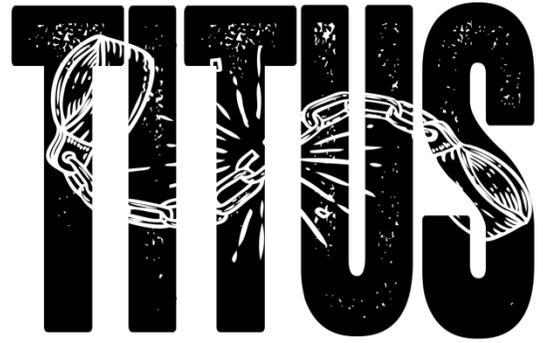


September 1, 2019 | DAVID ANDERSON

GRACE AND PEACE

Titus 1:1-4



Write down three areas in your life that - if they changed - would make a world of difference to you personally (health, marriage, finances, besetting sins/struggles, parenting, etc.):

1)

2)

3)

From what suffering are you desperate to be freed?

For the average Jew of Jesus' day, it was the suffering of Roman occupation and oppression. If you were of the righteous remnant in Israel or dispersed among the nations, you had to be thinking: this couldn't possibly be what Yahweh had in mind when He made His covenant with Abraham, David and Ezekiel. How is God fulfilling His promises and unconditional covenants while Israel is still suffering?

The people on Crete must have thought - in what sense am I rescued if I am surrounded by liars, manipulators and gluttons?

Today, you might be asking - in what sense am I liberated if my body is still ravaged by cancer or I continue to endure a loveless marriage or my besetting struggles and sins haven't miraculously gone away?

In the first four verses of Titus, Paul says that the message that he has been entrusted with is the message of true salvation. It's not just circumstantial salvation! It's deeper than that! It's the type of salvation that moves the faith of God's children forward and leads to genuine godliness. Jesus brings grace and peace and this is the eternal life, this is the capstone of salvation history, this is what was promised before the ages began. You have been saved, you are being saved and you will be saved. As Paul says, "God does not lie."

¹ From Paul, a slave of God and apostle of Jesus Christ, to further the faith of God's chosen ones and the knowledge of the truth that is in keeping with godliness, ² in hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the ages began.

Paul begins his letter to Titus as he does with all his epistles: identifying himself, establishing his apostolic authority, greeting his recipient and pronouncing a blessing.

Paul identifies his true identity as a *doulos* (slave or servant) of Jesus Christ. In Paul's estimation, his true identity is that he is a slave, servant, and apostles of Jesus Christ. Like Moses (Rev. 15:3), David (2 Sam. 7:4, 8), and the prophets (Jr. 7:25, 25:4), Paul identifies himself as the *doulos* of God. His goal and existence as a *doulos* of God is total submission to the Master. He is not an idle talker or teacher like the false teachers of Crete (1:10); he is an authoritative proclaimer of the gospel message, entrusted by the command of God. Titus is his legitimate spiritual son, bound together with Paul in this proclamation.

Why was Paul commissioned to be a *doulos* of God and apostle of Jesus Christ? The purpose (*kata*) is to further the faith of God's chosen ones, and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness. Who are God's chosen ones? Paul emphatically answers this question over and over and he needed to answer it here in Crete with all the Jewish influence (1:10). The chosen ones are those who have faith. The righteousness of Christ is credited through faith, not works (Romans 2:25-29, 4:3, Galatians 2, Titus 3:4-9, etc.).

The word for godliness, *eusbeia*, is a worship term that Paul uses ten times in the pastoral epistles. It's similar to the fear of the Lord we studied in Proverbs, where there is reference and awe towards God that impacts our thoughts and choices.

³ But now in his own time he has made his message evident through the preaching I was entrusted with according to the command of God our Savior.

In God's perfect and proper time, the unfolding and peak of God's eternal plan came about—Jesus Christ, our Savior. This is Paul's only message. The Word of God says that Paul intentionally purposed to have one message He preached - Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2). Paul says that this is the message that he was entrusted with according to the command of God our Savior. Paul says he has one sermon I preach. It is the life-giving hope of Jesus, His death and resurrection.

The Apostle Paul didn't see himself as a philosopher or a debater, and didn't view himself as one of the world's wisest men. He viewed himself as simply Christ's *doulos* commissioned to preach one message over and over. His calling was to be faithful - add nothing, alter nothing, omit nothing. This is the life transforming message that carries the authority of Jesus Christ.

⁴ To Titus, my genuine son in a common faith. Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior!

The contrast here is between a legitimate child versus an illegitimate child. Titus was a genuine son and Paul was his spiritual father. A spiritual father is willing to make some mighty sacrifices for his child. John says, "I have no greater joy than this: to hear that my children are living according to the truth" (3 Jn. 1:4).

Paul's blessing to Titus is this: grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. As Titus' spiritual father, what Paul wanted Titus to experience was grace and peace as he deliberately moved forward into this difficult Cretan culture.

God does not lie about your salvation

This morning you might feel stuck between unexpected circumstances and unmet expectations of how you envisioned your life turning out. Your salvation might feel theoretical and distant as you and your family long for rescue and relief.

As a co-heir in Jesus Christ, the Word of God says that you have been saved, you are being saved (leading to godliness) and you will be saved. Your salvation will be complete. As you navigate the challenging circumstances of your life, Jesus' blessing on your life is this: grace and peace.

Our stories are not stories of consecutive deliverances from the pain and circumstances of life. Our stories are stories of grace and peace in a God who does not lie, who is in the process of transforming us perfectly into the image of His Son.