to us. We don't go after God, but He seeks us and brings us to Himself. Paul has, by the Holy Spirit, packed a great deal of truth into just a few words.

And let us remember that "grace" not only means the unmerited favor of God, but it also means the power of God which enables us to become what He wants us to be: a holy people! And the reason our final glorification is absolutely certain is because it is guaranteed by the grace of God.

Titus, of course, believed this. He and the Apostle Paul had talked about the Gospel many times. But the mention of the Gospel was a reminder to him that, although his ministry was to lead the people of God into lives of increasing holiness, the power for such a ministry was not in Titus any more than it was in Paul. It was in the grace of God. All of the instructions which Paul had given to Titus would have been meaningless if the people he had mentioned were to make themselves holy. But since it was all by the grace of God it was within reach of the weakest child of God.

October 31, 1995

2:12 The subject of the verb “teacheth” is “the grace of God” in verse 11. “Grace” in this case means nothing when separated from “God,” and so we need to realize that it is God in His grace, or the God of all grace” Who teaches us. God does the teaching! He is the One Who directs and supervises everything that has to do with our spiritual growth, our maturity in Christ, our progress in holiness. He saves us through Christ, and then He teaches us. And this teaching continues on throughout our lives. We are always learning more and more about what it means to be holy. He teaches us through His Word. He teaches us in ordering our very steps. God’s providential dealings with us are all with a view to teaching. The Christian life is entirely different from anything that we have known before, and, in a sense, we need to learn to live all over again. The Christian who follows the world in what it does, or who brings into the church that which is successful in the world, hoping that it will be successful in the church as well (music, entertainment, etc.), is a Christian who is not paying attention to what God is teaching him, or her. Of course, there are many who profess to be Christians who have never been saved, and so they don’t know anything else, and can’t learn anything else. But for those who know the Lord, the Lord teaches them, and if He does not have our attention, and if we are not responding to what He would teach us, the Lord has ways of getting our attention. And what He does in those circumstances is never easy to experience. Abraham in Egypt, Moses in Midian, and Jonah in the whale, are all illustrations of God pursuing His people to teach them what He wanted them to know. You and I could add our experiences to the list.

November 6, 1995

The word which Paul used for “teaching” is a present participle of the verb, παιδεύω. Thayer, in his Greek lexicon say that this includes “*the whole training and education of children* (which relates to the cultivation of mind and morals, and employs for this purpose now commands and admonitions, now reproof and punishment (p. 473 under παιδεία). By His teaching God seeks to correct what is wrong in our lives, on the one hand, and to establish in our lives those truths and actions which will be of spiritual benefit to us. In Paul’s day (and it should be in our day) this was the primary responsibility of the father -- and the mother was to assist the father and support him in all of the child training which he did. We see this even in OT times. Solomon had this to say about the teaching of children by fathers and mothers:

20 My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother:

21 Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck.

22 When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee (Prov. 6:20-22).

Of course, it is understood in Proverbs that the fathers and mothers were teaching the truth of God. But the parallel with the family of God is important to understand. God, our heavenly Father, is our Teacher. He supervises our spiritual training. He uses the Holy Spirit as our main Teacher. We are taught as we read the Word. We are taught as godly teachers teach us. And, as I have said, we never graduate from our heavenly Father’s training. It continues on until we get to heaven.

What does the grace of God teach us?

It teaches us, according to verses 12 and 13, that “denying...we should live...looking...” Here we see what our responsibility is in the life of holiness.

“Denying” means rejecting. I like the way the NIV renders this. It translates it this way: “It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions...” There is definitely a negative emphasis in pursuing holiness, as well as a positive emphasis. We have both in this verse.

If we want to know what “ungodliness” is, all we have to do is to look around us every day. To “deny ungodliness” is to reject the way that the people of the world live with respect to God. He is not in all their thoughts. See Psa. 10:4. If at times they may think of God, they have no desire to please Him. If they did desire it, they would not know how to do it. They have no hesitation in taking His Name in vain. They have no hesitation in doing things that grieve God, things that are sinful in God’s sight. They will abort their children thinking that it is a matter of personal choice. They will live in a homosexual relationship in spite of the fact that the God in His Word condemns it and punishes it with the consequences He has place upon such a sin. But ungodliness is not limited to such gross sins. It is any lack of showing reverence for the Three Members of the Godhead. Ungodly living is really God-less living. It is a perversion of the way that the Lord intended for His human creatures to live. It is “the grace of God” that teaches us that our greatest priority is to please God, to do His will, to love and worship Him, and to glorify His Name. If we want to know what a truly godly life is, we need only to read through the Gospels and observe the way our Lord Jesus Christ lived. He always did the things that pleased the Father. Cf. John 8:29.

William Hendriksen had this to say about “ungodliness”:

Study the vivid description of “ungodliness” in Rom. 1:18-32 (note the very word in Rom. 1:18; cf. 11:26). Such ungodliness is *idolatry* plus *immorality*, both terms taken in their most comprehensive meaning. When grace takes over, the sinner repudiates ungodliness. This repudiation is a definite act, a decision to give up that which is displeasing to God (p.371).

What about “worldly lusts”?

Cf. what the Apostle John said in 1 John 2:15-17.

Cf. also what the Apostle Paul said in Rom. 12:1, 2.

To quote from William Hendriksen again,

According to scriptural usage, such worldly or sinful desires include the following: inordinate sexual desire, the liquor-mania, excessive yearning for material possessions (hence, quarrelsomeness, vanity, the lust to dominate), etc. Briefly, it refers to inordinate longing for pleasure, power, and possessions (pp. 371, 372).

“Lusts” are desires. They do not have to be bad in themselves, but the word is used most often in Scripture to refer to that which is bad and sinful before God. The Apostle Peter gives us this excellent word of counsel:

Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul (1 Pet. 2:11).

But returning to our text we see that the life of a believer is not just a life where we do not do certain things, but there are things that we need to do: But “we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” [age].

We ought to be well acquainted by now with the word, “soberly.” We had it in its various forms in 1:8; 2:2, 4, 5, 6, and now here in v. 12. It has to do with self-control, having a sound mind, that is, thinking clearly about things in life. A person who is “sober” will not follow the crowd; he or she will use self-restraint in order to do what is pleasing to the Lord.

“Righteously” -- All of these words go together. In order for anything to be righteous it has to measure up to

the divine standard. That which is righteous is acceptable to God.

“Godly” -- This is to act in accordance with that which gives God the preeminent place in our lives. It is possible to do what is righteous without being godly. This would mean that we do what we know is the will of God, but we have not set the Lord before us. We are to do what is righteous, not just because it is the best thing, or best for us, but that is what is pleasing to the Lord.

“In this present world,” or age -- This is the scene where such living is to take place. What the grace of God teaches us is that it is possible to live such lives even in a world like we live in, in this present time, even though everything in the world is moving in the opposite direction. This is because the grace of God not only teaches us, but the grace of God strengthens us, enabling us to live to please God in the midst of people who are not at all interested in what we are interested in doing.

And so we can never excuse ourselves on the basis of our circumstances. As the hymn tells us, this world is not a friend to grace. But we can be more than conquerors through Him that loved us, and Who continues to love us. Ours is the victory through the Lord Jesus Christ. And the Apostle John said,

For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4).

But this is not all that the Apostle Paul had to say about what the grace of God teaches us.

2:13 We are to be “looking for that blessed hope...”

Alfred Plummer, in the series of commentaries called, The Expositor's Bible, made this comment on verse 13: Most of us make far too little of this “blessed hope.” It is of incalculable value; first, as a test of our own sincerity and reality; and secondly, as a source of strength to carry us over the difficulties and disappointments which beset our daily course (pp. 260, 261).

And then he went on to say,

There is perhaps no more certain test of a Christian's earnestness than the question whether he does, or does not, look forward with hope and longing for Christ's return (Op. cit., p. 261).

“Looking for” means that we are looking forward expectantly, but with patience, to the fulfillment of the Lord's promise that He is coming again, coming to receive us unto Himself. It means that this should be our daily expectation. The grace of God teaches us this. We have no prospect that we are going to change the world. But we are to be strengthened and encouraged with the certain prospect of seeing the Lord.

