

**Message #2**

**Titus 1:1-4**

I promised Mary I would take her to the grocery store Monday and being the first Monday of the New Year, I thought it would be wise to do what I say. The problem is she wanted to go to the grocery store at the exact time Western was playing the Cotton Bowl. Well I set the DVR and took her. Now I was sitting in the car and it dawned on me that according to Direct TV, I could watch that game for free on my phone. So I called it up and signed in and sure enough I sat in my car watching the game on my phone. Now would you have ever thought that would be possible 20 years ago? The world is changing.

Over the last 50-60 years there has been a huge change in the morals of our country. When I was growing up we watched shows like Ozzie and Harriet; Leave It to Beaver; My Three Sons; Dick Vandyke; I Love Lucy and Andy Griffith. Back in those days if they showed a married couple going to bed, they were in two separate beds. The Father went to work, the mother was a homemaker and the children grew up to respect and submit to authority. Things were decent and innocent. Even when church services were shown on these programs, it was a reverent atmosphere.

But it is not that way anymore. The world has changed and not for the better. In our culture, sin is flaunted. Most shows will not only insinuate immoral behavior, they will show it. Things that used to be taboo are considered normal. Churches have become a joke. Instead of them being a place of reverent worship where the Word of God is carefully taught and sin is called sin, most places want to be a religious center of tolerance and acceptance in which no one is ever offended no matter what they are doing. Many churches want to entertain the world and make it feel good.

Back in the days of the Apostle Paul, there was a place that was in many ways just like that. IT was the island of Crete. It was a wild culture filled with people who had earned a "notoriously bad reputation." This reputation was bad in the Roman world and the Roman world was not known for godliness.

Titus was on the island of Crete. It was a wild, wealthy, immoral, drunken place of revelry and sin. It was a swinging and freewheeling society. There were all kinds of religious people presenting all kinds of religious ideas. Titus had been left by Paul on this island. It would be like dropping us off in New Orleans or Las Vegas. Most people who went to church were, as Dr. Ryrie said, people of "low character."

Titus was probably lonely, he was somewhat intimidated and he was probably wondering what he should even do. He is about 35 years old and he had been associated with Paul for about 20 years. Now he is on this island all alone. Probably more than once he said, "What am I doing here?" Well Paul and God had him there for a specific reason. He wanted Titus to get things in order. He wanted Titus to get these people functioning right so Paul wrote Titus a letter.

Now the letter begins in some ways the way a typical N.T. letter begins. But upon careful investigation the introductory remarks here are different. Only Romans and Galatians have more opening words. The point of the introduction is this:

**TITUS, YOU ARE TO BEGIN BY KNOWING THAT YOUR FAITH AND MINISTRY AND MESSAGE COMES FROM GOD AND JESUS CHRIST, AND I AM THE CHOSEN APOSTLE GOD USED IN YOUR LIFE.**

Titus had a big job to do in taking on this world of Crete. Paul wanted Titus to realize that there was Divine authority to what he was doing. Paul wanted Titus to realize that his ministry was one based on apostolic authority. The church is not some afterthought. There was eternal value to what Titus was to do. The church was to be an authoritative place that stands for the truth of the Word of God that promotes true godliness in people's lives.

Now the opening four verses contain a series of six key thoughts, which are all designed to cause Titus to think seriously about his job on this island of Crete:

**THOUGHT #1** – Paul is a bondservant of God. **1:1a**

Now Paul often refers to himself as a “servant” (doulos). This was the word used in the first century to refer to one who was a slave, in the sense of being subject to some master. Paul considered himself and his relationship to God to be a slave subject to his master. This is the only kind of slavery that will free you.

This idea that he is a bondservant is not new. **What is new is that he calls himself a “servant of God.”** Most of the time, Paul calls himself a “servant of Jesus Christ” (i.e. Rom. 1:1; Phil. 1:1).

Now this is no insignificant matter. In the Bible the phrase “servant of God” is used for some key men of God, who were highly ranked in the mind of God. God called Moses “my servant” (i.e. Num. 12:7). Joshua was called the “servant of the LORD” (Josh. 24:29). David was called God's servant (II Sam. 7:5). Isaiah was called God's servant (Is. 20:3). So when Paul uses this phrase and connects it to himself, it is a major title of authority.

