

# Faith, Truth, and Hope

## Anthony Kim

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If you were to write a letter today to someone you deeply care about, someone you've left in a difficult, chaotic environment to do a very hard and difficult job, how would you begin that letter?

Most of our letters start with typically casual pleasantries. I hope you're doing well, one would say. But we see the Apostle Paul sits down prayerfully to write to Titus, his spiritual son and ministry partner, while he is on the island of Crete, which is in Greece. And he doesn't open up with any sort of small talk. He knows what's weighing heavily on his spiritual son.

He opens up with one of the most extensive doctrinally dense and pastorally weighty salutations in this letter. You won't find the extended introduction anywhere else than here in Titus. So as we go into the text, let us first read the first four verses. If you would please stand out of respect of God's word. And please follow along silently as we read from Titus chapter 1 beginning in verse 1-4.

Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth, which is after godliness, in hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the worlds began, but hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our savior to Titus my own son after the common faith grace mercy and peace from God the father and the Lord Jesus Christ our savior is God's word. You may be seated.

We're going to see in the course of this introduction God laying the foundation. He starts with the defense that the integrity of the gospel is against false teachers. We'll see that when we get to verse 10. And then he draws correction in this part of these four verses as he writes to an island notorious for deception, full of lies, lack of any sort of discipline, just out of control with their own passions and their own desires.

And on top of that, complete spiritual disorder and leading to ungodliness. Before he ever gives Titus a single practical instruction about how to set the churches in order, he first anchors Titus soul and us and our souls in the eternal unshakable character of God.

And the burden that falls upon the Apostle Paul by the Holy Spirit. He gives him an opening of these three things. Faith, truth, and hope that anchors not only Titus but every believer who ever walks on this planet Earth to live godly lives in an ungodly world. Because the God who promised these things ultimately cannot lie. We're going to see that's the driving point to this introduction.

Let's follow his argument. Then the first of his argument is this is to identify the messenger in two areas. His submission and his authority of the apostle Paul. So Paul starts with he is a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ. He begins by identifying himself with these two distinct titles that seem on the surface to pull in opposite directions.

Submission and authority. A servant and an apostle. Seems like it's pulling completely in opposite directions, but we shall see in the text, there's more to it than that. He calls himself a servant of God. And this Greek word, if you look into it, and we're going to go through a lot of the Greek because this is after all in the language of Greek, primarily the audience, and we got to know the full meaning of these words, how they understood it in their time because it can be diluted in our English language.

So I will pull out from the Greek the word *doulos*. *Doulos*. While the English translation softens this word servant or namely bondservant meaning bond is man servant the actual title. This literal historical weight of this word *doulos* means literally a slave. Literally means a slave. And what does a slave do? He gives himself wholly up to another's will. All of it is to the will of the master. And this is namely he puts here of God.

He is completely in submission to the will of God. And we see then this word *doulos*. Someone who is owned all their allegiance, all of their time, all of their service to their master. No rights of their own and they solely exist to execute the will of the master. And so he puts that at the forefront of these distinct titles. And what makes this extraordinary is that while Paul frequently calls himself a bondservant, you'll see that in other letters that he writes here, he doesn't write it as bondservant of Christ.

Instead, this is the single unique occurrence where Paul uses this calling a servant of God. By placing himself in this category, he aligns himself all the way back to all the Old Testament prophets and leaders going back to Abraham and Moses and Elijah who were defined by their complete submission to Yahweh. And Paul looks at his life and says, "I am completely owned by God and I am entirely dependent on him." That is what he's saying here. And the interchangeable use of the word of God and of Christ in Paul's writings in his letters isn't a contradiction.

No, these are inseparable roles of the father and the son in Christian theology. Since he is mainly speaking to Gentiles here, he uses of God to convey he belongs to the Trinity, God

the Father, God the Son, and serving ultimately for the father's eternal plan of salvation through whose specific authority of God and the mission that was entrusted to him in Jesus Christ or rather by Jesus Christ. And notice the immediate shift then from a servant of God to then the apostle of Jesus Christ.

That word is apostolos. It means the sent one. The Greeks would know what this means because it literally means a messenger carrying a delegated royal authority in a letter. It came from the king and it was simply him to pass on the king's message. He was a delegate. He was used as an authority figure. And so he combines this word slave and a man that is delegated has delegated authority from the king. Paul stands as it were in the lowest position as well as in total humility.

