

A TOUGH PEOPLE TO PASTOR

Paul addresses this letter in verse 4, "To Titus, a true son in our common faith." As with Timothy, Paul and Titus also had a spiritual father-son relationship.

Paul and Titus had known each other 20 years. Apparently, they had met on Paul's first missionary journey to Galatia. Titus was a Gentile. And he became the flashpoint that ignited Paul's confrontation with the Judaizers in Jerusalem.

The Jews tried to force Titus to be circumcised, but Paul refused to buckle. Paul knew rules and rituals had nothing to do with salvation. Paul took a stand for grace! God accepted Titus through faith in Christ alone - and so did Paul!

Titus continued to minister with Paul over the years. Along with Timothy, Titus was a faithful and effective troubleshooter. He was with Paul on his voyage from Caesarea to Rome, and when Paul's ship stopped off on the island of Crete, a little southeast of Greece, Titus stayed behind to minister to the church.

During Paul's 2nd imprisonment we know that Titus joined Paul in Rome, and for a time after, ministered in Dalmatia.

Devotion Box - What God Cannot Do

Titus 1:2 tells us that our faith is "in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, but has in due time manifested His word through preaching which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior..." Note, here we're told one of the things that God cannot do. He cannot lie!

An interesting study is to go through the Bible and list all the things God cannot do. James 1:13, "God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone." 2 Timothy 2:13, "(God) cannot deny Himself." He can't violate His word.

There are some acts God cannot do - and one is to lie. That's why you can always take God's Word to the bank! What God promises He is faithful to do!

But eventually Titus returned to Crete.

In describing the Cretans, in Titus 1:12 Paul quotes a local author who had characterized his own people as, "always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons..." - not a very flattering description, to say the least... Titus had been asked by Paul to pastor a church full of Cretans - obviously, a church *full* of difficult people.

Which brings up the question, how do you handle difficult people? As a church leader, how do you deal with folks who've never learned to express their opinion in constructive ways? This was the challenge facing Pastor Titus...

Paul's letter to his friend, Titus, expresses one certainty - when dealing with difficult people strong leadership is an absolute essential! In three short chapters Paul condenses the instructions he communicated in his first letter to Timothy - and provides Titus a crash course in effective spiritual leadership...

The church historian, Eusebius, tells us that Titus pastored the Cretan church into old age. *Apparently, it's possible to even grow fond of difficult people.*

Devotion Box - Bondservant Of God

Paul begins with an introduction, 1:1, "Paul, a bondservant of God..." When Paul uses this term "bondservant" he takes us to Exodus 21, and laws dealing with Old Testament slaves. Slavery in ancient Israel was used as a means of paying off a person's debts. Rather than file bankruptcy, the debtor became a part of his creditor's household and worked to pay off his debts.

Often, a slave who served a benevolent master ended up living a better life in his master's house than on his own. In response, when it came time for him to regain his freedom, he would forego it, and opt to remain in his master's house.

To symbolize his voluntary devotion - and his love for his master - the slave was taken to the door of his master's house. There, before the judges of the city, an awl was driven through the lobe of his ear, pinning him to the house. His pierced ear forever identified him as a "love-slave", or "bondservant".

Paul considered himself a "love-slave" of Jesus. At first, he became a Christian because he owed the Lord an enormous debt. But the longer he served this kind and benevolent Savior the more he realized he could do far better in God's house than he could do on his own. He was glad to be a slave. Paul pinned himself to the door. What about you? Are you a "bondservant of God"?

Bible Scan - Titus 1-3, Philemon 1

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TRUE OF EVERY CHURCH

In 1:5 Paul reminds Titus of his original purpose for staying behind in Crete, "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking..."

Guys, there's no such thing as a perfect church – *and if there was the moment you joined it you would ruin it!* Every church has things that are lacking. Each church has its own shortcomings and deficiencies – and it's the pastor's job to constantly be taking spiritual inventory.

