

Titus, This Is All of God

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Well, let's take our Bibles and let's go to Titus 1, all right? Titus 1. I did an introduction to Titus last time, and I centered in on Titus 2:14 because that's kind of the hub of the wheel of all that Paul is getting at in writing this letter to his understudy Titus, his associate, his, um, subordinate who he has left on the island of Crete so that, uh, Titus could go around to the local churches on the island and try to organize a disorganized and disorderly people, uh, and that's kind of the context of what's going on and, um, Titus 2:14 tells us afresh, um, "He who gave Himself to redeem us from every lawless deed and to purify," notice the two words, "for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds." So God is in the process of building his people, creating for himself a people for his own possession, and, uh, I don't want to get too far off the mark here, but that's why you and I hold to the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints or the eternal security of the believer it's sometimes called, it's because God is going to have for himself a people. He's not going to lose his people. It's not because you're precious or good or work hard to go to church or clean up your life, though you should do those things, that you're gonna make it to heaven. No, you're gonna make it to heaven primarily because God wants to have for himself a people and the Bible makes us, that if we're properly exegeting the text, the Bible makes us continually get out of a man-centered and man perspective and get into a God-centered and God-ward view of things from his eternal perspective of what he's about and what he's up to. So I'll be referring back a lot to 2:14 that God is developing, building, use the word you want to use, for himself a people for his own possession. If you lose that, you've lose lost the foundation of all that God is about and all that God is doing.

So now we come to verses 1 through 4 of Titus 1, all right? Titus 1:1-4. Paul writes this long salutation. He says,

1 Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, 2 in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago, 3 but at the proper time manifested, even His word, in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior, 4 To Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

I've entitled the unpacking of this portion of the text, "Titus, This Is All About God. This Is All," I should say, "of God." In other words, "Titus, what you and I are about is God's planning and God's doing, that we're getting in on His mission."

Okay, here we have this salutation, Paul's opening words to Titus, and it's quite lengthy, matter of fact, verses 1 through 4 is one long sentence. So my English teacher in high school would say that's a run-on sentence and I love that Paul uses a lot of run-on sentences because I use a lot of run-on sentences. It's like I want to get everything in there that's supposed to be in there before I use the period, but it is just one continuing sentence. And in this run-on sentence, verses 1 through 4, Paul lays out a lot of rich doctrine which actually to unpack all the theology that's here, would take many, many, many weeks of preaching. And you think, "Well, that's kind of strange," because this is a personal letter from one man, the Apostle Paul, to Titus, his associate that he knows quite well. They've been together a long time. The New Testament mentions Titus with Paul on many occasions, especially, uh, in the work at the Corinthian church. But Paul has this run-on, lengthy, weighty theological salutation because Paul has an important purpose in mind. He's left Titus on the island of Crete, and he's left Titus with a daunting task. "Titus, you're to stay on Crete," he, in essence, says, "and I want you to straighten out this disordered, those rather disordered churches and disorderly churches."

The the difficulty of Titus' task could be seen down in verses 12 and 13 of chapter 1. Would you look there? Chapter 1, verses 12 and 13, "One of them, a prophet of their own, said, 'Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.'" Now how would you like that said about you? There it is in Scripture for all eternity. Verse 13 Paul says, "This testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely," not gently, not even, uh, uh, compassionately but reprove them severely "so that they may be sound in the faith." So here we have these people that Paul says everybody in the world knows that they're liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons, and they, many of them have come to faith in Christ and they bring their lying, their evil beast-like activities and their gluttonous ways into the church. And by the way, that's okay. Well, it's not okay but it's to be expected. When a person is saved they're not immediately sanctified. Can I get an Amen? The church is so we can all grow together. We're always repenting, Amen? But Paul is saying now some of these guys who came into the church out of a lifestyle of being lazy, evil beasts, liars, rather easy beasts, and gluttons, evil beasts and gluttons, and they're not making any progress. They're thinking the church of Jesus Christ ought to look like the culture they came out of and Paul said, "That can't stand so, Titus, your job is to stay on Crete and get this straightened out." I I feel like like some of my staff just like sometimes, "Thank you very much for that assignment." Titus probably said, "Wow, this is this is daunting."

