

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

TITUS LESSON 1 (Chapter 1)

Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Timothy Sparks and Ben Bailey.

Ben Bailey:

“For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you” (Tit. 1:5).

Timothy Sparks:

And I’m Timothy Sparks. Welcome to our study of the Book of Titus. This message is being brought to you by members of the church of Christ. We invite you to visit the church of Christ near you. There, you will find people who are sincerely interested in studying the Scriptures; as well as people who are concerned about your soul. They would like to study the Bible with you. If you have never attended the church of Christ, we extend a warm invitation to you to do so. Let them know that you would be interested in studying the Scriptures. Also, let them know that you have been watching this broadcast and that you appreciate their support of these messages.

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In the Book of Titus, we learn about an individual whom Paul had sent to a certain area to do a specific job.

Ben Bailey:

Titus and Timothy are books that provide case studies of two different men. Timothy was more timid. He was more of an introvert. He was someone whom you would have to encourage and help along the way. Titus seems like the kind of fellow who would “jump right in” to something. He could be a leader and do the work. As Paul told him, “I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city” (Tit. 1:5). Titus seems like a real “go-getter”—a leader. He seems to be the perfect man for the task of “setting in order the things that are lacking” and “appointing elders in every city.” It does not appear as if these are two separate commands. I think the church is lacking when there are not elders in every congregation. That is the way God set it up. A congregation can still be faithful without elders, of course. But Paul instructed Titus to “set in order the things that were lacking, and appoint elders in every city.” This was the important commission that Paul gave Titus. But before Paul gets into

that commission, he talks about faith, how God called these people, and the hope they had of eternal life.

Timothy Sparks:

Paul really seems to be able to serve as a good coach. What does a good coach do? First, a good coach reminds the team who they are. And that's exactly what Paul does. He reminds Christians that they are people of faith. He wants Titus to know that he is "a man of faith." And this is an encouragement that can apply to each of us. We are people of the faith. In Titus 1:2, Paul says we are "in hope of eternal life, which God, Who cannot lie, promised before time began". But a good coach will not only remind his team about who they are. He also will remind them what they are about. We are supposed to be about helping other people obtain the eternal life that is found only in Christ Jesus. Notice that Paul says "in hope of eternal life." In the here and now, we are "in hope of," "in an eager anticipation of," "eagerly desiring" eternal life. Hope has been defined as "desire plus expectation." We **desire** to go to Heaven. And we **anticipate** going to Heaven. Desire plus anticipation equals hope. As Christians, we are "in hope of eternal life." How can we be in hope of eternal life? Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (Jn. 10:10b). Christ came that we might have the abundant life in the here and now, and that we might have eternal life in the hereafter. In 1 John 5:13, John writes to Christians, saying, "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life." Eternal life is found only in Jesus. Remember also what our Lord prayed when He said, "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom You have sent" (Jn. 17:3). Christ's desire was that people obtain eternal life by coming to have a relationship with God, and thereby be "in hope of eternal life." God has made this promise to us. He is faithful. He will keep that promise. He is not going to lie, for He cannot lie (Heb. 6:18-19). God is a God of truth. He has in store for us life in the eternal realm with Him, if we are faithful and true. Paul begins his epistle by encouraging Titus to "remember who you are and what you are about, for there is something far better in store."

Ben Bailey:

And then, as a good coach would do, Paul offers a reminder about the importance of a Christian's jobs and duties. Paul has manifested God's Word through preaching. That was Titus' job and duty, too. Every team member has to do his or her part for the team to win. As a good coach, Paul reminds Titus, "Here is **your** role. Here is how God saves people. It's through the preaching of His Word." Titus needed to realize what his responsibilities and roles were. It has always been through the preaching of the Gospel message that God saves souls. It's not acting. It's not drama. It's not something "better felt than told." Preaching of the Gospel is what saves people. We learn from 1 Corinthians 1:21 that God chose what some think of as "the foolishness of preaching" to save people. The Gospel is God's power to save. The writer of Hebrews said, "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). Romans 1:16 teaches us that the Gospel is "the power of God to salvation." Paul once asked, "How shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom. 10:14). Without the proclamation of the Word of God by some means, people cannot be saved. In Acts 8, Phillip was going along the road when the Spirit overtook him and told him to go to the chariot in which an Ethiopian nobleman was riding. The

nobleman was reading Isaiah 53. Phillip asked him, “Do you understand what you are reading?” He responded by saying, “How can I, except some man should guide me?” (Acts 8:30-31). The nobleman needed some help. It was not that Philip was going to give the nobleman his own interpretation. More than likely the help that Philip offered (as an inspired man who had been given the message of God) centered on the fact that he could supply other passages of Scripture to help the fellow understand what Isaiah was saying. Today, we must preach only the Bible, and tell people what they must do—according to book, chapter, and verse—to be saved. That is what it’s all about. Titus had a difficult assignment ahead of him. It likely was going to be a challenge for Titus to appoint elders, and to set in order the things that were lacking. But Paul knew he was up to the task.