When people inform me about some deficiency in our church usually I'm one step ahead. I agree with them. I'm always looking for weaknesses. And it's our job to shore up those weaknesses as we continue to bolster our strengths.

Devotion Box - A Subtle Insubordination

Verse 10, "For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers." Understand, there are two types of insubordination – implicit and explicit. If you entertain a criticism – if you're just trying to serve as a sounding board – without sounding back that the criticism is wrong, or unfair, or uninformed – then you're giving implicit approval to the criticism. You've become party to the rebellion. Idle talk is often just as dangerous as outright lies and deception.

Understand, for a virus to remain in your body it has to have a host cell. It takes root in a cell that provides it shelter and nourishment ... and spreads from there...

The same is true with a bad attitude in the church. It too finds a host cell – a person or persons who may not agree with the attitude – but tolerate it. Without realizing it, the host cell provides shelter and nourishment for the bad attitude to grow and spread. Idle talkers and deceivers are both forms of insubordination.

LESSONS OF GRACE

According to 2:11-14 grace teaches us how to live, where to look, who to love, and why the lift...

How to live? We respond to undeserved love by "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age."

Where to look? We're "looking for the blessed hope (or the rapture) and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ..."

Who to love? The Lord who loved us enough to give "Himself for us."

And why the lift? God wants to make us a special people – purified from the world's pollution, and unified in our passion for good works!

Grace changes everything! Our life... our look... our love... our lift...

QUALIFICATIONS FOR CHURCH LEADERS

The qualifications for an elder begin in 1:6, "If a man is blameless..." There's nothing hanging over his head – no outstanding warrants for his arrest. "The husband of one wife," – literally, "a one-woman man". "Having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination..." Not perfect kids, but not out-of-control kids.

"For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God..." An elder or pastor needs to understand that the church belongs to Jesus. We're just stewards.

Once a salesman came to town looking for the local *Church of God*. He asked a resident if he knew the way to the church. The man answered, "Well, there's a church on Main Street, but it belongs to a couple of rich cats that keep it afloat... Then there's a church on Maple, but it belongs to a stubborn old grunt that runs the show. And there's a church on Elm Street, but it belongs to the family that founded it... No, I don't think there's any church in this town that belongs to God." When a leader acts as if he owns the church, there's a problem. Church leadership exists to represent God and carry out His intentions.

"...Not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict." A man who's afraid of confrontation shouldn't be a leader.

Devotion Box - A Matter Of The Heart

He says in verse 15, "To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled." All too often we determine right and wrong by how activities have been labeled by others. The group says it's wrong so it must be wrong, but labels don't always work. Right or wrong depends more on the heart of the person involved.

Take an adult square dance for example. *Is it good or evil?* Well, it depends. If your heart is full of love for God and love for others then it can be a fun time – a way to relax and have good fellowship. But if there's lust in your heart dancing around with members of the opposite sex could provide an opportunity for evil.

A pure heart can keep a beneficial activity pure, but an evil heart turns even a harmless, wholesome activity into an evil. Good and evil depends on the heart. If the heart is pure, the activity is pure. If the heart is evil, the activity will be evil.

Devotion Box - Dealing With The Divisive

In 3:10 says, "Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning..."

It's been said, "A troublemaker is a person who rocks the boat, then convinces everyone else there's a storm at sea." The person who delights in being divisive, needs to be shown the door. He can harm the harmony of a church. Paul says, warn him twice *and if he doesn't change his way, send him on his way!*

"...but according to His mercy He saved us..."
- Titus 3:5

WHAT OLDER WOMEN SHOULD TEACH YOUNGER WOMEN AND WHY...

Titus exhorts the older women, “that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things...” And who should they be teaching? Verse 4, “that they admonish the young women...”

