

“The Final Greeting” – Titus 3:12-15

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June 7, 2026

[What follows is the transcript of a sermon. It was originally intended to be heard, not read, so the tone is more conversational than academic. It has only been loosely edited, so forgive any grammatical, syntactical, or spelling errors. If you have questions, please contact Southern Oaks Baptist Church through their official website, www.welovethegospel.com.]

Take a Bible and meet me in Titus 3...

For the past couple months, we have been working our way systematically and consecutively through this book, watching the Apostle Paul instruct Titus on how to cultivate healthy, vibrant churches on the island of Crete. Today, we have finally arrived at the closing paragraph. Typically, when modern readers hit a list of ancient travel arrangements, obscure names, and routine final greetings, our eyes glaze over. We treat the end of a first-century epistle like the scrolling credits at the end of a movie. We think the main story is over, and it's time to check out.

In 1996, an author named Richard Carlson published a massive bestseller titled *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff*. His stated purpose was to help people look at common situations differently so they wouldn't lose sleep over life's minor details. Generally speaking, that's good advice. But as we consider these final four verses of Titus 3 together, I would like for us to adopt an entirely different mindset. My encouragement to you today is not “Don't sweat the small stuff,” but rather, “Don't *miss* the small stuff.”¹

There is a profoundly rewarding, yet challenging, exercise in refused skimming. When we slow down and examine this seemingly routine sign-off, we discover that there is actually no such thing as “small stuff” in the economy of God's kingdom and mission. What looks like ancient administrative paperwork is actually a fascinating window into how the early Christian network was sustained through real, everyday obedience.

And if all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for us (2 Tim 3:16-17), then these verses aren't just filler. They matter. In fact, these closing words are where the theological rubber meets the road. Here again, we see the grand doctrines we have been studying descend from the clouds of theory and plant themselves in the ground of the early Christian community. And it's relevant for us because Paul is showing us what a Gospel-shaped church actually looks like in real time. It looks like deeply committed partnership, radical generosity, and community anchored in and sustained by grace. In these final instructions to Titus, we are reminded that the Gospel doesn't just change our relationship with God. It radically reshapes our relationship with one another. It transforms a group of isolated individuals into a unified, mission-minded family.

So let's have a look. If you are able, let me invite you to stand to your feet once more in recognition of the authority of God's Word. Follow along as I read, beginning in verse 12...

“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. ¹³ Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing. ¹⁴ And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful. ¹⁵ All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.” (Titus 3:12-15)

This is God's Word. You may be seated...

Perhaps the first thing we can say about Paul's instructions in these verses is that they illustrate that the mission of the kingdom is never a solo endeavor. Rather, it is a strategic and cooperative effort aimed at the global

advance of the Gospel. It is a partnership that involves shared leadership and missional sending, which brings us to the first subject I would like for us to consider...

**Partnership:
Cooperating through Strategic Sending
(3:12-13a)**

Verses 12 and 13 introduce us to some of Paul's ministry team: Artemas, Tychicus, Zenas, and Apollos. Who are these people, and why do they matter to a bunch of believers sitting in Crete (or Tyler, Texas, for that matter)?

Well, first, he mentions Artemas and Tychicus. Paul intends to send one of these men to Crete to replace Titus. Think about the strategic wisdom in that. Paul knows that Titus cannot stay in Crete forever. Titus is a spiritual firefighter. He goes into chaotic situations, puts out the structural fires, sets things in order, and then moves on to the next assignment. But Paul is a good leader. He has no intention of leaving the Cretan churches shepherdless. He's going to send in backup. He is acting intentionally to ensure an orderly, seamless transition of leadership, preventing the infant congregations from floundering under the constant threat of false teachers.²

Now, we really don't know anything about Artemas. In fact, this is the only place he is mentioned in the New Testament. On the other hand, we know a lot about Tychicus. In the book of Ephesians and Colossians, Paul calls Tychicus a "*beloved brother and faith minister*" (Eph 6:21; Col 4:7). Luke mentions in Acts that he was a traveling companion of Paul's. And when he wasn't traveling *with* Paul, he was often traveling *for* Paul as a trusted courier, the man who physically carried some of our New Testament letters across the Roman Empire. Paul is willing to part with his absolute best teammates so that the church in Crete is taken care of. He's willing to send some of his best.³ And sometimes we must do the same, as we have recently felt in planting a new church in Gresham and sending out missionaries around the world.