Paul wanted Titus to realize that the one writing him this letter is a servant of the living God. This is a very authoritative title and this will be a very authoritative letter. Paul is not writing Titus a nice little thank you letter of encouragement or some friendly chat. This letter is coming to Titus as an authoritative inspired letter written by a highly esteemed and authoritative man of God.

Titus had a big job to do on the island of Crete and this letter would give him the authority to do that job.

**THOUGHT #2** – Paul is an apostle of Jesus Christ. **1:1b**

As if bond servant was not enough, Paul wanted Titus to realize this letter and assignment is also coming to you from an apostle of Jesus Christ. The noun order “Jesus Christ” means Paul is an apostle of Jesus the Savior and Christ the Messiah. Paul really emphasizes Jesus Christ in these opening verses. In **verse 1**, he mentions Jesus Christ. In **verse 3**, he mentions “God our Savior.” In **verse 4**, he mentions Christ Jesus our Savior. His ministry is about Jesus Christ, the God/Savior/Messiah/King.

Now the gift of apostle was the highest gift one could have in the church. It was a foundational gift given by God to the church to only a handful of men (Eph. 4:11-12). To be an apostle

- 1) one had to have actually seen the resurrected Christ;
- 2) one actually had to be sovereignly called;
- 3) one had to have been specifically chosen and commissioned by Jesus Christ;
- 4) one had to have been specifically taught by Jesus Christ;
- 5) one had to have been given a specific gift of being an apostle.

The actual word “apostle” means to be specifically selected and commissioned by Jesus Christ and sent out with His full sanction and authority. **There are no apostles today, but Paul was one of them and he wanted Titus to be reminded of this. He had actually been associated with a rare apostle of God.**

Paul wanted Titus to realize that he was sent with the full authority of God. He was a sent messenger. Jesus Christ specifically called Paul and singled him out to be His apostle. So his letter which is designed to challenge Titus to tackle the wild world of Crete was not just a nice little suggestion, this came with the full authority of God.

**THOUGHT #3** – Paul is a bondservant and an apostle for the faith of those chosen by God. **1:1c**

The preposition “for” is a key preposition of these verses. It is used three, actually grammatically four times in the opening four verses. It is translated “for” here and “according to” at the end of the verse and also **verse 3**.

The preposition is “kata.” Now in each use the word “for” or “according to” is followed by a word in Greek that is in the accusative case. When you have this particular construction, it means “for the purpose of” or “with reference of respect to” (Daniel Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, p. 377).

**The point is the servant and apostolic ministry of Paul was for the purpose of developing the faith of the elect. Paul’s ministry was not primarily aimed at the lost. It was aimed at the elect.**

Do not miss this point. Paul's ministry was for the faith of the elect. The Greek word "chosen of God" means just what it says. It means to be selected or chosen by God. Now you can try to figure out the doctrine of election and you won't be able to do it.

How God elects people is a mystery and when you look at yourself the greatest question is not how did God elect me, but why did He elect me? We will get one answer in this book; God elected us so we could be a reflection of His grace election to this wild world. The more we are in the Word, the more of a grace reflection we will be.

I am convinced that one of the things this doctrine of election does is promote a God-honoring reverence and appreciation for the fact that God saved us. One of the arguments against election is that people who believe in election believe they are elected no matter how they live so they can go sin up a storm. I have never known any who come to terms with election that want to do that. In fact, they are humbled by the doctrine and want to learn about God and serve God.

**Paul's life ministry was for the development of the faith of the elect by teaching them the deep things of God.**

Now you would naturally think that since Titus is on the wild island of Crete that Paul would have said our ministry must be about reaching the lost and stressing "free will." We must focus our attention on creating an environment that will lure in the lost heathen sinners. Let's not get too deep in teaching election, but let's emphasis man and his will.

Well apparently Paul did not believe that. You do not water down doctrine to reach anybody. Paul says our ministry is about developing the faith of the elect.

As their faith develops, God will reach the lost. Titus' ministry was not to win everyone on the island of Crete. His job was to proclaim the truth for the elect.

