

An Introduction To Titus

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[0:00] Great God in heaven, you are all that we need because you are a God who just pours out your grace again and again and again.

God in heaven, I would ask that you would instruct us now that this introduction to Titus, God would reintroduce grace into our minds and hearts.

God, I do pray, Father, for brothers and sisters who are in our midst that are straying, that feel like they've lost sight of Jesus, that have a sense that their life and their profession, there is a great gap between them.

God, would you use Titus and this book, God, to comfort and to compel. God, we ask that now by your spirit, you would teach us and instruct us.

Help us, God, to make the connection between the gospel of grace and the grind of our everyday life. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

[1:10] Amen. Children, you can scoot. Well, we're starting a study of the book of Titus this morning.

And so as you can see in your bulletin, today's sermon is an introduction to the book of Titus. I experienced a major disconnect this week.

I drive around in an older pickup truck. I call it my mobile tabernacle of praise.

And I can go anywhere because it's got four-wheel drive. Well, I'm cruising around and all of a sudden I realize I've got a disconnect. Because this phone of mine, basically, it's got all the music I listen to on it.

And so what happens, I put it in my truck and this little holder thing. And then there's this wire that runs from my phone into my truck kind of radio. And what happens is this source of goodness in all the music I listen to, it is connected to my truck speakers.

[2:26] And it goes from the source of goodness to my experience of the goodness. And there's a disconnect. So I'm cruising around this week kind of cruising around in silence because it turns out the wire that connects the phone to the truck radio, it got cinched and frayed.

And then there was this gap that could not be overcome. And so I just borrowed my son's wire and fixed that thing up. But we all experience a disconnect.

The goodness of God's grace made known in the gospel of Jesus Christ. God intends to connect to everything in your life as a Christian.

And we as Christians will experience this disconnect from the gospel of grace and the grind of our life. And so the book of Titus is God through the Apostle Paul equipping us as Christians to make the connection between this gospel, God's grace manifest in Christ, with our lives in the grind and in the grit.

God's grace manifest in Christ. So maybe you've come into the building this morning and if you were to take the spiritual pulse of your faith, it would be a little weak.

[3:58] Or in terms of your knowledge of the truth of what's been revealed through the gospel, you've gotten a little amnesia. You've forgotten the gospel.

Or maybe when it comes to your practice of the faith, your godliness, you've become a little anemic. Or maybe you're hopeless. You're just more aware of your present circumstances than the eternity in which God has secured our hope.

So this morning what I want to do is introduce you to the book of Titus because Titus is for you if any of those were true. And all of us experience all of that on some kind of measure.

God has grace for you through the book of Titus, my brother and sister. So here's how we're going to proceed this morning. I want to introduce you to some people that we meet in the book of Titus. [5:06] And then I want to show you the purpose of the book of Titus. And then depending on how much time I'm going to give you a preview of the book of Titus. So let's look at these people from the book of Titus.

The book of Titus, I'm going to focus in on the first four verses this morning. Let me read those. Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life, which God who never lies promised before the ages began, and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior, to Titus, my true child and a common faith, grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. There's some people that I want to introduce you to. The first one, of course, is the God of all grace. Paul, a servant of God and apostle of Jesus Christ, verse one. Verse four, grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

You might be thinking, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. I got two of the three right there. Father, Son, where's the Holy Spirit? In chapter three, we're introduced to the Holy Spirit. He does a great work of regenerating grace in us.

And so what we have in the book of Titus is the triune God of grace. He's the first person I want you to see. The second person you can't miss is Paul, the guy that's writing this letter.

[6:38] It was a letter. It was a letter from the apostle Paul to a guy named Titus, writing about a group of Christians on the island of Crete.

Now, Crete is an island of the middle Mediterranean, just south of Greece. And Paul is writing to Titus for a particular reason. But here's what I want you to see about Paul.

Verse one, servant of God. And if you had a Jewish bent in Crete at the time, and there were those with Jewish backgrounds, when they heard that phrase, servant of God, they would have heard Paul lining himself up with Moses and David and Haggai and Amos, all servants of God.

