**From One Leader to Another**

**Titus 1:1-4 (ESV)**

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If you would, open your Bible to the book of Titus. We’re starting a new series this morning. It’s a series that will take us into just before Easter. The book of Titus is in the New Testament. One of the early followers of Jesus, the Apostle Paul, is describing what it means to follow Him together in a context of the church. He is writing to a pastor who is helping to establish churches and church leaders throughout the island of Crete. So we’re going to look at this letter, this epistle, the book of Titus. This series is called *Order In A World Of Chaos*. We’re talking about how God brings order in His church family and through His church family, through the power of the gospel. I trust it will be an encouraging series to you and to us as a church family.

***1*** *Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God’s elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness,* ***2*** *in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began* ***3*** *and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior;* ***4*** *To Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.*

It’s not every day that you get a note like this. This was a special moment. I was sitting with Pastor Ritch in his office. We were sitting at the desk and he shared with me a note that he had received from a man who had served here as pastor at Bethany, I think, years before I was born. He had been here and he has since moved on to other ministries and continued to teach and write. He just recently wrote a book and it was published. He used the opportunity to reach out to Pastor Ritch and express his appreciation and his affection and his prayers for this church family. It’s a special note. He is a man who lived through decades of changes in culture. He has seen the sinful chaos of the world around us and still has a profound respect for and investment in the position of a church, even this church, to shine brightly as a light in the world of darkness, and the role of church members and the church leaders and this family to live that out. He took a bit of his time to share his heart and write this note of encouragement to a pastor miles and miles away.

Before us today is a letter from one leader to another. It’s an even more significant and special note preserved by the Holy Spirit for us. It’s still as relevant today as it was 2,000 years ago. It’s a letter between two leaders who understood what it was to live in a world of chaos. Paul understood that. You can read his descriptions of the world around him in the book of Romans or Timothy, and what would be to come. When you read those descriptions you think, was he watching the news today? He understood chaos. He understood the darkness and the evil and the challenges of the world that we live in. It’s a fallen world that is rebelling against God and that is tainted with a sin nature. Paul understood that and so did Titus.

Titus understood this, too. In fact, he had labored with Paul. You can read about what Paul did in the book of Acts. We’ve spent some time studying there. You can see his missionary journeys and his time. Titus isn’t mentioned, but it’s likely he was with them at different points. We know specifically a few. Titus had accompanied Paul and it seems that Titus was one of the people that likely Paul had shared the gospel with. He had been a Gentile, not a follower of God or Jesus in any of the traditional senses, and then had just turned radically and been converted and said, “I’m a follower of Jesus, now.” Then he had become a part of Paul’s ministry and had joined him on several of the tasks. Then he had been assigned several daunting tasks. In fact, it seems like Titus was the one Paul would choose or select for some of the most difficult situations.

I remember in practice, we had some players who were former professional players who would come and jump and practice. Our coach would have them come to test us. Every once in a while, they would pick some of us and say, “You guard him.” This is a tough one! Titus was a guy who always got chosen to guard the hard players or to take the tough tasks. He was the one who was sent here to help with the church of Corinth in the midst of spiritual chaos and there were moral church discipline issues. “Titus, how about you go on that assignment?” He was trusted with carrying a financial gift and had to have strong integrity. He was someone who was brought as an example and kind of even a model for Paul and Barnabas going into the Jerusalem council in Acts 15 and they were talking about how Gentiles fit into this church model. Here is Titus sitting there and he was a part of that. Now Paul has been giving him some of the challenging tasks and he has an assignment here that is no exception, an assignment to the island of Crete.

Crete is this beautiful island in the Mediterranean Sea, off the coast of Greece. It’s about as long as the distance from Peoria to Chicago, 160 miles or so. At it’s widest point, it’s about 40 miles across or so. It’s a strip of land that was a strategic military location. So there was some traffic there and it had a lot of influence on the Greek and Roman civilizations. But Crete was no peaceful island paradise. The people of Crete had quite the reputation, in fact. You can read it right there in verse 12.

**Titus 1:12** One of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, said, “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.”

