

*Invitation to Advance*  
Paul's Final Words to Titus  
*God's Invitations Series – Part 8*  
Titus 3:8-15  
October 4-5, 2025

Introduction

- Care & Compassion Weekend! - Thank you to Sam Koopmans from AIM
- Closing out this series and a new one is on its way!
- The Message on Wednesday to new pastors – they are walking into a **unique region** of unified church leaders due to the hard work of many.
  - **City Pastors** – 300 pastors worshiping and praying together that have vastly different theological opinions and perspectives.
  - **Jessup** – Churning out leaders to go into their spheres of influence, their denominations to promote the cause of Christ.
  - **KFIA** – many different churches, pastors represented, my involvement in interviewing people and promoting their church even if I see it very differently.
  - **Unity IN Diversity is the point** – Unity has to be worked for because it's human nature to divide.
    - **Unity** – doesn't mean sameness. It doesn't mean that we give up our convictions and fall into a gelatinous ooze of standing for nothing. It means there is something bigger, someone bigger than anything we think. It means that we all submit to Christ as our King. It means that at the foot of the cross all of us, with all of our opinions and doctrines and perspectives, are humbled and in need of the grace of God.
    - **Diversity** – it means that God has room to breathe through different voices and perspectives. None of us has this stuff right. At the beginning of Christianity the **Jews** didn't want to be with **Gentiles**, but God said otherwise. The **free** people didn't want to mix with the **slaves**, but God said otherwise. The **law people** didn't want to mix with the **grace people**, but God said otherwise. It was when all those groups submitted to something bigger, the presence of God, and His agenda to reach the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ and the worship of His name, that Christianity exploded and actually had an effect in the world.
    - The world isn't impressed with factions – the world is used to dividing over opinions and perspectives. The world doesn't respect a divided church. The world doesn't have to listen to a Church that cannibalizes itself. But the world has to take notice when we all put down our personal agendas for the sake of someone greater.
    - Whether we like it or not, we are outnumbered in the world and too many are lost still. God's not as interested in our squabbles as much as our strength as His ONE Body of Christ to reach the world. Whether we like it or not...

We are in this TOGETHER

## Lesson

- Get Up and Go
  - The Urge to Live a Profitable Life
    - Titus 3:8 – *“The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist<sup>1</sup> on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful<sup>2</sup> to devote themselves to good works.<sup>3</sup> These things are excellent and profitable for people.*
      - The saying is trustworthy<sup>4</sup> - What saying? It seems to be all of Chapter 3 which said: 1.) Treat people with honor and courtesy; 2.) We were once just like the world so don't get arrogant; 3.) God saved us from all that selfish living. 4.) It was all his grace and love not our efforts that saved us.
      - and I want you to insist on these things, - It seems that Paul is telling Titus to be strong in his teaching on these subjects. He needs to be strong in commanding the Christians to act like Christians and he needs to be strong in making sure that salvation by grace through faith alone is the gospel that is being taught.
      - so that those who have believed in God – those who call themselves Christians and have a new life in Him.
      - may be careful to devote themselves to good works<sup>5</sup> – We have a job to do and it's not to live for ourselves, to advance our private agendas, nor to get what we can out of life. Our job, our responsibility, is to do the things of God, which are always 'good things/good works.' Since it's so easy to slip into laziness and selfishness, we need to be CAREFUL, focused, attentive, to DEVOTE, commit ourselves to doing the things of God.

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<sup>1</sup> “The verb translated “stress” (from diabeibaioimai) occurs in the New Testament elsewhere only in 1 Tim 1:7, (The word is found twice in the AF (Papias 3:3; 6:1) and twice in Philo (The Worse Attacks the Better 38; Decalogue 130)) where false teachers “confidently affirm” distorted views. Paul does not want Titus to be tentative or timid about the gospel’s theological substance but decisive and forceful.” (Yarbrough, R. W. (2018). *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (D. A. Carson, Ed.; p. 551).

<sup>2</sup> Paul’s reference to “being careful” is significant here. It connotes the idea of concentrated thought and attention to something. “Verse 8 is a succinct conclusion to the whole of the teaching on the Christian life given in Titus. In it Paul drives home three points that we must not miss.” (Towner, P. (1994). *1–2 Timothy & Titus* (Vol. 14, Tt 3:8).) The first is that the Christian life is active. We trust in God and his Spirit empowers our good works. The second is that there will be fruit in our lives as we seek to do good. The third is that our good works will be beneficial to everyone. The goodness Paul references is likely meant to be of benefit for those outside the faith. He has missionary concerns in view here.