**THOUGHT #4** – Paul is a bondservant and an apostle to give deep knowledge of the truth.  
**1:1d**

Again the preposition "for" is implied in the grammar here. Paul's servant and apostolic ministry was for the purpose of taking the elect to a "deep level of knowledge" of the truth so that there could be growth in godliness. The purpose of Paul's ministry was not to create some vague faith in people, but deep knowledge faith that is based on the truth. This is what produces true godliness. The word "godliness" speaks of a very reverent God-centered godliness. **The truth and knowledge of God will always promote a reverent godliness.**

The word "knowledge" (epiginosis) refers to knowledge upon knowledge. Paul's ministry was specifically about taking people deep into the knowledge of the truth of the Word of God. Paul was not sent by God to have singspirations. He was not sent by God to put on some seminar or weekend retreat. He was not sent by God to entertain people. He was sent by God to take people deep into their understanding of truth and doctrines of God because this is what develops people.

This is critical to see. Deep knowledge of the truth is necessary to true godliness. Shallow people are carnal, fickle people and shallow people and shallow churches do not impact this world with the power of God. It is deep knowledge of God's truth that produces true godliness and that is what Paul's ministry was all about.

Crete was a shallow world, just like our world today. What we need to be doing is going after a deep knowledge of the Word of God and the doctrines of God.

**THOUGHT #5** – Paul's purpose of his ministry is to produce a hope of eternal life. **1:2**

Faith that is based on deep knowledge of truth is that which produces the certainty that we have a hope of eternal life. Paul's entire ministry was to communicate truth that produced eternal hope. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God. The more the Word of God is accurately taught the more faith is developed. Paul's ministry was motivated by three Driving Forces:

- 1) Development of Faith of Elect. 1:12
- 2) Give deep knowledge to produce reverent godliness. **1:1b**
- 3) Energize and stabilize our hope of eternal life. **1:2**

There are three reasons why we have this hope:

**Reason #1** - This eternal hope comes from a God who cannot lie. **1:2a** (Num. 23:19; I Sam. 15:29)

People would be wise to think very seriously here about this statement about God and about everything that shows up in His Word. God "cannot" lie.

The religious leaders on the island of Crete were a bunch of liars. In fact, Cretans were known to be liars (Titus 1:12). But it is impossible for God to lie and it is impossible for the Word of God to lie. God's Word does not lie and cannot lie because God cannot lie.

God's Word will always prove to be true. So as people are growing in deep knowledge of God, they will be assured of their faith. Our hope of eternity based on faith in Jesus Christ is not an uncertain hope; it is a hope that is based on a God who cannot lie.

**Reason #2** - This eternal hope comes from promises made by God long ago. **1:2b**

Long ago God promised that He would send His Son and His grace into the world. He planned this salvation package before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4, 11).

**Reason #3** - This eternal hope was the entrustment given by God to Paul. **1:3**

God revealed this faith in Christ Gospel message at the proper time and he revealed this grace Gospel to Paul. Christ came into this world at the proper time. God gave Paul his ministry at the proper time. God put Titus on the island of Crete at the proper time. God has us here in Kalamazoo at the proper time.

Now the specific ministry that was entrusted to Paul was a “proclamation” ministry. Paul’s job was to proclaim the Word of God concerning the grace of God. That was a commandment given to Him by “God our Savior.” Now this proves Jesus Christ is God.

Titus could see by the ministry of Paul that you reach the world by preaching, not by entertaining. As Titus would proclaim the grace Gospel, God would save His elect.

Notice what gives knowledge. Notice what produces faith in the elect. Notice what gives hope of eternal life. Careful, accurate preaching and proclamation of God’s Word was that which produces hope.

**THOUGHT #6** – Paul wanted his son Titus to take this grace and peace ministry to the entire island of Crete. **1:4**

Paul tells Titus that he was Paul’s true son in the same common faith that he had. That word “common” is koine, which refers to the same kind of faith common to all, including Paul and Titus. Paul is referring to the common grace that all have received, who have believed on Jesus Christ. The common faith is based on grace and it is faith in Jesus Christ that produces peace with God.

Titus knew Paul’s faith and grace doctrines. Titus knew of Paul’s ministry and he was to take that ministry and minister to a bizarre world and unruly culture.

Now this grace and peace has as its originating source God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

Grace is the unearned, undeserved, unmerited favor of God that is found in Jesus Christ and the possibility of having peace with God is all due to God’s grace. It comes from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

Do you see how Titus was to reach that wild world of Crete? Take the Word of God and proclaim it to the elect. That certainly is not the marketing strategy of most churches today, but this is the strategy that contains the full power of God.

What can we do to reach this godless mess of a world in which we live? We need to be serious minded people who go after a deep knowledge of God’s Word and as we do that, God will use us to accomplish His sovereign will.