The juxtaposition between the prominent Tychicus and the completely obscure Artemas accents a profound, encouraging truth about the kingdom of God: much of the heaviest lifting in the global expansion of the Gospel is carried out by ordinary people whose names are completely unrecognized by the world. In the strategy of God's mission, there are no minor characters or insignificant positions. As Alistair Begg is fond of saying, "Nobody's a nobody in the family of God."⁴ If the work matters enough to Him that He would appoint us to it, then it should matter to us. The Lord calls and equips some to serve on a public stage and others to step faithfully into hidden spaces, but both are fundamentally essential to the health of the church.

We see this dynamic play out every week in this place. For every visible teacher or upfront leader, there are dozens of faithful saints working quietly behind the scenes—managing logistics, maintaining the facilities, organizing schedules, and praying in secret. It takes an entire connected network of independent partners to move the mission forward, and God honors the quiet fidelity of an Artemas just as highly as the public labor of a Tychicus.

Furthermore, consider the strategic flexibility demonstrated in Paul's itinerary in verse 12. He says to Titus, "*Do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there.*" Nicopolis, which literally translates to "Victory City," was a thriving Roman colony on the western coast of Greece, known for its strategic harbors and commercial prominence.⁵ Paul was not drifting aimlessly. He was applying sanctified common sense and tactical foresight to his winter planning. Navigating the Mediterranean during the treacherous winter months was a logistical impossibility, making it vital to establish a secure, centralized base of operations to consolidate resources and prepare for spring. His plan is reasonable. And this reminds us that supernatural guidance from the Holy Spirit, on the one hand, and thoughtful, practical human planning, on the other, are not necessarily mutually exclusive, even if the former always trumps the latter.

Then, in verse 13, he mentions two more names: “*Zenas the lawyer and Apollos*.” It’s quite possible that these two were responsible for delivering this letter to Titus.⁶ Zenas is the only lawyer mentioned by name in the entire New Testament.⁷ In that culture, he was likely an expert in Roman civil law or Jewish legal traditions—someone who knew how to navigate the complex legal systems of the empire. And what about Apollos? We know him from the book of Acts as a brilliant, eloquent apologist from Alexandria, a man who was mighty in the Scriptures and could publicly debate and defend the faith (Acts 18:24-28).

The inclusion of Apollos also reminds us that Paul practiced what he preached. Recall in the previous verses how Paul criticized the “factions troublemakers” in Crete, those causing divisions with their preoccupation with foolish controversies.⁸ It’s notable that similar figures had tried to pit Apollos against Paul in Corinth (cf. 1 Cor 1:11-12; 3:1-9). Yet instead of succumbing to bitterness or “ministry competitiveness,” Paul treats Apollos as a valued partner in the ministry, both before the Corinthians over a decade prior and now before the Cretans.⁹ What we have here is a wonderful model of fraternity and unity. He’s modeling what he instructed.

But there’s something else Paul is doing here. Look at the sheer diversity of his team. You have a seasoned pastoral figure like Titus, an administrative courier like Tychicus, a legal expert like Zenas, and a high-powered intellectual communicator like Apollos. God’s kingdom is not a one-man show. It is not built on the shoulders of single, “lone ranger” celebrity leaders. It is a tapestry of diverse gifts, backgrounds, and skills, all cooperating together for a single cause. Paul, the great Apostle, cannot do this work alone. He needs the lawyer, he needs the local pastor, and he needs the evangelist. This is the heart of Gospel partnership: cooperating through strategic sending.

But this partnership demands something else, doesn’t it? It completely shatters the modern, consumer-driven mindset that so many people bring into the church. In our culture, it is incredibly easy to treat the church like a spiritual cruise ship. We show up, we sit in our comfortable seats, we critique the music, we evaluate the sermon, and we expect the staff to entertain us and meet our needs. If the service is good, we stay. We may even give. If it dips in quality, we jump ship and find another one. But biblical ecclesiology—the theology of the church—tells us that the church is not a cruise ship. It’s a battleship. It’s a battleship on a rescue mission.