Too many churches set their pastors up for failure by not taking this verse seriously. When a pastor counsels a young lady on an ongoing basis dangerous dynamics are set in motion... The woman sees the pastor as her hero, and can develop an attraction toward him... On the other hand, a pastor feels needed and appreciated – even idolized. You know where this is all going... This is why the older women – not the pastors – should disciple the younger women.

And the first lesson they should teach is “to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet...” Younger women need to learn to be appropriate in their conduct and conversation. And “chaste” or modest - “*chaste*” means “*pure*”.

They also need to be taught to be “homemakers.”

Once a little boy was asked if his family said a prayer before dinner. The little fellow answered, “Naw, we don’t have to, mom’s a really good cook.”

Ladies, are you a good homemaker? The Greek word means, “a keeper or guardian of the home”. Paul wants to make sure the younger women order

their lives in a way that puts them in a position where they can oversee and manage the affairs of their family. Dad is the head, the CEO; but mom is the office manager who needs to run the day-to-day. Momma bird needs to be in charge of the nest.

Now, this doesn’t mean a woman can’t venture out of her house to earn money for the family, no more than it means a husband, whose primary duty is to provide for his family, can’t help his wife clean and manage the home. As you learned in Proverbs 31, the virtuous woman is seen as quite a successful business woman. Yet, it does mean that no matter how industrious and ambitious a woman might be, her chief responsibility is to manage a peaceful and orderly home base.

Understand, *home* is the most vital place on earth. *Home is where life makes up its mind*. Home is a family’s refuge, and sanctuary. A stable home makes for stable kids and a steady husband. A woman who neglects her home and allows chaos to rule is out of the will of God. Her family should be her #1 priority.

The older women need to teach the younger women to be “homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.” Apparently, women who fail to follow their husbands are failing to follow God.

TO PHILEMON... AND TO THE CHURCH IN YOUR HOUSE

Paul’s next letter is “To Philemon our beloved friend and fellow laborer...”

You’ve heard of people who send letters of encouragement to prisoners. This was a letter from a prisoner. Paul was incarcerated in Rome when a twist of providence took place that put to the test Paul’s friendship with Philemon...

Paul had met and become friends with Philemon while in Colossae. Philemon, his wife Apphia, and son Archippus constituted a wonderful Christian family who opened their home to the church. The Colossians met at Philemon’s house.

Don’t forget— the church met in homes for the first 275 years of its existence. Its most successful period of expansion occurred when fellowships of believers were based in a home setting. A home provided an informal, friendly, less-threatening, atmosphere that was perfectly suited for reaching people with the Gospel.

Acts 2:46-47 says this of the infant church, “So

continuing daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” But note the combination: they met in the Temple - a large corporate gathering, but they also met from house to house- the more intimate setting.

Always remember, nowhere in the New Testament does the word “*church*” ever refer to the building. We, the people, are the church.

Once a youth worker complained to the pastor that the kids were chewing gum in the sanctuary... The pastor corrected him, “No, the sanctuary is chewing gum”. Jesus promised us in Matthew 18:20, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst of them.” Always remember a building is a convenience for a church— but it’s not a requirement.

Bible Scan - Titus 1-3, Philemon 1

Calvary Chapel

If you have questions on tonight's study email Pastor Sandy - sandyadams@calvarychapel.org
For back issues of Bible Scan study guides: www.calvarychapelstonemountain.com/biblescan.htm

Calvary Chapel Announcements - Thursday, October 31st 6:30-8:30 PM—Hallelujah Fest—please drop off your candy donations at the Info Counter...6:30 PM, High School Youth Group Pumpkin Olympics...November 1st –Haiti Mission Trip begins...Sunday, November 10th—Julissa Neely and Band...Next Bible Scan - December 1, 2002 - Hebrews 1-9

“Not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.” - Titus 3:5

**Bible Scan
Memory Verse**

KEMOSABES IN CHRIST

Paul calls Philemon “our beloved friend and fellow laborer”. Paul’s friendship with Philemon had been forged in the midst of laboring together for the Lord. They say men in the military - who’ve shared the frontlines - who’ve been in battle together- mold deep and durable lifetime friendships. And that’s why I believe one of the best ways to make friends is to get involved with serving the Lord. When you share the joys and jolts of spiritual service with another person a special, unbreakable bond forms - a neat friendship develops! Paul and Philemon served alongside each other and fought on the frontlines in the Lord’s army.

