

Foundation of the sermon

Purpose

To Introduce the Book of Titus – Introductory comments of Paul

Principle Idea:

Paul took his authority to be an Apostle – from God’s word – not his own authority. Our Christianity is founded solely in the words, and commands of God

Type of Outline

Exposition of Titus 1-4

Introduction

The book of Titus is in a group of epistles commonly called “The Pastoral Epistles.” It was in these works that Paul addresses his close co-workers in the ministry. Unlike the “Church Epistles” where his instructions are directed at a particular church and their issues, in the Pastoral Epistles Paul directs his instructions to a particular person. His instructions can be seen as a practical guide to the ministry.

In two of these works Paul directly gives instruction on the qualifications of the office of Pastor/teacher and deacons in the church. As Baptist we believe in the Bible and the Bible alone as our only rule for faith and practice, and it is in these works Paul gives us direct instructions on the selection of the shepherds of the flock of God in practical terms. Titus is one of the works giving us that direct practical instruction of how it must be in the Lord’s churches.

These instructions may be found – in verses 5-9 of chapter 1. Paul goes on in the work to give instructions concerning the need to refute false teachers in 1:10-16. He gives instructions on Christian behavior in 2:1-10; on Christian Doctrine and Christian life in 2:11-15. In 3:8-11 he encourages the practice of good works, and avoiding false teaching.

Acting as bookends to this practical instruction of how to conduct the church and practice Christian principles Paul addresses Titus in his greetings in 1:1-4, and requests of Titus to join him in Nicopolis for the winter and to assist some fellow workers in their journey in chapter 3:12-15.

Not much is known about Titus himself. Paul indicates through his writing the Titus was associated with his work in Corinth. You will find mentions of him in this regard throughout the 7th and 8th chapters of II Corinthians. Paul also indicates that Titus is a Greek in Galatians in comments concerning a visit to the temple and in his discussion concerning circumcision in Galatians 2. A final reference to Titus comes from II Timothy 4:10, where Paul remarks in passing that Titus has departed for mission work in Dalmatia (modern Yugoslavia).

Titus, as can be seen by reading the book of Titus, played an important role in the founding of the church on the isle of Crete. Titus it seems was Paul’s right hand man when it came to tough situations. He worked with Paul in Corinth, a church beset by a myriad of problems. According to Paul, he was dependable (II Cor. 8:17), reliable (II Cor. 7:6), and diligent (II Cor. 8:17); and he had a great capacity for human affection (II Cor. 7:13-15). The book of Titus shows us that Paul wanted Titus to use these talents to take control of the situation in Crete, and make a strong stance against false teaching.

This book was written during the latter period of Paul’s ministry possibly around 62 AD.

Today we will look at just the introductory salutation from Paul to Titus.

II. Body

A. Description of Paul and His Ministry

Titus 1:1 Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; 2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; 3 But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour;

RWB Translation:

1 Paul, a servant of God, but (also) (an) Apostle of Jesus Christ according to [the] faith of God's chosen (ones), and (upon) [the] knowledge of the truth, according to godliness; 2 [based] upon the expectation of life without end which God, the only trustworthy (one), promised before the time without beginning; 3 But (caused) to appear (in) their own times by means of [the] public proclamation of his word, which I (myself) was entrusted, according to commandment of God our Savior:

1. Paul describes himself as a servant

The term here is *doulos* is the common term for slave. Paul emphasizes this in several of his letters. You can see this by looking at Romans 1:1 and Phillipians 1:1. Paul understood that he was a man under authority, and that his ministry was not his own, not under his own authority – but under direct command of God and Christ. He was a slave to Christ.

Unlike many today who want to demonstrate the authority by their degrees, authorizations or by their title – Paul took upon himself the title of “slave of Christ”

2. Paul describes himself as an Apostle.

Paul makes a slight turn in his thought. He first notes that he is a slave but then he goes on to note that he is also an Apostle. Even this title in itself indicates that the men who held this office were not acting under their own authority but under the direction of orders from someone else. The term means: a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders. Paul recognized that he was an Apostle for the children of faith in God, but he knew that an Apostle operated directly under the Authority of God and Christ. The specific office of Apostle require certain things.