When you look at Artemas, Tychicus, Zenas, and Apollos, you are looking at a team where everyone has a job to do. Everyone is contributing to the mission. Titus has to get ready to leave. The church in Crete has to get ready to welcome a new leader. They all have to coordinate their efforts to make sure Zenas and Apollos are taken care of. No one is sitting on the sidelines. No one is just a spectator.

So here’s the direct, sobering, heart-level question we must ask ourselves this morning: Are we living like partners in the ministry of the Gospel, or are we living like consumers? When you look at the life, the time, the resources, and the unique professional skills God has given you—whether you’re a teacher, a stay-at-home parent, a mechanic, an engineer, or a lawyer like Zenas—do you view those things as tools to build your own comfortable kingdom, or do you view them as assets to be deployed for the strategic advance of God’s kingdom?

True Gospel partnership means we realize that we are all on assignment. Some of us are called to go to the frontlines of missions, like Apollos. Some of us are called to stay and anchor the local ministry, like Artemas. Some of us are called to use our practical skillsets to protect and move ministry forward, like Zenas. But all of us are called to cooperate. We plug our lives into a local church, not to see what we can get out of it, but to see how we can strategically send, support, and labor together so that the Word of God goes forth unhindered. The grace that saved you has drafted you into a global, expanding workforce. And there are no benchwarmers in the body of Christ. We are all role-players.

That being the case, we have to consider if we are playing our role, which leads us next to consider the notion of...

**Stewardship:
Contributing through Sacrificial Support
(3:13b-14)**

As we move into the second half of verse 13 and carry into verse 14, Paul shifts the focus from the people who are going to the people who are staying. He gives a command that directly tests the reality of the Cretan believers' faith. He says,

“Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing. ¹⁴ And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful.” (Titus 3:13b-14)

If you want to know what a Gospel-transformed community looks like in its most practical form, it looks like this: sacrificial stewardship. Paul tells the churches to take care of these traveling missionaries and to ensure they lack absolutely nothing for their journey. He says to “*speed*” them along, which we tend to hear as something akin to telling someone, “Have a nice trip, and let me know if you need anything.” But in the original language, this word (*propempo*) implied financial and material assistance. It did not mean merely saying a warm goodbye at the city gates. It meant practically, tangibly, and comprehensively equipping traveling ministers for the next stage of their journey. This meant that the local churches would step forward to physically load them down with the physical provisions they needed—replenishing their financial currency, packing their travel bags with food, securing their clothing for the elements, and ensuring they had adequate protection, transportation, and companionship so that their ongoing ministry would not experience avoidable hindrance or delay.

Paul underscores the absolute completeness of this stewardship by adding the negative clause: “*see that they lack nothing*” (3:13). This is an uncompromising appeal to proactive, radical, and costly generosity.¹⁰ The church was being called to look at the financial bank accounts, the material storehouses, and the physical resources of their households not as private, closed possessions to be hoarded, but as kingdom assets to be distributed for the global advance of God’s work. These aspects of our individual lives are components of the Lord’s Great Commission strategy. They were being challenged to look past their own immediate horizons and joyfully absorb the material burden of sending their workers into fields they themselves would never physically walk. This, by the way, is the logic of our denomination’s Cooperative Program.

But notice how Paul frames this. He doesn’t just give them a bill to pay. He treats this instead as a discipleship opportunity. In verse 14, he says, “*let our people learn to devote themselves to good works.*” I love that phrase, “let them learn.” This verb is related to the word for discipleship.¹¹ We have to be disciplined toward doing good works. Generosity does not come naturally to us. We are born with closed fists, holding tightly to our toys, our time, and our money. Sacrificial stewardship is a learned behavior. It is a spiritual muscle that has to be exercised, stretched, and trained over time.¹² We learn to be devoted to good works, in other words, by doing good works. And what is the classroom where we learn this? It is the regular, intentional practice of meeting urgent, real-world needs. Paul is telling the church that when a missionary passes through, or when a brother or sister falls into financial crisis, that is not an inconvenience. It is a testing ground for their faith. It is often their chance to prove that the Gospel has actually changed them from takers into givers.

Now, why does this matter so deeply to Paul? Why does he spend the conclusion of his letter talking about funding missionaries and doing good works? Because this is the structural summary of the entire letter to Titus. The main takeaway from Titus is this: True Gospel faith always produces tangible Gospel fruit. Throughout this letter, Paul has warned against false teachers who claim to know God but deny Him by their works. He has continually argued that empty talk is useless. Here, he gives the positive alternative: a life that is beautifully fruitful.