And so Paul's lining himself up with a rather select group of people, prophets from the Old Testament. And they couldn't miss the servant part, servant of God.

For a Greco-Roman mind in the first century who would have received this, they would have thought like this, servant of God, man, this guy doesn't do anything for himself. He serves God, a bondservant.

[7:47] He lays down all of his rights for his master. So just that first fray, it's packed. Paul, servant of God. And then he goes on to say, an apostle of Jesus Christ.

In the New Testament, that word apostle shows up a couple different ways. There is the lowercase a apostles. And those are men and women that are sent out very generally.

And then there are the capital A apostles. Those select group of men who the risen Christ himself commissioned and sent out.

And the apostle Paul is a capital A apostle of Jesus Christ. And the story is phenomenal. Acts chapter 9, Paul is going from Jerusalem to Damascus.

And he's not going to get Krispy Kreme donuts in Damascus. He's not going to the Walmart in Damascus. He's going to round up any Christians in Damascus.

[8:49] Bring them back to Jerusalem so that they would be persecuted. Paul is going to Damascus as a non-Christian. Persecuting the church.

And on the road to Damascus, he encounters the risen Jesus. And it changes everything. He's converted dramatically.

And he's not only converted, he is commissioned and sent out by the risen Christ on that road to the Gentiles to proclaim Jesus to them. Paul never got over that.

If you look at 1 Timothy chapter 1 verses 12 through 18, Paul never got over that. And so, you know what Paul was most aware of? Not his being a servant of God.

Not his being an apostle of Jesus Christ. He was most aware of the grace that God had poured out on him, a sinner and persecutor of the church. And radically altered him personally and his eternity.

[9:53] This guy writing this letter had a profound sense of God's grace. And when I say God's grace, what I mean is all of God's favor and kindness and goodness toward a sinner that they don't deserve in and of

themselves.

It's Christ's, God's riches at Christ's expense. A very helpful acronym. All of God's kindness to you through Jesus. And Paul knew that firsthand.

So this is the guy writing. And he's been given the authority of an apostle. And he's writing to another guy named Titus. And we see that in verse 4. To Titus, my true child and a common faith. Now, Titus is a little bit of a man of mystery in the New Testament. We really don't know how he was converted. How he became a Christian. But we've got some hints. Just by the fact that Paul says, to Titus, my true child and a common faith.

Chances are, whether before Paul's visit to Jerusalem in Acts 11 or before his visit to Jerusalem in Acts 15, that Paul had an encounter with Titus and led him to the Lord.

[11:03] It's a term of affection. But it's also a term that's recognizing a little bit of a difference. Titus, Paul is his spiritual father. It's couched in terms of family.

Titus was an apostolic delegate. Paul's apostolic representative. And lest you think that Titus was some greenhorn, some recent graduate from Bible school, or some just walked out of seminary. Here's what you need to know about Titus. Paul's writing Titus in the mid-60s A.D. And what we see from Galatians 2, verse 4, Titus was with Paul when Paul made a trip to Jerusalem.

And that would have happened mid-40s or so. So here's what you need to know about Titus. He has been around the block of gospel ministry for at least 20 years. He's been traveling with Paul, part of his gospel entourage, going from town to town among Greek-speaking Gentiles and Jews, sharing the gospel with them.

In 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, Titus plays a very important role in the life of Corinth. And then it's Titus who's selected to bring this huge collection of money from the Corinthian church to the two Jewish Christians in Jerusalem.

[12:33] That means Titus must have been proven and trustworthy. This guy's been around the block. 2 Timothy 4, Paul's last words penned.

Titus is in Dalmatia, which is around Macedonia, if you're familiar with the region around the Adriatic. Titus would have experienced God's grace in a profound way.

Titus was a Gentile, a Greek. And somewhere along the way, he heard the gospel. He heard that God in Christ offered full forgiveness, eternal life for him now.