Today we are closer to the time when the Lord will come than any generation of the Lord's people ever has been. And yet do we have to confess to our shame that day after day goes by without a thought given to this glorious truth. In my earlier days people talked more about the coming of the Lord than they do today. There was much more preaching on the coming of the Lord. Perhaps all of the different ideas about the coming of the Lord have robbed us of the daily expectation of His coming. Remember that any view of the Lord's return which does not let you believe that He could come today, is not true to Scripture. This hope was to spur Titus on to greater diligence in getting the work of the Lord done in Crete. He was to be preparing the people of God to live holy lives because the Lord was coming.

It is a “blessed hope” because it is a happy hope. The very thought of it gives us joy. If we look forward to seeing our loved ones here on earth, how great should be our joy in the prospect of seeing our Lord, and being with our Lord, and becoming like our Lord. His coming is going to be a “glorious appearing,” an appearing in glory, for all who know and love Him as their Savior. He will come for us, not as the lowly Nazarene, but as “the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

And so the grace of God not only teaches us what Christ has done for us (He has brought us salvation), nor what He is doing in our lives day by day (making us holy), but what He will do for us when He comes again. And every true child of God is learning about these truths, and they are truths which never fail to delight his, or her, soul.

In the 14th verse Paul turns again to speak of Christ, what he did for us on the Cross, why He did it, and what the result is to be in every one of our lives.

2:14 As “our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ,” He “gave Himself for our us.” Back in 1 Tim. 2:6 we learned that our Lord “gave himself a ransom for all.” In 1 Cor. 15:3 Paul said that the first point of the Gospel is that “Christ died for our sins.” In Gal. 1:4, 5 we have these words about our Lord Jesus Christ:

4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

5 To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

In Rom. 5:6 and 8 we have these great words:

6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

What do all of these verses tell us? They tell us that Christ died in our place, as our Substitute. Our text implies that He did it voluntarily, willingly -- which He did! And we can also see from these verses that what He did was enough. We don't need to add anything; no one else needs to add anything for us. The Lord did a perfect work which never needs to be repeated. He fulfilled the will of the Father, but it was also His will that He give Himself for us. What untold suffering is bound up in those words! How great was our need before God if only the Lord Jesus Christ could meet that need.

But what does the grace of God teach us about the death of Christ where He gave Himself for us? It teaches us that among the many things He was doing in His death, He died to “redeem us from all iniquity.” The word for “iniquity” used here is the word for lawlessness. He died for us to free us from all the ways we had violated the law of God. The price God required as a payment for our sins, and to see us free from its penalty as well as its power, was the death of His Son. He paid the price of our redemption, purchasing us for the Father.

But He also did another glorious thing. He was purifying us, cleansing us from sins's defilement in order that we might become His own precious possession, “zealous of good works.” He has changed us. Instead of spending our lives in lawlessness, we spend our lives doing that which is going to please God, and that which is going to bring Him glory in this present evil world.

Cf. Eph. 2:8-10. (Quote, and ask everyone else to join in.)

“Zealous” means that by the miracle of our salvation, we who once had no place for God in our lives, who had no desire at all to please Him, now have become eagerly desirous to live for the Lord and to do the work that He has saved us to do.

The grace of God teaches us all of this. Or let me state it another way: the God of grace teaches us all of these great truths. He writes them upon our hearts, and all of us, to differing degrees, to be sure, are to become living illustrations of the truth that Paul was presenting here. Looking back to the beginning of chapter 2, and even to the elders in chapter 1, this is what the grace of God teaches us, giving us hope that we can be what the Lord wants us to be.

Let me again quote from Alfred Plummer in The Expositor's Bible:

The passage before us might almost serve as a summary of St. Paul's teaching. In it he once

more insists upon the inseparable connection between creed and character, doctrine and life, and intimates the close relations between the past, the present, and the future, in the Christian scheme of salvation. There are certain facts in the past, which must be believed; and there is a kind of life in the present, which must be lived; and there are things in store for us in the future, which must be looked for. Thus the three great virtues of faith, charity, and hope are inculcated (p. 260).

What Paul has written in this passage is so amazing, and so important for every child of God to know and to experience, that Paul concluded with a final word of exhortation for Titus -- and for every servant of the Lord who would be faithful to the calling that he has to preach the Word. Let us see what Paul said.

2:15 “These things” -- having to do with the Gospel, and not anything else. Titus was to teach what Paul had taught him about a life of pursuing holiness in anticipation of the coming of the Lord. He was to “exhort,” that is, to keep reminding the Lord’s people about them, pressing their claims upon every life. And, where it was needed, where believers were slothful and forgetful of the purpose of their salvation, he was to rebuke and bring conviction. He was to let no man despise him.

The word “despise” lit. means to think beyond, or to think around. It means that he was not to let anyone ignore him, or to get around his ministry to substitute something else. This is what the false teachers would have the people do. But Titus was to be diligent in teaching the Word, and he must oppose anything else that might be proposed as a substitute for the Word of God.

The same exhortation is for us today. Some people are always looking for something new. They are not satisfied with the Word. They want to sidestep it, or go beyond it, or even ignore it. But whether a servant of the Lord be young or old, or somewhere in between, he is under a divine obligation to see that the truth of God, and nothing but the truth of God, is taught, and believed, and lived by himself and by all of the Lord’s people.

The Epistle of the Apostle Paul to Titus

Titus 3:1-11

November 13, 1995

VI. Believers and their relationship with the world (Titus 3:1-11).

With this chapter the Apostle Paul made a complete circle as far as the responsibilities of Christians are concerned. Chapters 1 and 2 both have to do with believers--leaders in the church and their qualifications, and groups within the church and the standards of their character and behavior. In this chapter Paul turned to the world. We are in the world, but as our Lord said to the Father in His high priestly prayer in John 17, "they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:14, 16). He also mentioned in verse 14 of that same chapter that believers are hated by the world, and that is primarily because we are not "of" them. We believe a lot of truths which the world does not believe. Our way of life is different. We are here, not to change the world, but to witness to the world in the hope that we will see many turn from the world to Christ. However, we have had, and still have, many Christian leaders who feel that it is our business to make the world what it ought to be. That is not the case. The Apostle Paul did not start a political movement to reform the evil of his day. Nor did our Lord before him seek to change Rome, or even the religious system of His day. Our responsibility is see to it that the Gospel is being preached throughout the world, and we need to keep in mind that our basic testimony to the world is in the lives we live. That is one reason it is good for people in the world to know us, to get acquainted with us, and to realize that we are different, and why! So this is a very important part of Paul's letter to Titus, and one which we need to pay attention to in these days.

The Cretans were in special need of these instructions because, as Charles Erdman said in his commentary, "the Cretans were "naturally turbulent and troublesome and insubordinate" (p. 152). And so they needed this teaching, and Titus needed to enforce his teaching as Paul had told him to do in the last verse of the preceding chapter which we have just finished. These are not mere suggestions which they could follow or not, however they might be inclined. These were divine commandments which were, and still are, binding upon every child of God. And we need it today as much as the Cretans needed it in the first century. For a long time we in the United States have been a lawless people, and the situation is getting worse daily. We resent having anyone tell us what to do. We think mainly in terms of our own rights, and consequently we are a nation that is torn apart with divisions. And it is so easy for Christians to go along with the spirit of the age in which we live, and to forget that we are just as responsible to live lives that are pleasing to God in the world as we are in the church. We have "professing Christians" doing ridiculous things these days, like blocking the entrances to abortion clinics, and, as a result, much dishonor has fallen upon the God we profess to serve. We know that if our government forces us to do things contrary to Scripture, then obedience to God comes first. But we need to be careful that we are not expanding that statement as an excuse for opposing anything in government that we don't like. If the Lord were forcing Christians to abort their babies, that would be one thing. But when abortion is legal, we can certainly speak out against it, but we cannot take the law into our own hands. Our leaders are accountable to God for the things that they legalize, and there is surely a day of reckoning coming for all who disregard the will of the Lord.

But let us get to the Word and see what the Apostle Paul told Titus about a believer's life in the world.

3:1 Paul said, first, that Titus was to remind the believers that they were to be subject to their leaders in government. We remind people of things which they know, so it is most likely that while Paul had been with them in Crete, he had taught them what their responsibility was toward Rome. Strong feels that their is in this verb, "Put them in mind," a suggestion that this be done quietly. This would suggest also that it be done graciously. Perhaps there had been some violations of what Paul had taught them previously. Titus was not to "get on them," but to point out how they had done wrong, and then encourage them to do the right thing.

