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TITUS

Clarity in the Confusion

Titus 01

I. Introduction

- a. Have you ever asked yourself “What am I doing?”
 - i. What is this all about? Teenage years looking at college, or midlife crisis, or after suffering a great loss, or even in the twilight of our lives
 - ii. What is going on? What is my purpose? Even as a Christian we can find ourselves wondering about our identity and what we should be doing with ourselves
 - iii. Paul’s letter to Titus is the perfect reading material when we find ourselves in that place
 1. It is a letter of conviction written by a man who knows who he is, knows what he must do, knows why he is doing it, and knows how to accomplish what has been placed in front of him
 2. In a world of chaos and confusion, Paul passes on clarity – which Titus absolutely need
- b. Here’s what we know about Titus
 - i. He was a gentile convert – meaning he wasn’t Jewish, he was a Greek follower of Jesus
 1. Paul refers to him as “a true son in a common faith” so it was very likely that Titus came to know Jesus during one of Paul’s missionary journeys
 2. Paul folded him into his life and trained him up, disciplined him, mentored him and then finally invited him to join him on his mission to preach the gospel
 3. Like Timothy, Titus meant a great deal to Paul
- c. In Galatians 2 we learn that Paul took Titus to Jerusalem - ***Gal 2:2-3 And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain. (3) Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.***
 - i. This was extremely significant – it means Titus came to Jerusalem uncircumcised and he left Jerusalem uncircumcised
 - ii. The leaders in the church at Jerusalem had agreed that salvation was through faith alone in Christ alone
 - iii. Not through circumcision or any other work of the law, which others had falsely taught
- d. Later Paul would send Titus to the churches in Corinth, Paul has a great deal to say about him in his 2nd letter
 - i. 2 Cor 2 Paul refers to Titus as his brother in the faith and says that he couldn’t find rest in his spirit because Titus was absent
 - ii. 2 Cor 7 Paul says he was comforted by the coming of Titus
 - iii. 2 Cor 8 Paul trusted Titus to receive the collection from the Corinthians to minister to the churches in need
 - iv. ***2Co 8:16 But thanks be to God who puts the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus.***
 - v. Goes on to say “if anyone inquires about Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker concerning you.”

- vi. 2 Cor 12 again affirms that Titus had the same care for them as Paul did - ***2Co 12:18 I urged Titus, and sent our brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not walk in the same spirit? Did we not walk in the same steps?***
- e. Titus eventually traveled with Paul to the island of Crete
 - i. 88th-largest island in the world and the fifth-largest island in the Mediterranean Sea - where they continued to spread the Gospel and planted what became network of house churches
 - ii. Paul had to leave the island to continue his missionary journey in Ephesus and Titus was asked to stay and work to build up the churches there
 - iii. In chapter 1, Paul instruct Titus to restore order to these churches
 - iv. Crete had a reputation - unsafe, plagued by violence, sexual corruption
 - v. To be a Cretan meant to be a liar, Paul quotes one of their own poets - "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."
 - 1. Churches were beginning to be influenced by corrupt leaders who were ethnically Jewish Cretans - motivated by creed
 - 2. The Cretan churches were also struggling with a correct theological understanding of God. Cretan's worshipped Zeus and liked to tell stories of how Zeus was born on the island - Zeus lied and manipulated to get his way
 - 3. The one true God was nothing like this fictional figure and Paul emphasizes God's perfect and trustworthy character throughout this letter

II. Paul, an Apostle of God

Tit 1:1-4 Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, (2) in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, (3) but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior; (4) To Titus, a true son in our common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.

- a. Paul explain in these four opening verses who he is, what he's doing, how he's doing it, and why he's doing it
 - i. Understanding who we are helps us to understand what we must do
 - 1. Philosophical question we must answer if we are to find meaning in this life
 - 2. Does the answer lie within us, or do we find the answer outside of us?
 - 3. Did we create ourselves? Arrogance of thinking we can be our own God.
 - a. ***Job 38:4 "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. 5 Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? 6 To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone,***
 - b. ***12 "Have you commanded the morning since your days began, And caused the dawn to know its place,***
- b. A slave of God
 - i. War captives were considered legally enslaved, and Roman military expansion was a major source of slaves.
 - ii. Debt slavery under made Roman citizens subject to slavery to work of debts that they were otherwise unable to repay
 - 1. Slave had no rights – they were considered property under Roman law - could be subjected to corporal punishment, sexual exploitation, torture, and summary execution
 - iii. Slavery may have looked different, wasn't based on the amount of melanin in your skin – Paul's introduction would have been shocking
 - 1. Why would a free citizen of Rome identify Himself with a slave