To be “*unfruitful*” in the New Testament is a terrifying spiritual diagnosis. It means a life that sucks up resources, hears sermons, enjoys community, but never produces any actual kingdom results. This challenges our comfortable, 21st-century consumer mindset yet again that often treats church attendance as a passive spectator sport where we consume religious goods and services without ever skinning our knees or bruising our pockets for the sake of the Gospel. Paul is declaring that the ultimate metric of a church’s health is not the size of its seating capacity, the sophistication of its programs, or the eloquence of its upfront teachers. The ultimate metric of a Gospel-saturated church is its active, visible, and self-sacrificing fruitfulness in reaching the lost and meeting the needs of the broken around it.

This forces every professional, every student, every family, and every senior adult in this room to look into the mirror of God’s Word and ask: Is my life yielding kingdom fruit, or am I just burning daylight and consuming resources? When we learn to step out of our comfort zones, look past our anxieties, and open our hands to support the mission of Jesus, we discover that our stewardship is never a loss. It is the joyful, spontaneous overflow of a heart that has been entirely transformed by the ultimate sacrificial support of our Savior.

And that’s the key. Church, let’s be honest with ourselves. How do we actually motivate our hearts to live this way? If I just stand up here and yell at you to give more money, be more hospitable, and work harder, that might produce a little bit of temporary, guilt-driven behavior, but it will never change your heart. Legalism cannot produce true generosity. If you want to know what actually opens a closed fist, you have to look at the Cross. You have to ground your stewardship in the Gospel. Why should we give sacrificially to ensure that others lack no true need? Because we look at Jesus Christ, who, though He was infinitely rich in the glories of heaven, for our sakes became poor. He emptied Himself, took on the form of a servant, and poured out His very lifeblood on a Roman cross so that we, through His poverty, might become rich (cf. Phil 2; 2 Cor 8:9).

Jesus didn’t look at our spiritual bankruptcy and tell us to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps. He saw our urgent, desperate need—our absolute helplessness under the weight of sin and death—and He met that need at the cost of His own life. He held nothing back. When you truly grasp the heights and depths of that kind of grace, it shatters your grip on your own material wealth. You stop viewing your resources as a security blanket to protect you from the world, and you start viewing it as kingdom currency to be spent for the glory of God and the good of others.

So let’s bring this to where we live today. What does it look like for us to “help cases of urgent need” and live fruitful lives (Titus 3:14)? It means we have to become deeply, intentionally aware of the needs around us. In our modern culture, it is incredibly easy to live isolated, comfortable lives where we plug in our headphones, drive into our gated communities, and never actually look at the pain, the poverty, or the spiritual brokenness right outside our front doors. We have to break out of that bubble.

Living a fruitful life means that when you look at your budget, you don’t just ask, “How much can I spend on myself?” You proactively ask, “How much space have I left to bless others?” It means that when our global mission partners come back with updates and needs, or when a family in our own local body hits a financial wall due to a medical crisis or a job loss, we don’t just offer vague “thoughts and prayers.” We step up and say, “Let’s make sure they lack nothing. Let’s help with that bill. Let’s buy those groceries. Let’s fund that mission.” That’s the look of a Gospel-shaped church. Our checkbooks, our calendars, and our spare bedrooms should bear the visible, undeniable marks of the sacrificial grace of Jesus Christ. Let’s learn to devote ourselves to these good works, so that our lives are bursting with eternal, kingdom-expanding fruit.

Finally, let’s consider Paul’s final word, which reminds us of our glorious fellowship with one another...

**Fellowship:
Community through Sustained Grace
(3:15)**

Look again at verse 15...

“All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.”
(Titus 3:15)

This short verse reminds us that the church is not merely an organization, a social club, or a weekly lecture venue. The church is a family. Notice how he phrases this: “*Greet those who love us in the faith.*”¹³ The bond that holds the church together is not based on shared political views, identical socioeconomic backgrounds, or similar hobbies. The bond is a deep, supernatural affection forged “*in the faith.*” It is the shared reality that we have all been rescued by the same Savior, washed in the same blood, and adopted by the same Father. Because of Jesus, complete strangers become brothers and sisters.