You know when you drive into a town and you see those signs like, “Welcome to Peoria,” and then it says some kind of tagline. Imagine arriving on the island of Crete for vacation and reading, “Always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.” Maybe we should pick a different spot! They were dishonest, brutal, over-indulgent slugs. Here is the culture in which Paul would send Titus. It’s this mixture of Greek and Roman influences and all kinds of pagan Gentile practices. Later Paul references the kind of culture in Titus 3:3. He understands that people are going to be

**Titus 3:3** …foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.

It’s chaos! So here is Titus, sent to Crete. It’s possible that at Pentecost, there were some Jews that were from Crete that had heard that Gospel message. They’re mentioned there. Maybe they had taken it back to Crete. So some people had started following Jesus. Maybe there were others who were fighting against that message of Jesus. So here is Titus, carrying out this mission of trying to share the good news and establish local church families here on this island.

Paul writes to him sort of pastor to pastor, leader to leader. It’s one of what is called the pastoral epistles. We have the letters to Timothy and the letter to Titus. The first letter to Timothy and Titus seem to be kind of closely aligned with each other and from a similar time period. In 2 Timothy, later, Paul was in prison and writing towards the end of his life. But here are these two letters and they are given sort of these tight marching orders, this manual for how to operate as a pastor in this world of chaos. It’s a manual of right beliefs and right behavior. Here’s how you understand truth and then here’s how you’re to live it out. Here’s what the church needs; how to be solid or grounded in the storm of life.

So here is Titus. Of all the places that he could be, he is investing his life here on this island. He is receiving this letter from Paul and Paul is emphasizing something to him. He is emphasizing what this world of chaos needs desperately. In the midst of all the spiritual disorder, social disorder, the moral disorder, all of these things, Titus knew what they needed. Paul knew what they needed and he is encouraging him because of what God knew that they needed. They needed the power of the Gospel at work, producing in all the people, members and leaders, true spiritual maturity, health and life. They needed the Gospel seed to be planted and then to grow and bear fruit. They needed true spiritual life and maturity. This is a blessing that was to come through the followers of Jesus in the form of biblical local church families.

What the world of chaos needed to see is people following Jesus together in local church families, where they understand why Jesus matters, the biblical Gospel. They know what following means, and they’re believing, belonging and becoming like Him in true godliness and they’re doing it together, in community, in local churches, the way that God has designed, with leaders and members working together. They need true spiritual maturity. This is what the world needs to see and all of us need to see; spiritually mature, God-glorifying, Spirit-empowered, Christ-centered local church families. More than any other social movement or action, this is the key to how God is working in the world. In every member, starting with the leaders, true spiritual maturity or leadership on display, Christlikeness.

What does that kind of maturity, that kind of leadership, look like? In a leader? In a member? Anywhere you’re at in life, what does true spiritual maturity look like? How do we think? What kind of mindset do we have? If we consider our own culture and our own corner of this world of chaos, and if we want to be a help, we want to shine brightly as lights in the darkness as Bethany in this area and in this state, in this country, in this generation, we want to know, what does it look like to think in a way that is spiritually mature? What does it look like to be leaders and to have an impact and invest in the way that God would have us? What would shape our perspective or worldview? We get an opportunity just to catch a glimpse this morning in Paul’s greeting to Titus and his perspective and how he is thinking about things. We get to look at their personal correspondence here from one leader to another and get a peek at his perspective. We’ll try to just touch on three perspectives that Paul has.

**1. How they view themselves (1:1a)**

The perspective of the spiritually mature person or a leader is how they view themselves. When you think about leadership, it’s important as we enter into the book of Titus and we kind of overhear a letter between two pastors, that we don’t check out and say, “Well, I’m not a pastor. I’m not a leader. I’m not an elder. I’m not a ministry leader of a certain kind.” No, God has preserved this in His Word. He wants us to understand a number of things about leadership. The qualities that are called forth and the perspectives that shape a leader’s mind, Paul’s mind, are the kinds of qualities and perspectives that need to shape all of our minds and we live out in the spheres that God has given us influence. So it’s important for us to understand how we and others, but especially those who are in leadership, how mature people in Christ are supposed to view themselves.

I could say it a number of ways, but we’ll say it like this. They view themselves as devoted to God or belonging to God, under the control of God. They belong to Him. They have a total devotion to belong to God. When you think about devotion, it’s a word that means love or loyalty. It’s often used interchangeably with the word worship, in fact. I’m given to this thing or given to someone. I’m given to God. He has control of me.