<sup>3</sup> “Paul’s language in 3:8 (cf. 3:14) takes an unusual turn, however, as “what is good” (kalōn ergōn) is the object, not of phrontizō, but of the middle infinitive translated by NIV as “devote themselves” (proistasthai). This word occurs only eight times in the New Testament and only in Paul’s writings. Usually it means to exercise leadership or management. (With this meaning it occurs in the active voice: Rom 12:8; 1 Thess 5:12; 1 Tim 3:4, 5, 12; 5:17.) But here (and in 3:14) it means to have interest in or to prioritize the doing of good, which Paul has highlighted at various points in the epistle. Titus would have been expected to flesh out these commands according to the opportunities and needs presented by the local situation.” (Yarbrough, R. W. (2018). *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (D. A. Carson, Ed.; pp. 551–552). William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos.)

<sup>4</sup> Paul’s next comment reflects back on 3:1–7 in order to reiterate the command to Titus and draw out more specifically the motivation behind the teaching. The reasons for seeing v. 8 in this relationship to the preceding are: (1) The formula “this is a trustworthy saying” (v. 8a) clearly refers backwards to at least 3:[3]4–7; (2) the repetition and reformulation of the command to Titus (“I want you to stress these things”) follows the same pattern used in 2:15 (pausing to summarize before moving on) and the term “these things” also points back to material just covered; (3) the purpose of the command (v. 8c) is spelled out in terms of doing “good [deeds],” which forms a verbal link with the description of Christian living in 3:1 (“ready to do whatever is good”); and (4) the closing rationale also reflects backwards (“these things” refers to “good deeds”) and echoes the concern that Christian character should affect people in general.” NICNT

<sup>5</sup> “What most attracts our attention is not the rhetorical importance of this summarizing statement, but the motive it gives for living the life of the Spirit in the world. Those who believe in God (the “us” who have been saved, washed, and who have received the Spirit, justification, and heir-status) have a responsibility to the world.” NICNT

- These things are excellent and profitable for people. – What things?  
**Good works.** Engaging with one another and the world around us in a way that advances God's agenda and blesses the world.
- Enough is Enough
  - A Warning Against Division in the Church
    - Titus 3:9-11 – *"But avoid foolish controversies,<sup>6</sup> genealogies,<sup>7</sup> dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless.<sup>8</sup> <sup>10</sup> As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, <sup>11</sup> knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned."*
    - A Teaching Church – We are a teaching church which means that **we slow down our time in the Word to describe what the Word says and WHY.** It's sexier to just give an inspirational message and our pastors would get a lot more applause if we were allowed to be smoother and quippier. But we made the choice a long time ago to be a teaching church that would **instruct our people how to read the Bible for themselves and that means we have to keep stopping and pulling back the curtain to get everyone on board and equipped.** This is one of those times.
      - Contextual Meaning vs. Application – **When we read the Bible it's our primary job to read it as it was written and for what it was written. That means we need to know the context and examine what the original author meant and what it meant to their audience. It is only AFTER we do that sufficiently that we can start applying it to our lives and extracting principles for our experience today.**
      - Current context – the current context that **Paul was trying to instruct Titus about was a messed up young fledgling church that had been rocked by controversy. False teachers** had come into the church and stirred everyone up by **telling them that they weren't really saved**

<sup>6</sup> The term controversies (ekzētēseis; see 1 Tim 6:4; 2 Tim 2:23; Tit 3:9 for the related zētēseis) refers almost technically to argumentative questions about interpretation of the Bible.

