

Titus

Who, When, Where

Written by Paulus (Paul). Paulus was originally a fanatical Pharisee, persecuting, imprisoning, and even killing Christians for teaching what he thought was heresy, that Yeshua was the Anointed, (The Jewish Messiah). After meeting Yeshua in a miraculous way on the road to Damascus, Paulus became not just a Christian but one of Christianity's most fervent preachers and teachers. He spent most of his life as an itinerant missionary, with all the life threatening perils that that brought with it, to the towns and cities which lay along the route between Jerusalem and Rome. Paulus died in Rome somewhere in the 60'sAD, and he wrote most of the letters which we have in the New Testament. Paulus wrote this letter in 63AD, probably just after his release from Roman imprisonment. He went to Crete, leaving Timothy behind in Ephesus to take charge of that ministry and appoint elders. Now he is sending Titus back to Crete to do the same thing there.

Summary

A personal letter from Paulus to Titus. His child in the faith. Reaffirming what his ministry was to be, and warning him against false teachers, especially Jewish ones, and telling him how to handle them.

Before You Read

What do you teach your disciples?
What are the important messages you would sum up for them if you had to write an email as you set them up in ministry?

What do you wish someone had told you when you started out in ministry? (in the general sense of when you started actually playing your part in your local church).

What do you think is the biggest problem that the modern church faces?

At what point should you ever walk away from a person in your church and have nothing to do with them?

What is the relationship between right teaching and right behaviour?
Is it anyone's job to judge people in your church to decide if they are really saved?

Key Verses

Titus 1:2

in expectation of everlasting life, which the free of falsehood God promised before times everlasting,

I love that description of God. The “free of falsehood” God. In Greek it's a single word, ἀψευδης (apseudes). And if someone who is free from falsehood has promised you something? You can rely on it. It's also a challenge to us isn't it. We're his children. We should be free from falsehood too. That's hard to do. We lie all the time. Mostly to cover our own mistakes. Or to preserve our pride, or from our fear of rejection. Let's rise above that and choose to be free from falsehood. Like our father, Yahweh.

Titus 1:5

For this reason, I left you in Crete — so that you should set anything which is lacking in order, and should install elders in every town, as I prescribed to you...

Paulus knew his role. It was to get things started. And then to move on. That's hard. To let something go, and to let someone else take it over. Something which you have put yourself into, your heart, your soul. And this person who takes over might ruin it. Ecclesiastes 2 talks about leaving your work for another who did not labour to create it. It's tough. But no matter how hard we hang on, eventually we **will** let it go. Maybe only when we die. But eventually someone else will take it over. Isn't it better to do that sooner, while you have control about who will take over? While you can have a transition period. While you can spend time preparing that person for their new role running your ministry? Some people are amazing at starting new things. They are rarely good at following through and finishing them. Know your role, let go when you're done.

Titus 1:6-9

qualifications of elders

How do you “score”? Should you be an elder?
So much credibility has been lost by the church in the last 50 years because of the failings of our leaders. It's a tough job. We should only allow men who have proven their character to take it on. I get that young men have vision, and passion, and in the world they are quickly promoted to management, and they even found companies. But this is not the qualification for being the elder of a church. When your children are grown, and we can see that they turned out well, that your character has passed the test of time, when we have seen not just what, but how you teach others, and it's all good. Then you're qualified. Not before. Let someone else do it until then, and learn to submit.

Titus 1:10

For there are many insubordinate, idle talkers, and mind deceivers, especially those from the circumcision.

It's pretty easy to fool the average into thinking that you are a great teacher who knows what you're saying. It's very difficult to fool a man of God. The mature leaders of the church should be able to tell the difference.

Titus 1:16

They profess to know God, but they're denying it by their works, being abominable, and disobedient, and rejected for every good work.

Anyone can say they believe in God. Anyone can say they love you. But in either case, you shouldn't be convinced by their words, but by their actions. Do their actions confirm that what they are saying is true?

Titus 2:1-6

specific advice for older men, older women, young men and young women.

It's interesting that the advice isn't the same for everyone. The specific things that Paulus mentions for each group, pinpoints the specific things that group struggles with. How about you? Which group are you in? How are you going with those things? Check out the other groups... their list looks easy right?

Titus 2:15

Speak these things, and entreat and expose with all authority. Don't let anybody despise you.

I find the modern Christian leader is very confrontation averse. We are so scared of confronting people. We think we always have to just be peaceful. But that creates an environment where falsehood and deception can thrive. We must confront false teaching. Bluntly. Directly. Publicly. Confront it while it's a small issue. (This is true for all confrontation really). If you wait for it to become a big issue it will either be too late, or the confrontation will be a war instead of a conversation. One of the things I learned as I got older, was to not be afraid of confrontation.

Titus 3:1

Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to submit, ready to do every good work.

Submission to authority is one of those fruits which shows your level of maturity as a Christian. Or not.

Titus 3:3

We were also ignorant once, disobedient, wandering astray, slaves to desires and various pleasures, passing life in evil and envy, detestable and hating one another.

Sadly, the modern church is well known amongst non-believers for its condemnation and judgement of others. But we used to be the same! We used to be ruled by our passions and desires. Maybe different specifics, but we were the same. We need to stop judging others, and focus on loving one another, accepting and forgiving others. And being patient while the holy spirit does the job of changing their hearts.

Titus 3:5

Not because of works in righteousness which we've done, but because of his mercy.

This verse sums up the gospel so clearly. Nothing you have done, nothing, counts for anything at all when it comes to your salvation. You are saved 0% by your own effort, work, merit. You are saved 100% by the mercy and love of Yeshua and by what he did in your place. Do not be proud that you're saved. You were no more worth it than any other person. God just had mercy on you.

Titus 3:9

Give a wide berth to foolish questions and genealogies, and contentions and quarrels about the law, because they're unbeneficial and futile.

It's so easy to be caught up in those kind of arguments. Or feeling like you have to defend against them.

The advice from Paulus? Argue? Defend? Nope... walk away. Don't have anything at all to do with this kind of argument. It's a waste of time. You will not convince anyone, and you will be distracted from the work you should be doing. Teach the truth. Live godly. Avoid this kind of rubbish. It will be seen for what it is. Those who teach it have condemned themselves.

After You Read

What verses really stood out to you?

How would you summarize this book in a sentence or two? What is it about? What is God trying to say to us?

Is there anything in your life that you need to cut out? To remove, stop doing?

What is your role in the church?
Are you doing that?
Are you doing anything else too?
Should you be?

Do you think you're qualified to be an elder?
Do you think you're submissive?

Are you caught up in some pointless argument or consumed by some trivial issue of teaching?
Are you ready to walk away?

Is there enough evidence from your behaviour to prove that you're really a Christian?