There was a tradition that began some time ago. I don’t know when, but it was over in England. There would be people who would serve and they would serve for the Crown. They would use the phrase, “I serve at her Majesty’s pleasure. I serve at the pleasure of her Majesty.” It’s a recognition and understanding that I’m here because the Crown desires for me to be here and they have a purpose for me in this. It’s an acknowledgement that I’m not here in and of myself. I’m here as an ambassador or a delegate and I’m doing the work or the will of the crown. It’s a way to indicate devotion to the service of the one in charge. A true spiritual leader is a maturity. How we need to think about our lives is that God is the one in charge and we exist as servants unto and from Him. We belong to Him. We’re under His control. That’s what we see here in Paul, in both the generic and the specific sense. He views himself as a servant.

***1*** *Paul, a servant of God*

That’s how he views himself. It’s as a servant of God, belonging to God and then also as

*and an apostle of Jesus Christ,*

He views himself as a servant and an apostle. Both titles carry this slightly different nuance. The first is talking about the all-encompassing humility that a mature person in Christ exudes. He understands he is a servant who belongs to God and who is under control of God. On a social level, that idea of servant would have carried a lot of stigma of the lowly position, of someone who doesn’t just determine what they want to do with their own life. They have a Master. They’re under control of serving their master. It had a strong stigma. But the term was also not unfamiliar to past generations of God-fearing people. If you look in the Old Testament, you can see that it was a title used to describe spiritual leaders of past generations, whether it was Moses or Joshua or Abraham, David, Jacob. These were called as people who were servants of God. They were devoted to belonging to, set apart, and committed to the service of God. This is something that defines how Paul views himself and it even would also define how Christians would speak about themselves later on in the New Testament and throughout church history.

Bound up in this title is probably a strong memory for Paul and his background. He would have viewed himself as a man of God, but he was opposed to this idea of a church and of Jesus and this message of good news. He was trying to oppress and persecute this and to wipe it out. In fact, Jesus reached down and opened his eyes and exposed, “I am on the wrong side. I am a sinner. I need a Savior. Jesus is my only hope.” Paul confessed his sin. He turned and he repented of his former way of thinking and said, “God, I need you. I only can be saved by Jesus.” He reached out and responded to what Christ has done, which is opened his eyes and given him life and grabbed him with this message of good news that we call the Gospel. It’s the truth that Jesus is God come in the flesh. He lived a perfect life. He offered Himself in our place, died on the cross, bore the wrath of God and then rose again victorious, offering life to all who trust in Him.

This good news message is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes. Paul recognized that was what had happened to him and now he was merely a servant. In fact, when he had been rescued, God told Ananias, “He is actually being commissioned to serve me, and this road is not going to be easy.” Paul said, “That’s what I am. I’m a servant. I’m given to God. I’m devoted to Him and whatever He has for me. I don’t have a self-serving or an independent will, the kind of idea of a worldly leader who says ‘I’m going to do what I want. I’m going to make what I want happen. I’m going to try to control what’s going on.’ No, I am under control. I’m trying to serve the will of God, whatever He wants to have happen.” In Paul’s mind, we don’t have a choice. That’s described by God, too.

We don’t really actually have a choice about whether or not we’re going to be a servant, whether we’re going be, it’s a hard word but, slave. The call is actually that everyone is either a slave to sin or a slave to God. Between those two, only one is truly freedom. The world would pitch that sin is where freedom is found. But it’s actually a slavery of bondage. What God offers is freedom in Christ. That kind of freedom which Paul embraces, “This is a slavery. I’m in service to God, but this is true freedom.” He understands that being devoted to God is actually a path of great joy. This humility of understanding that all that I do belongs to God, this is the humility that exudes from those who are spiritually mature, who are walking with Jesus in the Spirit.

You can look at the God-given authority that he appreciates. He specifies that he is a servant, but also an apostle of Jesus Christ. In this sense, maybe those who are on Crete who weren’t quite as familiar with Titus, they would have been able to see Paul is validating his apostolic ministry and saying, “I am a messenger sent out from Jesus. I’ve been given this message from Jesus. Titus, I am also entrusting you with that same message and calling you to share that same message with all those who will listen.” He recognizes that ultimately, there is really only one authority. There is really only one true spiritual leader, and that’s Christ. There is only one true Shepherd, one true Head of the church. Paul, as an apostle of Jesus Christ, he is a messenger. He is bringing this message, but this is all what he has received from Christ.

