

Titus 1:1-4
“Maintenance Manual”

I. Introduction

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I. Introduction

The theme of this letter is similar to many of Paul's letters as he writes to another young protégé Titus, who was a Greek and came to Christ in the city of Antioch. Later Titus accompanied Paul in many of his missionary journeys. As most of you know the bible wasn't compiled chronologically, and this letter doesn't fit into the time after 2nd Timothy but rather it would fit in between 1st Timothy and 2nd Timothy around 65 A.D. Titus who had been left on Crete the largest of the Greek Islands some 160 miles long by 60 miles across that lay 100 miles off the coast of Greece. The church likely was started after Paul's first imprisonment in Rome. After being released as recorded in the book of Acts, Paul desired to go to Spain and apparently did so. Most scholars believe that he took Titus and they stopped in Crete where churches were planted. Based upon the fifth verse Titus was left there to “*set in order the things that were lacking*” as Paul continued on to Spain. These pastoral letters provided great insight into the beginnings of the early church as it seems that it was easier to get Christ into a life than it was to rid the same person of the world.

Part of the understanding of what causes the crises within the church has to do with knowing the culture in which the church of Christ has been placed. Paul gives us further understanding of the people of Crete in chapter 1 verse 12 where he quotes

ancient writers of his day saying that the lot of them are, “*always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons*” and Paul affirms the truth of this in his words of verse 13 saying, “*This testimony is true*”. Throughout this letter Paul tells of these Cretan characteristics and put them in stark contrast to the expected transformation and now new Christian characteristics. They may have been a wicked and corrupt society, made up of “*liars, evil beasts and lazy gluttons*” but in Christ they weren’t to remain in their former condition. Though Paul’s words described the society that made up the island of Crete the context of the passage is not aimed at correction of society but correction of the church. As I read this little three chapter book the theme reads much like a Maintenance Manual where step by step instruction is given to the building superintendent how to fix what is broken, clean up what is a mess and generally provide a daily maintenance schedule. ***When the church is overwhelmed with problems the usual cause is the world is invading the church because the church has ceased in infiltrating the world.*** The Word of God was given to be a disrupting and transforming element in whatever society it was placed in. Whenever the church is authentic to the Word of God it will always stand against the norms of society. Society never changes for the better on its own, it must be invaded in order to progress to the betterment of all. Paul mentions this need for change but writing ***ten times*** the word “***GOOD***”. Paul says that people need to be in chapter 1 verse 8 “*lovers of what is ***GOOD****”. Then he states in chapter 1 verse 16 that the problem is that though, “*they profess to know God,... in works they deny Him... and have become disqualified for every ***GOOD*** work.*” The 2nd chapter is the “***GOOD***” chapter as the word appears five times in 15 verses. When folks try to change the way people are by means of the way they behave, through education, legislation, entitlements but none these means

produce lasting change. *If you bring a pig into the parlor, it won't change the pig, but it won't take long before you won't recognize the parlor. It is never enough to change people's behavior you must change their very nature.*

II. Vs. 1-3 A Word that works

Vs. 1 The letter writing custom of the day was first the writer, then the greeting, finally the reader. Based upon chapter 3 verse 3 two other workers were on their way; Zenas the lawyer and Apollos, which means that Paul was sending this letter to Titus through them. Though this letter was written to Titus by the use of his credentials Paul expected that it would be read by the church. Paul wants the readers of this letter to realize that first and foremost he was a servant. To describe his service he uses the Greek word that “*bondservant*” which was the lowest servant’s position and would be what we would call a slave but it also meant to be the lowest position by choice. **Paul was the lowest position by choice to the highest person, God!** It is never a low thing to be a servant of a Great God! He served God and was sent out by Jesus as a messenger for God the letter writing custom of the day was first the writer, then the greeting finally the reader. This is a rather long introduction but Paul emphasizes the importance of the word of God and ministry which viewed in four phrases by the use of a Greek word:

- A. Vs. 1a “**ACCORDING to the faith of God’s elect..**”: The phrase “*according to the faith of god’s elect*” is better translated “***for the furtherance of the faith***” as it carries the master passion of Paul which was to see God’s people go farther and do better. And for God’s people to “*go farther and do better*” they would need to adhere to “*truth that produces godliness*”. Paul saw himself a slave by choice that

was governed and directed by the Word of God, the purpose of which was to share the word of God to all.

- B. Vs. 1b “*the acknowledgment of the truth which ACCORDS with godliness*”: The truth of the Word of God is designed to transform lives. Our faith is not mere profession and is transformation! We aren’t just saved we are transformed visibly seen in a godly life.
- C. Vs. 3 “ACCORDING to the commandment of God...”: God reveals this truth through the content of the spoken word which Paul was pleased to be called to share.
- D. Vs. 4 “*In OUR common faith.*”: This “common faith” means that the Word of God is universal in nature and as such doesn’t have truth for some and not others.

Vs. 2 Going further and doing better is motivated by the hope of eternal life which is only possible because of our trust in Jesus. Eternal life doesn’t just exist in heaven far away it’s here now in our hearts. The closer we get to Jesus the more heaven we enjoy now and the further we are from Him the more our life becomes a living hell.

Vs. 3 There are folks who view people who come to church once or more a week to hear the bible taught as a waste of time, but God has chosen to “*manifest His word through preaching.*” We all will spend hours being entertained by a football game that in the end won’t produce anything lasting as most folks won’t be able to tell you who won the game in three years. Ah but the word of God will change me during the time I spend hearing it and applying it.

III. Vs. 4 A true son

Vs. 4 Like Timothy, Paul had been greatly influential in Titus' life. Galatians chapter 2 tells us that as a Greek he had traveled with Paul to the council at Jerusalem. He was a center piece of the argument that salvation came by way of grace through faith alone and not of works through circumcision. In 2 Corinthians chapter 8 he was used to help raise funds for the church in Jerusalem for famine relief. He was sent to Crete and later to present day Bosnia. When you trace Titus travel itinerary you see that he is always sent into be around or help fix controversy and difficulties. Titus is a guy that had the gift of repairing that which is broken and in need of a repairman and Paul had the utmost confidence that he could be of use where ever he was sent. In fact like Timothy he calls Titus his "*true son in our common faith*". Paul's salutation is practical and powerful as he wishes Titus the trifecta of "*Grace, mercy and peace*" which can only be found in "*God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior*".

The major differences between the Pastoral letters to Timothy and this one to Titus is slight: **The two letters to Timothy emphasize the importance of sound teaching,** whereas in **Titus Paul emphasizes sound behavior, "The truth that is which is in accordance to godliness"**. Lose teaching makes for lose living, but it is possible to contend for the faith while at the same time not being consistent with that profession. A simple outline of these three chapters sees:

1. Chapter 1: The need for godliness in the church
2. Chapter 2: The need for godliness in the home
3. Chapter 3: the need for godliness in the world