Timothy Sparks:

How would Titus going about setting in order “the things that were lacking”? He would do so by preaching the Word of God. It appears that there may have been some false teaching going on. Paul there is stressing to Titus, “You need to make sure that the truth is preached and taught.” That’s how God reveals His will for us—through the message that is preached. As Paul put it, God has chosen “...by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1:21). Titus received from Paul a stern charge—to set in order the things that were lacking. Whenever truth is preached, it dispels error. Whenever there is error present, those in error will not want to accept the truth. Thus, there is going to be some resistance to the preaching of truth. Faithful Christians must be willing to stand for the truth (as Paul would say, “having done all, to stand,” Eph. 6:13). We are to stand with the power and might of God. We do this, knowing, as Paul says in 2 Timothy 4:16-17, that the Lord will be the One Who stands by us, even if all others forsake us. If we are doing what God has given us to do, then we are going to be pleasing to Him. “For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ” (Gal. 1:10). Paul is saying, “I’m not in the people-pleasing business. I am in the God-glorifying business.” We need to please God in all that we do. As Paul is telling Titus to set in order the things that are lacking, he also tells him to appoint elders. Why is it so important for Titus to appoint elders in every city?

Ben Bailey:

It is important because without leaders to provide direction in a congregation, people can go astray. Thus, Paul tells Titus, “You need to appoint elders in every city. These spiritual leaders must watch out for the flock, care for the church, and make sure that it’s led, fed, and taken care of in the proper way.” The role and work of an elder is one of the greatest privileges, yet one of the most awesome responsibilities, imaginable. This important role should never be taken lightly. In 1 Timothy 3, we find a similar chapter that tells us about the qualifications of elders. The qualifications listed in Titus 1 begin in verse 6: “if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination” The idea of being “blameless” does not mean that a man must be perfect. It does not mean the fellow never sins. The idea is that he is above reproach. A man is blameless in the sense that when he does sin, he makes it right. And if that sin is known publicly, he confesses the sin publicly and repents. It is not that he has to be perfect, because no one but our Lord was perfect. We all sin and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). But an elder, as a blameless man, must be one who makes his sin right through repentance. He does not harbor or hide his sin. He

doesn't try to act like it never happened. If he sins, he makes it right in God's sight. He is a man of true repentance, and a man who wants to do God's will. He "walks in the light" according to 1 John 1:7. Thus, he is above blame. Someone could not say about an elder, "I saw this man do such and such, and he has never made that right."

Notice also that an elder is a man who has one wife. "Having" is present-tense language. As long as he is an elder, he is "having one wife." This would teach us several things. (1) A single man is not qualified to be an elder, no matter how good a man he may be. No matter how faithful a single man may be to the Lord and to His Word, God has chosen men who are married to be elders because of the family relationship involved in the church. If a man is married, it shows us that his character is such that he is able to lead his own home, and that he thus will have the experience required to take care of the family of God. (2) This passage also would teach us that polygamy is something that is condemned. In Genesis 2:24 we read, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (notice that it says "wife," not "wives"). Polygamists would not qualified to serve as elders. I think also implied in the phrase, "having one wife," is the idea that if a man is an elder and his wife dies, he no longer is qualified to be an elder since he is no longer the husband of a wife. Romans 7:1-4 clearly teaches that death ends marriage. Some people have gotten the idea that "once an elder, always an elder." This is not the case. If a man's wife dies, then he becomes disqualified to serve as an elder. He no longer has a wife. [Again, this is present-tense language.] Then we come to the qualification, "having faithful children." Notice that these children are not accused of dissipation or insubordination. They are not unruly. They are not children who are rebels. They are not children who don't listen to their father. The man who is an elder must have faithful children. "Children" in 1 Timothy 3:4-6 (and other passages) would teach that while they are in the home and under the father's control, the father did what he could to make sure that those children had every opportunity to learn the Word of God. He took them to church services. He gave them opportunities at home to study the Bible so they could learn the Word of God and know what the Christian life is all about. I think this qualification boils down to this. Did the man do his best to make sure that his children were faithful to the Lord? We know that each of us possesses free moral agency. After the children leave home, they may abandon their faith. But did their father do what he could while they were in the home? These first three qualifications give us some background into the man's character and his home life. Others are included as well.