This is the leader that actually we all seek to follow. He is the only man who perfectly truly embodied what it means to be fully devoted to God. He is fully God, yet fully man. He showed us what it was like to exude humility and to appreciate and respect God-given authority. This is the one the apostle Paul followed. This is the one that he said, “follow me as I follow Christ,” and the one that we all seek to fall in step behind. Humility and authority; both terms show how he viewed himself and his role that radiated devotion to God. It was total. It was complete. He was given to God’s work.

There are sometimes spiritual leaders who people push up against. They’re not interested in the kind of leadership that is being offered. In fact, they get upset. There is one story about D.L. Moody, who would try to be faithful in the mission and share the Gospel. Someone said, “Who does this guy think he is?” Something probably similar was said of Paul at times. Who does he think he is? Somebody said, “Does D.L. Moody have a monopoly on the Holy Spirit?” Someone responded, “No, but the Holy Spirit has a monopoly on D.L. Moody.” He is being used by God because he is fully given to God. God has complete control over him.

If you want to be used by God, walk in spiritual maturity. If you want to grow in what God would have you do, a big part of that is saying, “God, you have full control. I belong to you. My life belongs to you. Like we talked about last week, time, talent, treasures, it’s yours. I will do what you desire. It’s not about my will. It’s your will.” That daily prayer acknowledgment is that I belong to God. This is what Paul is modeling for Titus and is calling him into a very simple recognition of how a spiritually mature person thinks about themselves.

Think about your own view of yourself; your time, talent, treasures. How given to God are you? Is it total? Is it unmistakable? When you think about the spheres of influence in your life or you want to have spiritual impact, whether it’s at home or it’s in a ministry or it’s at work or even if you’re a student or a child and you’re looking at parents and looking at, “What am I supposed to be?” Or even evaluating leaders and saying, “What kind of leaders should we pray for? What kind of leaders should we expect our leaders to be?” It’s going to unfold even more as we go through the chapter in the coming weeks, but the emphasis is on people being given to God.

Think about your own life. Sometimes you’re fighting for control, whether it’s in your home for your kids or for the plan that you want to have or at work. It’s like, “I can’t get control of this stuff. I’m trying to lead and people aren’t following.” At the end of the day, what God is calling us to be in spiritual maturity is to say my goal here is not to be in control, but to be under the control of God. I need to be given to God. Hopefully, what people see when they’re looking at me is not, that guy is in control or that mom has control or she knows what is going on or she is making things happen. No, that person is under the control of God. God has control of them. That’s what we want to be and what we want to pray for.

When people say, “how can I pray for you as a spiritual leader?” pray that we would be devoted to God and that He would have full control of us and total control over and we would be given to His will, not our own. So a leader that is humble and belonging to God in their devotion. But then we think, what is this leader about? That’s how they view themselves, but what does this devotion drive them towards? What are they about?

**How they view their mission (1:1b-3)**

So if this is their devotion that is total, here is the mission that they’re faithful to. It’s how they view their mission or what they’re supposed to be about. They exist to serve Him in what they’re doing in their devotion. This mission that they’re advancing now is the mission of, I’ll just say it in one word because we’ll circle around a lot of times. It is the mission of the Gospel. We’re going to just circle around that idea of this Gospel message.

You’ve heard it said about people like, “He’s on mission.” This person is on a mission. They’re just focused. They’re dedicated. They’re faithful to what they’re being called to do, the duty that they’re called into, and embracing it with all of their being. They know what they’re about and what they’re doing. Have you ever had a teacher who you think, that teacher is on a mission? You get in their class and they are just ready to go and they are dedicated to the students. They’re coming after you and they’re reaching from where they’re at and they’re like grabbing your heart. You’re like, “Whoa! This teacher is teaching!”