We see that here in his position. But then this word apostle, he stands in a position that is so distinct in authority that he calls himself as it were the messenger to the local churches and demands in a case here of obedience. That is what the message is to send that you are to hear of the king and obey what he says.

So why does he use both? You may ask because exercising authority according to the will of God can only happen in the mind of a servant. That is how God appoints leaders in the local church. It must be exercised with these two distinct qualities. Submission and then authority given by the king.

If a person wants to be a spiritual leader, they must first know what it means to be a servant. Must know. Because we'll see that if one does not have a heart of a servant which is of humility, this devil can take that person and puff him up and cause all sorts of damage in a church because the exact opposite is of pride. And if one does not have humility, they will have then pride and it will destroy the local church. So he puts this before us. Paul leadership is characterized by this servant heart of service. But his message is backed by divine authority.

We must get that God is ultimately the one that is the source. And then he goes down to sharing the authority, delegation, not sharing but rather delegation to Apostle Paul. And he is to be a servant, a humble servant. And then that humble servant could lead a local church. And the truth here must be clear that true spiritual authority is coupled with absolute submission to God. Absolute submission to God.

Since Jesus is God, serving God and serving Christ are the exact same thing. They are used interchangeably. But here reason why he uses the word God is he wants to share that the Gentiles were part of God's eternal plan. And the weight of this even just here in this text where in a culture tells us to assert our rights as priority to protect our autonomy and be our own masters of our faith. Paul reminds us that the safest place that the most

honorable position in any human being is to occupy that of a slave to the creator. That is the best place to be.

That's the weight of this part of the text. And so we must evaluate our own posture toward God. Where are you in your posture to God? Is there anything between you and God, who is that? Who is that in between? Because are you trying to negotiate with him as an equal or have you surrendered your allegiance entirely as a *doulos*, a slave because you will be a slave to one thing or the other, a slave to God or a slave to sin.

That's how we see it in scripture. Now, let's go to the second part of this verse. We're going to see a three-fold progression of the gospel, ultimately the mission of the local church. Paul doesn't just list his titles. He immediately defines the exact purpose and scope of his mission. Title comes with mission.

He says his apostleship is this. Look at with me. According to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness. Notice this incredible three-fold step progression that Paul outlines for us here. And the Greek the preposition *kata* literally the word according to points to the goal or the mission. So anytime you see this according to it's to show us what is the goal? What is the mission of my position?

And so we see here that the mission follows this chain reaction that these must be in the mission. The first one is faith. Faith then leads to knowledge of truth and then knowledge mixed with faith produces godliness. That is a chain reaction. It is like the molecules. You put one molecule with the other and there will be a reaction. You cannot change God's design. And these are the very molecules. Faith, knowledge of truth produces godliness.

So let's start with the word faith. Faith is the inward transformation. Let me clear that up. It's not information, it's transformation. Faith is primarily an inward transformation. Paul says it this way. His work is for the faith of God's elect.

God's elect. So faith is the starting point before knowledge. Before knowledge, faith must be the starting place. It is the transformation of the inner man. The inner man must be changed. You see, the mind is not enough intellectually to get and understand the Bible. It must transform from within. And we choose to believe the unseen things as though it is seen. What do I mean by that? Faith is God-given. It's God-given. You cannot produce this transformation. You cannot produce faith. To put it simply, you see, Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." So, you can't see this. You can't feel it. So you cannot grasp it from your mental capacity because you can't see it. It must be God given the unseen. God is the one that transforms us. And so this faith is exercised by us as the vessels. We are vessels to God. But is entirely enabled by God's control. He is fully powerful. Rather, he is the ultimate power and he is the ultimate authority. And he is the one that chooses. That's what the word elect

means. He chooses who he's going to give faith to. And if you don't like that, well, that's God. And that's what he says. He gets to choose, not us. We don't choose him. He chooses us first.

That's the proper order here in the text. And this foundational truth is what must be clarified. And so he does it. This is one of those progressions. Next, then we can go to the knowledge of the truth. There is a cognitive part of this. The mind has to be activated.

How is it done? Well, first again the faith takes place. It's not blind, meaning that it is from God. We know and understand that. So he helps us get from a place of darkness to a place of light. That is the truth. And then he grounds us in our minds and in our reality.