Notice from this that a large part of an apostle's work, a large part of a pastor's work, is to act as a reminder.

Our problem so often is not that we do not know what we should do, but we know and have either forgotten, or else we get caught up in some kind of a cause and find ourselves being disobedient to the Lord.

Notice what Paul told Timothy in 1 Tim. 4:6. (Read.)

But What was it that Paul wanted Titus to tell the Cretans to do? See verse 1. (Read.)

Probably the best reading of this verse is what we have in the NKJV: "Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work." All of the more recent translations translate the verse this way. Instead of saying "to obey magistrates," the verb which Paul used simply stress the importance of obedience--which is doing what your governmental leaders want you to do. The two classes of leaders mentioned are "principalities and powers." Not many commentators try to define what Paul meant, but it seems to me that when he said "principalities" he meant those who had the greatest authority. In our government that would be the President, the Congress, and the Supreme Court.. In the state, the governor. In the city, the mayor. "Powers" would be those who serve under them under them --the President's cabinet, the lesser courts, the police, and so on. Believers are "to be subject" to them, i.e., to put themselves under the authority of their leaders, and to obey them. And this means that we must "be ready to every good work." The NIV translates this, "to be ready to do whatever is good." "Good" does not mean just what we like, but it means whatever is the will of the government under which we live and work. It means paying our taxes, observing speed laws and all other laws, and so on.

Now why is it that Paul placed such a strong emphasis on a believer's relationship to his government, especially since they were living under one of the most corrupt governments that ever existed? Please turn to Rom. 13 and we will have our answer.

(Read Rom. 13:1-7.)

Governments were established by God to rule and to protect and to guide the people under their authority. There never has been a perfect government. In fact, most of them have been corrupt. Our responsibility is not to correct the evils. In our country we have the vote, but a corrupt people (as all unregenerate people are) are going to prefer leaders who will do what they want their leaders to do. They are not even thinking about what is pleasing to God. We have an indication in the reports given to the kings of Israel as to what is required of kings and all who are in authority. Kings were judged solely on the basis of whether they did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, or that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord. Those who did what was right, were blessed; those who did evil, were judged. Governments who promote iniquity, who fail to give proper punishment to evildoers, and who fail to stand for that which is right in the eyes of the Lord, do themselves fall under the judgment of God.

But regardless of what kind of leaders we have, we are to be subject to them, and obey them. And why? Because "the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13:1). Therefore, if we resist and rebel against our leaders, we are resisting and rebelling against God. And if we do that, we will receive for ourselves "damnation," i.e., judgment. Christians are not excluded from living under the laws of the land, and if we disobey, we will have to take the punishment. If we exceed the speed limit, we will pay the fine.

Rulers themselves are responsible to God. And if they displease God in the way that they rule, they will have to face the consequences with God. There is not a governmental leader on the face of the earth, nor has there ever been, who is not himself, or herself, under the sovereign authority of the God of heaven and earth. Their hearts are in God's hand, as Solomon said so long ago and wrote it in Prov. 21:1,

The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

Titus 3:1 and Rom. 13 give us the will of God for each one of us concerning our government. And we need to be reminded of it frequently. See also 1 Pet. 2:13-17; 1 Tim. 2:1-7. See even what our Lord said about paying taxes in Matt. 22:15-22.

But let us go on.

3:2 This verse not only applies to leaders of government, but to people generally. We are not to be abusive of anyone. The word that Paul used here is the Greek word from which we get our English word blaspheme. It is to defame or revile a person. It is to scorn a person for what they are, or because of what they do. And it is not just speaking scornfully to the person we despise, but it is speaking abusively to others about him. Even when others may revile us, we are not to revile them in return. We are to be like our Lord, Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously (1 Pet. 2:23).

“To be no brawlers” -- This was one of the qualifications for an elder in 1 Tim. 3:3. And this gives further evidence that elders are to be examples to the Lord’s people. Nobody who names the name of Christ should be a fighter. James and John, the men who were by nature “sons of thunder,” were rebuked by the Lord when then wanted to call down fire from heaven on their enemies. Do you remember what the Lord said? Let me read the account to you found in Luke 9:51-56:

51 And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,

52 And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him.

53 And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

54 And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?

55 But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

56 For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.

Peter was acting as a brawler when he cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest. We can brawl with our fists, or with weapons, or with words, or even by our actions against someone.

We as believers are not to handle opposition nor to settle disputes the way the world does. Instead we need to let the Lord Jesus be our example Who never was a brawler.

So much for the negative; now for the positive.

“But be gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men” -- A gentle person will forego his own rights lest he commit a moral wrong (so says Trench, p. 154). Our Lord was an example of gentleness when he refused to stone the woman taken in adultery. He was gentle with Peter when Peter had denied Him so terribly. The father of the prodigal son is an example of the gentleness of God. Gentleness and grace are first cousins; wherever you find the one you will find the other. God was gentle in his dealing with Cain, and in his forgiveness of David. And for gentleness to be true gentleness, it must come from the heart. Gentleness is what people used to have in mind when they spoke of a man as a gentleman, or of a lady as a gentle lady.

This is what Matthew Henry had to say about gentleness: A gentle person does not insist on “taking words or actions in the worst sense; and for peace sometimes yielding somewhat of strict right” (Vol. VI, p. 871). And so it means that he will not put the worst possible construction on what people do, and will not see to it nor even hope that they get what they deserve, but will be thinking in terms of what can be done to help that person become what God wants him to be. The Lord Jesus was manifesting gentleness when He prayed on the Cross, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

And Paul implied here that a gentle person will show “meekness unto all men,” not just to certain people, nor just on special occasions. The Lord was “meek and lowly in heart” (Matt. 11:29).

Trench often remarks in his Synonyms of the New Testament that God in His Word has given words like meekness “a depth, a richness, a fulness of significance which they were very far from possessing before” (p. 151). And then he made this comment:

The Scriptural *πραότης* is not in a man’s outward behaviour only; nor yet in his relations to his fellow-men; as little in his mere natural disposition. Rather is it an inwrought grace of the soul; and the exercises of it are first and chiefly toward God (Matt. xi. 29; Jam. I. 21). It is that temper of spirit in which we accept his dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting; and it is closely linked with the *ταπεινοφροσύνη*, and follows directly upon it (Ephes. iv. 2; Col. iii. 12; Cf. Zeph. iii. 12); because it is only the humble heart which is also the meek; and which, as such, does not fight against God, and more or less struggle and contend with Him (Op. cit., p. 152).

Here again our Lord Jesus is the great example of meekness, and we see it especially in His prayer in the Garden. But we also see it in His rebuke of Peter when Peter had taken out his sword to defend the Savior. We see His meekness even when He instituted the Lord’s Supper, knowing better than anyone else what it meant, He gave thanks.

Moses is another one who was declared meek. Cf. Num. 12:3 when Miriam and Aaron “spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman he had married.” This was the comment of the Holy Spirit:

(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)

Job was manifesting meekness when he said, after he had lost all of his children, “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21).

We do well to study the lives of godly men and women both in and outside of Scripture. We can see how the Lord worked in their lives to make them gentle and meek in heart like the Lord Jesus was.

The Greek word for “shewing,” *ἐνδείκνυμι*, really means to give evidence of what we are by what we say and what we do. “All meekness” is meekness in every situation, and nothing but meekness, “unto all men,” not just to believers but to unbelievers as well. To quote again from Matthew Henry who was quoting from someone else whom he does not mention by name, we find this in his commentary:

“Distinguish the person and the sin; pity the one and hate the other. Distinguish between sin and sin; look not on all alike, there are moles and beams. Distinguish also between sinner and sinner: *of some have compassion, others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, thus making a difference*, <Jude 22-23>. Mind these things; *the wisdom that is from above is pure and peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated*.” Meekness of spirit and demeanour renders religion amiable; it is a commanded imitation of Christ the grand exemplar, and what brings it own reward with it, in the ease and comfort of the disposition itself and the blessings accompanying it (VI, p. 871).

It is clear from what the Apostle Paul wrote here that if more of us manifested greater gentleness and meekness, there would be more people who would be attracted to the Gospel. Such behavior is what Paul had in mind when he exhorted servants in chapter 2, verse 10, to “adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.”

