

7-28-24 Every Good Work (Titus)

Week 6

Text: Titus 2:11–15; 3:12–15

Topic: Witness, Good Works, Teaching

Big Idea of the Message: God calls believers to learn to practice good works.

Application Point: While there are general attributes all Christians should exhibit, there are also specifics in the various seasons of life.

As Paul wraps up his inspired playbook to his understudy named Titus, he concludes with some practical teaching about teamwork. As teammates, we must never assume or presume that things will be easy.

Sometimes our expectations of others are not met, and we can get discouraged. Because we are selfish by nature and tend to not always think the best of others, we need the help of God to function as the family of God.

Let's look at the final verses in the Book of Titus. Please turn to **Titus 3:12-15**. I see five team-building exercises that can benefit each of us today.

1. **We cannot do it alone.**

• **Read verse 12.**

- As the winter is approaching, and travel on the seas becomes dangerous, he wants to make sure that Titus will be able to spend some time with him.
- The phrase **“be diligent”**, other translations **“do your best”** or **“make every effort”** is a command with a sense of urgency.
- We could read it this way: “Do your utmost to come.” For that to happen, he is planning to send one of two men to take over the tasks of Titus on Crete. Paul is sending in reinforcements.
- Let me make some observations.
- **Paul was into personal discipleship (Paul invested in others).** Titus is under stress from the mess in Crete, and so Paul wants him to come away to get refreshed. He is really following the example of Jesus.
- When the disciples were involved in ministry, they returned a bit tired, and we read in **Mark 6:32** that Jesus got alone with them: **“So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.”**
- I'm sure that Paul reviewed what happened on Crete and then proceeded to equip Titus for his next assignment. Interestingly, Paul did the same thing with Timothy in **2 Timothy 4:21**: **“Do your utmost (best) to come before winter.”**
- **Paul was not a loner.** Did you know that the apostle mentions over 100 people by name in his letters? Paul was a total team player.
- **Paul wasn't afraid to make friends (he was purposeful).** Even though Paul was an apostle, he worked in tandem with believers from all classes.

- Friendships with faithful followers can help us grow. The church was created to be a community of interdependent people as **Romans 12:5** states: **“So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”** I need you and you need me. **Proverbs 27:17: “As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.”**
- The best friendships develop through shared experiences. Most of Paul’s relationships were cultivated in the crucible of ministry partnerships. Some of the best friends you will ever have been those you serve side-by-side with.
- **People are more important than programs.** Paul does not tell the church to keep programs going but to keep friendships fresh. I love how he bears his heart in **1 Corinthians 16:7: “I do not want to see you now and make only a passing visit; I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits.”** No program, or plans are worth more than relationships!
- **Authenticity is the key to lasting friendships.** Paul was a real person who sent a real letter to a real person. The Bible did not just fall out of the sky but contains personal letters filled with warmth and emotion. Paul wanted to further train Titus, but he also craved his companionship.
- **God uses notables and nobodies.** It’s interesting that of the two men mentioned in **Titus 3:12**, one of them is well-known, and one is a mystery man. We don’t know anything about Artemas while Tychicus has a very impressive spiritual resume.
- Paul had not yet made up his mind what man he wanted to send to Crete to replace Titus, but Tychicus was an obvious choice. In studying **Acts 20:4, Ephesians 6:21, Colossians 4:7, Ephesians 4:12 and 2 Timothy 4:12**, we see that he had some previous experience. Tychicus delivered letters to the Ephesians, Colossians and to Philemon. He was Paul’s personal FedEx man.

Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me. Col. 3:7

2. Fan the flames! (Don’t be flame thrower!)

- **Read verse 13.**
- Once again, we know a lot about one of these guys and not much about the other. Zenas was a lawyer, meaning he was either an expert in the Old Testament law or had been trained in Roman governance.
- **Acts 18:24-28** tells us that Apollos was a Jewish believer who was well trained and had a tremendous knowledge of Scripture. When he spoke, he did so with great fervor, he taught accurately, and he was bold. One of the best things about him was that he was open to learning more (he was teachable).
- Zenas and Apollos were essentially traveling missionaries. They have come to Crete and now need givers so that they can go to the next place.
- Notice that the Cretan Christians are to do everything to help them. This word has to do with **“with haste.”** We’re not to wait to give but to do so generously and quickly so that missionaries can be sent on their way.
- This phrase was used in **Acts 15:3: “The church sent them on their way...”** Paul described how believers assisted him in **1 Corinthians 16:6: “...so that you can help me on my**

journey, wherever I go.” The idea is to send forward on one’s journey and to do it with earnestness.