It has to have this acknowledging. You see that in the text. There has to be an acknowledgment of the truth. The truth. Not a truth. The truth. Jesus said, "I am the truth." And you have to acknowledge the truth. This isn't just knowing facts. At this stage, it's not about facts. Faith is now transforming this truth. And where you can acknowledge the truth, it's not I just memorized this fact. No, it's transforming you inside out. That's the kind of truth he's talking about here. It's not a mental acquisition. Oh, I memorized it. I can spill it out. No you know in the inner man you have been transformed by this truth and now you're able to acknowledge it in truth.

Truth to truth it's a saving message this truth. What has you been saved from? That's the idea. Acknowledge. Do can you acknowledge in your life that this truth has saved you from some kind of lie that you've lived? Because that's the exact opposite of the truth. Any lie that's in your life, has he exposed that lie and grounded you in the truth by faith? Has that happened? Has that real reality happened in your life?

Because if it hasn't, then your life will continue to lead in the course of your passions and your desires. Because a grounding truth is the saving message of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then we go to godliness. After the inward and the mental transformation, he goes into godliness. Now this is the outward behavior. That's what godliness is. And what happens here? The heart responds of the faith that has been given coupled by the truth alters your daily life. Oh yeah. Your daily walk is now completely different. You don't walk the same anymore. Amen. You walk a different walk. Your walk is now controlled by a wonderful, beautiful, trustworthy master.

It alters your control of your life. You have no more control. You are controlled by the master. And it produces then godliness which is a reflection of God. Godliness is another way of saying holiness or another word of saying sanctification. They all have the same root meaning. You are now walking a transformed life in your outward behavior.

And that behavior walks in this way in obedience to Christ and his commands. You now hear the command and you obey it. You hear the command and you obey it. And you see this in your daily walk over and over and over again.

And that shows a deep a real personal savior, a real personal Lord in your life that respects God's word. That's how respect looks like. Respect says, "I'm going to listen and I'm going to obey what you say because I am yours and you are mine. That's what reverence looks like. And that's how reverence for God looks like. Paul doesn't present truth as doctrine again to memorize, but as truth that produces a life of reverence. Do you live out of respect for God and his word on a daily basis?

Whenever you hear the word of God, you're like, "This is the most important thing. Whatever else that I was doing I am locked in. Has he created that? Has he created that kind of transformation where when Jesus says when the truth is given my sheep hear my voice and they follow me. Do you follow his word to that degree?

See, truth that does not lead to godliness is not truth we have truly believed. Let me say that again. Truth that does not lead to godliness is not truth we have truly believed. The church, us as believers who are the church body, we are to examine ourselves with the knowledge of scripture. That's how we examine ourselves. We don't examine our hearts, our emotions, our circumstances. No, as believers, we examine ourselves with the knowledge of scripture.

We go to the scriptures over and over again. This is a distinct outward behavior. We used to go to our feelings. We used to go to our circumstances. We used to go to things that we thought we can control, right? No. Now we go to the scriptures. That's our source of truth. Not in us, not in outside, but here.

And what does the scripture do? What is it supposed to do? It's supposed to give us humility. Is that the outcome when you read the scriptures? Does it make you more humble? Does it make you want to be more holy, more godly in your life? And to express that in love, agape love, God's sourced love, that you love those that you interact with. And it's not produced in yourself. Again, all of this is produced by God, by faith, by his word.

And when you do, you know you're a child of God. When these aspects of humility and holiness and love is constantly in your life, not perfectly, but you see glimpses of it. You see glimpses of humility. You see glimpses of love. You see glimpses of holiness in your life.

See, Paul's assignment is to build up the believers so that their doctrine matches their duty. Okay, that word duty again is are you listening to the commands and are you

following through? That's what duty is. Don't think of it as it's a bad thing. Duty in this sense as a Christian is a good thing. It is good to hear God's word. Amen. It is good to live his word because he is who he is all loving.

He rules out then that an apostleship is a legalistic following a bunch of rules and having some kind of checklist. You don't see that here in the writing of Paul. It's not something you do but rather what God does in you to do. So the gospel changes the heart and the mind and then it manifests into the natural from the spiritual and it's an inevitable. You can't stop this byproduct of working into your life where you will start looking more like the Lord Jesus Christ. You can't stop being more and more transformed in the Lord Jesus Christ. It will happen in the Christian life.