<sup>7</sup> In terms of content, the descriptive phrase myths and endless genealogies has been taken by some scholars as an indication that the heresy was Gnosticism, which in some of its manifestations held to the belief that God related to the created world via a system of angels (called archons), here supposedly alluded to in endless genealogies. The preoccupation with stories about creation (here indicated by myths?) evident in some Gnostic literature allegedly further supports this view (Dibelius and Conzelmann 1972:16-17; Hanson 1982:57; Brox 1989:35). Jeremias and Strobel (1975:14-15) understand myths and genealogies to refer respectively to creation stories and the traditions about the patriarchs. Others (Sandmel 1972:158-65; Quinn 1990:246-47) argue that genealogies (see also Tit 3:9) refers to biographical stories about the historical Jesus. While it may not be possible to be that precise, it is important to note that the Jewish (and Hellenistic Jewish) interest in genealogies or "generations" (Hebrew toledoth), as seen in Philo (Moses 2. 46-47; compare On Rewards and Punishments 1-2) and in the writings of Qumran (1QS 3:13-15) make it clear that the term itself was a reference not just to lists of family names and descendants but also to edifying stories about significant Old Testament figures (see also Josephus Against Apion 1.16). The Jewish/Judaizing features connected with the occurrences of the words and phrase in these letters (1:8; Tit 1:14; 3:9) suggest that Paul is criticizing some sort of speculative interpretation based on the Old Testament stories. For the view (adopted here) that the term myths is mainly a negative qualitative assessment (for which see the discussion in Quinn 1990:100-101, 111) and genealogies identifies content, see also Quinn (1990:100-101, 245-48). Paul's readers would not miss the derogatory tone in myths and endless genealogies (see also Guthrie 1957:58; Fee 1988:41-42).

<sup>8</sup> "Paul counsels this fourfold avoidance because the disputes he has in mind "are unprofitable and useless." To avoid misunderstanding here, it is important to observe how assiduously Paul strove in person and in his letters to overcome opposition to the gospel by suasion and to facilitate harmonious ties within and between churches. Most if not all of Paul's letters and his tenures in various locales can be understood as implementation of Christ's dictum "Blessed are the peacemakers" (Matt 5:9)." (Yarbrough, R. W. (2018). The Letters to Timothy and Titus (D. A. Carson, Ed.; p. 554). William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos.)

because they weren't Jewish enough and didn't do enough good things to earn their salvation. They argued about what the Old Testament said, and what they reasoned was the REAL way that people got to heaven.

- But avoid foolish controversies<sup>9</sup> - They derailed the Cretan Christians by getting them involved in unnecessary and unhelpful controversies. They would get into the weeds about what God said to the prophets and to Moses and spent way too much time speculating on things they didn't know the answer to.
- genealogies<sup>10</sup> - they derailed people by talking about who was really a Jew and what was expected of people based on lineage. They argued about how God interacted with Abraham, Moses, and what Isaiah really meant.
- dissensions<sup>11</sup> - They kept saying things that erupted in division and battles about sides and about perspectives in contrast to each other. Instead of talking about what united the church they talked about what should divide the church, all under the banner of talking about purity, which they defined.
- and quarrels about the law<sup>12</sup> - The false teachers spent way too much time talking about the Old Testament law and what God was trying to say. They argued about what were universal laws and what were ritual laws. They argued about what creates righteousness in mankind and what hoops we need to jump through in order to be good enough.
- for they are unprofitable<sup>13</sup> and worthless<sup>14</sup> – Paul says that all of that results in NO BENEFIT. It's worthless in the grand scheme of things. Yes,

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<sup>9</sup> "The first item, "foolish controversies" (2 Tim 2:23) is a description of the way in which "enquiry" was carried out by the opponents, rather than a comment on the content. The polemical adjective, "foolish" labels the theological enquiries as frivolous and incompetent, apparently because they produced no worthwhile results (cf. 1 Tim 1:4)." NICNT

<sup>10</sup> "The next term, "genealogies" identifies at least one element of the contents of their doctrines and perhaps also materials that played a part in their art of interpretation (see on 1 Tim 1:4). Although Quinn has argued that the term indicates some dispute about the genealogy of Christ, the more likely reference is to a Jewish type of interpretation based on OT and extra-canonical stories of the biblical heroes and speculation based on family trees.<sup>7</sup> It is less clear how this material figured in the movement, but probably the biblical accounts and other legends formed the basis for certain aspects of belief and practice that ran counter to the apostolic faith. Equally uncertain is the degree to which this aspect of the opposition is related to the similar trend in Ephesus. As in 1:14, the instruction is to give such teaching a wide berth." NICNT

<sup>11</sup> "Reflecting further on the liabilities of the rebellious Cretan teachers, Paul in the third and fourth terms shifts the focus to the observable chaos produced by their controversies and speculative debates. First, the plural term "arguments" (ereis; "dissensions, quarrels"; see on 1 Tim 6:4) depicts the general state of dissension and discord surrounding the movement. In 1 Tim 6:4 the link between dissension and the arcane disputes about interpretation is clear. Use of the term in Hellenistic Jewish and NT vice lists links it with the sort of base ("Cretan") lifestyle that Paul denounced and sought to transform in the fledgling Christian communities on the island." NICNT