Remember Tonto’s name for the Lone Ranger? It was “Kemosabe”. *And do you now what Kemosabe means?* How about, “Faithful friend.” A trust - a faithfulness - was forged between the Lone Ranger and Tonto because of the many battles they fought together... When the bullets start flying, a trust begins to develop.

THE DEEPER PICTURE

In Martin Luther’s commentary on Philemon he wrote, “All of us are Onesimus!” We all were unprofitable slaves - on the run from God. We departed for awhile, only to be received back forever! And no longer just as slaves, but as joint-heirs with Jesus. And just as Paul interceded for Onesimus... Jesus is interceding for us!

Paul intercedes for Onesimus in 1:17-18, “If then you count me as a partner, receive him as you would me. But if he has wronged you or owes anything, put that on my account.” What Paul does for Onesimus is a picture of what Christ has done for us...

Mankind has two problems: 1) we cannot attain God’s standard and 2) we cannot pay our debt. On the asset side of life’s ledger we lack enough merit to gain God’s favor. On the liability side, we owe far too much than we could ever begin to pay off. But Christ, the Accountant of Grace, has an answer...

In verse 17 He tinkers with the assets. He adds wealth, righteousness, stature. As Philemon was encouraged to accept Onesimus as he would Paul - God vows to receive us as He receives His own Son. In Christ when I approach God I am assured of His acceptance since He promises to treat me just as He treats Jesus!

And in verse 18, on the liability side, just as Paul agrees to cover Onesimus’ debts - Jesus promises to cover my spiritual debts. On the cross of Calvary, the Lord Jesus took over our payments, and covered them in full. Our debt was cleared!

HE’S PROFITABLE AGAIN

Onesimus was Philemon’s runaway slave. He had left Colossae and traveled 900 miles to the big city of Rome. There he figured he could get lost in the crowd.

One night, though, Philemon got himself into trouble. He was at a bar - had too much to drink - ended up in a fisticuffs with another guy - and was tossed into the slammer. And the next morning, when he awoke from his drunken stupor, he looked around the jail cell, and realized he’d been locked up with Paul!

As the rabbis say, “Coincidence is not a kosher word.” There are no accidents in God’s plan. Onesimus’ reunion with Paul was a divine encounter - a God thing! He was converted through Paul’s witness, and became a brother.

Verse 11 employs a play on words. “Onesimus” means “profitable”. Thus Paul writes to Philemon about Onesimus, “who once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable to you and to me.” Before he left, Onesimus was more a headache than a help, but now Jesus has made him profitable. He’s now a real Onesimus. And that’s true of us, Jesus doesn’t just purify us, He makes us profitable and usable and fruitful.

Devotion Box - Skill Of An Appeal

That’s why Paul is now writing to his buddy Philemon. He’s making an appeal. He’s asking him to receive Onesimus again - not as a slave, but as a brother.

But notice how Paul makes his appeal. He doesn’t use his authority - instead his appeal is based on love. As he says in verse 9, “yet for love’s sake...”

Paul doesn’t push, he pulls. He could’ve ordered Philemon. After all He was “Paul, the aged” - 30 years an apostle. Paul was a spiritual heavyweight, yet he didn’t like to throw his weight around. Paul hoped Philemon would receive Onesimus not because he had to, but because he wanted to.

Be careful when you push a friend, and make demands, and order him or her around. A true friend relies not on browbeating, or guilt trips, or pressure tactics, or pay backs - *but love...* Love with no strings attached. The best way to preserve a friendship is to avoid pressuring your friend - we’re to be brothers, not barterers.