



Studies in Titus & Philemon

An orderly church

A sound church

A practical church

Titus

Contents

| | Page |
|---------------------|-----------|
| Introduction | 1 |
| Titus 1 | 2 |
| Titus 2 | 4 |
| Titus 3 | 7 |
| Philemon | 10 |

Titus

An Introduction

Titus (meaning honourable) was one of Paul's converts. He must have been converted in the early years of Paul's ministry, for he accompanied Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem at the conclusion of their first missionary journey: Galatians 2:1-3. He was a pure Gentile and was not circumcised.

Paul's letter to Titus was written about the same time and at the same place as 1 Timothy. Paul was about 70 years old when he wrote, to help these leaders understand how they were to do their ministry: consequently we have in them the words of the Apostle to ministers and Christian workers.

Crete is an island of southeast Greece, in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, marking the southern boundary of The Aegean Sea. Largely mountainous, rising to 8,060 feet at Mount Ida, Crete is the largest and most populous of the Greek islands, measuring about 140 miles (225 kilometers) long and 35 miles (55 kilometers) wide. Today it forms a significant part of the economy and cultural heritage of Greece while retaining its own local cultural traits. Crete was famous in Greek legend as the birthplace of Zeus.

Crete is mentioned in the Old Testament in 1 Samuel 30:14 and Ezekiel 25:16 in reference to the Kerethites, a Philistine people who are believed to have originated on Crete.

After he had completed his 3 missionary journeys the apostle Paul stopped briefly at Crete while being taken as a prisoner to Rome, and it was from Crete that his shipwreck voyage occurred: Acts 27:7-15.

People of Crete, "Cretans," were among the earliest of Christians, being present with those gathered at the Pentecost "birthday of the church," after the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:9-11). Paul's estimation of the Cretan character (Titus 1:10-16) was the current view of the time, and was attributed to Epimenides, a well-respected Cretan poet of the 6th century BC.

The book of Titus can be divided into 3 main themes

1. An orderly church
2. A sound church
3. A practical church

Study 1

Titus 1

An Orderly church

Connect

1. Discuss concepts of order and disorder. Can you name some synonyms (e.g. peace, chaos ...)

Discover

Read the whole chapter

2. Titus has clearly been given instructions to create a leadership structure within the church.
 - a. Is this the first time in the Bible that we see something like this?
 - b. Why do you think it was so necessary to appoint elders?
 - c. Why was so much emphasis placed on their character?
3. In verse 10 Paul refers to “*rebellious people, full of meaningless talk and deception, especially those of the circumcision group*”. Who are these different groups of people and why is Paul warning Titus against them?

What dangers do these groups of people present to the church and also to individual Christians?

4. Verse 13 instructs Titus to “rebuke them sharply”. These are strong words. Matthew 18:15-17 gives us some help in how to deal with the rebellious. Why is it so important to discipline them? Why can't we just “agree to disagree” or let them continue with their behaviour?

Apply

5. Can you think of a time where you were perhaps the “rebellious” person or where you had to deal with a rebellious person within the church context or outside of it. How would you handle things differently now?
6. Compare verse 1 with verse 16: what are the challenges of living up to the knowledge we claim to have?

Study 2

Titus 2

Note

You may want to take two sessions over this study. If so, the most obvious break is after question 6. However, the chapter hangs together with a single argument running through it, so do make sure you review the first part when you start the second.

Connect

1. What do you think of when you hear the word “doctrine”? Is it important to you? Why, or why not?

Discover

In Titus 2:1 “you” is emphatic: Titus’ teaching must be in contrast to what has just been described. In chapter 1 verses 10-16 we are told what practical problems the Church in Crete had because of bad doctrine: look back briefly if you need to be reminded of them.

Read Titus chapter 2.

2. Why are the six qualities in verse 2 important for all believers? Do you think they become easier or harder for us (whether men or women) as we grow older? Why do you think self-control is the quality most often mentioned in this chapter?
3. Why are slander and addiction forms of irreverence (verse 3)?

In what ways are both of them destructive to the Church?

(The older women seem to have had a particular task of teaching younger women, probably in the home, whether formally or informally. Perhaps this was because it was less appropriate for Titus to do so directly.)