So the salutation is in the context of motivating and encouraging and confirming that, "Titus, yes, you're up to the task. We can get this done, Titus." So Paul in this salutation lays down his apostolic authority, and, of course, Titus' likewise authority, because Titus serves as a representative and extension of Paul's authority. So he weightily sets forth the divine authority that he and Titus both minister under, and Titus is going to need this as he runs up against difficult opposition in his efforts to reform and revitalizes the churches on the island of Crete.

Now, the particular doctrine that just oozes out of the salutation is the doctrine of the absolute divine sovereignty of God. The absolutely divine sovereignty of God. Paul wants to rivet afresh into the heart and soul of Titus that their mission on Earth, and particularly now Titus' mission in Crete, is all of God, the divine sovereign God's ordained all of this, and that they are God's instruments, God's agents to be on mission with God in their work. "So Titus," in effect, Paul is writing, "remember what we're about is all of God. God designed it. God set it up God's our power. God's message is our message. This is all God's stuff. We're just getting in on it. We we didn't come up with something, Titus, and we thought would be clever and useful and helpful. No, no. What we're doing, Titus, is all of God."

Now kings and rulers and dictators and tyrants all throughout the ages had declared their power and their sovereignty but none of them were ever sovereign. They never were sovereign. They never could be sovereign. Matter of fact, when earthly powers strut and declare their sovereign power, the one and the only one who is sovereign and all-powerful has a response. I'll run through a few verses. Psalm 2:4 says, "He who sits in the heavens laughs and scoffs at them." Building on the theme of divine absolute sovereignty, Colossians 1:16 reminds us, "all things were created through Him and for Him, and in Him all things hold together." In Ephesians 1:11, "He works all things after the counsel of His own will." Can I remind you, church, are you listening to me? Can I remind you, church, that everything that has ever happened from eternity past through time that we are in now and into eternity future, is for the good of his people, his church, and for the glory of his own name. Did you hear that? Everything Iran's doing and Iraq is doing and President Biden is doing, everything that everybody is ever doing in all the earth is to the end of God building his church and glorifying his own name. He works everything after the counsel of his own will and that's God's, can I say, God is crazy about his people. He's just enthralled with his own idea to save for himself a people. That's why I preach so much about the local church because your individual salvation is fabulously important, of course, but even more important with God is that we come together as a people because our witness is greater when the people are together as God's people. Psalm 115:3, "our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases." Proverbs 19:21, "Many are the plans of a man's heart, But the LORD's purpose will prevail." People, people dictate, kings, rulers, moms, dads, young people, whoever, "I've got this plan," but only what God ordains is gonna come to pass. Absolute divine sovereignty.

Now let me give you a Jeff Noblit expanded definition of God's sovereignty. Generally, if you look up in the dictionary the word "sovereign," it's the idea of supreme power and authority, but when we think about God's sovereignty, we need to elaborate on that a little bit more. God's sovereignty includes that God looks to no one outside of himself for any wisdom, any counsel, any direction. God looks to no one outside of himself to figure something out, to have an idea of what he should do or how he should feel about something. And God certainly in no way, shape, or fashion, looks to anyone outside of himself for permission to do anything. His decisions are also never altered by the response of his creatures. God does certain things, men don't like it, God could care less. He can't fail. He can't err. All of his decisions are holy and righteous so why would he

look to unholy and unrighteous ones to give him any approval. He just doesn't care. If he cared about what you thought, he'd be less than God. Or what I thought. Plus, not only does he pay no attention to outside wisdom or counsel, not only does his decisions never take in the response that his creatures may have to him, he has all authority, all wisdom and all power to carry out his dictates to perfection. He's got all power and all authority to carry out everything he ordains to its perfect end, and can I remind you, the one thing he's most adamant about, I might use that as an anthropomorphic parallel to the person of God, the one thing he's most adamant about is that all of his children get all the way home. Wow. And he could care less what the heathen think about it. He could care less about what anybody thinks about him. And he has all the power authority to get it done. What a God this is.

