

Parting Words

Titus 3: 8-15

Although this was a rather brief letter, Paul had shared much with Titus regarding the ministry he had received from the Lord. He was encouraged to establish elders in each of the cities in Crete in order to assist with leadership within the local church. Paul offered counsel on dealing with false teachers that would inevitably try to infiltrate the church. He gave instruction regarding the role of believers within the church, and their opportunity to disciple others in the faith. Finally, Paul dealt with the character believers were to possess and portray as they walked among society.

Paul's letter to Titus may have been brief, but it offers much that is needed within the church today. The instructions Paul left for Titus remain relevant for those within the body of Christ. As we conclude our study of Titus, I want to discuss the [final directives](#) Paul gave as we consider: [Parting Words](#).

I. The Concluding Instruction (8-11) – These verses are actually a continuation of the line of thought Paul sought to convey in the verses that precede them. We find he spoke of:

A. The Believer's Duty (8) – *This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.* Paul knew he had provided beneficial counsel to Titus and the church. He challenged Titus to continually affirm the truths he had received, being faithful to proclaim the Word of God and the Gospel of Christ. This would ensure those who heard and obeyed the Word would live lives worthy of their calling. Those committed to living according to the precepts of the Word would maintain good works and possess a positive Christian witness. This would be profitable to the church and society at large.

- Paul's instruction is simple, and should be relatively easy to follow. However, we cannot minimize the importance of such simple truth. As believers, we too share an obligation to maintain good works. We are to live our lives in a way that reveals the transformation that has taken place through salvation in Christ. It isn't enough to merely know what the Bible teaches; we must put those precepts into practice in our everyday lives. If we live no differently than the average person, never considering the needs of others, or sacrificing our time in order to serve the Lord and others, the world will see no difference in us. We have an opportunity to make an impact, but this requires dedication and commitment to serving in a way that honors the Lord and edifies the church.

B. The Believer's Discernment (9) – *But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.* Paul was well aware of those who sought to pervert and dilute the Gospel with other teachings and expectations, particularly from the Judaizers. Paul urged Titus to avoid foolish questions. He knew some would seek to present questions that appeared urgent, but in the end they only consumed time without benefit. There was no need to get bogged down in senseless questions and debates. The Judaizers also loved to emphasize their genealogy, their relation to Abraham. They were notorious for expecting the church to adhere to the law if they were to be acceptable to God, essentially adding to the Gospel. Paul declared such conversation and debate was unprofitable and vain.

- While the topics may have changed in our day, the damage and disruption of foolish talk and legalistic expectations remains. We too must guard our hearts, striving to prioritize the Gospel, while refusing to be side-tracked with senseless, unprofitable debate. Some have no desire for truth; they thrive on debate and discord. These will do anything they can to stir trouble and create confusion within the church.

C. The Believer's Doctrine (10-11) – *A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; ^[11] Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.* Knowing Titus would sooner or later be forced to deal with a heretic, Paul offered counsel in dealing with them as well. A heretic is defined as “*one who takes or chooses for himself.*” It has the idea of one who chooses what he believes, in spite of the teaching and doctrine revealed in Scripture. When these presented themselves, Titus was to immediately admonish them. If their behavior continued, Titus was to rebuke them again. If the second admonition did not correct their doctrine, Titus was to reject them and have no association with them. Paul declared those who refuse to be corrected have subverted themselves, (*turning away from the truth,*) committed sin, and condemned themselves. Titus was to feel no guilt for dealing sternly with a heretic. They had brought reproach upon themselves.

- This is little practiced today, but it is certainly needed. I can fellowship with those who embrace the fundamentals of the faith, but I refuse to associate with false doctrine for the sake of cooperation. When heretics are found, they must be dealt with according to Scripture. If they will not heed wise counsel, the church is to reject them.

II. The Closing Benediction (12-15) – As was his custom, Paul concluded his letter with a benediction. Consider:

A. The Identification (12-14) – His parting words made reference to many within the church. He mentioned:

1. The Faithful (12-13) – *When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter.* ^[13] *Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.* Paul planned to send Artemas or Tychicus to relieve Titus in Crete for a season. When they arrived, Paul wanted Titus to meet him in Nicopolis, bringing Zenas and Apollos with him. Let's consider what we know of these faithful men.

- **Artemas** – This is the only time he is mentioned in Scripture, but we know he must have been a faithful minister of the Gospel. He was willing to travel to Crete in an effort to continue leading the churches planted there.
- **Tychicus** – He was a faithful friend and associate of Paul, mentioned several times in Paul's letters. He held a position of trust and confidence with Paul, being given the task to deliver the letters of Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon.
- **Zenas** – Like Artemas, this is the only time he is mentioned in Scripture. Paul identified him as a lawyer. We don't know if he originally traveled with Titus to Crete or if he became a trusted disciple through the ministry of Titus there. Whatever the case, Paul knew Zenas would be beneficial to him in Nicopolis.
- **Apollos** – Paul also wanted Titus to bring Apollos to Nicopolis. Apollos is mentioned several times in Scripture, a Jewish evangelist who was well versed in the Word of God. Aquilla and Priscilla aided Apollos much in his early ministry, expounding the Gospel of Christ to him, which he readily accepted and began to boldly preach.

2. The Fruitful (14) – *And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.* Referring to the believers at Crete, Paul spoke of them as "our people." He identified with them as part of the church, the body of Christ. Paul left a final admonition for Titus to teach them to maintain good works in order to be fruitful in faith and ministry. Paul knew works did not save, but those walking with the Lord would be given to good works. In order for the ministries in Crete to be successful, the church would have to show forth good works.

- This principle remains applicable for the church today. As we have discussed, we must commit to good works if we are to honor the Lord, edify the church, and reach the unsaved.

B. The Salutation (15) – *All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.* Paul closed the letter with warm, well-wishes from those with him offered to Titus and the churches in Crete. Paul urged Titus to greet believers in the faith, while praying they all experience the matchless grace of God as they endeavored to serve Him. No doubt this brought much encouragement to Titus and the churches, knowing they were being prayed for and supported by Paul and those who ministered alongside him.

- It is impossible to overemphasize the impact and need for prayer and encouragement in our day. I fear we fail much too often in this act of kindness. It is easy enough to do, and yet many times we fail to offer a kind word of encouragement. We fail to pray for one another as we should. I want to challenge each of us to make this a priority in our daily walk with the Lord. Make a prayer list of believers and pray specifically for them. When you see them, let them know you appreciate them and are praying for them. Maybe send a card or letter, offering a word of encouragement. This would pay great dividends in the work we are laboring in together!

Conclusion: I trust you have enjoyed our time in Titus and have benefited from the teaching. Although written hundreds of years ago, it remains relevant for our day. If there are needs in your life, come to Christ today. I pray we as a body of believers will regain our excitement and zeal for the work of ministry. We have a great responsibility, and a gracious opportunity. Let's do all we can together for the glory of our Lord!