But what reason do we have for seeking to do and be as Paul was instructing Titus that the believers in Crete should be? Look at verse 3. And let us be careful to realize that here Paul was speaking not only of himself

and Titus, but of all believers -- including us!

3:3 The reason that we need to be submissive to governmental rulers, as well as to be careful not to speak evil of others, nor to be brawlers, but to concentrate on being like our Lord, gentle and meek, is because of what we were before the Lord saved us. The thought of our past should humble every single one of us and keep us from being hard and critical and impatient with those who still are what we used to be. What were we? Look at the list. It is not at all complimentary, nor designed to build up our self-esteem.

“Foolish” -- We were often lacking in wisdom, and did things that we regret now that we did. In 1 Tim. 6:9 Paul spoke about “many foolish and hurtful lusts.” To be foolish is the opposite of being wise, and Trench said that in foolishness “there is always a moral fault lying being the intellectual” (p. 283). Our foolish minds lead us to do things that are sinful in God’s sight.

“Disobedient” -- This is a word which means that we knew that we were displeasing God, but we went ahead anyway, and nobody could talk us out of it. We were *contumacious*, obstinately disobedient, rebellious against God, possibly against our parents, and against anyone else who stood in our way. We were determined to do what we wanted to do.

“Deceived” -- We were led astray. We were deceived by our deceitful hearts, and were companions of those who were just as deceived as we were. The word means that we were seduced. This is Isa. 53:6. At the very time we felt that we were in charge of our own lives, we found that we were the victim of what others wanted to do.

“Serving divers lusts and pleasures” -- The word for serving here indicates that we became bondservants, we were enslaved to the sinful lusts of our own hearts, and were led astray even farther by our insatiable appetite for personal pleasure. The Apostle John said that this is all that there is in the world, “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 John 2:16). There may have been times when we hated the results, but we could not set ourselves free regardless of how hard we tried.

“Living in malice and envy” -- The living here is not real living, but more of a passing of our time. “Malice” is a word which speaks of our depravity, the source of all of the evil of which we are so capable. “Envy” is ill-will. It is jealousy over what another has, but without any desire to have it for one’s self. It is jealousy over someone else’s success or progress, but with no desire at all to follow such a good example. Envy hates to see another person have some good.

“Hateful, and hating one another” -- These two words are different words in the Greek. The first describes a person who is totally obnoxious. No one can stand to be around him. He is so bad that even those who formerly were his friends can no longer tolerate him. One commentator says that this is the stage of degradation before it becomes absolutely hopeless (Expos. Greek Testament, IV, p. 198). “Hating one another” -- not only detesting others with no evidence of love, and doing whatever a person can to make life miserable for others.

It seems that Paul’s description of believers here is like taking a step down with each word of description. It does not mean that every person without Christ lives the worst life that it is possible to live, but this is a general description of the person who is without Christ. Such a life gets worse all of the time, not better. And the end is eternal judgment and separation from God. That was the path we were all traveling, and there is only one reason that we all are not on the same path, going deeper and deeper into sin. And that is what Paul again turns to in verses 4 through 8. The change is all to the glory of God, and not due to any works of righteousness which we have done. Let us notice how this glorious transformation has taken place, and what we are now by the “kindness and love of God our Saviour.” If it were not for Christ, we all would be what we

used to be, and our condition would be absolutely hopeless.

November 20, 1995

3:4 Here we see what we are not what we used to be, and like people still are all around us who have never experienced the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice in this section where Paul was again dealing with the Gospel that he refers to all three Persons of the Godhead in connection with our salvation: God, in verse 4; the Holy Spirit, in verse 5, and Jesus Christ, in verse 6.

We all have heard the expression concerning various things when we say, "Before, and after." It may be a picture of an old house that appeared to be good for nothing but to be torn down, and then someone goes in, remodels it and restores it completely. And then we look at the two pictures, "Before, and after."

Here in this chapter Paul was speaking of the "before, and after" of a child of God. Verse 3 gives us the "before"; verses 4 through 8 give us the "after." How did the change come about? It was not that the believers in Crete had reformed themselves from being the "liars, evil beasts, slow bellies" that their own prophet described them to be (see 1:12), and which Paul said was true (see 1:13). No, the change had come about through the appearance of "the kindness and love of God our Saviour" (3:4). Paul evidently mentioned God first as our Savior because God initiated our salvation. It is as Paul said in 2 Cor. 5:18, 19:

18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

We have the same emphasis in 2 Thess. 2:13:

But we are bound to give thanks alway **to God** for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, **because God** hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

It is God Who has made the change in our lives, and so we cannot take any of the glory for the change that has been made in our lives. God did it! And it was not because we deserved it. Those who can be described according to what we have read in verse 3 deserve nothing but the judgment of God. So how thankful we can be for "the kindness and love of God our Saviour." As Matthew Henry pointed out in his commentary, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20)--grace superabounded!

What did Paul mean by "the kindness...of God"? Trench preferred the word, sweetness. It does not just refer to what God has done for us, but what it was in His very nature which caused Him to choose us, redeem us, seek and find us, draw us to Himself, and then keep us even though we have displeased Him more times than we like to mention. It is that in God's very nature which is mellow rather than harsh and austere. Trench cites **Luke 7:37-50** as a passage which illustrates "the kindness...of God," only in this instance it was displayed by our Lord. (Read.)

But it was "kindness and love" combined. The word for "love" which Paul used here is not ἀγάπη, but φιλάνθρωπία. This means, love for man, or, as it is translated in the KJV, "love...toward man." When you put God and man down, and then put "love" in between them, you have the most amazing relationship that there can possibly be. Paul was referring to this when he wrote Rom. 5:6-8:

6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

When Christ died on the Cross, God was giving proof not only of His love for us, but that He loved us even before Christ died for us. This is truly amazing, isn't it? And what makes it even more amazing is the fact that there was absolutely nothing in us that would attract His love, nothing in us that merited His love. So He didn't love us because we deserved to be loved; He set His love upon us just because He loved us.

I love that passage in Deut. 7 where Moses was speaking of God's love for Israel and explaining why God loved Israel. Listen to the explanation:

6 For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

7 The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:

8 **But because the LORD loved you**, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt (Deut. 7:6-8).

Why did the Lord love us? All we can say is that He loved us because He loved us. There wasn't anything in us to attract His love; He simply loved us. The reason is not to be found in us, but in Him!

"Appeared" in this verse is the same verb, and the same form of the verb, that we had in 2:11: ἐπεφάνη. This is a second aorist indicative passive. In Luke 1:79 it is translated, "to give light," speaking of the coming of the Messiah, but it is the same verb (although not the same form) that we have here. So the "appeared" in 2:11 and here in 3:4 must refer to the birth of our Lord. It was as Isaiah predicted,

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined (Isa. 9:2).

In Heb. 10:26b we read, "...but now once in the end of the world [age] hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

So it was due to "the kindness and love of God our Saviour" that the Lord Jesus "appeared," the personification of God's kindness and love.

And so, after what we have learned about verse 4, we are not surprised to read what we find here in verse 5.

3:5 The coming of our Lord to save us was not prompted by "works of righteousness which we have done." The prophet Isaiah said that:

But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away (Isa. 64:6).

Our ideas of righteousness are far different from the righteousness of God. We are all familiar with Eph. 2:8-10. (Read, and explain "not of ourselves" and "not of works.") Cf. also 2 Tim. 1:9. When people get concerned about their sins and their need of salvation, they immediately think like the Philippian jailor did when he asked Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). And they told him that salvation does not come to us by doing, but by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. We are saved by faith in Christ, not by the "good" things which we have done. The person who tries to be saved by works has not realized the depth of his need because of his sin.

So we did not obligate God to save us by what we have tried to do to please Him. Salvation never comes that way. We can never do the right things, and if we could, we could never do enough. This is the first thing a person has to learn if he is to be saved.

“But according to His mercy He saved us” -- God’s mercy means that He felt sympathy for us in our misery because of our sins, and this is one thing that made him act to save us. And Robertson says that the aorist form of “saved” emphasizes that God has effectively done this. He did not just try to save us, nor just to provide it for us if we wanted it, but He has saved us.

But if it did not come as a reward for what we have done, how did it come? “By the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit.”