But there is a subtle, crucial shift that happens at the very end of this verse that we cannot afford to miss. Throughout the entire book, Paul has been addressing Titus using the Greek singular form of the word “you.” He’s been saying, “Titus, *you* do this,” and “Titus, *you* teach that.” But in the final sentence, when he says, “*Grace be with you all,*” the word “*you*” shifts from the singular to the plural. If Paul were writing this in the American South, he would be saying, “Grace be with y’all.”

Think about the profound implications of that tiny shift. This tells us that Paul never intended for this letter to be kept as a private, confidential email between two Christian leaders. He knew that from the moment it arrived in Crete, it was going to be unrolled and read out loud to the Christian community. Paul is reminding Titus, and he’s reminding us, that the Christian life cannot be lived in isolation. The instructions in this book—how to fight false doctrine, how to live godly lives, how to show hospitality—are not individual self-help projects. They are community projects. We need a corporate environment to actually fulfill what God has called us to be. We cannot display the glory of the Gospel alone. We need a local church body where we can practice mutual affection, bear one another’s burdens, and stir one another up to love and good works.

And how does Paul anchor this community? Look at the final thought of the letter: Grace. “*Grace be with you all.*”¹⁴ It’s so fitting that this is how the letter ends, because grace is such a grand theme in the entire book of Titus. In chapter two, Paul reminded us that “*the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation*” (2:11). In chapter three, he reminded us that we are “*justified by his grace,*” becoming “*heirs according to the hope of eternal life*” (3:7). And here in the final breath of the letter, he reminds us that we need that very same grace to sustain us every single day.

The Christian life is not a system where you start by grace, but then you have to survive based on your own perfect performance. No, you begin by grace, you grow by grace, you serve by grace, and you finish by grace. We need God’s unmerited favor—that’s what grace is—to tolerate each other’s quirks, to forgive each other’s offenses, and to keep pushing forward when the work of ministry gets heavy and exhausting. Paul leaves the Cretan church—and by extension our own church today—thoughtfully swimming in an ocean of divine grace. When we are anchored in that sustaining grace, our fellowship becomes a safe harbor for a broken world, showing everyone around us what it looks like to be a community defined by the unconditional love of God.

So there you have it. That’s the book of Titus. A letter that began with Paul introducing himself as a servant of God and an Apostle of Jesus Christ now ends with ordinary Christians greeting one another, sending one another, supporting one another, and resting together under the banner of God’s grace. And that is not accidental. Paul has been showing us from the beginning that the Gospel creates a particular kind of people. It creates churches marked by sound doctrine, godly leadership, transformed households, holy lives, good works, sacrificial generosity, and grace-saturated fellowship.

But as we close this series, we must remember once again the order of things. Titus is not a book that says, “Clean yourself up so God might accept you.” It is a book that says, “*The grace of God has appeared*” (2:11). Jesus stepped into the darkness of our sin, not because we were righteous, but according to His own mercy. He gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession who were zealous for good works.

That means the good works that are encouraged in Titus are not the root of our salvation. They are the fruit of it. We do not obey to earn grace. We obey because grace has already found us, washed us, justified us, adopted us, and made us heirs of eternal life through faith. The Gospel does not merely pardon guilty sinners and leave them unchanged. It trains us. It reshapes us. It teaches us to say “no” to ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age while we wait on the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

And that is what our world desperately needs to see. Not a church full of religious consumers. Not a church known for empty talk. Not a church that claims to know God but denies Him with its works. The world needs to see Gospel-shaped churches: churches where older saints disciple younger saints, where leaders are above reproach, where families are ordered by grace, where outsiders see good works that adorn the doctrine of God our Savior, where foolish controversies are avoided, where urgent needs are met, where missionaries are sent, where ordinary people become fruitful servants of an extraordinary King.

Brothers and sisters, may that be true of us. May we be a people who love what is good. May we be sound in faith, steady in hope, and rich in love. May our doctrine be beautiful, and may our lives make it visible. May our homes, our budgets, our calendars, our conversations, our ministries, and our relationships all bear witness to the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

And when we stumble, may we run back to His grace. When we grow weary, may we be strengthened by His grace. When we are tempted to drift, may we be anchored by His grace. When we serve, may we serve by His grace. And when our race is finished, may we find that the same grace that appeared to save us was the grace that carried us all the way home. God help us. And until that day our blessed hope appears, until the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ fills the sky, until faith becomes sight and grace brings us all the way home: “*Grace be with you all.*”

Let’s pray...