Timothy Sparks:

It's interesting that Paul then repeats himself right after this by saying, "For a bishop (or overseer) must be blameless" (Tit. 1:7). He is stressing to Titus, "You must make sure that these men have a good track record and are morally upright. Be sure that they are living a life such that that no serious accusation can be brought against them." Paul says that a bishop (elder, overseer) must be blameless "as a steward of God." The idea of "steward" indicates one who is a manager. Paul mentions this concept of being a steward or manager in 1 Corinthians 4:2 when he says, "Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." The terms elder, overseer, pastor, and shepherd all refer to the same work that a man might be taking on (overseeing the flock of God). Here, Paul is saying that the individual must be a manager—one who is going to handle well the affairs of the church. It is required that the man "be found faithful" as a steward of God. He should not be self-willed, which means that he cannot seek his own selfish gain. He cannot be so headstrong that he just bullies his way through things. As we learn from 1

Peter 5, he is not to “lord it over the flock.” He is not supposed to use the position of elder as a “badge.” Rather, it is a role of **service**. A good parallel can be seen in the way a shepherd oversees the sheep. Does a shepherd beat his sheep into submission and force them to do things? No, he gently leads them. He directs them. He protects them against the wolves. Paul’s instructions to Titus are going to deal with that issue, in fact. An elder also cannot be self-willed. He is not to be one who “has to have his way.” That is not the proper attitude for an elder. Hebrews 13 tells us that elders are supposed to rule. The idea is that they are supposed to lead. We in the church are to allow the elders to rule in such a way that they can do it with joy rather than grief. That is, we need to keep ourselves in the love of God (Jude 21)—which makes an elder’s job a lot easier. If a sheep goes astray, then the shepherd (an elder) would be responsible for going to retrieve it. And if we are the one who’s going astray, not only are we jeopardizing **our** soul, but we also are using up a lot of an elder’s valuable time—that that could be spent tending to other people’s souls.

Ben Bailey:

An elder also is not to be one who is given to wine. Nor is he to be one who is violent. He is not to be the type of man who is self-willed or quick-tempered. And he must not be given to greed. All of these are much like the characteristics we spoke about in 1 Timothy 3. But Paul changes a little in verse 9. In this context, he says that an elder has to be a man who is able to “hold fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.” One of the things that we learn about the work and role of an elder is that he must be a man who knows the Bible. He is able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convict those who contradict God’s Word. This clearly teaches that **he** knows the Word, and holds fast to it. He knows what the Word teaches, and is able to help others who may be contradicting the Word of God by admonishing them to live according to that Word. If a man doesn’t know the Word of God, hasn’t come to a conviction on certain matters, or is unsure about certain things, there is always room for growth. We are not saying that there is something wrong with “not knowing.” We are **all** continuing to grow (or, at least, we should be!). But, there are certain doctrinal issues (like, for example, marriage and divorce, the church, salvation, etc.) that a man must understand well before he is able to serve as an elder, so that he can help others who may be contradicting God’s Word on such matters. Paul goes on to say that there are many who **do** contradict. The elders were to be the ones who stood up to help and/or oppose such individuals.

Timothy Sparks:

Paul talks about the people who are teaching false doctrine. These people were just spewing out a lot of things as idle babblers. He says that these people’s mouths needed to be stopped. Why? If error is being taught, you must first stop that teaching before you can successfully teach the truth. Part of an elder’s job is to put a stop to any false teaching that may be taking place so that the truth can be preached. It’s somewhat akin to how you till, plant, and grow a garden. What do you do first? Do you just go in and start planting the seeds? No. First, you are going to remove the weeds. You are going to till the soil. You are going to cultivate it, so that it is properly prepared to receive the seeds. Then you can plant. That, in essence, is what Paul is telling Titus. He is telling him, “You make sure you instruct these men whom you are going to appoint as elders. You make sure they know the Word of God. You make sure they have the qualities that God requires them to have. And then you make sure that they are so firmly rooted in the Word

