

Set in Order – Sermon 7 – Titus 1 Recap

**Intro:**

- 1) **New Year ball drop – split screen showing a recap of the year's significant moments**
  - a. News reel recap of events
- 2) **Conclusion – we have lived through some significant times this year**
  - a. Headlines highlight popular cultural figures who passed away in 2025
    - i. Ozzy Osbourne
    - ii. Robert Redford
    - iii. Diane Keaton
    - iv. Jane Goodall
    - v. Hulk Hogan
  - b. Headlines highlight global conflicts that had significant shifts in 2025
    - i. Israel-Hamas Gaza struggle brought to a ceasefire after years of conflict
    - ii. Armenia-Azerbaijan peace agreement
      1. Ending years of conflict between the two
      - iii. Thailand – Cambodia border ceasefire – December 2025
  - c. Headline highlight growing global economic restructuring
    - i. Trump's tariffs
    - ii. Economic trade deals
    - iii. Stock market – record highs in 2025
- 3) **There's a significance of recapping prominent events**
  - a. It shows us what has taken place and how that ought to shape the landscape of the anticipated future
- 4) **Before we dig in to Titus 2, I also wanted to take a moment and recap what we previously have gone over in Titus 1**
  - a. I want us to recap what we've learned in Titus 1, grasp the significance of those truths, and have it shape how we approach Titus 2
  - b. Brings everybody back up to speed
- 5) **Sermon Titles**
  - a. Before we turn the page
    - i. Remind us of truths that impact our lives
  - b. Previously in the Word
    - i. Reminding us of the significant truths that should shape the landscape of our future
    - ii. Statement – truth reviewed is truth remembered
  - c. Truths that travel with us
    - i. Give everyone a refresher and insight so we head into Titus 2 on the sage page
  - d. Headlines of the chapter
    - i. Highlight major truths we must not easily forget

### ***The Priority of the Gospel***

#### **1) Paul begins this letter with a specific focus on Gospel truths – V1-3**

- a. The language Paul uses in these opening verses is language of the Gospel
- b. Essentially – Paul opens this letter with a statement about the necessity and priority of eternal life
- c. We could say – this opening statement sets the tone of this letter as it centers around the Gospel and a Gospel centric ministry
  - i. Paul wanted to get a message across right out of the gate – getting the Gospel right matters

#### **2) Notice – Paul opens this letter using titles of Gospel grace**

- a. Servant of God
  - i. Servant – doulos – refers to the most servile person in the Roman culture
    - 1. Roman culture, at the time, relied heavily on servanthood
      - a. Between 25-40% of the Roman world was slaves
  - ii. Doulos carried a specific social stigma
    - 1. A doulos was considered the property of another
    - 2. In Paul's day, a servant was often considered an instrument of the Master's will
      - a. Simply a tool to be used
    - 3. A doulos typically had no personal rights, and in some cases, not even legally recognized as a person
    - 4. In Paul's day, this title conveyed the idea of: loss of dignity, power, freedom, and status

#### **3) Fascinating title Paul used to introduce himself with**

- a. Think of all the titles/accolades Paul could have mentioned other than "servant"
  - i. Phil. 3:4-6 – His learning, Living, and Lawfulness
  - ii. Blameless – amemptos – no + blamable – indicates no fault found
- b. Q – Why would Paul open this letter with such a title?
  - i. Phil 3:7-10
    - 1. Dung – rubbish, refuse, something that should be discarded, a decaying thing
    - 2. Among other things – using this title reflected the Gospel grace in Paul's life
      - 1. In his own works – he was a slave to sin
      - 2. In Christ work – he was a servant of God