- c. Paul saw something in the relationship between a master and a slave that he willingly and happily identified with
 - i. ***1 Cor 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.***
 - ii. ***Rom 14: 8 For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.***
 - iii. ***Peter writes in chapter 1 of his first letter – you were bought by the precious blood of Christ***
 - 1. There is something in us that resists the idea that we belong to someone else – we recoil at the idea that someone else should be in control of our lives
 - a. That is the lie – that somehow if we give into Jesus we will lose a part of ourselves – truth - we are not who we were created to be until Jesus is on the throne
 - 2. Life doesn't make sense until we step into that wonderful relationship – I am His
 - iv. Video of a pilot and his friend flying back from a fishing trip
 - 1. The pilot experienced a cardiac event and passed out and the plane went into a nose dive, his friend reached over him and grabbed the controls and pulled back on the stick - radioed in the emergency to the tower – air traffic controller and part time flight instructor – happy to receive that instruction because it was a matter of life and death
 - 2. We struggle with authority – something rises up in us when we are told what to do
 - 3. Paul willfully submitted to the authority of God in his life because who understood who he was – He was created by God, loved by God, and saved by the grace God
- d. Paul knew who he was, so he knew what he had to do
 - i. What? An Apostle of Jesus – a messenger, a representative, Paul's life and teaching told the story of who Jesus is and what He has done
 - ii. Who is our master? Who's authority have you submitted yourself to? What are we an evangelist of? What do we find ourselves talking about the most?
- e. How? According to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness - manifested His word through preaching
 - i. For the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness
 - 1. Recognition of the truth that leads to or corresponds with godliness
 - 2. Godliness comes from a recognition of truth, we have not recognized something as truth until we submit ourselves to it
 - a. Someone may have told us as a teenager that a \$600 car payment is not a great idea with a minimum wage job – and we can agree and still buy that car
 - b. We don't really believe something unless we allow it to change us
 - 3. Different kind of knowledge - puffs up - knowledge that doesn't change us, we just collect it to show it off to friends
- f. Why? In hope of eternal life – Paul has confidence in how the story ends
 - i. God cannot lie, promised before time began – because he has confidence in God
 - 1. Eternal mindset – invested in the future
 - 2. Difficult in a culture of immediate gratification
 - 3. Rarely think about how the decisions we make today will effect tomorrow
 - 4. Steal tomorrow's joy for today (Substance abuse, financial debt, sexual promiscuity)
 - 5. Reaping and sowing

Titus 1:5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—6 if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. 7 For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, 8 but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled,

III. What is Lacking?

- a. Paul's first charge to Titus – set in order the things that are lacking
 - i. What was lacking? Godly leadership – elders that share the heart and mind of Jesus
 - ii. What is a leader? Simplest definition, someone that takes people from point A to point B.
 - 1. To lead you have to know where you are and know where you are going
 - 2. Godly leader is one who helps guide us away from our old nature into our new nature in Christ – ultimately leads us to the feet of Jesus
 - iii. Paul knows that is the solution to the disorder in the church – elders who are first led by Christ
- b. How will you know one of these men when you see them? Don't focus on talent and gifting, look at their character
 - i. I am convinced the good leadership and Godly leadership are one in the same
 - ii. Good leadership is rooted in good character – makes me a little uncomfortable when we say we are not voting for a pastor we are voting for a Fill in the blank
 - iii. Charisma or intelligence is not synonymous with strong character
- c. The American church can often be divided into two types of gatherings - head centered or heart centered
 - i. Head centered gatherings often resemble a university lecture hall and heart centered gatherings are more akin to a stadium concert
 - 1. Experience centered churches - the most charismatic are seen as the most spiritual - the best performers, high energy motivational speakers, big personalities – they are the leaders
 - 2. Intellectually centered - the ones with the most prestigious degrees, the most intelligent, the most studied – the most books on their shelves
 - ii. Paul is more concerned about character
 - 1. Something that is developed by abiding in Christ
 - iii. The home is the training ground for the Christian leader
 - 1. A leader cannot lead a church if they cannot lead their own family, and they cannot care for a church if they cannot care for themselves.
 - 2. Self-control is an act of care and concern for one's self – we talk about treating ourselves – but in reality what we often do label as treating ourselves is self-destructive

IV. Back to Authority

Tit 1: 9 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. 11 For there are many insubordinate both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, (11) whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.

- a. Insubordinate – unwilling to submit
 - i. Here we've come full circle – not only are these men unwilling to submit they try to justify their behavior to others
 - ii. Paul has a very specific group in mind – the Judaizers
 - 1. These men would go from house to house undermining what faithful men were teaching

2. Unfortunately, this happens in the church today and the scary thing is we may be a part of it and we don't even realize it
3. We may be undermining the work of the Lord through our grumbling and complaining
4. Instead of taking their concerns to Paul or Titus – they practiced guerilla warfare and tried to spark a rebellion
5. This is not how God operates – I don't care how right we feel about something – when we do this we are more concerned about people taking our side (dishonest gain) than we are about the wellbeing of the fellowship

Tit 1:12-16 One of them, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." (13) This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, (14) not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men (major on the minors, their own bents) who turn from the truth. (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. (16) They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

- b. Paul's talking about a Cretan poet, prophet, and so called miracle worker named Epimenides – he was known for his own embellishments and he called his own people liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons
 - i. Paul says, "yeah that sounds about right" – these false teachers fit right in with their culture, with fallen humanity – this wasn't an ethnic stereotype – this is a diagnosis of the fallen man
 - ii. ***2 Tim 3:1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!***
 - iii. They profess to know God but their actions deny Him! - ***Rebuke them sharply***
 - iv. There will always be an abundance of false teachers and false messages pushing their way into the church – as John Stott once wrote, "when false teachers increase, we must multiply the number of true teachers."