

Titus: Becoming a Sound Church

06 Christian Charity

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When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing. And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful.

All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith.

Grace be with you all

I. INTRODUCTION

What kind of church should we be? How should we be known in Christian communities and to those who are not in Christian communities?... I can remember in college talking with a friend who was really questioning Christianity. It was solely based upon the actions of Christians he knew. Now, I did remind him that as many bad example he might have, he did have good ones as well. But the point still remains, do we look like Christ? Well, that is something to ponder and hopefully are conclusion will be that we are humbling attempting to show Christ to the world; through our actions, attitudes, and charitable demeanor.

Lets makes some sense of this farewell first and then spend substantial time reflecting on what is said here and implications for us. So this section of the book of Titus really has two components, people and what Titus and the church are to do for them.

II. PEOPLE

A. Artemas and Tychicus (12)

1. When one of these men get there Titus is to come/make haste to Paul at Nicopolis
2. Who are these men?
 - a) Well there is no other mention of *Artemas* in the bible but we can gather that he was a friend and faithful minister or Paul would not have sent him as a replacement for Titus.

The work at Crete was still heavy with opposition. As a minister you will have to accept bumps and bruises, some will love you and some will not understand your leading, perhaps Crete had a few of these people because we know there were some causing dissension.

There was still a hard work left...so it is safe to say that Artemas would have been a qualified man especially considering the example of Chapter 1.

- b) On the other hand *Tychicus* is often mentioned in the scriptures (Acts 20:4 / Eph 6:21 / Col 4:7 / 2 Tim 4:10,12).

He accompanied Paul on multiple journeys and carried out several ministry task given him. He is described in Ephesians as a “beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord.”

He was tasked with giving a report to the Ephesians and also Colossians on how Paul was doing and about his activities. It is likely that since Tychicus

was sent to Ephesus that Artemas was Titus's replacement in Crete.

The next two men we are introduced to are...

B. Zenas and Apollos (13)

1. Who were these men

- a) Well once again just like the first two men, *Zenas* has no other mentions in Scriptures where as Apollos is well known.

But we can rest assured again that Zenas had to be a qualified man and an example to the Church in Crete of all the qualities in chapter 1.

Especially since he is already there passing through to another work with Apollos who was a well-known Christian worker. The other describer we get indicates that Zenas was more than likely and expert on Roman law.

- b) *Apollos* has many mentions throughout the NT (Acts 18:24, 19:1 / 1 Cor 1:12, 3:4,5,6,22 4:6 16:12). He was a native of Alexandria who spoke boldly in Ephesus.

He was an eloquent man and competent in the Scriptures. So much so that the Church in Corinth had arrogantly and vindictively began to proclaim they followed him instead of Paul.

Definitely not Apollos fault but does indicate his level of skill. Apollos apparently did significant work alongside Paul because Paul states in 1 Corinthians that he, Paul, planted and Apollos

watered. He was a faithful and competent worker for the gospel.

Now he and Zenas are passing through onto another work. So Titus is to ensure the church there helps these men in their midst. They are to...

2. *speed their departure*... This is not a suggestion. Actually, Paul is commanding Titus to help them on their way, assists them.

Whatever they need; supplies, rest, encouragement, financial support, prayer, whatever—give it to them and quickly.

3. *make sure they lack nothing*... equip these men so thoroughly they lack nothing. Invest in them and their work in gospel engagement. They are to be very charitable to them in supporting their efforts.

The next group Paul addresses in his farewell is...

C. Our People (14)

1. A bit of a weird designation for Paul to say “our” people but not too out of place considering.

As we have seen over the past few weeks, there is false teaching in Crete; so, Paul is saying emphatically that those who don't follow their teaching, which is sound doctrine, are not “our” people.

He is making a distinction between groups of people and in turn indicating that the church cannot do good works until doctrine is sound, until beliefs are accurate.

The reason I say that is because right after he addresses the believers who hold to right teaching he states that...

2. The believers there at Crete and to *continually* learn to devote themselves to good works. Exact some wording as 3:8. As stated last week, this is a common theme for the book of Titus.

One cannot have Christ as their savior and not have works that match that salvation. So in closing Paul is taking one final reminder that the Christians there are to continue to learn long after this letter has been read and placed on the shelf.

The only way to learn, according to Paul is to do it!
Why do these things?

- a) so to help cases of urgent need and not be unfruitful. Paul is saying that there is right now in front of them an urgent need.

Zenas and Apollos are on their way to continue the work of proclaiming the gospel and establishing local churches. There is no more urgent need than helping them accomplish that goal.