And so here is Titus. Paul is writing to him. Titus is in Crete, chapter 1, verse 5. It must have been Paul and Titus were in Crete at some point together, sharing the gospel.

Paul leaves them in Crete so that Titus can put things in order, set up elders in the churches in the towns of Crete.

[13:51] So they had been ministering the gospel there. So we're kind of getting an insight into first century church planting ministry. Paul has to go.

He sends this letter to Titus. In order to help Titus know how to care for these new believers in Crete. Which brings us to the new believers in Crete. Paul has a very interesting way of talking about them.

Paul is servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the sake of the faith of God's elect. For the sake of the faith of God's elect. He's talking about these Christians in Crete.

And they're not just in one place. What's implied from verse 5 is that these Christians were spread out around Crete. And from town to town. They need help.

And Paul is writing Titus so that Titus helps them make the connection between the gospel that has saved them and how to live their lives now in light of the gospel.

[14:56] So these Cretans. Cretans. Being Gentiles. Being Greeks.

There were some Jews around them. That's going to be part of some false teaching that we see referenced in verse 10. But these are people that were worshiping false gods.

These were people who were living for their flesh. These were people who were happy in their sin. And then God interrupted them with his grace. In fact, we've got 20 centuries separating us.

But they're a lot like us. These Christians in Crete. This elect of God. God chose them from before the foundation of the world.

And then they heard the gospel. And they responded in faith. They've experienced God's grace. God's riches at Christ's expense.

[15:59] They've been forgiven of all their sins. They have the promise of eternal life. And they needed help. They needed help to know how to live in light of the gospel.

The gospel that saved them. Needed to be the same gospel. The same grace. That shaped them. And that's where we live today.

The gospel is not just a message that we believe. And then put on the shelf and say. Done with the gospel. The gospel is a message that we build our lives on.

We never outgrow the gospel. We're in constant need of the grace. Which flows from the gospel. The book of Titus is a book about grace.

Notice in verse 4 at the end. Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. And then if you flip to the end of chapter 3.

[17:03] The last five words. Grace be with you all. This is a book about grace. God's riches at Christ's expense.

Grace. These are the people I wanted to introduce you to. Now let me help you see the purpose. We've already been talking about it. We see the purpose start coming out.

In chapter 1 verse 1. Paul a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ. For the sake. For the sake of the faith of God's elect.

And their knowledge of the truth. Which accords with godliness. In hope of eternal life. For the sake. Gets at this idea of purpose. Paul is writing this letter.

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. To Titus. For the sake of these young Christians. In these towns throughout Crete. He wants to help them. Walk with Jesus.

[18:05] And so there are four words. I want you to key on. And it's going to help us understand. Why Paul is writing. First one is this. For the sake of the faith.

Of God's elect. Faith. Trusting in God. Actively believing in him. Paul.

Paul. Is very interested. And concerned about. The faith. The faith. Of these young Christians. In Crete. He's not talking about.

The objective truths. Of the Christian faith. He's actually talking about. Their experience. In trusting. God. They're believing in him.

Have you ever had someone come up to you. And say. Hey. How's your faith doing? And what they're asking you is. Hey. Is your faith little faith? Like Jesus talks about. Or do you have big faith? Or you're somewhere in between faith?

[19:01] There are different kind of degrees of faith. And Paul is wanting to. Help these young Christians in Crete. Move from an initial faith. Into a full.

Vibrant faith. Trusting in God. With all of they are. More and more. If you went into a doctor's office. And you went in with some symptoms. You're just kind of dizzy. You're. Seemingly moving in slow motion. Your heart's kind of fluttery.

And. And your doctor does some blood tests on you. And it comes out. That your red blood cell count is really low. You're anemic. And it results in kind of.

Lifelessness. Slowness. Paul doesn't want. These young Christians. To be anemic.

[19:59] In their faith. He wants them to be vibrant. In their trusting. Of the risen Christ. So let me ask you a couple questions.

Friends. How's your spiritual health this morning? How's your faith? When you pray. Are you confident God hears you.

