

6-23-24 Every Good Work (Titus)

Week 1

Text: Titus 1:1–4

Topic(s): Leadership, Mentoring, Good Works

Big Idea of the Message: Paul articulates the good works of a leader.

Application Point: Whether one is a leader of leaders, a leader of a congregation, or a personal mentor, there are recognizable practices and attributes each must maintain and show forth.

We're beginning a new series today from the New Testament book of Titus. This short book is often forgotten in the shadows of Scripture because of its size and because many of its themes are duplicated in First and Second Timothy. But this section of Scripture is very relevant to our lives today. **2 Timothy 3:16** reminds us that **"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness."**

Who was Titus?

- Titus was a convert of Paul. **Titus 1:4: "To Titus, a true son..."** Paul also discipled and mentored this man in the faith.
- Titus was a friend of Paul. Titus went with Paul to the Jerusalem council to argue that Gentile converts did not have to keep the Law (**Acts 15**). In **2 Corinthians 8:23, Paul refers to him as "...my partner and fellow worker among you."**
- Titus was a man of conviction. **Galatians 2:3-5 gives us some detail: "Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek...We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you."**
- Titus brought comfort to Paul. **2 Corinthians 7:6: "But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus,"**
- Titus was trustworthy. Titus was entrusted with collecting an offering from the Corinthians in **2 Corinthians 8:6: "Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete among you this act of grace."**
- Titus had a servant's heart. **2 Corinthians 8:16, "But thanks be to God, who put into the heart of Titus the same earnest care I have for you."**
- Paul trusted in Titus's ability to troubleshoot and lead God's church. **Titus 1:5: "This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you."**

Titus was positioned on Crete, located southeast of Greece in the Mediterranean Sea. This Roman province had a hundred cities, many of which were heavily populated and very independent. To be known as a Cretan was not a good thing.

One of their own poets, whom Paul quotes in **Titus 1:12**, referred to these people as **"always liars, evil breasts, lazy gluttons."** The Philistines, who were the arch enemies of Israel throughout the

Old Testament, hailed from this island. Cretans were also steeped in pagan superstition and false religion, believing that Zeus was born on one of their mountains.

As we study these verses, a principle arises: Ministry is **ALWAYS** messy. **Proverbs 14:4: “Where there are no oxen, the manger is clean, but abundant crops come by the strength of the ox.”** If we’re going to reach out to those in Crete, it will be messy. When the ox messes up the manger, it accomplishes the purpose for which it was created. We must be willing to make a mess to save a life. To have an impact on our world, we must first stand on the truth if we hope to saturate those around us with the truth.

Read Titus 1:1-4.

How should we live while we live in Crete? **“Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons.”**

1. Embrace your identity.

- **“Paul, a bondservant of God...”** The very first way that Paul describes himself in this letter is, **“a servant of God.”** He could have pulled out his resume and referred to himself as a scholar, appealing to his religious heritage, his unique calling, his authorship of so many books of Scripture, of being brought up to the third heaven, but he didn’t. Paul chose a word that literally means slave, “one whose will is swallowed up in the will of another.”
- Christian’s, we too are “one whose will is swallowed up in the will of another.” This should be a mark of a follower of Christ. His will should replace ours.
- **Slave:** one who completely belongs to his master with no freedom of his own. **Servant:** one who willingly chooses to serve his master.
- If we are followers of Christ. If we are believers, we have a new identity, we are NO longer the old person. We are servant of Christ. He is our identity. I am no longer my own, I am owned by another. Jesus.
- Too often we can find ourselves suffering from identity crises. We are caught in a conundrum between doing what the old nature desires and what the new nature desires.
- The first step is to acknowledge you have a problem; the next step is challenging it; baby step if you need. But be careful, as too many of us get stuck in the first step and wonder why we are frustrated.
- Embrace your identity. God has called you for His purpose. What has He called you to do? Share the gospel. Live obedient after His ways. Get to know Him, through His word and prayer. Suffer for the cause of Christ.
- Embrace your identity in Christ. You are a friend of God (John 15:15, “I call you friends”). You are God’s masterpiece (Eph. 2:10, “his workmanship”). You are children of God (Gal. 3:26). You are loved (Rom. 5:8). You are free (John 8:36). You are new (2 Cor. 5:17)
- Your name is friend of God. Your name is God’s masterpiece. Your name is child of God. Your name is loved of God. Your name is free in Christ. Your name is new in Christ.