"So Titus," in effect, Paul's writing with this rich permeation of divine sovereignty in this salutation, "Titus, I just want you to understand something afresh as you take on this daunting task of getting these churches in Crete in line, that God is behind all of this. What we're about is of God. And Titus, don't grow weary. Don't get discouraged. Don't quit on me." I'm not saying he said that but I think that's the implication. "Finish this assignment and gain strength from the divine sovereignty of God that what you are about, Titus, is all God's work. It's for God. It's by God. It's ordained by God. It's defined by God and it's the power of God that will help us get it done." As the Bible says, if God is for us who can be against us? In other words, just no use to be against something that God's for. You can't prevail then.

So I I'm gonna use eight different points and some of them are quite brief, some of them are not so quite brief. But I., notice the sovereignly appointed position. Now this is, of course, the sovereignly appointed position of Paul. So Paul throws out here his position that God, the sovereign God, has appointed him to as he begins his salutation to Titus. He talks about, "Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Christ Jesus." The bond-servant or could be translated bond-slave word here, *dulos*. It comes from the most servile level of slavery in the ancient Greco-Roman world. There were a lot of levels of slavery, a lot of different ways slaves were viewed, some of them were more like work associates, but that's not the word Paul uses. He uses the lowest word that, "I'm completely under the total dictate of my master's authority." He said, "That's what I am."

Now, but this is true of all of all of us. Romans 6:22 reminds us, "But now having been freed from sin," sin used to be your master, sin used to dictate your eternal standing, but no longer. In Jesus Christ now Christ is your Master and it is Christ who dictates your everlasting standing before God. So you're no longer the slave of sin, you're free from that but notice these words, "and enslaved to God." What a glorious bondage and slavery this is. You and I, like Paul, are the bond-slaves of Jesus Christ. Among thousands of things we could mention, do you know what that means? That means you cannot put on social media anything you want to put on social media because you represent Christ as his bond-slave. You cannot act in your marriage the way you might wanna act or the way the world expects you to act in marriage, you're to act the way your Master tells you act because you are the bond-slave of Christ Jesus. You don't get to choose whether you'll be committed and active to the local church body of Christ because you are bond-slave of

Christ Jesus. And the most powerful men in this building need to humble yourself this morning and say afresh, "Christ, I am your bond-slave." Your pastor has a long record of not putting on you dictates that are not thoroughly biblical. I'm not going to give you my opinions or my ideas, etc., etc., but the things that the Bible is clear on we must decide, "I don't have a vote. It is not for discussion."

My dear, dear father-in-law was, I think, probably the most faithful Christian I've known in the last 40 years. I mean Clifford Battle got saved and Sunday morning Sunday school was never an option. Sunday morning church was never an option. 6 o'clock church training was never an option. 7 o'clock worship service never an option. Monday night visitation never an option. Wednesday night prayer meeting, never an option. That's the way the man lived his life because he knew, "God saved me and I'm his slave and if His church is meeting, I'm gonna be there." I don't know what it what's speaking to you this morning, but it was good for Jeff Noblit to realize afresh I don't get to pastor the way I want a pastor. By the way, I don't even pastor the way the elders want me to pastor, though I know we're in perfect agreement on this. I don't answer to the elders. I answer to the elders to be accountable to Christ. Are you hearing me? I'm someone else's slave and I've got godly elders and they, amen, that they've never been a problem on those kind of things. I'm not saying that, but what I'm saying is afresh and anew, wives, your Master is Jesus. You don't treat your husbands with honor and respect because it feels good or because they deserve it but because you're a Master that this is the way wives treat their husbands. Husbands, you don't go to work to deny yourself and make sure you take care of that precious bride and those babies and pay the bills and provide perfect for that, protect that family. You do that because your Master says that's what you're to do. I'm taking way too long on this point. I've got eight points.

Brothers and sisters, we have been bought with a price but for us, what a blessed bondage this is, what a wonderful slavery this is because you know what Jesus said? He said you're all under a yoke. You're either under the yoke of sin and Satan and the world in the flesh, the devil, or you're under the yoke of Jesus Christ. And he says my yoke is easy, comparatively speaking, and my burden is light. But you're somebody's slave. Bob Dylan, when he supposedly got converted awhile back, he did write some good songs if you can get past his voice. But he has a little simple song that says you gotta serve somebody. He says, you know you might be a preacher, you might be a lawyer, you might be a a king, you might be a have a harem, you might have all that, but he says you're gonna have to serve somebody. Then he says it may be the devil or it might be the Lord, but you're gonna have to serve somebody.