<sup>12</sup> "Quarrels about the law" alludes to heated arguments about Torah (cf. 1 Tim 1:7). The nature of the quarrels is not completely clear. We may reasonably surmise that the "talmudic" sifting of Scriptures and traditions was applied in support of excessive views about ritual purity (1:14–15); but the whole picture must include the persistent attachment of these teachers to Cretan values that would hardly have sat easily with such Jewish-oriented views. In any case, the disruption implied posed at least part of the threat to the Christian households (1:11) and to the Cretan church's image in society." NICNT

<sup>13</sup> "Titus was not to wade into this situation as another debater. The reason ("for"; gar) for avoidance of the interpretive arguments is their worthlessness. Two near synonyms render this assessment. The first, "unprofitable" (anōpheleis; Heb 7:18), sets up a deliberate contrast with the assessment of "good deeds" as "profitable" (ōphelima) in the preceding verse. The proof of the negative assessment can be seen—in stark contrast to the aims of "good deeds"—in the turbulence and fighting generated by these discussions." NICNT

<sup>14</sup> "The second term, "useless" ("empty, vain, worthless, futile") strengthens the denunciation; in the Greek canonical OT, especially, the term often appears in connection with idolatry, while in the NT it describes a condition apart from God. Together these descriptors measure the fruitlessness of these debates about interpretation in terms of the distance, both ethically and doctrinally, they put between God and people." NICNT

it's important to know about the law. Yes, it's important to know about what God said. But once it takes our eyes off of the mission at hand and breaks apart the body of Christ, it's gone too far.

- Application Time – Boy I'm glad that none of that applies to us today... Okay, so no, we haven't had a bunch of false teachers come in here and freak us all out by telling us that we won't go to heaven unless we become more Jewish. No, we haven't had influential people telling us that good works will save us. Thankfully! But we have had controversy. We have had different perspectives divide us. We have allowed side issues take our eyes off the prize and we have focused more on what's different about us than what's the same. It's not that those discussions and issues aren't important. They are. It's that we have allowed them to go too far and we need to reframe and remind ourselves of the bigger picture.
- As for a person who stirs up division,<sup>15</sup> after warning<sup>16</sup> him once and then twice,<sup>17</sup> have nothing more to do with him<sup>18</sup> - The Church should never be quick to cast out. The Bible tells us to go to extreme lengths for reconciling, restoring and unifying. But there are times when someone is so stubborn and lost in their perspective that they become hazardous to the church as a whole. After speaking with them over and over and not seeing any adjustment or submitting to leadership, that person has to go. They can always come back when they come to their senses, but until they do, we cannot allow them to ruin everyone around them and tear apart what Christ died for.

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<sup>15</sup> "How is Titus to engage the disputants? Verse 10 guides him in the appropriate way to address the problem. The instruction sets out a disciplinary or corrective process that breaks down into three steps, with the assumption that a good response on the part of the offender would bring the process to a halt. The offender (appropriately pluralized in the TNIV) is the "divisive person," the one causing (or promoting) factions in the church. The term *hairetikos* had not yet acquired the technical meaning "heretic" (but see 2 Pet 2:1); nonetheless in this case, divisiveness is directly linked to errant teachings and practice. The phenomenon develops around an opinion (or set of them), belief or ideology (perhaps including praxis) that is held so firmly by a group that it separates from the larger community—thus the sense of factionalism or divisiveness. From the standpoint of the community (even one as small as a household), the danger lies, on the one hand, in fragmentation and resultant instability, which becomes particularly acute if the faction actively proselytizes within the larger community. On the other hand, the activity of such teachers, whose reputations are already marked in society, poses a danger to the public image of the church. People included in this "divisive" category are envisaged as holding to the opposition's views so firmly that they foment further strife in the church." NICNT

<sup>16</sup> "The corrective process that Paul describes involves confronting the offender with a formal verbal warning. It is an application of the qualification set out in 1:9 with a verb of word group ("refute those who oppose [the sound doctrine]"). Here behind the TNIV's translation, "warn ... and then warn a second time," is actually the noun meaning "admonition." This includes instruction, correction, and warning with a view to regaining the offender (as in 2 Tim 2:25–26). More than formal accusation, the process includes corrective teaching in the effort to convince the offender of the ethical or doctrinal error and win him/her back." NICNT