Last week, I was talking and one of the children who is here came up and they were talking to me. They said, “Your dad preached last week. He’s a really good pastor.” They heard that from his preaching. I kind of take that to mean they could tell he was really trying to pastor. He came in and he didn’t even know us, hardly, but he was coming and he was talking to us and he was pastoring. He was good at it because he was coming through. He had such a mission. This is what we see in Paul. Paul is on this mission, this Gospel mission. We see how his mission unpacks here. We’re going to try to unpack it, but it’s one of Paul’s longest greetings. I’ll read it once. He says who he is and then he says

*for the sake of the faith of God’s elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness,* ***2*** *in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began* ***3*** *and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior;*

Now that sentence is like the suitcase that my parents used to pack from Africa. It’s like how did you get all that into one sentence? Don’t open it up. Are you going to do that this morning? If you unzip that thing, you’re going to leave a big mess. I get it! It’s bursting with commas and clauses and prepositions and theological terms. We’re not going to unpack it all without leaving a big mess. We’re going to take a few things out and observe this is what is inside. But Paul’s mission is encapsulated in so much here that it’s worth chewing on. That’s why we’re taking this week to consider it. I’ll try to highlight a few features of this Gospel mission that Paul has so we can get a sense of what we should be striving towards. So, we’ll try to take out his aim, his motivation, and then his means. So his aim, what he’s about, his motivation, why he’s about it, and then his means, how he’s about it. So first, look at the aim of his mission, what he was about in verse 1. There are three terms that we could highlight. He says

*for the sake of the faith of God’s elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness,*

So there are three terms and I’m going to summarize this aim like this. The aim of his mission is the Gospel transformation of God’s chosen. This is what he’s aiming for. It’s the Gospel transformation of God’s chosen. In this aim you can take those two components of Gospel transformation and God’s chosen. You see that in verse 1. The people he is aiming to reach there are God’s chosen. He says

*for the sake of the faith of God’s elect*

That’s what that word means. Chosen means elect. It’s a loaded word filled with a lot of theology. We don’t have time to unpack it all this morning and there is a big swirl about it, but it’s a biblical term. The Greek word sounds like in English, the word elect. We have that idea where even in our own culture, we have elections whereby we have many options and we choose one person in particular. They are chosen specifically. Paul is saying in his aim that his ministry, his drive in writing to Titus here is for the sake of God’s elect, God’s chosen, God’s people. He’s highlighting the fact that this is the people of God on his radar. It’s a phrase used in the Old Testament to describe Israel. They were chosen by God. These people were called to follow Him. You see Paul’s heart in this word is driving him for this group. In 2 Timothy, he is writing from prison and is suffering. He says

**2 Timothy 2:10** Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

He wants for these people, God’s people, to experience Gospel transformation. Now in one sense, Paul’s heart is for all people. He longs for all the Gentiles to know God. He longs for all of his countrymen to know God. He says in Colossians 1, he labors that every man may know Christ, become complete in Christ. But you see that he doesn’t know in the end who is going to respond to this Gospel message with life.

He is sowing the seed of Gospel truth and he doesn’t know what kinds of soil is out there, but he’s going to sow it. He’s going to sow that seed because he knows the power of God is to salvation to everyone who believes. They receive it with faith. This Gospel message must be heard and the Holy Spirit must awaken people to respond so that spiritual life occurs. His interest, his aim is in the spiritual life. As he scatters that seed, he is looking for the fruit that is being born, for the life that is there. He cares so deeply. He is on mission to see that life be nurtured to fruition. He longs for Gospel transformation in God’s people. That’s who.

This idea of Gospel transformation is the objective, the what. The word Gospel means good news. It’s this message of how God saves sinners through Jesus. He wants to see this message transform people. Transformation is a total change, just like the caterpillar. It goes into the cocoon and it comes out totally different. Paul wants to see people transformed with lives changed and they have actual true spiritual life. In what ways? What does that change look like? He mentions three concepts; faith, knowledge and godliness.

*the faith of God’s elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness,*

We don’t have time to get into how these terms interrelate. Because of the unique context, the Greek terms are not definite. They could be taken in multiple ways, but there is one intended meaning, so we have to do our best with context to understand what Paul is talking about and how we put them together. But I think what he references first is this idea of faith. The faith of God’s elect or those who trust God is their belief or trust in this Gospel message. It’s that they would receive this message, the Word of truth, and then they would experience life changing relationship with God through faith.