Well, we're all like Paul, a bond-slave. Well, this is part of Paul's position. He said, "I'm converted and now I've been placed in the position of bond-slave and as His bond-slave He gave me this particular unique task," here it is, "and an apostle of Jesus Christ." Apostle has the idea of just simply being a sent messenger. You go with somebody else's message. In the apostolic office of the New Testament, which is no longer in effect, by the way, it was being sent with the blessing and the authority of the sender. It was a unique office God gave to 12 men plus Paul for the establishing of the doctrines of the church and the completion of the New Testament canon, and there are no more men with

that kind of authority. If you say, "Well, I know a guy and he says he's an apostle." Is he writing Scripture? There are no apostles like the early apostles. Sometimes folks say there are no no longer apostles with a big "A." There may be those who have influence in a broad way like the apostles did, but there are no longer the the office of apostle.

So Paul, by calling himself a bond-slave and then the apostle of Jesus Christ, meant that he was on a mission for Christ in the Earth and, again, the mission, the supreme task is that God will say for himself a people. So as God's bond-slave and being assigned to this office of apostle, Paul is indicating to Titus, "Titus, I have and now you have, we have strict marching orders that we do the Lord's work according to the Lord's dictates by the Lord's power. We're to do God's work God's way trusting the power of God to make it effective." That's the position, the sovereignly appointed position Paul has. A bond-slave and an apostle. Now secondly, the sovereignly appointed purpose. Paul continues on and he talks about, I II do what I do for this purpose," middle part of verse 1, "for the faith of those chosen of God." Then he gives some subsidiary, if you will, or elaborates on some other things, and we'll look at them one at a time, but we'll begin with that thing, "I do this for the faith of those chosen of God." Now notice he does not write, "I do this for those who might believe." That's an okay phrase. It's biblical, but he's forcing us to view this from God's eternal perspective again.

"I'm doing this for the faith." The word "for, kata," there is a word that can be translated various ways, but the idea here is is that, "I'm doing this to the end of, or in order to bring about the faith of the chosen." All right? Paul said, "That's my purpose. I go everywhere and do what I do and work as I work and minister as I minister so that the chosen may come to faith."

Now the word "faith" here is a subjective context. It means not that body of doctrine, the Christian faith that we refer to. No, here it's subjective. It means individuals coming to faith and trust in Jesus Christ, coming to know Christ as their Lord and as their Savior.

Now word "chosen" here for the faith of the chosen, is the word ekletos and more often than not it's translated "the elect" and not "the chosen," but both words are used in the New Testament. It means those God has chosen for a certain purpose, i.e. he wants them to be a part of the people he will have for his own possession. So Paul said, "God's about this supreme task of collecting for Himself of people that will be His forever and my job is to do my ministry so that those He's chosen will come to faith in Christ."

This same Greek word is used in in the parallel Hebrew or Aramaic in the Old Testament to refer to the nation of Israel over and over again, God's elect people, God's elect people Israel, Abraham's descendants. And of course, this doctrine of God sovereignly choosing those who will be his is taught throughout the New Testament, and for a fact when he wrote to Timothy, 2 Timothy 2:10, "For this reason I endure all things," in other words, this is my purpose. This is why I put up with what I put up with. This is why I suffer what I have to suffer. This is why I'll go through the persecution when persecution comes. For what reason, Paul? "For the sake of those who are chosen." He could have written for the sake of those who believe, that's the man-ward perspective, but he doesn't do it. He

makes us look at it from God's eternal perspective. God has to choose you before you ever believe on Christ. But Paul says, "I know God has His chosen ones and I endure all that is for them so that they may obtain salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal life or eternal glory with the eternal glory."

Then Ephesians 1:4, "just as He chose us in Him," when we believed? No. Don't read into the text because your proud human flesh wants to have some stake in your salvation. Let the text be the text. "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love." So you have this expression of divine sovereignty pounded out, if you will, in the beginnings of this salutation. Paul is saying that the primary purpose of his ministry was that through his ministry the chosen of God would believe.