“The washing of regeneration” -- The Greek word for “regeneration” lit. means, a new birth. And it is by the new birth that we are washed clean, made acceptable to God. Through the new birth we receive eternal life, and then are capable of doing works that are pleasing to God. In regeneration we are united to Christ, and “if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature,” or lit., it is a new creation. God does work over the old. We are not reconditioned people; we are regenerated people. Hendriksen in his commentary mentions that this is the only time in the NT that the word regeneration is used of people, but that the truth of regeneration and the new birth are mentioned often. He listed John 1:13; 3:3, 5-8; 1 Pet. 1:23; 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18; Gal. 6:15; Eph. 2:5; 4:24; and Col 2:13.

This brings about a “renewing.” The Greek word is ἀνακαίνωσις. This means “*a complete change for the better*” (Thayer, p. 38). Trench has a very interesting comment on the two words, “regeneration” and “renewal.” It seems clear that Paul is attributing both of these works to the Holy Spirit--the regeneration and the renewal. But this is Trench’s comment:

The new-birth is contemplated as already past, as having found place once for all, while the ‘renewal’ or ‘renovation’ is daily proceeding--being as it is that gradual restoration of the Divine image, which is ever going forward in him who, through the new-birth, has come under the transforming powers of the world to come. It is called ‘the renewal *of the Holy Spirit*,’ inasmuch as He is the efficient cause, by whom alone this putting on of the new man, and putting off the old, is brought about (Synonyms of the New Testament, p. 65).

So by the Holy Spirit we are born again, and we are gradually being renewed, made more holy, more like the Lord Jesus. And both of these works are made effectual in us by the blessed Holy Spirit.

November 21, 1995

3:6 The “which” at the beginning of this verse refers to the Holy Spirit. In present-day English we would say, Whom. The “he” refers to God, Who is the subject from verse 4 and through verse 5. “Shed on us” is the Greek verb, ἐξέχεεν, which is a first aorist indicative active of ἐκχέω, which means “*to bestow or distribute largely...the abundant bestowal of the Holy Spirit*” (Thayer, p. 201). Many take this as referring to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 on that particular Day of Pentecost, but it seems to me more in harmony with the text to say that Paul was speaking of our individual reception of the Holy Spirit when we were saved. “Abundantly” means richly. The Holy Spirit has been given to each one of us in the entirety of His Person, not shared in part among us. The Holy Spirit dwells fully in each of us just as though He were in us, and not in anyone else.

The word “shed” was used by Paul also in Rom. 5:5:

And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

The Holy Spirit has not only come to every believer, but He has bestowed upon us all manner of spiritual gifts, equipping each of us to be able to serve the Lord effectively and for the glory of God. The Holy Spirit more than makes up for our deficiencies. Therefore, we must always remember how dependent we are upon Him for

the blessings we need and see in our lives and in the work that the Lord has given us to do. We are to be continually filled with the Spirit and we are to walk in the Spirit.

But we also need to remember that all we have in our salvation, from start to finish, is ours only and always “through Jesus Christ our Saviour.” Without His work on the Cross, we would still be in our sins, and verse 3 would still be a correct, although tragic, description of each one of us. And without His present ministry in heaven where at the Father’s right hand He continually intercedes for each one of us, our gradual transformation into His very likeness would be impossible.

3:7 In this verse the Apostle Paul gives us the completed picture of our salvation. In verse 3 we see what we were. In verse 5 we see that God has saved us. In verse 5 we also see that we are being renewed by the work of the Holy Spirit. It is He Who superintends and guarantees our progress in holiness. And now in verse 7 we see that having been justified by God’s grace, we are “made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

We are not going to be justified; we are justified through the instrumentality of the grace of God. We are righteous, not by our own works (v. 5), but through “the kindness and love of God our Saviour” (v. 5), and by the Holy Spirit’s washing and renewing (v. 5 also), which has all been made possible “through Jesus Christ our Saviour” (v. 6)--His death and resurrection, as well as His present ministry at the Father’s right hand.

“Justified” is the first phase of our salvation. It is instantaneous, complete, and eternal. Our renewal by the Holy Spirit is the second, present, and continual phase of our salvation--our sanctification. What Paul was speaking about here in verse 7 is the third and final phase of our salvation--our glorification.

Hendriksen pointed out in his commentary on Titus that the presentation of salvation which we have here is consistent with what Paul has taught in other passages which he wrote, e.g., Eph. 2:1-10. And we even have the threefold portrayal of our salvation in Titus 2:11-14.

I like Hendriksen’s definition of justification. He said,

Justification is that act of God the Father whereby he counts our sins to be Christ’s, and Christ’s righteousness to be ours (II Cor. 5:21). It is the opposite of *condemnation* (Rom. 8:33, 34). It implies deliverance from the curse of God because that curse was placed on Christ (Gal. 3:11-13). It means *forgiveness* full and free (Rom. 4:6-8). It is God’s free gift, the fruit of *sovereign grace*, and not in any way the result of human “goodness” or “accomplishment” (Rom. 3:24; 5:5, 8, 9). It brings peace to the soul (Rom. 5:1), a peace that passes all understanding. It fills the heart with such thanksgiving that it produces in the life of the believer a rich harvest of good works. Hence, justification and sanctification, though ever distinct, are never separate but stand in the closest possible relation to each other (Rom. 6:2; 8:1, 2).

And now we are learning in verse 7 that justification and sanctification will lead inevitably to our glorification.

“That” is the translation of the Greek word *ἵνα*--an adverb denoting purpose or goal, according to Thayer, p. 302. And we can translate it, in order that. What is the purpose? It is that having been justified (and sanctified), “we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life” (NIV).

An heir is one who has a right to an inheritance because he is a son, or a daughter. Paul did not mention our sonship here, but it is implied and required by what he had to say about our being made heirs. Cf. what Paul had to say about our predestination in Eph. 1:5, 6, 11, 12. See also Rom. 8:14-17; Gal. 3:26-29; 1 John 3:1-3.

“The hope of eternal life” -- The “*joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation*” (Thayer, p. 205). This does not mean that we will not have eternal life until we get to heaven. We have it now. It does mean that we

will not experience the fulness of our salvation until we are finally with the Lord. Our hope is not uncertain. It is just the opposite. It is absolutely guaranteed to all the family of God by the promise and oath of God Himself! Cf. Titus 1:1, 2. See also 1 Tim. 1:1. Let me say it again, this is our glorification.

November 27, 1995

3:8 What is “a faithful saying”? The word “faithful” in the Greek is πιστός. It means that which is worthy of our trust, that which can be relied upon. A “saying” is lit., a word. It means the message or the doctrine which Paul had been teaching. And, coming where it does, it must refer to what Paul had just written in verse 4 through 7. It was true. It was absolutely dependable. No true believer should ever question any part of the message.

What was it? It was the Gospel! It is so absolutely true and dependable that anyone who ignores it, or denies it, has to be a fool. There is no truth that has greater proof behind it than the Gospel. It can be accepted in the fullest assurance that this is the truth of God. Anyone who denies it, or who even raises questions about it, is simply displaying his own ignorance and folly.

Five times Paul used this expression in the Pastoral Epistles: 1 Tim. 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:11; and here in Titus 3:8.

Because it is “a faithful saying,” Paul went on to say, “and these things I will that thou affirm constantly.” This was said to Titus about his own ministry. “Affirm constantly” is the translation of one word, a verb, in the Greek text, and it is only used one other place in all of the NT: 1 Tim. 1:7 -- where it is used of false teachers. False teachers teach error like it was the truth. Unfortunately sometimes preachers handle the truth as though there might be some doubt about it. But there is no doubt about the Gospel. And Paul told Titus that he must declare this truth and confirm it over and over again. Again we see what Jerry Bridges has emphasized: the need to preach the Gospel to believers. Only he says that we need to preach it to ourselves. And from Tit. 3:4-7 we see that the Gospel includes not only how we are saved, but why we are saved, and our ultimate destiny as the people of God. Every time the Gospel is preached, some part of it is going to be confirmed in the mind of some believer as they see something about the Gospel that they had not clearly understood before. Or it may be that it will bring a believer back to some truth in the Gospel that he had been overlooking. It might be the fact that the Lord saved us to make us holy, or that we need to be living each day in the expectation that this might be the day when the Lord will return.