And so the truth is that the biblical faith, true biblical faith is never divorced from sound doctrine. Get that? You must continue to be rooted in the strong foundation of the doctrines presented in scripture. And by doing that, the result is you will be transformed in not in your mind but also in your actions. And that is what godliness is.

And faith is God's chosen means of forming his people. And so there are many today who claim to have faith but their lives show no godliness, no transformation from the inside out. Conversely, there are those who demand obedience to following a bunch of moral laws but lack a heart of faith. There's no faith in them, just a bunch of rulemaking. Both by the way are fractured versions of the gospel.

They are fractured version of the gospel. It is the gospel is not supposed to look like just following a bunch of rules. By the way, there are a certain kind that follows over hundreds of oral traditions, man-made. And Jesus confronts them and says there's just two. Love thy God with all thy heart, mind, soul, and spirit. And then love your neighbor as thyself.

Jesus never wanted to put that kind of a burden in anyone. And so he states it very clearly to those who are religious but blind. And then he also follows through with those that shouldn't beat themselves up. If you know and recognize you are a sinner, God is calling you. Right? The merciful sinner that was crying out, beating his chest, oh God, be merciful unto me. And then the one again, the Pharisee who did all these works and had no transformation from inside.

Everything external, looks great, nothing done inside. Yet the one that was transformed in the heart, God looks upon. And what does the scripture say in Isaiah? The one that's of a contrite and broken spirit and trembles at my word, I will not despise. So this is weighty.

And the call here is to return to the simple dependent obedient faith in God. Trusting his word above feelings, above the culture, above your own circumstances. Those will be

your attacks in your battle. Your feelings, the culture, your circumstances. And God's word must be above all those always.

So examine the chain reaction and your life. Does your knowledge of the Bible translate directly into how you treat your family, your co-workers, your church community here at Calvary Baptist Church. It does have a direct effect in your relationships. Absolutely.

So, we're going to go now to verses two and three. We're going to look at the unshakable ground, the unchanging God and his perfect timing. Verse two and three. And hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began, but hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our savior. Here Paul moves into the grounds of his confidence. His grounds of his confidence. Are you confident with the ground that you are on? Because he is going to tell and spell it out here.

What are you supposed to be confident? What is Titus to be confident? What if us as believers should be confident? Because after all, he is isolated in a difficult island. We're going to see how difficult it is as we go along in this letter. But do you believe that you have confidence right now that you have a strong foundation?

And so Paul anchors everything in this word hope in the hope of eternal life. That's what it says in the text. In biblical language, hope is not something that you just wish. It is guaranteed. It's going to happen. Guaranteed by the one that cannot lie.

And that's why you can endure to the end. You can. That's confidence. You can endure to the very end. Above your feelings, above your circumstances, above the culture. You can rest confidently. You can endure through all of that. That's the kind of hope God gives you. And look at how he defines eternal life here. It's beautiful. So the Greek word here is *aionios zoe*. *Aionios* means to see as far as can be seen as far as you can see. So seeing past the feelings, past the circumstances, past the culture and you see past all the way to the end.

That's what he is saying here. And *zoe* refers to the quality and the depths of life, not just a chronological duration. He's not talking about that here. You see, the Apostle Paul and the Apostle John in his letter approaches this with harmony that it doesn't look like you're just gritting your teeth and just you're going to make it to the end. No. John, Apostle John writes about eternal life as a present possession. Get that? A present possession. The life through which we live right now. Meaning you have eternal life now. You are presently experiencing eternal life. And so Paul here then focuses on the life in which we will live. So not just as apostle John puts it that you have living eternal life now but then Paul here is talking about the eternal life that we have in the future. And when you put those two

together think of it like this. Right now as a believer you have a healthy eternal spiritual life inside you. Right?

But you are still living in an environment that is deeply toxic, right? Broken and full of sin. Paul says, "Our hope is that one day we will be stepped into a heavenly environment where the atmosphere will perfectly match the life that matches within. It is the ultimate fulfilling life." Do you see that?

So you're experiencing that eternal life and then one day the heavenly environment will match what's going on inside. Not until then. And so you can rest in that. So whenever you have that peace and you're like why am I having peace despite of all the storms that are going on in my life? God has given me this right in Philippians this peace that surpasses all understanding. That's what it means. That's what eternal life means. You have peace with God. You have rest in your soul. Jesus said, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light." Right? Come unto you and I will give you rest. That's how it looks like in another way.