¹ This illustration was adapted from a sermon by Alistair Begg, titled, “Ordinary People and Everyday Events,” which was accessed online at: <https://www.truthforlife.org/resources/sermon/ordinary-people-and-everyday-events/>.

² Paul’s heart for pastoral care is developed further by J. Ligon Duncan, “Shun Foolish Controversies/Help Christians to Be Fruitful,” accessed online at: <https://fpcjackson.org/resource-library/sermons/shun-foolish-controversies-help-christians-to-be-fruitful/>.

³ Scholars conjecture that Paul ultimately sent Artemas to Crete, as Tychicus was later dispatched to Ephesus. E.g., Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, UBCS (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011), 214; George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 356.

⁴ Begg, “Ordinary People and Everyday Events.”

⁵ See Andreas J. Köstenberger, *1-2 Timothy & Titus*, EBTC (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2021), 353.

⁶ As suggested, for example, by Robert W. Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 556; Hayne P. Griffin, “Titus,” in *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 332; et al.

⁷ Griffin notes, “the additional description ‘the lawyer’ reveals a common Pauline literary trait (cf. “Luke, the doctor,” Col 4:14; also Rom 16:23; 2 Tim 4:14).” Griffin, 332.

⁸ Richard D. Phillips, “Titus,” in *2 Timothy & Titus*, REC (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2020), 266.

⁹ Tim Chester, *Titus for You*, GWY (The Good Book Company, 2014), 108; cf. John F. MacArthur, *Titus*, MNTC (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996), 168.

¹⁰ “It was not an age of credit cards and electronic itineraries; traveling Christian workers were dependent on local generosity for their subsistence, unless like Paul they worked to support themselves. Paul emphasizes this reality by adding, ‘See that they have everything they need,’ which is literally ‘in order that they may lack nothing,’ with a possible emphasis on *nothing*. Titus should support them in every respect. Despite the urgent tone and wide-ranging counsel of Paul’s letter, Titus’s attention cannot be only on himself and his churches; he is expected also to share Paul’s heart for the wider spread of the gospel in regions beyond Crete. Missions does not detract from pastoral labor and oversight but is part of the lifeblood of those necessary local ministries.” Yarbrough, 557-558.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 558; Akin, *Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, 303.

¹² “But we learn to be devoted to good works not by signing up for a class on good works or by reading books about good works. We don’t learn to be devoted to good works in that way, through an analysis of good works. Instead, we learn to be devoted to good works *by doing good works*. In fact, the force of the verb here translated ‘learn’ is more ‘to learn through practice,’ to learn through experience. We learn devotion to good works, then, by doing good works. Devotion to good works comes through our own firsthand experience of good works.” Todd A. Wilson, *Zealous for Good Works: Mobilizing Your Church for the Good of Your Community* (Chicago: Moody, 2018), 113. He is drawing on I. H. Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, ICC (London: T & T Clark, 1999), 345.

¹³ Some commentators, such as Gordon Fee, suggest this phrase may be a “parting shot” at those who had proven disloyal to Paul’s apostolic teaching. By greeting those who love him “*in the faith*,” he differentiates the “sheep from the goats,” identifying those who recognize his authority and the truth of the Gospel. See Fee, 216; Griffin, 332. Towner is probably correct, however, that “we should be careful not to make too much of the phrase ‘those who love us,’ which was a fixed phrase in letters.” Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 805.

¹⁴ Many manuscripts add ‘amen’ as the last word (cf. KJV), but significant witnesses omit it. Metzger explains, “The concluding ἀμήν (⋈ D° F G H Ψ *al*) is obviously secondary, for the word is absent in a variety of early and diverse witnesses (P⁶¹ ⋈* A C D* 048 1739 1881 *al*), and the temptation for copyists to add the liturgical conclusion would be great.” Bruce M. Metzger, United Bible Society, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, Second Edition, a Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament (4th Rev. Ed.)* (London: United Bible Society, 1994), 586-587.