2. Pursue after godliness.

- Godliness seems to be one of Paul's favorite words. He repeats it often. **(1 Tim. 2:2; 3:16; 4:7-8; 6:3, 5, 6, 11; 2 Tim. 3:5)**
- Paul knew who he was, he embraced his identity and that drove him to do what he was supposed to do. Because Paul embraced his identity he knew his purpose. *"You do what you do because of what you think of you"*
- Paul was a servant and an apostle **"according to the faith of God's elect."** Paul's mission was to fortify the faithful and grow them into godliness.
- The word **"elect"** means "to pick out for oneself." The **"elect,"** according to Paul, are those who have accepted the gospel message (the Church) and are therefore secure before God.
- One commentator put it this way: "Although surrounded with mystery, the biblical teaching on election... assures faithful, struggling believers that their salvation is all of God from beginning to end" (Hiebert, "Titus and Philemon," 1957).
- Paul encourages servants of Christ as he connects doctrine and duty. **"...the acknowledgment of the truth which accords (leads to) with godliness,"**
- Knowledge is more than just knowing facts; it implies a more intimate and personal relationship with truth.
- Truth must transform the way we live. Proper belief must lead to practical behavior.
- Doctrine is **DEADLY** when it is divorced from godly living. Because the Cretan culture had so many ungodly elements to it, the believers were to demonstrate the reality and possibility of godly living.
- The word **"godliness"** is derived from two words which literally mean, "well reverence" or "well worship" and is used to describe the awesome respect we are to have of God. We should think so highly of Him that it shakes up the way we live.
- There is no such thing as drifting into deep discipleship. If we're going to be godly, we must go after it, we must be intentional, deliberate. And the best way for that to happen is to grow in our knowledge of the truth.
- Remember what I stated weeks ago: Knowledge applied with understanding leads to wisdom. Wisdom is the end results of applying God's knowledge and understanding. God's wisdom can only be found through obedience lived out.
- The Scribes and Pharisees focused on external standards of godliness. Jesus showed them that what's in the heart is most important.
- I like how John Piper puts it: "Godliness is a love for the things of God and a walk in the ways of God."
- Are you growing in godliness? Are you living with a **"bondservant's"** mindset, with everything you do before the face of God?
- If you want to impact the Cretans around you, you must remember that they are reading you a great deal more than they are reading the Bible.

3. Enjoy eternity now.

- **Verse 2: "in hope of eternal life..."**
- Our faith and knowledge rest on the hope of eternal life. We can have certainty in what we believe because we have hope.

- Hope is the superstructure on which genuine godliness is built.
- This word hope is different from how many of us use it. Some of you are “hoping” that the Bills are going to be beat the Lions this coming season...but that’s not going to happen. But you will keep hoping!
- Hope as used in the Bible is living with absolute certainty. It’s the idea of looking ahead eagerly with confident expectation.
- Looking into the future should accelerate godly living today.
- For those who have put their faith in Christ, eternal life is so certain that it doesn’t begin when you die but rather kicks off at conversion.
- Fam, Brethren, eternal life is not just some vague hope for the future; it’s an absolute reality for the believer.
- We can live each day celebrating our eternity! And do so by living obedient to our calling.