Paul had gone over the Gospel twice in this very short epistle, and he wanted Titus to keep the Gospel always before the people to whom he ministered.

What specifically was there about this message that Paul wanted Titus to emphasize? It was this: “That they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.”

The NIV translates it this way: “So that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good.” Basically doing good works means obeying the Word of God. It meant abiding by the particular instructions which Paul gave at the beginning of chapter 2. It meant being subject to the government under which we live, etc. So this was to be kept before the people of God continuously as a means of their edification.

Illus: The Oregonian reported in yesterday’s paper that last Sunday night 10,500 people gathered in Portland’s new Rose Garden for a praise rally. The TV showed that it primarily had the marks of a charismatic meeting. But one thing that the paper said which I felt was especially characteristic of the Lord’s work today was that there was “no preaching.” No preaching! No, that would offend some people if there

were preaching. And when you have such a diverse group, preachers would have to be very careful not to offend anyone, or those people would never come back again. No preaching! That is the direction the church is going, and that is the main reason that churches are doing so many foolish things these days. It is only in the Word that we can learn how to praise the Lord, how to worship Him. People need to read their New Testaments more carefully. In the early church, and for many years afterwards, preaching was at the very heart of their gatherings. And this is what Paul was exhorting Titus to do. Preach and teach! Show people what our salvation cost God, and why He has chosen to save us. Gradually in our day the preaching has occupied less and less time in church services, and it has been replaced by singing, by contemporary music which is patterned after the world's music, and by testimonies. We have come a long way from the days when the Puritans would stand out in winter weather for hours to hear the Word of God proclaimed. Our failure in preaching, too, has taken its toll on the effectiveness of the church. Perhaps our trouble is that with the doctrinal breakdown of our churches, and the rise in entertainment, we have drawn people into our churches who don't really believe in God, who have never been saved, and, of course, they are not going to be interested in the preaching of the Word of God. Verses like Titus 3:8 ought to make us think.

How does verse 8 end? With the words, "These things are good and profitable unto men." What "things"? The same "these things" to which Paul was referring at the beginning of this verse. So he was still talking about verses 4 through 7.

They are "good" in themselves. There is nothing bad, nothing harmful, nothing corrupting, about the Gospel. Instead, they are, as Hendriksen translated "good," excellent! People will never read anything that is better. They will never hear anything that is better. The Gospel of the grace of God deserves to be called "good" more than any message that has ever been given by anyone. It sounds good. It is good. And the effect of the Gospel upon the hearts of people is always good. People are never made worse by the Gospel; they are always made better.

And that is why the Apostle Paul went on to say that it is not only "good," but it is "profitable." It is beneficial. People find it greatly to their advantage when they hear and believe the Gospel. The Gospel not only makes things right between us and God, but it transforms our lives. We become new creatures. The bondage we were in to our sins is broken by the Gospel, and we find ourselves wanting to please God instead of always seeking that which we felt would be satisfying to us.

So a preacher who is not preaching the Gospel, who is not teaching the Word, is not helping his people like he could and should. If I want to help you, there is nothing that I can do that is better for you than to teach you the Word of God. And I get my greatest help from reading the Word, and from studying it, and from the teaching and writing of others who help me to understand this wonderful Book. Anything that takes time from the preaching of the Word in our churches needs to be thrown out. The singing of the great hymns and Gospel songs has a rightful place with the preaching of the Word, but entertainment as such belongs in the world, not in the church. We get our joy, not from a show, but from the Lord. I wish the Lord would impress this upon us so that we would never be satisfied if we go to church, but do not really learn more about God and His Word.

So we have a twofold emphasis in this verse. The truth of the Gospel must be preached over and over, but it must be done by showing, as Geoffrey Wilson pointed out in his brief but very helpful commentary on Titus, "their practical bearing on the conduct of believers" (p. 121). But then he added this comment from a man I do not know, named White:

'It is most significant and suggestive that the apostle held that good works were most certainly assured by a theology which gives special prominence to the free unmerited grace of God' (Ibid.).

Charles Erdman made a good statement about this verse which I want to read to you before we pass on to

verse 9. This is what he had to say:

The statements of the great essentials of belief which he [Paul] has been making are thus declared to be absolutely trustworthy, so that Titus can confirm them “confidently,” and with the purpose of showing that real faith in God is not a matter of theory or speculation but of practice. True belief will manifest itself in life, and to that end the proclamation of Christian truth should ever be directed. Thus Titus was urged to proclaim these great verities of saving grace “to the end that they who have believed God may be careful to maintain good works” (The Pastoral Epistles of Paul, p. 155).

But let us move along.

3:9 In verse 8 Paul told Titus what he was to do; here in verse 9 he told Titus what he was to “avoid.” And I would assume that Paul was speaking here about preaching as well as about the things that people give their personal attention to on a day to day basis.

“Avoid” -- Titus was not to dialogue with those Paul mentioned in this verse; he was to stay away from them. And yet, as Paul indicated in chapter 1, with believers Titus was to refute their teaching through his own teaching of the truth. A lot of time can be wasted with people who are not satisfied to let the Word mean what it says, but who like to bring in other things or manipulate the Word of God so that they get something else out of the Scriptures.

Dr. William Hendriksen said,

What a sharp contrast between all this *useless* nonsense and the very *useful* matters about which Paul has just spoken in verses 4-7... A minister who does justice to the latter will have no time for the former (New Testament Commentary, Thessalonians, Timothy, and Titus, p. 395).

What was Titus to avoid?

“Foolish questions” -- The NIV translates this as “foolish controversies.” Matthew Henry said that these were questions that led neither to the glory of God nor to the edification of believers. See Vol. VI, p. 876. There are good and legitimate questions which need to be answered by the Word of God, but the Judaizers had their own agenda and so were raising foolish questions that would help no one.

All of the things that Paul mentioned here speak of what the Judaizing teachers were doing. “Genealogies” are an important part of Scripture, or we would not have them. They are especially important in tracing the lineage of our Lord Jesus Christ. But the Judaizers were not interested in Christ. They were interested in maintaining that which had been in effect before the coming of Christ, and, in particular, showing the superiority of the Jewish nation. This was “unprofitable and vain” -- in contrast with the Gospel which was “good and profitable” (v. 8). And this, in turn, led to “contentions,” wrangling and quarreling, and they, in turn, led to “strivings about the law,” i.e., the Mosaic Law. “Strivings” come from quarreling, and really amount to verbal warfare. Not all who use the Word of God use it in a profitable manner, and that was true of the Judaizers. Their teaching was “unprofitable and vain.” It was useless and did no one any good at all. It would turn people away from the truth because people who do not know the truth are inclined to link all religious teachers together, and do not want to have anything to do with any of them. And so Paul was exhorting Titus to stay away from them altogether.

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3:10 The emphasis in verse 9 has to do with ideas and teachings outside of the church which are contrary to Scripture, and which, if they are accepted by believers, produce divisions within the church. Titus was

to “avoid” all such teaching. He would not have the time to deal with all false teaching. His emphasis was to be upon the teaching of the Word. This is the best way to protect the people of God from error. If we know the truth, then we are prepared to recognize error when it comes alone.

The emphasis here in verse 10 has to do with heretics within the church. This is an entirely different matter. This is a problem which Titus and the elders of any church must be prepared to deal with, and to deal with it quickly, briefly, and severely. The man referred to here is in the church. He must be warned, and if he is not responsive and submissive to the leaders of the church, he must be rejected. This is an entirely different word from the word “avoid” in verse 9, and it would seem that it would call for different action. Heresy outside of the church is a different problem, and less serious, than heresy within the church.

In Gal. 5:19, 20 Paul mentioned “heresies” among “the works of the flesh.” This indicates that in the very nature of man there is a tendency toward error, actually a preference for error. In 1 Cor. 11:19 Paul said this:

For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

Since they are a part of the flesh, it is inevitable that heresies will appear in the church, but, in one sense, they serve a good purpose: they show who the real believers are as well as identifying those who are not.

The Apostle Peter also spoke of “heresies” in 2 Peter 2. Listen to what he had to say:

1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not (2 Pet. 2:1-3).

False teachers have always been effective in not only getting people in the church to accept their teaching, but it must necessarily follow that those who accept the false must turn away from the true.

So this is something that we need to be prepared for.