You have peace. You have rest and you have joy that is unspeakable and full of glory right now. Are you experiencing that continually internally? Because you're not going to ultimately get it until you get to heaven externally. So just remind yourself of that.

You see, a lot of people go wrong with social gospel that we can somehow fix the world now into looking like heaven. No, that's not going to happen. Not until that day. And so, let's focus on the priority. People need to have peace with God internally, the inner man. And only the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ can do that. Not some kind of social gospel. We can't change anything externally. Only God can change that.

So we have this guarantee. We have this confidence that God that cannot lie. Repeat that over and over. He cannot lie. What he's saying is true. It will come to pass. I love that expression of Jesus. It will come to pass. It will come to pass. This situation, that situation, all situations, it will come to pass.

And so we live in a world where everyone lies. The Cretans were famous for it. They loved lying. It was part of their expression. They didn't have any conviction when they lied. They were proud of their lying. And human nature is riddled with this kind of deception, isn't it? To some degree. White lies, black lies, they're all lies, right?

But the one only, God is the one that cannot lie ever. And it's not that he simply chooses not to. No, that's the wrong interpretation. Rather, it is the absolute impossibility because why? He is holy and he is righteous in nature. It's his nature. That's why he cannot lie. We on the other hand have a sinful nature. So we are bound to lie in one form or the other. But God, no, he can't. He must be true to himself.

One commentary puts this. You see, we see our equals every day. Sinful nature, right? But God has never seen his equal. God has never seen his ego. He is completely dependable. You see that? No one is like God. No one is like God.

And this promise wasn't an afterthought to Paul when writing this part of the letter. It was made before the world began. God showed to the Apostle Paul, "What I'm having you write has already been planned out all long ago. Eternity past." The way expressed in scripture, eternity past, shared between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit before humanity drew even a single breath.

And God, who is perfectly orderly, waited until you see the word expression, in due time. Another way of putting it, God's timing, the exact right season to manifest this word through preaching. When I got here, I was just because that's me right now. I'm going, Lord, please help me to preach. Help me to preach this text with confidence, with boldness, with clarity of mind. Because you see, I am preaching God's promises that were planned before I even had a single breath in my lungs. Before anyone on this planet Earth had a single breath in their lungs, this plan was already resolved. It was already settled.

And now visibly, the way it's done is through preaching and the proclamation of his word. This elevates preaching above entertainment, above giving advice, above sharing my thoughts and my opinions. Preaching is preaching God's word. And that's it. That's it. That's good enough. I don't need to entertain you. I don't need to joke around. I don't need to put bunch of fancy things in this room. I don't need to share, hey, I have all these degrees, so just listen to me because I have all these educational degrees. Doesn't matter. At the end of the day, it's God's word and I'm settled in my heart and your heart. That's what I need. I don't need anything else. That's my foundation because that's his eternal plan that I'm sharing with you.

And so the Greek word for preaching is kerusso which means a royal herald. Again, when I looked at this, I was like, I'm to be thinking of myself as a royal herald. God help me. You see, in the ancient world, when a king had an unalterable decree, a herald, a royal herald would step into the city square, blow a trumpet, and shout, shout the proclamation. Paul says, "I am just the herald blowing the trumpet of a king who cannot lie." This has to be as loud as a trumpet, as clear as a trumpet sound.

And the truth of this is that salvation is not fragile. It is an unalterable decree, a declaration, a manifestation of God's word. You see, it is an eternal decree, eternal decree, eternal plan. You see, we live in a temporal world that has a bunch of temporal plans. Only God's word is eternal. Again, I had to look at this and go, Lord, help me. This is done before time. Guaranteed by the immutable, unchangeable truthfulness of God himself.

God manifests his eternal truth through the preaching of his word. God help me. When your world is falling apart, when people break their promises, and when your heart, your own heart falters, your hope, get this, when I'm preaching this, your hope when I'm preaching is that you rest on a God who is fundamentally incapable of deception. He cannot break a lie. He will lift your hearts up. He will encourage you through all sorts of circumstances. And that is what my preaching is supposed to convey.