Let's look at Acts 1:21-22 concerning the requirements given then by the other Apostles to replace Judas.

21 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

1. A personal witness of the ministry of Christ
2. A personal witness of the resurrection of Christ

Now Paul had not been a direct follower of Christ, as these men had. But he considered himself as one who had witnessed the ministry of Christ – born out of due season (See I Corinthians 15:8. In Galatians 1: 15-17 Paul indicates that he did not receive his teaching from men but directly by God during a 3 year period in Arabia. This passage states:

“15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, 16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh

and blood: 17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.”

Paul had met the the resurrected Christ on the road to Damascus – in Acts 9:3-6 it states:

“3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.”

So Paul had met the requirements of an Apostle – just a little latter than the others called Apostle. There is no man now living that can have the claim of the office of Apostle like the 12, or Paul. They are unqualified. But even in that lofty title there is the qualification – that the authority of the office – was found in others that did the sending not in the one sent.

Paul in the next section in Titus gives some qualification of his status as an Apostle:

a) It was according to faith

Paul was qualified to be an Apostle by the direct requirements we have just discussed, but he pauses here to further clarify to what an Apostle (and we might add what any minister, or believer) must do is go beyond the surface qualifications – to be included in God’s chosen. This choosing, this ministry, this Christianity must be “according to the faith of God’s elect”

b) It was upon the knowledge of the truth

Paul as already pointed out came in direct relationship with Christ through revelation – Christ instructed him correctly. Paul had been religious all his life. In Philippians 3:4-6 he says:

“5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; 6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.”

And in Acts 22:3 he says:

“I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.”

But Paul was not chosen – could not be an Apostle – was not acting according to the faith – until he received the “knowledge of the truth.”

You may have grown up in the church – you may have learned at the feet of the masters – but until you gain that personal revelation of God you are not chosen of Him, you are not the elect, you are not saved and assured of eternal life.

Paul goes on to note that the truth he is talking about only comes “according to godliness.” Truth is not only an understanding of facts – it is God’s truth and must be handled in a godly manner. Truth as we have learned in past sermons is not just words, or ideas, it is found only in Christ – and to handle truth in a godly manner is to walk as He walked. Truth is not just words it is action – Paul had to handle the truth with a godly response through his life’s conduct.

c) It was based upon his hope of the resurrection

Paul did not believe that his Christianity was just based in the here and now – it was based in eternity. He didn't believe just for belief's sake. He didn't accept just a temporary authorization to teach and preach the Gospel – but that his preaching and teaching was rooted in the expectation of life without end. His hope lay in the future – his message – what he was sent to proclaim was eternal –

The authority of his Apostleship lay in the expectation of life everlasting.

The messenger was not the focus – the focus was the message. He says three things concerning the expectation inherent in the message:

1. God promised it in eternity past
2. It has as its source the only one trustworthy in the world.
3. It comes through the proclamation of this message – via preaching – and not just through the means of preaching but only by the preaching of the WORD.

d) He was entrusted with the message

It was not his message – but God's – his Apostleship was in the preaching – proclaiming of the message – and the message wasn't his message. The authority to preach and the message itself came from God – Paul was only sent.

e) He was commanded to do it by God.

He received this by command of God.

B. Addressee of the Letter

4 To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Paul address Titus – a child of God -- again its interesting to note he isn't just a child – but the authority of his being a child of God had its authorization only in God – through the common faith.

Paul's address is Grace, and Mercy and Peace – gifts that only God can give in true measure.

III. Conclusion

Titus gives us practical instructions in the practice of the church. It is instructions to a minister of the Gospel given a difficult task to build a church in a tough situation. It speaks of how to select godly leaders, how the minister should deal with false teaching – and gives instructions on the proper conduct of the people in the church.

Today we have looked at the address of the letter – in it Paul gives a short description of himself and his ministry. His focus is on his authority – authority that is not inherent in himself but found only in the message that is to be preached, in the hope that that message engenders, in the truth of its contents, in the faith it produces, and finally in its ultimate source – the one only trustworthy one in the universe.

Date: 12/05/09

Title: God is the only Authority.