

Titus Study Notes:

An Introduction:

Audience: Titus had for many years been a co-worker with Paul. Galatians 2:1-4 mentions Titus as an early travelling companion. He was an uncircumcised Gentile, who was later sent by Paul as a delegate to Corinth during the time when Paul was facing conflict with the Corinthian church. In 2 Corinthians 7:6-7; 7:13-14; Paul describes how delighted he was with the report that Titus brought about the Corinthian church. Paul then has high praise for Titus and his companions: 'these brothers are representatives of the churches. They are splendid examples of those who bring glory to Christ' (2 Corinthians 8:23).

Titus had been left by Paul on the island of Crete. It is unlikely that Paul himself had spent much time on the island of Crete, although he had stopped there briefly on his trip to Rome and may have visited after his release from his Roman imprisonment. Jews from Crete had also been present in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:11). The people of the island had a reputation of dishonesty, cruelty, and greed. Paul

quotes a prophet from Crete who said 'The people of Crete are all liars; they are cruel animals and lazy gluttons' (Titus 1:12). Titus was given the difficult task of overseeing the churches in this environment.

Occasion of Writing: The letter to Titus is very similar to 1 Timothy and it has been suggested that both letters were written at the same time. This would date Titus to around 63 A.D. Paul wrote to Titus to provide him with some practical suggestions for leadership.

Themes: Paul addresses several issues facing Titus. He urges Titus to confront wrong teaching and to instead train people in the truth. He advises him to appoint capable elders in each of the churches. Titus was instructed to choose men of sound character for this role. One of the clear roles of the elders was to teach the people and oppose wrong teaching. Paul then advises Titus about how to teach different groups within the church. Church members of all ages were to be instructed to live lives worthy of the gospel. All people regardless of age or gender had a role within the church.

Session 1:

Welcome

Can you think of any thoughts or actions in your life that have changed after you've learnt something new from God Word?

Worship

Put on some worship music (Holy & Anointed One – would fit with the theme) and give everyone some paper and pens – draw or write down all the things that come to mind from the bible. At the end say a prayer to thank God for all the amazing truths in the bible.

Word

Watch together:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUEYCVXJM3k>

(The Bible Project: Titus).

From the first talk on the 2nd January and this video what have you learnt about the book of Titus?

Titus is now in Crete – in those days you might call someone a 'Cretan' if you thought they were a liar, a mercenary person or just 'no good' because this was the reputation of people from Crete. Titus was a young man charged with sorting out a network of house churches in Crete and it was hard going. Paul's letter is to help him focus on the task and remind him how to be in the situation. One difficulty was dealing with two groups that were having an influence on the church. One group (see Titus 1.14 was adding things to the gospel) the other group (see the first half of chapter 2 – were so pleased the gospel was full of grace that they didn't think it mattered at all how they lived).

Can you think of examples of how either of these influences affect the church today? Where do we need to watch out?

Look at chapter 1.1-4

In these verses we see Paul's underlying commitment to God's Word – this is the only time he calls himself a 'slave to God' in this Greek phrasing. As we start a new year – to what extent are you a slave to God? What should that look like as you live your life out in West London?

This faith in Jesus not only saves us today and makes our lives godly, but also gives us hope for the future. What encouragements can you take from this?

The book of Titus will raise questions as well as answer them. Take some time to read through it (it only takes approx. 8 minutes) – you could do this now. Jot down any questions you have as a group – keep them so that at the end of the series you can check whether they've been addressed and if they haven't why not invite one of the clergy along to have a go at answering them!

Witness

Spend some time praying specifically for a few people who you'd love to know the hope of eternal life. Over this January try to commit to praying for them – perhaps write their names down and place the paper somewhere you will see it regularly.

Session 2 – Healthy Leadership:

Welcome

Why is it important that Christians live out the teaching in the bible? What damage can be done when we don't? What modern examples can you think of today? More awkward – what examples can you think of in yourself?

Worship

This week why not slowly say together the prayer of confession – afterwards the leader could read the absolution:

Lord God,
we have sinned against you;
we have done evil in your sight.
We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your love.
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.
Renew a right spirit within us
and restore us to the joy of your salvation,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

May the Father of all mercies
cleanse us from our sins,
and restore us in his image
to the praise and glory of his name,

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Word

Read Chapter 1

Paul introduces himself as a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ. Would you describe yourself in the same way? If so, what implications does this have for your life? If not, how would you describe your relationship with God?

According to Paul, what characterizes a godly elder or church leader? How can a local church congregation raise up godly elders or leaders?

One of the roles of an elder/leader is to teach sound doctrine and refute those who teach what is false. See Titus 1:9. What can an elder/leader do to ensure they are well equipped for this task?

An elder or leader must be blameless or above reproach (Titus 1:6-7). What's the difference between blameless and sinless?

Would you like to be an elder/church leader? Why or why not? Is there anything you could be doing to equip yourself to fill this role in the future?

How can we make sure that we champion godliness over slickness in our leaders?

How prepared are you to allow verses 1-4 of this passage to impact your daily living? How will you allow God's Word to shape you today?

Witness

What could you put into practice where you have influence today so that you can keep on growing as a healthy leader (we all have spheres of influence even if we don't see ourselves as a 'leader')? Pray for God to help each person in this.

Session 3 – Healthy Reputation:

Welcome

'Put your money where your mouth is.' How important is it that people act out of their convictions/live out what they preach?

Worship

Listen to some worship music and have some quiet time with God in the company of others.

Word

Read Chapter 2

What do you remember from the sermon? How were some of the more 'challenging' parts of this passage handled?

In what settings do you yourself advise/instruct/guide/teach other people, either formally or informally? What can you do to equip yourself to pass on sound Biblical teaching?

Have you ever had the opportunity to train up a new believer or a younger person? Why or why not? Have you ever considered it?

Paul instructs Titus 'In everything, set them an example by doing what is good' (Titus 2:7). Why do our actions matter to God?

What changes has God brought to the world through the person and work of Jesus Christ? Discuss the changes in 2:12-14a that happen to a genuine believer as God's grace transforms them.

Would you say that you are setting an example for other believers (Titus 2:7)? Are you 'eager to do what is good' (Titus 2:14)? What is one further thing you could do that would make you a better example for other believers?

How should we handle both encouragement and rebuke in the church today?

Witness

Pray for the church to be a good witness to the world. That our behaviour would reflect the gospel and be attractive to others.

Session 4 – Healthy Beliefs:

Welcome

Take some time for each person to share one highlight and one low light. Each person remembers what the person to the left of them shares and when everyone has shared all pray out loud together for the person on your left.

Worship

Say night prayer together (read the passage from Titus 3)

Word

Read Chapter 3

Why do we struggle with submitting to authority? What does it mean to biblically submit to one another? What is Paul getting at in verses 1-2?

Why is it helpful to remember our state without Jesus (verse 3)? How should this verse impact how quickly we forgive others and how quickly we should check any judgmental spirit within us?

Verses 4-8 are beautiful – what do they state? What was said about them in the sermon on Sunday?

What outward changes in your life testify to the hidden work of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:4-7)?

What would it look like to live out verses 9-11 today? See also Romans 12:18.

How can we ensure that we don't live unproductive lives? What are we encouraged to focus on in Titus? How do our beliefs in Jesus have an impact on our ability to live life well?

How can we strive for godliness whilst not slipping into a gospel of works?

Considering this passage how should we walk around West London today?

Witness

What one or two key things from the book of Titus will you ask God to help you apply in your life?