We live in a time when preaching is often treated as optional and secondary. Just watch it on YouTube. No, brethren, you don't know what God's spirit's going to do to you when you are in proximity with other believers and the preacher himself. You see, when the herald gathered the people, it was a physical gathering. He wasn't at some distance shouting. No, they heard the speaker in person and live because the spirit is living and breathing and working that no technology can ever produce.

Truth will be given, but truth of the spirit, that is something different in a local church setting. I'm always blown away because I don't treat this lightly. And I ask God to help me never to treat preaching lightly, to never treat your word lightly, but that his Holy Spirit's presence will be known and recognized in the preaching. That something that I say would enter into the deepest part of your soul and that God would create life there only he can produce. And you certainly realize you are before a holy God.

And what are you going to do when that holy God knows everything about you? He knows what's going on in your heart right now. He knows what's going on in your mind right now. What are you going to say when you have no excuse? When he has decreed something that is unalterable? You can't alter this. I can't alter this. What are you going to do? You simply can only say yes, I believe or no. There is no maybe. There is no I'm going to wait on this.

That's why when the text today is the day of salvation, he literally means today is the day of salvation. He gave you another day. He gave you another opportunity to hear his word. Until you realize the weight of that, you won't ever trust in the Lord Jesus Christ because you don't see the weight of your sin. And that's what the Holy Spirit does. He brings down the weight of the sin upon you and said you can't carry this. You are deceiving yourself. That's what the truth does. Supposed to set you free.

Rest upon this kind of hope. It's a guaranteed unalterable decree. Stop living with the anxiety that God will somehow pull the rug under your life. No, he doesn't do that. What he says he will do. What he declares, he will do. He honors his own word. He counsels with his own self to value and honor and submit the preaching of God's word here in this part of the text is extremely important. But yet we have to move on.

We going to see here now in the next part is the line of authority and the partner in the trenches. What Paul does here, he says, "I am not alone in this. My brother, my own son in the faith is also is going to share the same truth with you." And so he says in the second part of verse four or the first part of verse four to Titus my own son after the common faith after explaining the identity and the unshakable nature of God Paul finally addresses the recipient here. He finally gets to the recipient Titus.

And this term my own son literally means a genuine begotten child. This tells us that Titus was likely led to Christ directly through Paul's ministry. They shared a common faith. It was a living saving faith that crossed deep cultural divides. Paul was strict scripturally trained Hebrew Jew. But Titus, he was a gentile. Yet in Christ, what could easily divide in the natural setting, those walls were entirely obliterated, a Jew and a Gentile, no wall. It's like whatever you can imagine, like I can never get to be united with this person.

He does the breaking of that wall. No amount of external pressure, manipulation can do what God does. He's the one that breaks down the walls. And it's by grace. Amen. It's not forced. None of that.

And so this part of this letter, it's a mandate where a prince would be given a Roman legal authority in the Roman Empire when an imperial delegate was sent by the emperor to govern a chaotic province. That's typically what is done with this situation. He carried an official letter containing explicit instructions and if anyone questioned the delegates rights to establish order, he simply held up this mandate.

And this is what he's Paul's doing is saying carry up that mandate that was once given to me. You are to carry that on. And what is that mandate? Well, it's this letter. He's addressing this letter to Titus. Hold up this letter high above to the local church that you're preaching at.

And look at this flawless line of authority from Paul. He creates to protect Titus from false teachers. And so above the false teachers, we're going to see later on the text, it says to get the local church to not follow the false teachers, raise up this letter. If it's not according to this letter, you are a false teacher and you're a falling deception. That's literally what Paul is saying here. You are that delegated authority I'm giving this letter to.

And so God the father and Jesus Christ hold the ultimate sovereign authority. Then God delegates the authority to Paul as an appointed apostle. And then Paul delegates this authority to Titus in this letter. Then Titus who was commanded to delegate this authority then to the other church elders all across to every city in Crete. You see the order it is done this way according to God. And so Titus was not some random choice for this job. Paul in the writings in second Corinthians as you know the Corinthian church was in all

sorts of disorder. They were doing all kinds of chaotic thing. And he first had experience in that church and he watched Paul working through that church putting back order in place at the church of Corinth which by the way which wasn't that far away from Crete and so he puts back order in place takes away all the chaos and confusion and brings back one of the most beautiful chapters of love in 1 Corinthians chapter.

