

August 18, 2024

“The Rules of Life”
Lesson 3

Titus 1:1-3, 2:11-15

Intro

This is one of Paul’s Pastoral Epistles, along with the two he wrote to Timothy. These epistles were written to people, rather than to churches, as in the letters to the Galatians and the Ephesians.

Titus likely went to the island of Crete with Paul on one of his missionary journeys, though Acts does not name him specifically. Paul went to Crete sometime after he was released from his Roman imprisonment; scholars say he wrote this letter to Titus around AD 65 after departing the island. He left Titus there to correct some negative situations in the church, and to put an eldership in place in every church on Crete.

The church in Crete was troubled by people who professed to know God but lived lives that were vastly different from than profession. These people had deceived others, disrupted the community and brought controversy into the church. Paul’s solution for Titus was “sound doctrine” and training in godliness. These two elements are the foundation for every believer to mature into godly men and women.

Read Titus 1:1-3

1. vs. 1: Paul identifies himself from the first as the author of this letter

He does this also in his first letters to the Corinthians and to Timothy

He also identifies himself as “a servant of God”—the only time he ever uses this phrase

This description shows his humility—he is a servant

This is a necessary quality to one who would lead other Christians

He also states his purpose in writing to them: “to further the faith of God’s elect”

The elect are those who have chosen to accept God’s offer of salvation

Paul wants these people to have a deep understanding of their faith

Faith and knowledge (understanding) produce “godliness”—the end result Paul wants

Godliness is behavior that follow’s God’s standards

Some Cretans were known for their ungodly behavior (see Titus 1:10-13)

Paul knows this is a topic that needs to be addressed from the start

2. vs. 2: Paul says godliness produces the “hope of eternal life”

This hope isn’t wishful thinking, but confidence in what will happen because of Christ

God promises eternal life to all who come to him through Jesus Christ

God is perfect—He does not lie

Every promise God speaks can be relied on because He cannot lie

2 Tim. 1:9 says that God prepared the way of salvation “before the beginning of time”

So His promise allows us to have confidence (hope) of our eternal destiny

3. vs. 3: Here Paul reminds us that the salvation message came at “his appointed season”
God always had a plan (from the beginning), so there was a best time for Jesus to come
This plan wasn’t fully revealed or known until Christ came
Now that He has, God is using Paul to preach this message of salvation through Christ
The last part of the verse is Paul’s reminder that he has been given authority
The preaching was “entrusted” to him by God
God commanded him to preach this gospel

Read Titus 2:11-15

4. vs. 11: Paul first writes of “the grace of God”
This is the gift of our salvation/justification from God
Grace is not deserved or earned; is it based exclusively on the love of God
“By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God” Eph. 2:8
We need this grace because we are incapable of attaining salvation by our own works

Paul says this grace “appeared...(to offer) salvation to all people”
The word translated “appeared” carried the idea of light appearing in the darkness
The grace of God in Christ appeared to bring salvation to a world darkened by sin
The gift appeared to all and is available to all
However, not all choose to accept it
Those who do accept and receive this gift will show godliness in their lives

5. vs. 12: Paul here teaches that grace leads to salvation, which then leads to godliness
Grace becomes an instructor in the habits of righteousness and godly living
In accepting God’s gift of grace, we also receive the Holy Spirit who teaches us
We are to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions
Ungodliness is any behavior that goes against God’s holy nature
Worldly passions are selfish desires of the flesh that are contrary to God’s ways
The godly behavior we are to develop includes self-control in our passions and desires
We are also to live “upright and godly” lives
These are attitudes and behavior that conform to God’s nature and standards
These three things (self-control, upright lives, godly lives) are to be developed now

6. vs. 13: Paul instructs that living godly lives is to be done with a goal in mind
We are waiting for the “blessed hope” of Jesus’ return
We live through the trials and suffering of this life because we have hope
Jesus is going to come back
We are to live lives of holiness and godliness as we eagerly anticipate His return
Paul reminds us of God’s awesomeness
He calls Jesus “our great God and Savior”
Remembering Him in this way encourages us as we strive to live holy lives

7. vs. 14: We wait for Christ's second return because of what He did when He was here first
He "gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness"
He did this voluntarily
He did what no one else could possibly do: rescue us from sin and death
He redeemed us, meaning He ransomed us from the bondage of our wickedness
He also purified us
To be pure is to be clean, and in God's eyes, holy
The result of these two things is that our identity now is as God's "very own"
As His people, our desire is to do His will
Paul describes it as "eager to do what is good"
We act this way out of love for Him who redeemed us, not out of force

8. vs. 15: Paul finishes this section to Titus with an encouragement and directive
"These, then, are the things you should teach"
These areas must have been a problem to correct in Crete
Paul, as an apostle, encourages Titus to strengthen the faith of the believers

Paul uses the word "rebuke" in this verse, the third time in the letter Paul uses that term
Ungodly behavior was common in Crete
Titus therefore must call it out and offer a correction to live in godliness
Titus has authority to do this because Paul the Apostle has given it to him
A "chain of command" is in effect here
Titus gets authority from Paul, who got his authority from Jesus (see Titus 1:1)
Paul finishes by saying "Do not let anyone despise you"
Though Titus' age isn't mentioned, he is likely younger than Paul
This advice is similar to what Paul told a youthful Timothy (1 Tim. 4:12)
Titus is to have confidence that his teaching is authoritative and valuable for growth

Application: It is easy to get discouraged by failures and struggles. But we can take hope because of the good news that the grace of God is ours through Jesus Christ. Jesus' sacrifice of Himself on the cross redeemed and purified us. Therefore, we have hope of eternal life. This gift of eternal life teaches us to live godly lives and to seek Christlike behavior. We live this way as we wait for the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Prayer: Almighty God, thank You for the gift of grace and the forgiveness of our sins that we have in Jesus. Thank You for salvation and the hope we have because of it. By the power of the Holy Spirit, help us live godly and pure lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.