

“Christian Mission Over the Long Haul”

Sermon Notes

- **The final four verses of Paul’s Letter to Titus remind us that none of us are indispensable - save the gospel**

**Gospel stability in a rapidly changing society demands...*

1. ...gifted leaders (vv.12-13; 1:5-9)

2. ...good workers (v.14; 1:16; 2:1-10, 14; 3:1, 8)

3. ...God’s grace (vv.15; 1:4; 2:11; 3:4-7)

MEFC Community Group Study Guide

For the week of June 28th - July 4th

Getting Started

1. Our journey through Paul's Letter to Titus began on February 2, 2020. Stop and ponder together as a group how much our world has changed since that day. Bearing in mind truths such as Genesis 50:20 and Romans 8:28, how do you see the Lord's good hand of providence at work in our families, our church, our community, and our nation over the last five months?

Digging Deeper

2. One of the sweet features of this particular letter is its brevity. At a mere 649 words, it only takes about seven minutes to read. Take the time to read out loud through its contents together one more time, reflecting on the current cultural moment in which we find ourselves. What specific truths (chapter and verse) do you find uniquely powerful and relevant for us in this season of mission together?

Open Your Bible to Titus 3:12-15...

3. In verse 12, Paul references two of his fellow workers in the mission of the gospel: Artemas and Tychicus. Though this is the only mention of a man named Artemas in the Bible, Tychicus appears five separate times in the New Testament. Take a look at Acts 20:4; Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7 and 2 Timothy 4:12 in order to learn a bit more about this brother. What role(s) did he play in the 1st century church? How does Paul describe him? Do you know folks like this in the church? Why are they so vital to the advance of the gospel?
4. When Paul tells Titus in 3:12 "...do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there", this obviously entails Titus leaving the church on the island of Crete. According to v.12, when will Titus know it's time to leave? Why is this detail so critical? Furthermore, what do you think it must have been like for Titus to depart from the community he had come to know in these local fellowships? The Lord does move his people around, doesn't he? What is this experience like for you - either as someone who's left one church to come to another, or as you've stayed at one church and watched others come and go?
5. Verse 13 says: "Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing." Similar to Artemas, this is the only reference to Zenas in the Bible. However, Apollos has a rather high-profile in the 1st century church. His name appears no less than ten times. Here are the references: Acts 18:24-28; 19:1; 1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:4, 5, 6, 22; 4:6; 16:12. What sort of a leader was Apollos? Can you think of any Apollos types in the 21st century church? Reflecting on these verses, what are the assets of an Apollos for the church? What are the liabilities?
6. In Titus 3:14, Paul addresses the issue of good works (for the eighth time!). Look back through each of the references to "works" in Paul's Letter to Titus: 1:16 (2x); 2:7, 14; 3:1, 5, 8, 14. If you had to create a theology of good works for our church from these eight references, how many propositions can you draw out for practical application? A significant emphasis within our 2025

Vision (prayer, care, share) is a desire to *demonstrate the compassion of Christ* as we **care** for the Westonka area and beyond. How might the specific truths we've studied here in the Letter to Titus become critical stones in the foundation we're hoping to build as it relates to compassion and mercy ministry?

7. Paul's final greetings in v.15 highlight God's grace (once more). Though it can be variously defined throughout the Bible, if you only had this letter to do so...how would you seek to unfold the meaning of the grace of God to someone who was hearing the word for the first time (1:4; 2:11-14; 3:4-7)? As Brian Tabb has wonderfully said: "Grace has a face, and it's Jesus."¹ In these verses, take note of and discuss together God's grace both in terms of his work *for us* in Christ, as well as his work *within* us in Christ.
8. As you close your time together as a group, make a point of praying by name for those on your 'List of 5', asking God to grant each of us a renewed passion this season to pray for, care for and share the gospel with the people in our lives who are far from Christ.

¹ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/podcasts/help-me-teach-the-bible/brian-tabb-on-teaching-titus/> . Accessed 7/2/20 @ 12:45pm. By the way, this link will take you to an outstanding hour-long interview conducted by Nancy Guthrie with Dr. Brian Tabb (Academic Dean and Associate Professor of Biblical Studies at Bethlehem College and Seminary in Minneapolis). After 23 weeks in Paul's Letter to Titus, this discussion is a wonderful refresher course on this remarkable book of the Bible. Over the course of just over 57 minutes, they read through and provide commentary on the entire letter. This is gold.