We talked about faith last week, how the Bible uses that term faith in a lot of different ways. There are lots of people who believe or trust, but it’s not true saving belief. Even the demons believe in God. They believe in Jesus and they’re afraid. They shudder. But it isn’t saving faith. They don’t have the kind of faith that actually receives God’s offer of salvation through Christ. It’s a mental assent. They say, “Yes, that is God,” but they don’t actually receive the promises through His Word and count them as true for them. They don’t actually believe and act upon that belief and saying, “Yes, this is God’s gift to me.” Paul is aiming for true saving faith and that they would actually experience the transformation of the Gospel and relationship with God through Jesus. He longs that they would have real relationship in their very hearts, and that Christ would dwell in them, the Holy Spirit would be at work and they would know God and be known by God in real relationship; true, genuine faith in their hearts.

But also, that they would embrace real Gospel truth. So there is Gospel relationship through faith and real Gospel truth. He says the knowledge of the truth. They go together, hand in hand. The truth in relationship wouldn’t just be a sign of mysterious unthinking emotion of the heart. No, it reaches the head. It’s that these people would embrace real Gospel truth. Faith and knowledge go together. There always is a concern. In 2 Timothy, you see him talking about people who he says are

**2 Timothy 3:7** always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.

The truth is not just truth in general. I think he is speaking about the Gospel message, here. They’re always learning. They have a lot of things going on in their mind, but they’re never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth and embrace the true Gospel and doctrine as Paul is teaching and God has given us in His Word. This is what he longs to see them mature in their thinking, in their believing and in how they understand what God is communicating through the Gospel message. It’s why Paul was so committed to teaching and laboring and people understanding. He talked long. He talked so long, people would fall asleep. He talked so long that people would fall asleep and fell out of windows. He was teaching because he wanted them to understand. He didn’t say, “Let’s sing some more songs and more songs,” and whip them up into an emotional frenzy. They did sing. They worshiped, but they also taught because he knows they have to go together. We experience relationship, but we must understand and they will both deepen together. So Paul is committed to teaching and to preaching.

It’s why church leaders and churches have to be committed to teaching and to preaching. Gospel transformation, people’s lives really being changed means that we understand and we grow in understanding and arrive at that knowledge of the Gospel truth. Satan is a liar and there are so many false teachers out there spreading lies and trying to deceive and lure away. Paul is saying he is committed to proper understanding and teaching, that people would have Gospel transformation through faith and through knowledge, but it would not stop there. This faith, the real Gospel relationship, this knowledge of real Gospel truth would also move from their head to their heart and into their hands. That they would experience real Gospel impact and live it out in godliness. It wouldn’t just be a doctrinal statement that they sign or some kind of emotion that they express personally or even together, but godliness would manifest in their lives in actual ways. To be known by God and to know God transforms you to become like God. This is the path Jesus showed. He is the image of the invisible God and we are called to follow Him and to become Christlike, and in so doing, become like God or godly. They go together. All of our lives are shaped by the desires that God would have for us and that true knowledge of God, when it’s conceived, it would give birth to true God-glorifying actions in our lives, practical changes.

In the book of Titus, you see in this world of chaos, he is very concerned about the church family, leaders first and then members, that all of them would be living in a way that shows what God is like so that the world would see it in real life with flesh on. Jesus showed us the path. We do it by the power of the Holy Spirit, but that right teaching should change us into right living. Gospel transformation shapes our head, heart, and our hands, all that we do, into real impact. This is the aim of Paul’s mission, the Gospel transformation of God’s people. You can see that aim. That’s what he is about. You can see that motivation for why.

The motivation of the mission here is the Gospel promise. You can see Paul’s hope in the promise and his trust in the Promiser. We sang about that just a few moments ago. The hope in the promise that drives him, he says

***2*** *in hope of eternal life,*

Biblical hope is not just a flimsy wish, like, “I hope this happens.” No, it’s a confident expectation, a settled conviction. This will happen. This is my hope that I have eternal life. We who were cast out of Eden, who are looking at however many years the clock is ticking and our time to enter eternity, that we are looking at death, but we have hope of eternal life. Some of us have embraced that and have that settled conviction because there are people that we dearly love who have gone on before us. Our hope is so palpable because we know that is where they are. This is my hope. This is the motivation that drives me. It isn’t just, “We’re going to do things better here. We’re going to make things better.” Where are you looking for hope? Do you open up the news or social media or you kind of text a friend? You look out the window and say, is there any hope out there? How are you doing? Are you finding it? Maybe sometimes you find it. You look at your bank account. You look at your work progress. You look at your grades and you kind of go, here’s an investment. This one has hope. But is it eternal? This is eternal. There is no hope better than that. You see Paul’s driving motivation. We have hope of eternal life and that’s the promise. Look at the Promiser. He says this is from