<sup>17</sup> "Recovery of the errant person is a high priority, and the protracted character of the process has precisely this goal in mind. If the first warning is met with resistance, Titus is to make a second attempt to persuade the offender. This procedure may be modeled on the Jesus tradition (Matt 18:15–17), which endorsed an extended disciplinary process for the sake of restoration." NICNT

<sup>18</sup> "Finally, if a first and second encounter did not bring the offender around, the last measure to be taken was exclusion from the congregation in some sense. The verb indicating this measure has various uses, which makes the sense of this step somewhat unclear ("have nothing to do with them"). Probably the severest sense of "drive out, dismiss, discharge"<sup>15</sup> is meant, with excommunication from the church in view (see on 1 Tim 1:20). Expulsion measures such as this were apparently taken in Qumran in various lengths for various offences. But the procedure to be followed by Titus seems closer to the spirit of the Jesus tradition, and corresponds to the disciplinary measures glimpsed elsewhere in Paul. Above all, the finality of the measure is not addressed. In the present context of controversy and disruption to the fellowship, this last step of discipline is as much a matter of damage control for the community's sake as it is a punitive action calculated to bring the offending individual to repentance." NICNT

- knowing that such a person is warped<sup>19</sup> and sinful<sup>20</sup> - Those terms mean they are so lost in their perspective that they cannot listen any more. They will continue in their personal agenda and perspective no matter what leadership says and their behavior will 'continue on sinning' (that term sinful is a continuing action form). ,
  - he is self-condemned<sup>21</sup> - That person made their own bed and now they have to lie in it. They have demonstrated that there are more important things than Christ's agenda and the gospel. They have proven that they don't respect leadership. They have shown that they are in a world of their own and will then stand alone and deal with the implications of that.
- People Logistics
  - Paul gives instructions for his team
    - Titus 3:12-13 – *"When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis,<sup>22</sup> for I have decided to spend the winter there.<sup>13</sup> Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way,<sup>23</sup> see that they lack nothing."*
    - Paul's Shift to Wrap Up – When we are reading this letter quickly this seems like a sharp left turn. I suppose that's not how Paul intended it but it seems that he had to wrap up and had already said things multiple times so he went on to necessary logistics.
    - Where did these guys come from? – they were all a result of ministry connection and unity efforts prior. They could trust one another. There was an element of loyalty. They were all on the same mission of Christ.
    - When I send Artemas<sup>24</sup> – Paul was going to pull Pastor Titus out of the Cretan church in the near future, likely for another assignment. In his place he was going to send one of two likely pastors (or both). The first is a guy we don't know anything about: Artemas. All we know is that he was Greek/Gentile.

<sup>19</sup> "Justification for this most severe step of exclusion is given in v. 11. There are three elements to Paul's reasoning. First, this kind of person (i.e. one who stubbornly resists a first and second admonition) demonstrates by such resistance that corruption has already set in. The perfect tense verb, literally "has been perverted, corrupted" (TNIV "such people are warped"), depicts a present state that has arisen out of past actions. The implication is of a hardened state of mind." NICNT

<sup>20</sup> "Secondly, it follows from this that the offender's present manner of life is characterized by continuing to sin. In this case, the present tense verb, "keeps on sinning," (TNIV "such people are ... sinful") implies that the warning has been rejected and therefore that the individual, now with knowledge of the error, is culpable (see on 1 Tim 5:20). "Sinning" includes self-deception and error, in continuing to embrace the culturally deformed message as true; but it also includes deliberate wrongdoing, in leading others astray, disrupting households and the church, and in rebelling against apostolic authority (1:10)." NICNT

<sup>21</sup> "Third, a final participial phrase concludes the assessment of such a person or group as "being self-condemned." The meaning is clear: having been admonished of error (repeatedly), the offender's persistence in the teaching and stubborn refusal to acknowledge the apostolic warning amount to a self-pronouncement of guilt (cf. Luke 19:22; Gal 2:11). One such as this person is to be set out of the church." NICNT

<sup>22</sup> "With the arrival of his replacement, Titus was to make his way to Nicopolis, where Paul planned to spend the winter. Nicopolis was a busy port town on the western coast of Greece. It was actually known for its harsh winters; many travelers from all parts would have been forced to spend the winter there, so that Paul could continue his ministry despite the impossibility of travel." (Towner, P. (1994). 1-2 Timothy & Titus (Vol. 14, Tt 3:12-15). InterVarsity Press.)