And is working on your behalf? When you read your Bible. Do you. Is it your sense that God is actually addressing you. Through his word? When you sing to God.

Are you. Mindful that it's actually God. You're singing to. And not just a friendly sing along. With your good friends. You're worshipping the one true God. When you have opportunities to witness. Are you. Are you taking them with joy? How's the awe meter. In your heart. Towards God. Is it anemic. Or is it.

[20:53] Awesome. That you have. A wonderfully. Amazing. Great. And grand. God. Who is worthy.

Of your life. How's your faith? The first word. I want you to key on. Is that word faith. The second word.

That I want you to key on. Is the word. Knowledge. For the sake. Of the faith. Of God's elect. And their knowledge. Of the truth. The kind of knowledge.

That we're talking about here. Is not just a. Intellectual. Ascent. Knowledge. It is. A conviction. Kind of knowledge.

Being convinced. Of something. To be true. Passionate. Committed. Yes. The truth. The truth. The truth. That Paul.

[21:48] Is talking about. Is the truth. That he's talking about. Throughout. The book of Titus. It's the sound doctrine. That he refers to. Again and again. And what that has to do.

Is. Is the truth. Of God's grace. Made known. In the gospel. The truth. Of the gospel. Of Jesus Christ. That God. Through Christ.

Pours out. His grace. On sinners. Not just. When they get saved. But all the way through. God pouring out.

His grace. In order for these. Christians in Crete. To have a healthy faith.

They will need. To be convinced. Of the truth. Of the grace. That is found. In no one else. But Jesus. Their health.

[22:45] Depends on it. Another way to say it. Is this. If you as a Christian. Forget the truth. Of the gospel. Let's call that. Gospel amnesia.

It's just. A matter of time. Before. Your faith. Gets anemic. Gospel amnesia. Results.

In an anemic. Faith. A loss. Of vitality. But being convinced. Of the truth. Of the gospel. Of grace.

Results. In spiritual. Vitality. What the apostle. Then calls. Godliness. But before we talk.

About godliness. Let me. Put something. In front of you. Have you ever heard. There's this. There's this. Radio station. That I grew up. Listening to.

[23:41] It played classic rock. At the time. It's called WCKG. Out of Chicago. And they would have this tag. Playing the soundtrack.

Of your life. And so you go about your life. With the soundtrack. Playing in the background. What's the soundtrack.

You're playing. What's on your playlist. Maybe your playlist. Goes like something like this. You've got a playlist. Called future fear.

And it goes something like this. The unknowns. The possibilities. The what ifs.

Unknowns. Possibilities. And what ifs. Unknowns. Possibilities. And what ifs. It's the soundtrack. Playing in the back of your mind.

[24:37] And it's bathing your mind. You're meditating on it. You have these. Future fears. Of the unknowns. Do you know what that does.

To your faith. It weakens it. It has a way of. Helping you forget. The gospel of grace.

And results. In spiritual anemia. Maybe you're not a future fear. Kind of person. Maybe you are a. Past regret. Kind of person.

The coulda. Shoulda. Wouldas. You live in regret. From the past. Oh I could have done that. Oh I should have done that.

I would have done that. And it's the soundtrack. Of your life. It just plays in the background. It's like a dull headache. You just get used to it.

[25:39] Woulda coulda shoulda. Woulda coulda shoulda. Do you know what that does to you? It helps you forget the gospel of grace.

Leads to spiritual anemia. Do you know what the antidote is? A new soundtrack of your life. It's called gospel grace.

And you have to personally. Press play. Every day. And you've got to preach this gospel. To yourself. That God. The great.

I am. Became a man. To die for me. To pour out his grace on me. To forgive me. Of all my sin. To give me a promise.

That is secured. By his word. And his blood. That I have an eternal hope. Waiting for me. An inheritance. Grace. That God has. Indwelt me with his spirit.

[26:40] To overcome sin. And when you start playing that. It's the knowledge of the truth. Of the gospel of grace.

And the effect of that over time. Godliness. Look back in the Bible. In the text. For the sake of the faith of God's elect.