*which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began*

He is the unlying God. He is truthful. You can look at the news or you can listen to some kind of thing and you say, maybe that’s true. I mean, we do our best. But here, you come on a Sunday morning and throughout the week, when I come to this, it’s totally true. He is an unlying God. That is something amazing, something stable, something given. He makes promises. He is a Promiser that is truthful and He is also eternal. He promised before the ages began, before time eternal. God, the God who is the I AM, Yahweh, He made this promise, this intention, this decree that He would be a saving God. He did that not based on all the things that we’re doing here. No, He did that before time eternal. This plan has been going on for a long time. I don’t think anything happening here in time is going to stop it. He has made it happen. This is dependable. He is truthful, He is eternal, and He is faithful.

 ***3*** *and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior;*

God knew exactly what He wanted to do, when He would keep all His promises. He manifested this truth in the Gospel message, in the work of Jesus, and then carries forth that Gospel message now. You think, why is God doing things the way He is doing? Shouldn’t He have done such and such thing? How is this year going this way? Why is this taking so long? God knows exactly when to do what needs to be done and He does everything at the proper time. We can trust Him and He has proven that especially here where in the proper time He manifested salvation through the person of Jesus Christ and through His work on the cross, His resurrection, and the hope that He is sharing now. This is the promise, the driving motivation. So the aim is Gospel transformation of God’s people. The motivation is His Gospel promise. The means by which it is accomplished is Gospel proclamation.

It’s this simple message. He says now it’s been manifested in this Word or this message that we have, and the method there, you see, is through the preaching. He understands “This is the preaching that I’ve been entrusted with,” which Paul says is sort of shocking. “Me, the guy who was persecuting the church, the greatest sinner of all, God has entrusted to preach this message so that everyone will be like, ‘Whoa! What kind of hope does he have?’” He’s like, “I know. I only have one hope. It’s Jesus. That’s why.” It’s so that we can see the only one who gets glory, the only one who is offering hope is Jesus. He says

**John 14:6** …I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Paul is like, “I’m just pointing at Him, and it’s shocking that I’m here. I’m here telling this message. God chose me on purpose.” In 1 Corinthians chapter 1 we see God says, “I chose foolish people like Paul, and everyone who is a part of the church, to show all of this is about me and my glory and what I’m doing. It’s so you see how amazing I am as a Savior. I’m saving people who you would think, this is unimaginable. I’m going to do it through this Word, through a message, through talking.”

In our culture, we have people spending millions of dollars and hundreds and thousands of people working on this one movie that is going to entertain you for an hour and a half, or a show. They are doing everything they can, and can’t even keep us entertained. And we’re like, we’re going to have just one person who is kind of sometimes boring, and they’re going to get up there and talk for like 45 minutes or 50 or longer. I don’t know how long. I don’t look at the clock. It’s scary! But they’re just going to talk.

Someone is like, “What are you doing on Sunday?” Oh, we just kind of talk. Who does that? What kind of power is that? “We’re going to change the world.” What? God is like, “I like doing it like that. In fact, everybody is going to go talk and share this message. I’ll take care of it. You just sow the seed. You just talk.” You think, this is shocking! Paul says, yes. That’s how God wants to do it. Paul understands that’s how God is doing it through him and how God is going to do it with the church.

You understand the spiritual stakes because when you start to open your mouth, you realize how much is against you. You realize how much boldness it takes to actually say the Gospel because this is offensive and foolish. You realize I’m talking to my family member or I’m talking to my neighbor or a co-worker and there are threats of persecution. There are threats of maybe someone stepping away from me. There are threats of people not wanting me in this neighborhood anymore. There are threats of my job. There are threats of my family position. In all these things you realize what I’m saying is this is true and actually, this is your path to life. It’s not me. It’s God.