of God that they know error when it confronts them.” If you don’t know the Word of God when error is being taught, you won’t know whether it is truth or error. That is one of the things that is wrong with our world today. And it was a problem in Hosea’s time as well. The prophet of God wrote, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge” (Hos. 4:6). Isaiah said, “Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge” (Isa. 5:13). In many instances, that’s what has gone wrong today. If we have leaders in the church who do not know the Word of God, then, they cannot know what error is. Then, as Paul observed in 2 Timothy 2:17, “their message will spread like cancer.” It’s like 1 Corinthians 5:6, where Paul said that “a little leaven leavens the whole lump.” You have to remove that leaven. You have to stop the false teaching. Then, the truth can be upheld and preached. Titus had an awesome responsibility to make sure that only men who met these qualifications were installed as elders.

Ben Bailey:

The Book of Titus is about living faithful lives. Chapter 1 says that you must live a faithful life in the church. In chapter 2, we’re going to read about living faithful lives in the home. Paul is going to talk about each person’s role—the man’s role, the woman’s role, the children’s roles, the younger wives’ roles. Then, we can outline chapter 3 around living faithful lives in the world. How do those who are not members of the Lord’s church see us? Each chapter in the Book of Titus compliments the idea about living faithful lives. How is **your** life? Are you a part of God’s family, the New Testament church? If you are, are you faithful? Are you there every time the doors are open? Are you one who can be called upon and is dependable? Do you volunteer to help when help is needed? There are a lot of people who go to church, but what are their lives like at home? Do you teach your children the Bible? Wives and husbands, do you love one another? Younger women, do you teach your children? Older women, what are you doing to help the younger women? How do people outside the church view you? When they look at you, do they see a shining light and a good example for Jesus Christ? Do you stand firmly for the truth? And, are God’s mercy, love, and grace exhibited daily in your life?

Timothy:

This is a book that is about “living up to our faith.” When we live up to our faith in the church, and at home, then it is much easier to live up to our faith in the world. Jesus tells us in the Sermon on the Mount, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven” (Mt. 5:16). God has a plan for us to live lives of faithfulness. We need to be people who know what we are “all about”—living the Christian life. We must realize that if we are faithful, we can have the “hope of eternal life, which God, Who cannot lie, promised before time began” (Tit. 1:2). As we look at the overall theme and thrust of the Book of Titus, we see that Paul writes to an individual who was a firm soldier of the Cross—one who was not going to compromise. We hope that you will decide to commit yourself to Christ this day, and not compromise any more. We hope that you will accept the truth of God’s Word. You need to believe in Jesus as God’s Son. Repent of your sins, so that you change your heart and mind from a lifestyle of sin to live for the savior. Confess Christ as the Son of God. Be baptized into Christ, allowing His cleansing blood to take away your sins. Then, live faithfully to Jesus all the days of your life. In the end, you will receive the crown of life (Rev. 2:10).

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Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

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STUDY QUESTIONS FOR TITUS LESSON 1 (CHAPTER 1)

1. Why did Paul leave Titus in Crete?
2. In Titus 1:2, Paul spoke of the fact that Christians live “in hope” of something. What is that “something”?
3. In Titus 1:2, Paul also provided an important clue regarding one of God’s characteristics. What is that characteristic?
4. According to 1 John 5:13, should Christians be unsure of their salvation? Explain your answer.
5. What is a good definition of “hope”?
6. In 1 Corinthians 1:21, Paul referred to the “foolishness of preaching.” What did he mean by that phrase?
7. Titus was instructed to set in order “the things that were lacking.” How was he to go about accomplishing that?
8. Who, according to Paul’s statement in 2 Timothy 4:16-17, will stand with us, even when all others forsake us?
9. When Paul referred to himself as a “bondservant of Christ” (Gal. 1:10), what did he mean?
10. What did Paul mean when he wrote that an elder must be “blameless”?
11. An elder is to be a “steward.” What does that mean?
12. In 1 Peter 1:5, we learn that an overseer is not to “lord it over the flock.” Explain that statement.
13. Paul wrote in Titus 1:9 that an elder must be able to “convict those who contradict.” Explain the meaning of such a statement.
14. Explain the connection between 1 Timothy 3:6 and Titus 1:9.
15. What is Titus 2 about?
16. Titus is a book about “living up to” something. What is that “something”?
17. If a man is serving as an elder, and his wife dies, may he continue to serve as an elder? Support your answer with Scripture.
18. Hosea 4:6 indicates that God’s people were being destroyed for a specific reason. What was that reason?