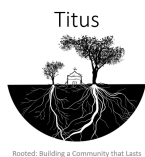


Titus #1

(Titus 1:1-4)

Mark Crawford
1-4-25

We are starting a new series today which will continue for the next 12 weeks. We want to do a deep soak to grow roots into this book. The first chapter will take 2 weeks, the second chapter 4 weeks, and the third chapter 6 weeks



This was a letter from Paul to his faithful follower, Titus.

Principle Characters

Paul



Paul was the first great missionary; you can read his story in Acts. He first persecuted Christians and on his way to do more of this, Jesus met him on the road and he believed Jesus and became the first missionary for the Gospel, going all over the Greco-Roman world. He wrote this letter in Decapolis and sent it to Titus in Crete.

Principle Characters

Paul
Titus



Titus was Paul's companion on his second missionary journey. In Galatians 2, Paul talks about his trip to Jerusalem to confront the leaders there about the law and its requirements. Titus went with him as an un-circumcized Greek. He was one of the first non-Jewish leaders in the church. He was the one who carried Paul's letter to Corinth and traveled with Paul to Jerusalem and other places. Paul would send

Timothy when he wanted to give people a **big hug** and he sent **Titus** when he wanted to **enforce** things. Titus is left in Crete temporarily: church history says he later died on the island of Crete.

Principle Characters

Paul
Titus
Cretans



Crete is an interesting place: it's a large island (165 miles by 40 miles) in the middle of the Mediterranean. In Acts 2 when the Holy Spirit came, one of the groups of people was a group from Crete. In Acts 27, Paul traveled along the coast of Crete and Paul wanted to winter there.

However, they went on and were shipwrecked. Most people think Paul was released from Roman prison and later died there. But I personally think Paul remembered that there were Cretans who believed and didn't get any help to follow Jesus or the structure they needed to be disciples. I think Paul would have

gotten out of prison and then gone back to Crete to help the people and I think he left Titus in Crete to continue the work. (This is what I think.)

Crete was well situated in the Mediterranean as a trade route. It had become a wealthy place with a lot of war. At the height of the Greek Empire there were many cities in Crete famous for pirates and mercenaries and warriors during Alexander the Great. This was probably a place where “everyone did as they saw right.” Keep in mind that this was the place Titus was called to establish roots and structure. One of Crete’s own prophets, Ephimenenes, called Cretans liars and lazy gluttons and evil brutes. ***This was the place the Gospel was planted.***

The letter structure includes the following topics:

Letter Structure

Chapter 1:

Greeting

Elders and Deceivers

Chapter 2:

Purposeful Discipleship

Chapter 3:

What to teach

Grace be with you all



Titus 1:1-4

Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ...
...for the faith of God's elect...
...and the knowledge of truth that leads to godliness...
... a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life...
...which God who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time and at his appointed season he brought his word to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our savior.

Today, we will look carefully at the introduction.

Paul starts with his **identity** and his **calling**: He is a servant (but maybe not like a servant from Downton Abbey) which means belonging to Jesus. Paul is an apostle, a message-carrier. This is really beautiful to consider identity and calling: Eric did a whole sermon series on this in the past.

The **elect** or **chosen** people were the Jews, but this group was not exclusive: anyone can come in and be a chosen person and elect as well.

Faith and believe: Imagine a frozen pond and you are playing a game and something falls on the ice. You can go get the thing because you think the ice is strong but unless you are willing to step on the ice, you won't know it can hold you. Yesterday at Sabino Canyon, there was a lot of water and people trying to cross the water. I was helping a woman cross and held out my hand and told her to come a certain way. But unless she took my hand and stepped across, she wouldn't have faith in my word. (She did take my hand and was able to cross.) Paul wants us to take this step, too: to act on the belief we have in Jesus.

Knowledge: If we grow in our knowledge of truth, we will live a godly life close to Jesus.

Once in college in Michigan, I had to take a trip to a farm in October. One night you sleep in a warm cabin and the next night, you make your own structure and sleep outside. I wasn't feeling

well before the trip and the nurse advised me NOT to go on the trip. I went anyway and developed a really bad cough as a consequence. I was told the truth but I failed to take it. We need to be continually reminded of what is true so we can be reminded of how to walk closer to God.

The faith and knowledge that Paul wants for people are resting on the hope of eternal hope: they rest on Jesus, the good news that he died and was resurrected into eternal life. This is why we can step out in faith and take his hand.

Titus 1:1-4

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^c Titus 1:1-4

To Titus, my true son in our common faith

Paul closes this long introduction saying that his identity, knowledge, truth are all based in the promises of God.

I love that Paul's assumption is that this is also who Titus is: He is a true son in their common faith. They have traveled together: he knows that Titus has his own spiritual DNA. When Paul says who he is, it also means who Titus is. I love this idea: the one carrying the message into Crete, the place of war and wealth and liars and gluttons has knowledge and truth. This is what Paul knows Titus will share with the Cretans.

My questions for you:

1. We live in a place of Cretans: we can live however we want as long as we don't hurt too many people. How am I being influenced by this?

2. In the *Horse and his Boy* (CS Lewis) they are taking a message through the desert to a certain people that need it. They are told where to go to share this message: they have faith. If you are stuck in your faith, is it because of the desert? I fear not having the things I will need in the heat. Do I know what the message is

and what my mission is and am I willing to step out? After I get out of the desert, have I reached the valley where I want to stay there, unwilling to deliver the message?

3. Who is my true son/daughter? There is discipleship that you will notice throughout this book. Maybe you have been a believer longer and you look behind you and see people who can be your true offspring: you can hold out your hand and call them to follow. Or maybe you need a father/mother to follow? Do you know who you are following? Are you willing to ask someone to help you in your journey? Find someone to follow and find someone to follow you.

How are you being influenced by the Cretan Way?

Where are you stuck in your faith?

Who is your true son/daughter? Who is your true father/mother?

Titus 1:1-4

Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

Paul closes with this. Grace is the gift of eternal life, Jesus, God. We need peace as we walk into the Cretan way.