It is important to understand the basic meaning of the word heresy. Alfred Plummer has an excellent description of this word in his commentary on Titus in The Expositor's Bible series. He referred to Tertullian who was a native of Carthage in north Africa, and who was born in the middle of the second century A. D. He was a fervent defender of the faith, and is considered to be one of the early church fathers. He said that at the root of the word heresy, ἁίρεσις, is the idea of *choice*. It speaks of choosing something because a person likes it. Gradually the word took on the meaning of a bad choice, and it has that meaning in the NT. Then Plummer said this:

In all spheres of thought and action, and especially in matters of belief, a tendency to choose for oneself, and to pursue one's own way independently, almost of necessity leads to separation from others, to divisions and factions. And factions in the Church readily widen into schisms and harden into heresies (p. 297).

And then Dr. Plummer added this important statement:

Another important thing to remember in reference to the strong language which St. Paul and other writers of the New Testament use with regard to “heresies” and erroneous doctrine, and the still stronger language used by early Christian writers in commenting on these texts, is the downright wickedness of a good many of the “self-chosen views” which had begun to appear in the Church in the first century, and which became rampant during the second. The peril, not only to faith, but to morals, was immense, and it extended to the very foundations of both.

When Christians were told that there were two Creators, of whom one was good and one was

evil; that the Incarnation was an impossibility; that man's body was so vile that it was a duty to abuse it; that his spirit was so pure that it was impossible to defile it; that to acquire knowledge through crime was estimable, for knowledge was good, and crime was of no moral significance to the enlightened;--then it was necessary to speak out, and tell men in plain terms what the persons who were inculcating such views were really doing, and what strong measure would be necessary, if they persisted in such teaching (Op. cit., pp. 298, 299).

It is good to remember also the words of the Lord Jesus Christ in Matt. 18:7,

Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

How important it is for all of us to know the Word of God, and to hold fast to the Word. We can be so easily deceived, and deception is inevitable when we start making choices on our own even though they may not be supported by Scripture. All teachers and all teaching must be tested in the light of Scripture, and where it fails the test of Scripture, it must be rejected.

Paul said that an heretic must be admonished twice. To admonish him means to point out the nature of his error, and then to warn him graciously of the action that will be taken against him if he persists in his error. Some expositors do not think that Paul was not speaking of excommunication, but I can't see how it would mean otherwise. It is not safe to allow a false teacher to continue on among the Lord's people. The longer he continues, the more people he will infect with his heretical teaching.

In verse 11 the Apostle Paul went on to say why the heretic must be rejected after he has been sufficiently warned about what he is doing.

3:11 A doctrinal heretic is a doctrinal pervert. He is corrupted and will only corrupt others, as Dr. Plummer has pointed out, not only doctrinally, but morally. Just as certainly as true doctrine leads to godly behavior, so false doctrine leads to sinful behavior.

We also need to recognize that the heretic is a sinner. And here we can point out that the basic meaning of a sinner is that he is one who has missed the mark. The person who, having been warned of his error, and yet persists in it, is not condemned because the leaders of the church reject him; he is self-condemned. He has condemned himself and must suffer the consequences, not only by his expulsion from the church, but a greater judgment before God.

An unrepentant heretic is showing clearly, or at least raising strong suspicions, that he does not know the Lord.

It always seems to some that such words as we have here are too severe, and are unloving. There are always those people who feel that we should not take such a strong stand against error because it will keep us from ministering to such a person in the future. But we need to remember that church discipline is not for the purpose of destroying anyone; it is for the purpose of seeing a person changed and restored. By excommunication a person is not prohibited from attending church. He is simply identified before the church as a teacher of false doctrine so that the people of the church will know not to follow him. But the purpose of discipline is always restoration. An example: the man Paul mentioned in 1 Cor. 5.

Let me close this section by quoting again from Alfred Plummer. Writing in the latter part of the nineteenth century, he spoke in a way that applies to us in the latter part of the twentieth century:

In our own day there is danger of mistaking lazy or weak indifferentism for Christian charity. It is a convenient doctrine that the beliefs of our fellow-Christians are of no concern of ours, even when they try to propagate what contradicts the creed. And, while emphasis is laid upon the

responsibility of accepting articles of faith, it is assumed that there is little or no responsibility in refusing to accept, or in teaching others to refuse also. To plead for tenderness, where severity is needed, is not charity, but Laodicean lukewarmness; and mistaken tenderness may easily end in making us “partakers in evil works.” To be severe, when severity is imperatively called for, is not only charity to the offenders, it “is also charity towards all men besides. It is charity towards the *ignorant* as carrying instruction along with it; charity toward the *unwary*, as giving them warning to stand off from infection; charity towards the *confirmed* Christians, as encouraging them still more, and preserving them from insults; charity towards the *whole Church*, as supporting both their unity and purity; charity toward *all mankind*, towards them that are *without*, as it is recommending pure religion to them in the most advantageous light, obviating their most plausible calumnies, and giving them less occasion to blaspheme” (The Expositor’s Bible, pp. 305, 306. The quotation at the end is from the Words of Waterland, The Importance of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, IV, ii, 2.).

We live a century after those words were written, but we face the same kind of a situation today. Doctrine is not popular among professing Christians. In fact, it is blamed for the divisions which exist among those who claim to be believers in Christ. Many evangelical leaders are willing to set aside doctrine for the sake of unity. Preaching has been given a back seat to entertainment, seminars, psychology, and methods. Many speak about the Holy Spirit, but there is very little dependence upon Him in doing the work of the Lord.

The present dialogue which includes Catholics, Protestants, and many other groups including Mormons, is an indication that there is still a strong movement against standing firmly for the Gospel of the grace of God, and for the teaching of Scripture generally. In this environment our calling has not changed. We are to contend for the faith. We are to preach the Word. We are to encourage holy living, the only kind of living that can possibly please God. Let others say what they will, we are responsible to God for the way we live and for what we preach. May the Lord give us the courage, as He has given courage to many before us, to hold fast to the Word of God regardless of how strong the opposition might be against us. The church desperately needs the teaching of the Pastoral Epistles today.

The Epistle of the Apostle Paul to Titus

Titus 3:12-15

December 4, 1995

VII. The Conclusion (Titus 3:12-15).

Of the four men who are mentioned in Paul's conclusion to this epistle, we are familiar with two of them, and with two we are not familiar. This is the only place that Artemas and Zenas are mentioned. Tychicus and Apollos are mentioned elsewhere. All of them were not only believers in Christ, but we active in the work of the Lord. But each one was important to the Apostle Paul at this time in his ministry -- between his first and second imprisonments, the second which led to Paul's death.

3:12 Paul obviously wanted Titus to come to him, but he had not decided apparently who would relieve Titus -- Artemas or Tychicus. Tradition has it that Artemas became the leading elder of the church at Lystra (which was in Galatia). But tradition is not always reliable. If it were important for us to know, the Spirit of God would have made it clear which one Paul sent to relieve Titus of his duties in Crete.

Tychicus is mentioned four times in Paul's epistles and once in the book of Acts. This is the reference that we have to him in Acts 20:4,

And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.

This followed the uproar of the people in Ephesus where Paul could easily have been killed by the worshipers of Diana. From there Paul went to Macedonia, and afterwards went down into Greece. He was there three months. When the Jews were threatening to kill him, he planned to go to Syria but on the way would go through Macedonia. And this verse tells us the men who were with him -- both Timothy and Titus being among them.

Tychicus is mentioned in two of Paul's prison epistles, that is, epistles which were written during his first imprisonment in Rome. In the Ephesian epistle we have this reference to Tychicus:

21 But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:

22 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts (Eph. 6:21-22).

Paul had just concluded his great passage on the warfare of the believer, ending it with an appeal for the prayers of the believers at Ephesus, and then he told them that Tychicus was coming to see them to give them a full report of what was going on in Paul's life. Paul referred to him as "a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord." Obviously Tychicus was a man whom the Apostle Paul both loved and trusted. He trusted him not only to give a true report to the church at Ephesus, but to do it in such a way that the believers there would be comforted and encouraged. That was not an easy assignment in view of the fact that Paul was a prisoner in Rome when all of this was taking place. If Tychicus were to concentrate of the human side of Paul's imprisonment, his report could have been very discouraging. But if he focused upon the hand of God in Paul's life, he could encourage and strengthen the saints in Ephesus. It seems clear that Paul knew that Tychicus would do the latter without minimizing the seriousness of Paul's circumstances. The only way any of them could have had peace during those days would have to keep their minds stayed upon the Lord, as Isaiah encouraged the people of God to do in his day.