4. Which parts of verses 4-5 apply to you personally? How do they affect the choices you make about personal and family needs on the one hand, and those of Church, work, and wider society on the other?
5. If you do any kind of teaching, leading, or informally influencing others, what do “integrity, seriousness, and soundness of speech” (verse 7) mean to you? In what other contexts are they needed?
6. What do you think verses 9-10 indicate about the particular temptations of a slave? Your life may be very different, but do you find the same problems in your own heart? Why are our natural reactions sometimes so strong, and what helps you to overcome them?
7. Paul’s concern for the truth had always been with a view to godly living (chapter 1 verse 1). How many reasons can you find in verses 11-14 for living self-controlled, upright and godly lives?

What do you expect to see in a life that is “eager to do good”? (The Message version has “energetic in goodness”).

8. Why is an ungodly life inconsistent with receiving God's grace?
9. Paul could have argued for godly living on the grounds of God's holiness, or of the example set by Jesus, or of the law; but here he says "**grace** teaches us" (or in some versions "trains us"). Why is grace likely to have better results in affecting behaviour? How will our grasp of "grace" affect the way we teach or lead other people?
10. What are the responsibilities of a leader in Christ's Church? (Compare chapter 1 verse 1). Do you think they are difficult to carry out?

How should we then pray and support our leaders?

Apply

11. What have you learned from other believers who display the virtues of this chapter? How do you want others to be influenced by you?

Study 3

Titus 3

Connect

In one sentence, think of one piece of advice, one encouragement, and one reminder you would give to the leader of a new church far away from you.

Introduction to the chapter:

Paul continues to write his letter to Titus, his "true child in a common faith" (Titus 1:4), to give him guidance on how he should lead the church. These words are not Paul's opinion as a man, but direction from the Lord to the church, which we can also benefit from (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The chapter starts with reminders of how we are to be (verses 1-2). It then moves on to remind us of where we came from (verse 3), and how we got to where we are now (verses 4-7). Lastly, it gives warnings of what to avoid (verses 8-11), then ends with some practical advice (verses 12-15).

Discover

Read Titus chapter 3

Verses 1-2

1. (Read these in several different versions to get a wider range of descriptions). What is the common theme for the reminder in verse 1 (only)?

What is the common theme for the reminder in verse 2?

2. How would we put these into practice? In what circumstances might it be particularly difficult?

Verse 3

3. What were we like in the past?
4. What does the text refer to when it says, “once were”, or “at one time we too were”?

How might this reminder of our past help us to practice verse 2?

Have we changed? If so, how much?

Verses 4-7

5. Why is the word “but” used here? (Verse 4)
6. What has happened to “us”? Does “us” refer to everyone? (Verse 5)

7. What are the results of all this? (Verse 7)

Verses 8-11

8. What way is Titus taught to speak to the church, and why? (Verse 8 and also Titus 2:15)
9. How is Titus taught to deal with people who deliberately cause controversy for the sake of it? (Verse 9)
10. If you feel God is leading you to an opinion different from others in the Church, what must you avoid in the way you handle it? (Contrast these verses with chapter 1:10-11.)

Verses 12 – 15

10. What are we encouraged to do here in practical terms for other believers?

Apply

11. Which of these elements of guidance for the church is God bringing to your attention today? This may be individually and as a group. Pray for one another with this in mind.

Study 4 Philemon – A study in intercession

Note

Philemon is a personal letter from Paul, written from prison in about AD60. It was written about the same time as Colossians. The people mentioned in Philemon are named in Colossians 4:7-17. It is possible that Philemon and Appia were a couple and Aristarchus may have been their son.

Connect

1. What differences are there between slavery and servanthood?
2. How would these differences affect relationships in the household?

Discover

Read Philemon

3. What does the letter tell us about
 - a) Paul
 - b) Philemon
 - c) Onesimus
4. What are the relationships between them at this point?

5. What do you think might normally happen to a man in Onesimus' situation?
6. Why is Paul writing this letter?
7. How does he approach this sensitive matter?
8. What is his attitude to Philemon? (Verses 1-7)
9. How does he choose to intercede for Onesimus? (Verses 8-11)

What has changed in Onesimus since he met Paul?

7. What sacrifice is Paul making? (Verses 12-16)

What risks could there be in sending Onesimus back?

8. How does Paul show his concern for Onesimus? (Verse 17-21)

For your notes

What are his hopes?

9. Read 1 Corinthians 7:20-24: although Onesimus is still a slave, how will his relationship with his master be changed?

Apply

10. How can we identify with Onesimus? Read Isaiah 53:6, Galatians 3:26 to 4:5, and Colossians 3:9-11.

11. What can we learn from Paul's example about (a) how Jesus intercedes for us, and (b) how we can best intercede for others?

12. Pray for a desire to become an intercessor.

**Holland Road Baptist Church
Small Group Studies
Printed September 2012**