4. Count on God’s character.

- The basis for our belief is grounded in God himself. Look at the phrase in **verse 2: “...which God, who cannot lie,”** This truth about God is in direct contrast to the Cretan culture.
- God is free from all deceit. The Greek literally reads, “The non-lying God.” **Numbers 23:19: “God is not a man, that he should lie.” Hebrews 6:18: “It is impossible for God to lie.”** God is the very essence of truth!
- In direct opposition is the devil who is described by Jesus in **John 8:44** as being the “**father of lies.**” God’s character backs up the hope of eternal life. Because He said it, it’s true, and it will happen.
- God is a promise keeping God. What He has said, He will do. You can count on His character. As Joshua reminded the people before he died:

“And now I am about to go the way of all the earth, and you know in your hearts and souls, all of you, that not one word has failed of all the good things that the Lord your God promised concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one of them has failed.” Joshua 23:14

“The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.” 2 Peter 3:9

- What promise do you need to believe today?
- Is there something you’re struggling with?
- Is doubt causing you some distress?
- Claim the promises of God and then sing His praise.

5. Trust God’s timing.

- Notice **verse 3, “...has in due time manifested His word through preaching,”**
- All of God’s promises will come true but it’s on His timetable, not ours. Events on God’s calendar occur at designated times in history according to His perfect wisdom. The timing of Jesus’ birth, for example, is one of Paul’s favorite themes.
- The purpose behind God’s timing is often known only to Him.
- Do you have a hard time waiting on God’s timing?

- What is it right now that you're struggling with?
- You're not alone. Walk through the season of life that you're in so that you will be prepared for the next one. God is never late; but He is rarely early. Trust His timing. And don't disregard the fact that if you have not put your faith and trust in Jesus yet, you must do so before it's too late.

For God says, "At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation, I helped you." Indeed, the "right time" is now. Today is the day of salvation. 2 Corinthians 6:2

6. Keep sharing the good news!

- **"...through preaching, which was committed to according to the commandment of God our Savior."**
- People must hear the gospel before they can respond. We must earn the right to be heard and live a lifestyle that makes people thirsty, but we must also proclaim the message with our mouths.
- Paul understood that preaching was entrusted to him. Listen to how passionate he feels about his job.

For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! 17 For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward, but if not of my own will, I am still entrusted with a stewardship. 1 Corinthians 9:16-17

- Be always ready to share the gospel. When the opportunity comes, say a quick prayer and give let God do His work through you.

7. Stand in faith.

- **Read verse 4.**
- The words **"in our common faith"** means that which belongs to several. Jesus prayed in **John 17:21: "...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you."**
- The biblical model is unity within diversity. I am not better than you and you are not better than me. This church is not better than other Bible-believing churches. As we commit to what we have in common (faith) with other Christians through Christ, we will be much better off.
- Paul then finishes his introduction with the words **"Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."** Grace is unmerited favor and peace is experienced by those who respond to the grace of God.

Conclusion

We can stand for the truth because of the grace we've been given. We can do that by...

Embrace your identity

Pursuing after godliness

Enjoying eternity now

Count on God's character

Trusting God's timing

Keep sharing the good news (gospel)

Stand in faith

What stand do you need to take this morning?

"If you try to change your behavior without changing your identity, you're pulling up a weed without getting to the root."

What is it that God is prompting your heart about?

How will you respond?

Do you know Jesus intimately?

Do you know Him as your Lord and Savior? You can, but you must be willing to lay your identity down and embrace His.

Will you today?

Brethren, those that already believers, maybe you have become too complacent? Maybe you have been hurt? Maybe you have believed a lie. Will you recommit your life? Turn back. Embrace your identity.

Will you please stand right now if you've made a commitment to be Christ's man or woman in Crete?

"Sought after (Isa. 62:12) Precious in his sight (Isa. 43:4) A new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17) Not condemned (Rom. 8:1) Forgiven (Col. 1:14) Loved (1 John 3:1) Accepted (Rom. 15:7) A child of God (John 1:12) Jesus' friend (John 15:14) Free (John 8:36) The temple of God (1 Cor. 6:19) God's treasured possession (Deut. 7:6) Complete in Christ (Col. 2:10 NLT) Chosen (Col. 3:12) Called (2 Tim. 1:9) An ambassador of the Most High God (2 Cor. 5:20) God's masterpiece (Eph. 2:10 NLT) Able to do all things through Christ, who gives you strength (Phil. 4:13) More than a conqueror through Jesus, who loves you (Rom. 8:37)"