Paul's mention of Tychicus in Col. 4:7 was very similar to what Paul told the Ephesians. Tychicus was to give the believers at Colosse the same kind of a report that he was to give in Ephesus, and for the same reason. Again Paul called Tychicus "a beloved brother, and a faithful minister," and then he added, "and fellow servant in the Lord." You talk about conferring honors upon a person, these were the highest honors that could be bestowed upon any child of God. A message could be preached about each title. Paul had no doubt about his

salvation, and so he called him his “brother,” a brother he dearly loved. He was a “minister” -- and he used the Greek word from which we get our English word deacon. He was not using the word officially of a leader in the church, but of one who was devoting his life to serving the Lord. He was “faithful” in that he was dependable, but also because his ministry was true, faithful to the Word of God. And then he was a fellow bondservant, a bondslave, of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was a man committed to do the will of God. Listen to the words which Paul wrote about him:

7 All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord:

8 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts;

9 With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here (Col. 4:7-9).

It is interesting that Onesimus was a companion of Tychicus on this occasion, and it may be that they delivered the Ephesian epistle to the Ephesians as they obviously delivered the Colossian epistle to the church in Colosse, as well as the epistle which Paul had written to Philemon about Onesimus.

The fourth reference Paul made to Tychicus in his epistles is the one we have here in Titus. The last is in 2 Timothy 4:12 where he said, “And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus.” This was shortly before Paul’s death, and probably the purpose of Tychicus’ trip to Ephesus was similar to the one he had made approximately three years before.

You can see that Paul did not consider himself to be a one-man minister. He had many co-workers. He loved them. He trusted them. And he enlarged his own ministry through them. Paul felt that it was important to encourage the Lord’s people as much as possible knowing not only their love for him, but that all of them had trials as well because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And their trials would have been aggravated greatly if they had not had some knowledge of how the Apostle Paul was doing. And so the missions of Tychicus were very important.

The postscript on this epistle says that Paul wrote to Titus from Nicopolis. But Paul’s words here in verse 12 would disprove the postscript. If Paul had been in Nicopolis he would have said, “Be diligent to come to me to Nicopolis: for I have determined **here** to winter.” But he said “**there**.” Macedonia has been suggested as the place where Paul was writing, and maybe even Philippi. This point, however, is not important.✠

What we do need to notice is that Paul wanted Titus with him -- with him for the winter! Possibly Paul wanted to make plans for the Spring when it would be possible for them to travel again.

3:13 We cannot say anymore about Zenas than is said here: he was a lawyer. What kind of a lawyer, we do not know. Neither do we know the mission that he and Apollos were on. By the fact that Paul told Titus to make sure that they were fully supported and that they had everything they needed for the trip, would indicate that they were doing the Lord’s work. The mention of Apollos would hardly allow us to reach any other conclusion because he was very diligent in serving the Lord.. Much is said about Apollos in the book of Acts, and in Paul’s epistles. William Hendriksen has the summary statement about Apollos in his commentary on Titus. (This is found on pp. 398, 399.)

Apollos is a familiar figure. He was a Jew, a native of Alexandria (Acts 18:24) the famous Egyptian library-and university-city which had been founded by Alexander the Great in the year 332 B. C. He was, moreover, an orator, mighty in the scriptures. Having come to Ephesus, where he spoke boldly in the synagogue, he had been taught the way of God more accurately by Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:20). Thus equipped, he had gone to the province of Achaia where he proved to be a great blessing to believers, and powerfully confuted the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 18:27, 28). Afterward he had

returned to Ephesus (1 Cor. 16:12). He was a good friend of Paul (“I planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase,” 1 Cor. 3:6). We may be sure that Paul and Apollos were grieved by the party-spirit which plagued the Corinthian church (“I am of Paul,” “I am of Apollos,” 1 Cor. 1:12).

Dr. Hendriksen made several references to Acts 18 where we read a great deal about Apollos. Please turn with me to the last five verses of that chapter, and let me read to you what Luke has recorded for us about Apollos. **Cf. Acts 18:24-28.** (Read.)

It is very evident that Apollos was a very gifted servant of the Lord. As a speaker, he surpassed the Apostle Paul. He was fervent, on fire! He was “mighty in the scriptures.” Notice that verse 25 says that “this man was instructed in the way of the Lord,” but when we get to the next verse we see that after Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and “expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.” And Apollos accepted their teaching. He was teachable. He knew much, but he always wanted to learn more. Does verse 27 indicate that what Apollos was lacking was an clear understanding of the sovereign grace of God? Last of all, notice that his ministry seems to have been Christ-centered. That is the most important point of all. There are many who teach the Bible, but their ministry is not Christ-centered. You can learn much from them, but you will not have your heart drawn to the Lord, and blessed by what you learn of Him. It would be wonderful if more of us were able to teaching, exalting Christ, so that the hearts of those who hear us with burn within them like the two disciples experienced on the road to Emmaus. Cf. Luke 24:32.

Paul wanted the needs of Zenas and Apollos to be so fully cared for by the churches of Crete that they would be able to devote their full time and energies to the ministry of the Word of God.

3:14 This verse sound^s like verse 8, doesn’t it? And it is! But here Paul was re-emphasizing and applying to the Cretan believers what he had told Titus to do in verse 8. It is one thing to know that believers in general should do a certain thing, but it is even more convicting and powerful when we are told that we should do it.

It is wonderful to receive, but “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). This is something that believers need to learn – the blessing that comes with giving! Paul was encouraging the support of missionaries here. And he was teaching that when we have a part in their ministries by giving (and by prayer, we could add), we also share in their fruitfulness. We all have a ministry where we are, but we also have a responsibility to minister to people in other places, and in other countries, where we cannot go. And we need to “learn” this; “our’s” need to learn this. And leaders like Titus need to include this in their teaching.

There are many things that we need to learn as Christians that we cannot do. There are many negatives in Scripture. But we need to learn what we need to be and what we need to do. And the blessing comes when we learn and obey both the negative and the positive aspects of ~~our lives~~ ^{the Word} as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Matthew Henry said that we need not only to be harmless, but we need to be fruitful. May God impress upon us the importance of maintaining good works, and of avoiding those things which God considers to be bad.

3:15 This is the conclusion of the conclusion. One thing that the epistles of the NT teach us that we often overlook is the importance of writing letters. Obviously it endeared Paul to the people of God in an unusual way. He wanted people to know that he was thinking of them, prayed for them, and wished them well. And it was good, and still is, when the believers in one place know that they are cared for by the believers in another place. The work of the Lord can be a lonely business. We need the Lord, but we need each other, too. How thankful we can be for people who remember us, and pray for us. And so Titus would have been encouraged with Paul’s words in conclusion, “All that are with me salute thee.”

And then Paul said, "Greet them that love us in the faith." Paul's letter was an expression of his love, not only for Titus, but for all of the believers in Crete. And he was grateful for the love that they had for him. Paul had many people who hated him because of his ministry of the Gospel of Christ, and so he was especially thankful for those "in the faith" who not only loved him, but also loved those who served the Lord with him. Again notice that Paul was always mindful that he was not a one-man ministry.

"Grace be with you all. Amen." This is a prayer, and it is a prayer which Paul repeated over and over as he prayed for the people of God. We not only need the Lord's grace for our salvation in the beginning, but we need His grace to strengthen us in our trials and weaknesses, to comfort us in our sorrows, to guide us in our daily lives. We never outgrow our need for the grace of God. And so this always ought to be in our prayers for each other. There is only one source for the grace that we need, and that source is GOD!

Paul's letters began with prayer, and they ended with prayer. It ought to be the same way with us. Our sermons should be the same -- beginning and ending with prayer. And it is good even in times of fellowship in our homes that we recognize our need for the Lord's blessing at the beginning of an evening of fellowship, and seek His blessing in prayer, and that we part from each other with such a prayer as this. The more we seek God, and the more we recognize our need for Him and for His blessing, the greater will be our joy, and the greater will be our fruitfulness. This, too, is the way that we become a blessing to others. May the Lord forbid that we would ever forget that wonderful little word, G-R-A-C-E.