And we see a church that is not changed by information, but changed by transformed faith and the knowledge of the truth passed on to godliness. And so then we see in the writings of Paul, we're not going to go there due to time, but he said, "I miss Titus and I recognize Titus. He helped me. He was the one that helped me to put this church in order. And so I am now going to send you to Crete to do the same thing because you have experience. You have the spiritual maturity and experience to go and change this part of the world as well by the grace of God and the mercy of God by Christ strength.

And so we see that he was not again a random choice. No, he had experience and he has done well in a previous church setting similar to this one in Crete. So Paul trusted this ministry partner. And so Paul didn't send a committee. He sent Titus. Titus.

And Titus was a specialist. Again, he dealt with difficult situations and before in high conflict environments that were by the way had a lot of false teaching there as well. And there was all sorts of immorality going on there. He goes unselfishly as a slave going in submission to the ultimate authority through the chain of command deeply mature devoted servant and is saying yes I will go and he goes. So God establishes these clear lines of spiritual authority and order within his church to protect his people from chaos and deception. And says there's that going on. Go and do likewise.

And so the church leadership is not about personal gain or ego. No, they're the ones that are to be the light and the salt, to lead this church out of chaos, lead this church out of immorality, to lead this church into godliness that is reflected in the leader. And again this part I'm God help me as well that I will be that kind of church leader to you all that it's not in my own strength. It is not anything within me but it's because I stand upon this word and I have confidence to not only preach it but to live it because he is the one that supplies my needs.

So I don't have to lord over anyone. I don't need to do that. I don't need to say serve me. No, those are all wrong because I'm directly commanded by God to be a faithful steward just like Titus, just like Paul. I follow in that chain of command. No one else but those do the scriptures.

So I ask to pray for me and I know that many of you are and I'm just here saying please continue to pray for me. Please continue to support the ministries here in this local church, especially when it comes to evangelism, of outreach, and of discipleship, of

spiritual formation. Because those two areas is where Satan loves to attack the most. And remember, he's not attacking you directly. He can't attack God, so he's going to attack you. Always remember that. It's don't ever take this personally, but we have to go through with it. Amen. This is how a church is healthy. This is how a church continues to follow the great commission of making all disciples of all nations.

So recognize that the church is designed in this way where God will do his work in and through our lives starting with me and everyone else. I am to lead in this way and you're to follow through with it. And God help us with that. And now we go to the last part of verse four.

Paul closes his salutation by pronouncing a beautiful blessing over his son in the faith. Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, our savior. Notice how Paul weaves these three words together as an indispensable part of our life. For anyone doing hard spiritual work, we need to constantly remind ourselves we're not doing this by our own strength. We're doing this by his grace, by his mercy, and by his peace. Any type of spiritual labor that we do. It must have those three things. Grace, mercy, and peace that comes from God the Father and the Lord Christ our Savior.

So grace remind yourself it is unmerited favor. You have favor with God in Christ. I said this on Wednesday that the world works itself towards acceptance. We as Christians come from a place of acceptance already. Get that. Recognize that you have been accepted in the beloved in Jesus Christ as soon as you trusted him as your savior and lord. And so to receive grace is to receive what you could never earn or obligate to God to give you.

So you won't have this ever demand. Lord, why aren't you doing this for me? When you have grace in your life, you go, "Thank you, Lord. Whatever you give, whatever is to be done in my life, I receive it with grace." Because it's not a performance that he's looking for. He's looking for one that will just simply do his will.

God gives grace to the humble. Another part of book of James, Titus could never accomplish his mission in Crete. Never. He would never be able to accomplish it without grace. You see, he knows that it's not up to his intellectual strength or his own rather intellect. And but it was him that desperately needed a continuous infusion of grace in his life. So if you can pray, pray for an infusion of grace in this person here and in yourselves because God supplies grace continually, right? Why is it called a throne of grace? It's called the throne of grace because it's unlimited source given by God. You see, he doesn't need anything from us, but he allows to give things to us. He is a giver at the source.

And so, always remember that you're sustained by a giver that has ultimate unlimited grace. Then secondly, mercy. So, while grace gives us what we don't deserve, mercy withholds the negative consequences which we do deserve. How many times in your life

has he put a roadblock in pursuing your own desires? That's what mercy looks like. He kills that desire that would destroy your life by putting either a roadblock or he removes that desire from your heart. That's what mercy looks like. He withholds the negative consequences that we do deserve if we just follow what we want to do.