This is God’s chosen means and the mission Paul is all about. He’s totally devoted to God and he’s on board with this mission. He’s going to be faithful to the mission, the Gospel transformation of God’s people. He knows they are out there. God is doing it. You can’t stop it. It’s like I’m going to be about that. I’m going to proclaim the Gospel and I’m going to do it the way that He desires and I’m going to trust Him with what happens. He knows Titus needs to hear that. He’s like, that’s what I’m about and that’s what you’re about, Titus. It’s a world of chaos. Be about this. That is the mission. Be committed to it. Be a herald. Be committed to it. Last, let’s just look at

**How they view others (1:4)**

This is how Paul views others and how people who are spiritually mature view others. While they’re on this mission, they’re dedicated to it. They’re given to God. But they don’t view others as pawns just to move around. They don’t view others as “Okay, how good are you at this mission?” Yes, there is a sense of spiritual warfare, but we’re not just soldiers where it’s “You do this. You do this. You go,” and he’s sending them out to their deaths. “Go share the Gospel over there. You lost your job? Okay.” No, he doesn’t view people like that. He’s not looking at Titus like, “Hey, toughen up out there, buddy. I’ve been to prison before.” How does he look at Titus? How does he look at others? Yes, there is a world of chaos. Yes, there is hardship. But you see what he has? He has affection.

You see the maturity of Paul’s devotion is total. You see the maturity of his mission. He is faithful. But you see the maturity of his affection. It’s real. He has a real affection for this man, Titus. You see how he relates and how people view others as eternal beings that they love. We’ll say it like this. If they’re servants of God, they view themselves on mission as heralds for God, but they view themselves as family in God, family together with affection. You see Paul having this affection for Titus. He relates to them the basis of their affection is in faith. He says

***4*** *To Titus, my true child in a common faith:*

They have a spiritual unity there because they’re a family together. He says that they have this faith in common. It’s a sacred unity, this faith that is definitive. It’s this teaching that has been given. It’s not something that is being adapted by people. No, this is what God has given. This common faith that Jude talks about is definitive, but it’s also inclusive in the sense that this faith is given to both Jews and Gentiles. They share a common faith. As the world shakes all the things that we hold in common with people and we lose our common identity in all kinds of areas, this is the one that is unshakable. In this world of chaos, Paul and Titus are in lock step. He says we have this common faith. We’re a family and you’re my true son in this faith. He’s a child that belongs and they’re in this together. There is a sacred unity, a sacred legitimacy to this faith and a sacred intimacy. You see his affection, there. The benefits of this affection you see it unpacked in his wishes of

*Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.*

You notice that he says that God is the Savior and also that Christ Jesus is the Savior. He understands that this is the Godhead at work, this saving power. He wishes grace and peace. It’s a common greeting, but both of those are sort of grace being like the fount and peace being like the flow. Grace is this undeserved kindness and favor that God gives and peace is the experience of recognizing I’m safe. I belong to God. He wants them to experience this and to spread this joy. The effect and the source comes from this Trinitarian God; God the Father, Christ Jesus the Savior, and that others will benefit from it.

You see the tensions. The most free person in the world is the one who is the slave to God. The person with the strongest belief in God’s saving election of His people is the one most compelled to go and live out the mission of preaching the Gospel. The person who is most saturated in undeserved kindness of God’s grace is the one most devoted to personal godliness. The person who is most secure in God the Father’s love is the person most desperately in need of God the Son’s salvation from wrath. Understanding this together is what Titus desperately needs, and then to communicate through people who are spiritually mature, churches that are spiritually mature, all the members. But he’s going to start with the leaders. We’re going to ask, what kind of leaders does a church need? That’s what Paul is going to get into.

There was a book that came out a little bit ago where someone made a distinction between what they called resume virtues and eulogy virtues. Resume virtues are the kinds of things that you put on your resume; performances that you’ve done, skills that you have, things that might impress people. Eulogy virtues are the sort of things that people talk about at your funeral. It’s where they acknowledge, this is what this person meant to me. There is a distinction between those two. You see the affection of Paul carried out here in Titus and you see the kind of qualities he is going to emphasize in spiritual maturity in leaders in the next couple of verses and who we want to be as a church family. There is a worldly path that is drawing us into all the things that we need to invest our lives in. We’re being shown a different way, a path to the man who had the greatest impact in the world and who the world would despise in terms of resume. But in terms of actually what He accomplished and meant to people and to His followers, it’s incredibly impactful. This is the one who brings order out of chaos. What He is calling us into is to live real lives in a genuine way that are being transformed by the Gospel. We’re going to try to work through over the next couple weeks what that means.