Now all true saving faith comes from the initiation of God. God takes the initiative. It's his sovereign choice. It's his sovereign initiative that brings us to faith. Now listen very carefully: a person does not become chosen, become chosen rather by exercising faith but they exercise faith because they are chosen. That's what Paul is saying. "I don't like that," you say. God doesn't care if you like it. It just doesn't affect him. He won't even have to take two baby aspirins to sleep tonight if that bothers you. It's about time that Baptists decide why don't we just let God be God and we'll just humble ourselves before him. Quit making God into our image and let God define himself.

Now I know you don't have a problem with it but a lot of modern Baptists and evangelicals would because they've been taught very poorly from the word of God. One scholar puts it this way based on the composite of New Testament usage of the word *ekletos*, translated chosen here, it's God choosing, choosing, rather whom he would separate from the rest of mankind to be particularly his own and to be continually under his gracious oversight. Interestingly, Jesus himself is called the elect *ekletos*, the chosen one. That's in Matthew 12 where, in effect, God says, "Out of all the beings in the universe, I have elected, I've chosen One, the second person of the Godhead, Jesus Christ, to be the One who will go and save the children, securing them and see to it that they're brought home that We might have for Ourselves a people for Our own possession."

So Jesus is elect to do that job just as we are elect or chosen to be a part of the family Jesus builds, and all this is to the honor and the glory and praise of Jesus Christ who performs the work. So Paul is, in effect, saying to Titus in this salutation, "The divine purpose of my ministry, Titus, and therefore your ministry as an extension of me, is that God's chosen ones may come to faith, all to the end," Titus 2:14, "that God may have for himself a people."

Now Paul continues here and he gives us some particulars, some glorious truths that go along with those who believe. "Those who believe also," Paul continues, "will come to the knowledge of the truth." Look at it there in, um, verse 1, the last phrase, "and the knowledge of the truth." Now scholars tell us really that idea of knowledge there means full knowledge, and I think you might even think of the idea of complete knowledge. Complete knowledge, that is the message of the truth, the gospel of our salvation. You

don't really have knowledge until you get that knowledge. That's the full. That's the complete knowledge that mankind needs. For example, in one sense there's true knowledge everywhere you and I go but it's not saving knowledge, so it's not the full knowledge. I mean water is two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen. That's a fact. Listen, I got it backwards, did I get it backwards? That's a fact. That's truth. But you can know that and not be saved. It's not saving truth. And you can go through all of the truths of engineering and science and chemistry and mathematics, and God's allowed men to find out a lot of truths about the way he put things together, you can have all of that knowledge and it's true knowledge, but it's not saving knowledge. So it's not full. It's not completed yet. You can even know the 10 Commandments, they're true but knowing the truth of God's law is not saving knowledge. Saving knowledge is the full knowledge Paul is referring to here. It has an excellency. It has a supremacy. When you have the knowledge of Christ and the gospel, you have a power that no one else understands or knows about. He said that's the knowledge I want you to have, that full, that completed knowledge which is Christ and the gospel, that you know him in the full, and you know the hope of forgiveness of sins and the assurance of eternal life. That's full knowledge.

This is what Paul preached and this knowledge is so superior that if you have all the other knowledge in the universe but you don't have this knowledge, you end up with nothing. But it's so superior that if you have this knowledge and like most of the other knowledge of the universe, you have everything. You've got to understand Paul's writing in a Greek Roman culture that prided themselves on great learning and great intellect yet at the same time they're worshipping all these weird pagan demigods and living in gross immoralities. It just was, it's astonishing to me having gone to Greece and looking at it up close and studying it for quite a long time before I went, how this this age, this Greek Roman age is just esteemed as the great renaissance of mankind. They were vile and wicked as hell itself. Yeah, they gained some intellect perhaps but they didn't have the true knowledge. Well, till Paul showed up, preached the gospel and some of them did then. As Jesus said, Mark 8:36, "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world," gain the whole world of knowledge, you could say, "and to forfeit his soul?"

So Paul says, "Titus, the purpose of my ministry is to preach so the chosen come to faith and they grasp what really is intellect and knowledge, that is, Jesus Christ and His saving work and His saving power." Then he adds another glorious truth that's connected with this, you might say this looking back, he talks about the faith of the chosen of God, they were chosen before the foundation of the world, that looks back, now these truths we're looking at now look to the present, then just in a moment he's going to look to the future. Now he says, this is our purpose and continuing, "which is according to godliness," to bring people to a godliness. That means that they become God-like. It's a God likeness. The idea is that these people become right with God through Jesus Christ and they begin living like people who are right with God. Not saying sinless perfection, but the purpose and pattern of their life begins to change so they're right with God and they learn to live as those who are right with God.