Now I don't think we are to simply lock urgent need into that one occurrence. Notice Paul has stated to continually learn.

Do this concrete need in front of you now and then continue as needs arise to help others in gospel work and in doing your own gospel work; so that, you do not become unfruitful as a church, to

become useless as a local body of believers who are suppose to represent the Godhead.

Apparently, the church had been leaning towards being unfruitful so Paul has taken this entire letter to strengthen their works by strengthen their understanding of God's grace given them through Jesus.

- D. The last group Paul addresses are the people with Paul and those who love them there in Crete (15)
1. People w/ Paul send greetings
 2. Greet those there who love them
 3. Paul is extremely gracious in his dealings and wants those who are there in Crete concerned about him to be comforted by his letter so he gives a personal greeting to them.

III. FINAL WORD

- A. *Grace be with you...*theologically rich by this point in the letter. The word grace has appeared only 4 times in the letter but it has shown up at significant points.

Grace first shows up in Paul's greeting to Titus and the last occurrence is here in his farewell to all the believers in Crete. The other two are super important to the beauty of this letter.

Both of those occurrences fall in the sections were Paul unpacks the work of God through the Son of God by the Spirit of God to save us! 2:11 says God's grace appeared in Jesus bringing salvation and then in 3:7 states we have been justified by God's grace.

Oh how sweet God's grace is and how appropriate for Paul to ask for that grace to be with them, for it to be their focus.

IV. THEREFORE...

A. *Urgent needs...*

1. Where does the gospel need to be in our community?
2. Where is there deep pain that needs healing?
3. Where is there hopelessness that needs gospel centered hope?
4. Where are the felt needs (poverty, homelessness, foster care, etc.) so deep that one cannot even see their real need (spiritual)?
5. Who are people you know or perhaps you sitting in this room that we could better equip to be about gospel work?
6. If you think of a map showing our gathering it would reveal that we are clustered together in one spot. But then imagine all those dots spreading out from here. Well that is what happens each week...we gather, then scatter.

You must notice urgent needs were the gospel needs to be proclaimed. We must learn how to appropriate the gospel in all of life, see the gospel's affect on all situations.

- ##### B. Not becoming *unfruitful*...The worst thing a church can do is become unfruitful. This usually happens when we, as Titus has clearly laid out for us, let go of sound doctrine. When sound doctrine is loosened the cords of the entire church unravel.

Sound doctrine is like a very sturdy cable holding a 1200 lb. piano suspended in the sky, but when it is clipped a little here and a little there...the piano cannot be supported so it falls to its peril.

When we clip a little there and a little here on sound doctrine, the church cannot be support and it will fall to its peril.

Ultimately, we have seen time and time again in Titus that works, fruitful works, is a result of sound doctrine that reminds us of Christ work on our behalf.

C. Church *for* the city/community...A very articulate pastor in New York has made some helpful distinctions in regards to gospel engagement from the church to the culture.¹

1. We should not be a church *against* the city because this results in us verses them. This is a church that disengages the culture around them and lashes out with ungracious speech and very rarely gets to the gospel because they view their job only to identify the problem.
2. We should not be a church *of* the city because this results in a church that looks just like the surrounding culture offering no help. This is a church that engages at every level of culture in almost complete agreement with their view of the world and what is wrong. They very rarely get to the gospel because it is their job to make sure the culture knows they love and accept them and to proclaim gospel truths as the greatest need would be to confrontational.
3. We should not be a church *in* the city because this church simply gathers and creates programs to minister

¹ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/4-kinds-churches-city>

to their people. They never get to the gospel because the sole purpose of ministry is to themselves.

4. But rather we want to become a Church *for* the city this church seeks what is best for the city which can ultimately only be accomplished through the glorious work of Christ on the cross. This church often gets to the gospel because they know that peace is only established through first peace with God. This church is not afraid to engage the culture around them but is desiring to point all they encounter towards Jesus—a Jesus who has appeared! This is most evident by how Paul concludes the letter...

D. Grace!

1. *Grace be with you all...* what must come to their minds when Paul says grace be with you? If you simply take the letter, the most predominate statement in regards to grace is that it has appeared in Christ (2:11). We help by bringing the grace that God has brought to us... which is Jesus! If you don't understand what is meant by Jesus, the word gospel, God's grace...check out your bulletin and see the biblical understanding of the gospel, of the work of God's grace through Jesus.

Do not leave this room without talking to someone. If God is working on you ask some questions before you leave. I will be around or feel free to contact me this afternoon, but please don't hesitate. If God is working respond.