Every single believer, even an apostle, even a pastor, uses a massive amount of God's mercy. And that's why I go to Lamentations. There is new mercies every morning. Every morning I pray, Lord, I need new mercy. I fail over and over again without you. Pray that for me and for yourselves. Because we need his goodness when we falter. Amen.

We don't want to be too hard on ourselves. We need to depend upon him. Next, peace. Peace rooted in the Hebrew concept of shalom. Peace is not just the absence of conflict. Let me repeat that. It isn't it. Peace is not just the absence of conflict, the external. It is all things working together harmoniously according to the divine design. God designed peace to work despite of conflict in your life. Did you recognize that?

You see, when Titus is resting in God's grace, he can experience internal peace even when facing external adversity and the frustration of not seeing things happen maybe in his timing or opposition that's coming from outside from the enemy which all play out in a healthy local church. And so he's going into that knowing that there is going to be difficulty all along the way and that he cannot fix the conflict in himself. But he needs peace through it all. He needs peace through it all.

And so you pray Lord grant me this kind of peace in my life because I won't experience it out externally. You designed it that way. You designed it that you want peace in the inner man primarily. Always remind yourself of that as he reminds Titus here. And so we look then after all of these things, the source of this blessing of the grace and the mercy and the peace that is sourced from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.

We see throughout just this opening paragraph that Paul does something extraordinary and unique to the book of Titus he uses the title savior interchangeably for both God the father and Jesus Christ. In verse three he speaks of the commandment of God our savior. But here in verse four he speaks of Christ Jesus our savior. So by doing this, Paul here explicitly highlights the absolute deity, the trinity here that Jesus Christ is God in human form.

So this is what we are as Christians. We believe in a triune God. Amen. We believe in a triune God. And so always remind yourself of that because there are people that don't believe in a triune God. And you have to share that in your gospel presentation because many people don't understand.

And it shows that the father and the son are in perfect harmonious agreement regarding redemption. The father is the ultimate source of our salvation and then Jesus Christ is the glorious means through which it is fully accomplished. So the truth here is that Jesus Christ is co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father acting in absolute unity as our savior.

You don't have to worry about a division in the Godhead because we see a lot of that division happening here in this world, don't we? But know that none of that happens with God the Father and God the Son. There are always in agreement. And so the father looks just like the son does to us with love. And whenever he disciplines his child, he does it always in love. And that's transformative in it, isn't it? If you are a parent here, that you are disciplining your child in love. Because that's how God disciplines us. We are a reflection of God the father. That's a tremendous amount of weight on us as fathers, isn't it? But at the same time, we go, "It's not in me." He designed it this way. If I follow through, he'll give me the strength. Amen. He will. If we follow through with the way he designed fatherhood.

And so as we close in all these things that were shared that you would step in in this blessing that God has laid out for us as a foundation that you don't have to fight these spiritual battles alone. That you have confidence in truth that cannot be altered and that he will according to his timing and his decree will allow you to do what he has called you to do. He will grace you over with his favor. He will give you the mercy that covers you and he will give you the peace that anchors you through it all. And so depend daily on God's grace, depend on God's mercy, and depend on his peace.

And when you do, you will go forth continually every day carrying the kind of clarity that Paul puts here in the introduction to the letter of Titus. And then you will have and live in as an absolute servant of God to remind yourself that you are a slave to God. And you are able to walk in faith that expands to not only your mind with the truth, but that you are able to display a life of godliness and that you can rest securely from one week to the next, knowing that your souls are held by a God who cannot lie, who has chosen us from before time began and will one day, one day he will safely bring into the eternal environment which we call heaven that he has promised for us. Amen. Let's pray.

Father, whatever I have said from this pulpit, I pray that your word would be above all that is said here this morning. Lord, let your word and the Holy Spirit work in each one of our hearts whether we are saved in Christ or those that are without Christ. Work Father as only way that you can sovereign Father who has ultimate power and authority in our lives. I pray God that truth would weigh heavy upon all of our hearts. That faith would be received and that we would live a life of godliness that pleases you. And that we will look more like Jesus Christ in our lives. Knowing that Father, we can't change anything

externally. But Lord, if we trust and yield you to your word, you will transform and change us from within. Help us to constantly be changed and transformed in the likeness of Christ. Do father what only you can do and we'll thank you in the precious holy name of the matchless son of god in Jesus name. Amen.