The contrast here is in Titus 1:16 where Paul is exhorting Titus, "You're gonna run into some tough stuff in these professing churches," because verse 16, "They profess to know

God but by their deeds," their ungodly deeds, that is, "they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed." "Titus, you're gonna run into a lot of people who claim to be Christians, but the even the not not not that they're struggling with a sin or sins, not that they're trying to be repentant, they're giving themselves over to the same wickedness they gave themselves over to before they claimed to be Christians." And he says they're phonies, they're counterfeit, they're not the true thing because there's no progressing godliness. Paul is saying there's only one power that can bring a person to walk in a new pattern of godliness, and that's the indwelling power of Jesus Christ. So Paul, and we saw this in other writings of Paul and even in his writings in 1 and 2 Timothy that a mark of the true redeemed ones that they're repenters and striving to live differently, to be more God-like.

So the full knowledge is embracing Christ as your Lord and Savior, and that leads to a new kind of life that looks different than the old wickedness in the culture that you were saved out of. So, and then one final thing, they look to the past. He says, "The purpose of my ministry is to bring faith to those who are chosen." He he's been looking at the present that they may grasp that this is real knowledge and it produces a holiness in life. Then he looks to the future, verse 2, "in hope of eternal life." And this is the climactic goal of all Paul did, and all that Paul preached, that is, that he might preach this full knowledge, this truth of Christ, and men and women, boys and girls, might believe and might manifest a true godliness and therefore live in a true hope of gaining eternal life with God in heaven when they pass away.

Now the sovereignly unalterable promise. This is III. The sovereignly unalterable promise. Now again, who's he writing to? Titus. And of course, I'm sure the writing was circulated in the churches for the churches to study, but primarily to Titus, the pastor, if you might, or the associate apostle, in one sense, who's overseeing these churches in Crete, and he's tried to encourage Titus, "God's behind all this, Titus. This is all of God." And then the second-half of verse 2 says, "which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago." He said, "Titus, understand it will be hard. Some people will leave. They're going to spin and twist everything you teach and do, Titus, to put you in a bad light. They're gonna say, hey, grace means we can live in the sins we used to live in before we heard the gospel and we'll just get to go to heaven anyway. Just all kinds of false teachings are going to go around, Titus, and it's gonna get so frustrating and you're gonna get so tired, you're gonna get so weary you'll say does anybody care? Is anybody getting it? Remember Titus, God promised that this was His true way and it will save those whom God deems to save."

This is encouragement for the man of God and it's encouragement for all of us because God's given an unalterable promise. He said he's the God who cannot lie and he promised this, notice the phrase there, last part of verse 2, "long ages ago." The phrase that God promised it long ages to go means literally before time began. Before God spoke physical matter into existence, before God created Adam and Eve, God promised that he would save for himself a people through the merits of his Son, Jesus Christ, and it would not be thwarted. It's unmitigable. You can't diminish it and change it, warp it, frustrate it. "It's going to happen, Titus. God even promised it before time began that He would do this."

I'm so glad I get to be about something that wasn't thought up in some man's mind. "God, Titus, thought this up," is what Paul was saying.

2 Timothy 1:9 reminds us, "who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace," so he had a purpose, i.e. a promise in grace, "which was granted us in Christ Jesus," through the means and merits of Christ, "from all eternity." Before time began this was promised and he says he's the guy who cannot, he's the rather the God who cannot lie. "Titus, do you realize what you and I get to be part of? Don't be discouraged. Titus. Keep on keeping on. We're part of something God's ordained to take place and God promised it before He even made time that we'd get in on this ministry. And He's the God who cannot lie," Paul further says." God has an unlieableness to his character. I don't know that that's an English word, but it is good theology. An unlieableness. It's impossible for God to lie. It's impossible for God not to fully keep his word. Hebrews 6:18 reminds us, "so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie." God is going to have for himself a people for his own possession. "Titus, God's ordained the way this is going to work, the means it's going to work by, the power He's going to bless it with. It's going to come to fruition. Titus, we're in on something that, in one effect, is already settled in the eternal mind of God, so keep on keeping on."