- **Third John, verses 5-8** is one of the clearest sections on fanning the flames.

Dear friend, you are being faithful to God when you care for the traveling teachers who pass through, even though they are strangers to you. 6 They have told the church here of your loving friendship. Please continue providing for such teachers in a manner that pleases God. 7 For they are traveling for the Lord, and they accept nothing from people who are not believers. 8 So we ourselves should support them so that we can be their partners as they teach the truth.

3. **Do what is good.**

- **Read verse 14.**

- This is the sixth time in Titus that Paul urges believers to do good works.
- It’s as if he can’t conclude the book without one more appeal for believers to do good works. I wonder why he had to tell them this so many times in such a short book. My thought is because by nature we don’t automatically do good things since we’re lazy or consumed by our own issues. We need constant reminders because when we do good works, we stand out on a Cretan culture.
- The last part of **verse 14** can be taken in one of two ways. When we do what is good, our own daily needs will be met. This is similar in thought to When we **Matthew 6:33: “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”** put God and others first, our own necessities will be met. The other way to understand this phrase is that when we devote ourselves to doing good, we end up providing for the daily needs of others.
- When we learn to do good deeds, we’ll meet pressing needs.
- Our daily aim should be to do good deeds in the name of Jesus and to share the good news, sometimes even with words. We should/must be known for our good works.

4. **Greet everyone (Be Available!).**

- We really see Paul’s passion for people in **verse 15**.
- He craved to be connected with fellow Christians. He wanted Titus and those in Crete to know that everyone with him was with them.
- Paul also wanted to make sure that those who loved him in the faith were given a special greeting. Notice the phrase **“Greet those,”** implying that it was more than just Titus he was writing to. This book was intended to be circulated among the churches on the island of Crete.
- In the Bible times, believers would often greet one another with a **“holy kiss” (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:26)**. The main point here is that we should be warm toward others, acknowledge them, and look for ways to connect with them. Christians should never be too cool or aloof from one another because we need each other.

- The church and our community are filled with silent sufferers. Let's look for ways to link our lives with those around us. The first step is to break out of our shells and give a greeting, then following Paul's example work at remembering names, and then get involved in people's lives through ministry partnerships.
 - Will you work at greeting at least five people that you don't know very well before you leave this morning?
 - There are a lot of new faces and we must make it our mission to get to know and welcome them.
5. **Give grace to others.**
- Paul closes this letter, as he does in all his letters, with the gift of grace, **verse 15**.
 - It's as if he can't get over the fact that God saved him from his sins.
 - He never tires of teaching about grace because he wants everyone to be impacted by the Almighty's **UNMERITED** favor. Let's listen to the final word from each of Paul's epistles.

Romans 16:20: "The grace our Lord Jesus be with you."

1 Corinthians 16:23: "The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you."

2 Corinthians 13:14: "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

Galatians 6:18: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen."

Ephesians 6:24: "Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love."

Philippians 4:23: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen."

Colossians 4:18: "Grace be with you all."

1 Thessalonians 5:28: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."

2 Thessalonians 3:18: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all."

1 Timothy 5:21: "Grace be with you."

2 Timothy 4:22: "Grace be with you."

Philemon 25: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit."

- We're not sure exactly who wrote the book of Hebrews, but this book also ends with: **"Grace be with you all" (Hebrews 13:25)**. **2 Peter** concludes this way: **"But grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ..." (3:18)**. And the final phrase in the entire Bible is a word of grace in **Revelation 22:21: "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen."**

Conclusion

1. **We cannot do it alone.**
2. **Fan the flames.**
3. **Do what is good.**
4. **Greet everyone.**
5. **Give grace to others.**

What a picture of the body of Christ! We have been created to be in a community and to work together as a team.

Do you feel trapped and in the dark? Are the walls caving in on you? The only way out is through leaning on God and on others.

Sought after (Isa. 62:12) Precious in his sight (Isa. 43:4) A new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17) Not condemned (Rom. 8:1) Forgiven (Col. 1:14) Loved (1 John 3:1) Accepted (Rom. 15:7) A child of God (John 1:12) Jesus' friend (John 15:14) Free (John 8:36) **The temple of God (1 Cor. 6:19) **God's treasured possession** (Deut. 7:6) Complete in Christ (Col. 2:10 NLT) Chosen (Col. 3:12) Called (2 Tim. 1:9) An ambassador of the Most High God (2 Cor. 5:20) God's masterpiece (Eph. 2:10 NLT) Able to do all things through Christ, who gives you strength (Phil. 4:13) More than a conqueror through Jesus, who loves you (Rom. 8:37)**