<sup>23</sup> The closing greeting also indicates that either Artemas or Tychicus was about to replace Titus on Crete.

<sup>24</sup> "First, Paul clarifies his plan for Titus's redeployment. It is contingent upon the arrival of one or the other of two people meant presumably to replace Titus. At the point of writing, Paul had apparently yet to decide which one he would send. The language of "sending" is typically used to describe Paul's deployment of his team, and we may assume the two people mentioned are colleagues. The first of these, "Artemas,"<sup>25</sup> is a Greek name otherwise unknown in the NT." NICNT



- or Tychicus to you<sup>25</sup> - The other option of pastor to replace Titus was Tychicus who traveled with Paul on his third missionary journey. He was the one that Paul **sent to Ephesus** to encourage them and give them updates on how Paul was doing. He was referred to as 'Tychicus **the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord.**' (Eph 6:21). He was also **sent to the Colossians** with the same instructions. He seems to be **Paul's go-to encourager and emissary**. He was likely one who would carry Paul's letters to churches and help them understand it. The OR suggests that Paul hasn't quite figured out which would be sent.
- do your best to come to me at Nicopolis,<sup>26</sup> for I have decided to spend the winter there. – Nicopolis was a **common seaport in that part of the world that people would winter in**. The winters were harsh around those areas and it was a safe haven for travelers. Paul was still in the traveling groove and since he was going to be sending out Titus, it was a great place to meet. Paul reminds him that Titus needed to watch for weather and get there ahead of time. We don't know how much longer Paul was going to leave Titus at Crete to finish up some of these mandates in this letter.
- Do your best to speed<sup>27</sup> Zenas the lawyer<sup>28</sup> – **Nothing is known** about this guy other than he is a Greek lawyer (Hellenistic lawyer, not Jewish lawyer). This is likely a lay leader who **used his gifts for the gospel**. Clearly Paul like this man and respected him.
- and Apollos<sup>29</sup> on their way; - Apollos, we know since he was a **famous preacher**. He is the one that Priscilla and Aquila mentored. He was naturally gifted as a speaker but he was still immature when they met him. At this time in the ministry he seems to be more mature and doing great things for the Lord.
- see that they lack nothing – **the church needs to financially support** all of these team members because they are out there doing the work of the ministry.

<sup>25</sup> "About 'Tychicus' (also Greek) we are better informed, assuming he is the same person who traveled with Paul on his third missionary journey, from the province of Asia, named in Acts 20:4; Eph 6:21; Col 4:7 (2 Tim 4:12). The references in Ephesians and Colossians cast him in a similar role as Paul's emissary. It remains unknown which of these coworkers finally received the assignment. One scenario places this letter in very close proximity to 2 Timothy, in which case Paul might have selected Artemas for this assignment, since Tychicus was sent to Ephesus (2 Tim 4:12). But an earlier placement of this letter (and 1 Timothy; see Introduction C.2.) would require another scenario." NICNT

<sup>26</sup> "Titus's destination was to be 'Nicopolis.' Of the various places with that name, Nicopolis of Epirus,<sup>32</sup> on the west coast of the Greek peninsula across from the southern end of the Italian peninsula, is by far the most likely. This location corresponds to Paul's statement about the extent of his ministry (as far as Illyricum [Rom 15:19], which was to the north of Epirus), as well as to the later note that Titus was in Dalmatia (2 Tim 4:10)." NICNT

<sup>27</sup> "Paul next instructs Titus to 'do everything you can' to assist two other team members who were due to come to Titus (probably bearing this letter) and then continue on to other places. The verb suggests his task is to help them in practical ways to be able to continue their journey without delay.<sup>37</sup> In fact, the continuation of the thought in v. 14 suggests Titus will accomplish this by mobilizing the church to help. And this corresponds to the expectation, linked to this verb's use in Paul's discussions of his and his coworkers' travel plans, that house churches would fulfill the responsibility of extending hospitality to traveling Christians." NICNT

<sup>28</sup> "Of the two men who are mentioned, 'Zenas, the lawyer,' a Greek to judge from his name, is known to us only here. Speculation as to why the description 'the lawyer' is included with his name remains largely just that—speculation. He was undoubtedly a lawyer.<sup>40</sup> His Greek name (meaning 'gift of Zeus') suggests his expertise lay in Greek or Roman law and not in Jewish law." NICNT