Let me just, um, let me circle the wagons here. I didn't mean for this to be a two-parter but it probably needs to be. When you think about the absolute sovereignty of God, and particularly, by the way, why should we even have to use the modifiers "absolute sovereign" in front of the word God? If he's not absolute and sovereign, he's just not God. But we have to because some good well-intending Baptists and Methodists, Presbyterians and Assemblies of God and others, have begun to define God by means or by definitions that they are comfortable with. I want the being of God to make you uncomfortable. I want you to think when you think on how God reveals himself, I want you to wrestle a little bit with something that's bigger than your brain could have figured out. That makes me love him more, worship him more and revere him more.

So when you come to the absolute sovereignty of God in salvation, this literally off the top of my head, what does that do for a true child of God? Why is it important to stay true to the text and teach it the way it's written? Because number 1, it humbles us afresh. Gospel humility, I call it. You can't embrace that a wretched, lawbreaking, wholly offensive, desperately wicked, demonized sinner like us would be the object of the blessing and favor of the Triune Holy God without falling on your knees, at least figuratively, and saying, "O God, that's too awesome for me. That's too wonderful for me. That love is incomparable in my thinking." It humbles us afresh, and you can never be a person, a church rather of sweet unity and oneness if you're not gospel humbled. We need to be humbled afresh. You know what else it does for us? It energizes and fuels our missions and evangelistic zeal. That's what Paul's doing here. "Titus, go out there and preach. Let's get some more folks saved. Let's get these churches in line because God's got folks out there who are His and they're gonna respond to the true message. Don't change the message to get more numbers, Titus. Then you'll have a bigger mess and I have to bring you home and send Tychicus over there to fix it. No, preach it right and

God's chosen and elect ones will start popping up like popcorn, and when they come because the Spirit of God has done a work in their hearts and they're drawn to the truth, you can never lose those guys. Then you'll have a true church."

The problem with most pastors, even good men, is they have a very false concept of how long this may take. I tell young pastors who go out to pastor a church, I say, "Well, okay, you've inherited a congregation. Now your job is to preach the truth of the word of God until you find a church in there somewhere." Well, that's basically what Paul what, what Titus is doing in Crete. He's going to bring the truth that God's gonna give him through Paul, and he's going to go around until he finds some churches and all this mess that calls itself churches. It emboldens, it emboldens our evangelism and our missions, knowing that God, listen, Jesus has with his own blood saved for himself his own from all peoples tongues, tribes and nations. So we gotta get to all peoples, tongues, tribes and nations and find God's people and see them come to repentance and faith. Can I say for the 10 thousandth time? We don't know who they are. Spurgeon used to say if God would put a yellow streak down the back of the elect, we could just run through town pulling people's shirt-tails up and see who has the yellow streak. But we don't. So what's the Bible tell us to do? What did Tim Seal tell you to do last week? We preach to all men everywhere without reservation, repent and believe on Christ and God will save you. Then after they get saved, we open up the book and we say, "Praise the Lord, you repented and you believed and, by the way, you were chosen before the foundation of the world." Well, which one's true? Both of them are true. They always have been.

Well, let's not come to a text and weave it and massage it and jump over things so that we are comfortable. I don't want you to be comfortable. I want you to be a God-fearing, God-revering Christian because he's just bigger than our brains. It it it gives you a gospel humility. It fuels evangelism and missions. So when the True Church Conference comes around and 40-70, I don't know how many churches will be represented, when these churches come in here to be mentored, encouraged and strengthened, you gotta think about that, that God has his people out there that he's going to bring into his church and if we can help these guys, we can see more of God's people, Paul said his purpose, come to faith and grasp the true knowledge that it's all about the gospel and actually have congregations that begin to turn away from the old cultural lifestyles and walk in a new pattern that's according to godliness. And what's the end of all of that? As those churches are more like Christ intended for them to be, then people see in those churches the glory of God, and that's why we breathe, and that's why we live, and that's why we're here is that God will get more glory throughout the earth. What, is it not amazing we get to get in on this?