And their knowledge of the truth. Which accords with godliness. We've looked at faith. We've looked at knowledge. Now let's look at this word. Godliness. Godliness is a word that just means like.

God centeredness. That I'm. That I'm living my life. With. God at the middle of everything. Or. Or God likeness. Like. I am seeking to be like my holy God.

What we see happening here. Is a very important connection. Paul. Wants us to see something. That. The knowledge.

[27:43] Of the truth. Of the gospel. Of grace. Accords. With godliness. Better translated. The gospel.

Truth. Results. In godliness. It produces. Godliness. When you. Dwell upon the gospel. Of God's grace. Godliness. It has. It has. It has. An effect. It compels you. It burdens you. It motivates you. It stirs.

Wants. In you. To be like. Christ. Christ. And so. This godliness. It's dependent. On the knowledge. Of the truth. And you can't have one. Without the other. So if you want to be spiritually healthy. Not only do you have to dwell upon the gospel. It's got to find its way into your life.

[28:41] And we see that played out throughout the book of Titus. In Titus chapter 1. The apostle Paul talks about godly leadership in the church. Chapter 2.

He talks about godly members of a household. And that they live out their godliness because of the gospel. And we see the similar thing played out in chapter 3.

That we as Christians are to live in a community with unbelievers. Non-Christians. And we're to live a unique way because of the gospel. What the gospel has done for us.

We'll develop this more over the next couple weeks. God wants his grace to be having a transformation.

A personal effect in you. And the way to it. Is to begin by remembering what he's done for you in Jesus. The last word I want you to key on is the word hope.

[29:45] We see it in chapter in verse 2. In hope of eternal life. What's interesting about this section here is that Paul thinks about gospel ministry as the crossroads of eternity.

On one end is eternal life. Eternal life. Future. Eternity.

And on the other end we see he talks about promise before the ages began. Eternity past. And so what Paul sets up in verses 2 and 3 is our hope now in the present in the crossroads of eternity is established of what's to come.

The promised hope of eternal life. We live in an intersection.

We live in an intersection between eternity past and eternity future. And it's called this present age. And hope is vital to the Christian in this.

[31:02] If you find yourself here this morning and you're hopeless. You've lost sight of eternity. The solution is the gospel of remembering of what God has done for you in Jesus.

And that the promise of eternal life has been secured to the blood of Jesus. And that eternal life is yours. What's key here is this.

Hope is essential to vital spiritual faith. It's necessary. So the Apostle Paul frames this whole conversation about connecting the gospel with the grind of life within the context of eternity.

Eternity past and eternity future. The crossroads of eternity is now. You're living in the crossroads. Let me wrap up by saying this. The people that we have been introduced for to this morning. God. The God of grace.

[32:28] Paul. An apostle of Jesus by God's grace. Titus. Apostolic delegate by God's grace. Those Christians in Crete. All by God's grace.

The people of grace. God's radically changed them. He's changed their eternities. And Paul is writing them for the express purpose of their faith.

That it would be grounded in the gospel. So that the godliness they're seeking to produce flows from the gospel. And there's hope. Hope in what's to come.

When we're living in the crossroads. The book of Titus is God's instruction to us of how to live for him. It starts with grace.

It ends with grace. It focuses on the gospel. Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior is where he starts.

[33:31] And he closes with grace to you all. This is a book that starts and ends with grace. And over the next few weeks. My prayer is that you will grow in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

And that you'll find yourself more and more experiencing a vitality of faith. That comes from being grounded in the gospel.

Let's pray. God in heaven we thank you so much for the book of Titus. Lord I pray over the next few weeks that you would press this book into our hearts.

The truth of it. That we would be a people that find ourselves rejoicing more and more. And the grace that you poured out on us. And are pouring out on us. We ask that God one of the wonders that comes from studying this book.

Is that we would become more and more like you. That there would be greater, greater godliness and good works in our midst. Because the gospel is central.

[34:43] God we ask this all in the name of Jesus. Amen.