<sup>29</sup> "'Apollos,' however, is probably the same character associated with Paul in the Corinth-Ephesus stage of the mission.<sup>44</sup> While some uncertainty remains with regard to their relationship as reflected in the early chapters of 1 Corinthians, the final reference in 1 Cor 16:12 suggests basic amicability and even cooperation in the mission." NICNT

- Investing in the Kingdom Work – why do we receive tithes, offerings, and gifts each week? So that the kingdom of God can be advanced through selected leaders and ministries. It's always been that way. Not everyone can dedicate their whole life to active ministry, but everyone is a Christian called to change the world. A few are selected out to do the extra work of God and put all their attention on the kingdom building rather than only on their own lives. Those people and activities should be supported by the whole. Here at Bridgeway we receive those gifts and distribute them as helpful. In addition we give to the Lord to break money from being an idol in our lives. And just so you know our staff, leaders, pastors & elders also give and tithe to this church (even if we are paid from this church). We lead by example in this regard. All of us need to give to the work of the Lord more than He needs our money.
  - Increase strategic giving – I have been talking with our teams behind the scene about what our church should be able to do financially through the shared combination of gifts and tithes. Some here are giving a TON percentagewise, and some of us are still not engaging in this aspect of church life. Although this isn't the time to talk about this in-depth, I will be coming back and addressing this aspect so that we all are sharing in the rising up of the movement of God through Bridgeway.
- Here to Help
  - Instructions for Christians to be ready to help
    - Titus 3:14-15 – *"And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful."<sup>30</sup> 15 All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all."*
      - And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, - This is another (he's done this multiple times), challenge to get the Christians on Crete to live on purpose and start making a difference in their community by living in such a way as to bless other people and do the things that Jesus would do. Christianity is a lifestyle and we have things we must DO.
      - so as to help cases of urgent need, - there were specific things going on at that time that Titus and Paul were aware of that needed to be handled and there was not enough people from the church stepping up and doing something about it.
      - and not be unfruitful. – Unfruitful is the idea of a tree that is supposed to be a fruit tree but doesn't bear any fruit. Christians are filled with the Holy Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit: Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,

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<sup>30</sup> "The Cretan believers should learn to do good for meeting urgent needs in order that (hina) they "not live unproductive lives," literally "not be without fruit [akarpoi]." This Greek word can refer literally to trees without fruit (Jude 12), but its other six New Testament occurrences are metaphorical. The gospel message becomes "unfruitful" when choked out by worries and distractions (Mark 4:19)." (Yarbrough, R. W. (2018). *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (D. A. Carson, Ed.; p. 559). William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos.)



goodness, etc. should be flowing out of their lives and doing things that change the world around them. So should we today.

- All who are with me send greetings to you. – Titus wouldn't likely know all of Paul's current team (there were a lot of them), but Paul wanted him to know that they were all one big group of family.
- Greet those who love us in the faith. – Paul wanted Titus to give well wishes and heartfelt hugs to all those in Crete who knew Paul and his team.
  - Is the world of people you love getting bigger or smaller? – Is your social connection getting greater or more isolated? Why? I've been doing study in the Holy Spirit recently and two stories in the book of Acts keep popping up: Ananias (Jewish Christian) & Saul/Paul (former persecutor); Peter (Jew) & Cornelius (Gentile). After Jesus was done with them their world of Christian partnerships got bigger. It was tough to get there but it happened. What about us?
- Grace be with you all<sup>31</sup> - Paul tended to close with wishes and blessings of grace because he knew that grace was difference maker. It was not just what saved us but it was what empowers us to do what we need to do to live a victorious and fruitful life.

### Conclusion

- Keeping our head in the game – there is so many distractions around us right now. I am having to redial in every day to stay focused on having the right heart, the right attitude, the right perspective that aligns with what God wants to do through me. Don't let the enemy bait you off of your mission.[maybe talk through the hunter/bait analogy here].
- We have a job to do – live like Christ, share His love, promote the gospel, worship His name, make HIM famous. Let's get to it.

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<sup>31</sup> "In the epiphany of Christ, God communicated grace and gifts to enable his people to live in a qualitatively different way from the rest of the world. The outward dimension of this new existence (attributed to God's grace, to Christ's self-offering, and to the gift of the Spirit) is defined in terms of "good deeds... The grace-wish is not a literary formality, but rather a genuine prayer or blessing that seeks for the recipients the full experience of God's gracious and loving presence (with all this entails)." NICNT