**4) Further – Paul uses another title that reflects the Gospel and Gospel ministry**

- a. Apostle of Jesus
  - i. Apostolos – a sent messenger
  - ii. 1<sup>st</sup> century – term indicated a special messenger sent, often as an ambassador, to carry an important message to certain people
    - 1. Messenger spoke with the full authority of the one who sent them
  - iii. Term has 2 applications in the NT
    - 1. Broad application – a messenger of the church – a missionary
      - a. Some in the NT were given this label as they were sent out by the church to carry the Gospel message and further the Gospel ministry
        - i. Barnabas – Acts 14:14
        - ii. Epaphroditus – Phil. 2:25
    - 2. Specific application – refers to the 12 Apostles of Jesus and Paul
      - a. Specifically refers to the small, unique group of church leaders chosen by Jesus Himself, who witnessed His ministry and resurrection, tasked with establishing NT churches and sound doctrine
  - iv. Again – this title is reflective of Gospel grace
    - 1. Q – what was the message the Apostle's were given and entrusted with?
      - a. Ans – the Gospel
        - i. Gal. 1:11-16
        - ii. 1 Cor. 15:1-4
        - iii. Matt. 28:18-20
    - 2. This title reflected the mission and message of the Gospel
      - a. In essence, as an Apostle of Jesus, Paul's ministry purpose was to share the Gospel and the truth of God's Word

**5) Paul's ministry as a servant and apostle was to share God's Word and equip the church to grow**

- a. Through new converts – God's elect
  - i. According – Grk. Kata – directional term, a word denoting connection
  - ii. In other words – the faith of God's elect is an overflow of the Gospel ministry of Paul
- b. Through sanctification – knowledge of the truth
  - i. Acknowledging – epignosis – a full or thorough knowledge/discrimmation
    - 1. Refers to a clear perception of a truth

**6) What's vital to point out here – Paul opens his letter with Gospel priority**

- a. He's about to discuss what a Godly ministry is to look like for Titus on Crete
  - i. But before all those details – he starts with the Gospel
- b. In other words – the ordered life he is about to expound on stems from getting the Gospel priority right
  - i. The Gospel comes 1<sup>st</sup>, then Gospel action comes after
  - ii. Belief/behavior – Gospel/Godliness – Atonement/Action –  
Salvation/Sanctification – Washing/Works

**7) As a church “set in order” we must understand the vitality of this order**

- a. We do not simply preach moralism to produce a Godly life
  - i. Adding good things without Jesus is not good
- b. We must understand the simple truth of the Gospel is always under attack
  - i. Why did Paul have to start out by placing this emphasis?
  - ii. Even in his day people were undermining the grace of the Gospel (10-16)
- c. It is as if Paul wanted this order to be clearly and undisputedly grasped
  - i. Atonement than action

**8) Clarity of the Gospel – 1 John 5:11-13**

### **The Necessity of Growth**

- 1) After his opening statements on the Gospel, Paul reveals his main purpose in writing this letter to Titus
  - a. V5 is a clear statement of intention and purpose
- 2) **Set in order** – *epidiorthoo* – to set it right, to straighten in out
  - a. Epi – upon + Dia – through + orthos – straight
  - b. “Set right again what was defective” – W.E. Vines
  - c. Denotes a restoring of what has fallen into disorder
  - d. Term borrowed from the medical community – Ortho
    - i. In Bible times – refers to setting a broken bone or straightening out bent limbs
  - e. Prefix “Epi” intensifies the statement – to set it thoroughly in order
- 3) Q – What was Titus called to “set in order”?
  - a. Things that are wanting – the things that fall short, the things that are lacking
  - b. “Titus was charged with the task of correcting and setting straight certain doctrines and practices the churches in Crete that has become defective.” – J Mac
  - c. By the way – phrase is stated as a present active participle
    - i. Meaning – these issues were not a one-time-problem, they were on-going issues involving church life and hindering church growth
  - d. Evidently – as Paul left the ministry at Crete, some things stuck out as needed more spiritual growth/maturity
    - i. Issues that were out of order and in need of correcting
  - e. As you read this letter, you’ll notice by what Paula addresses, what some of those “wanting” issues were
    - i. Gospel, Leaders, False teachers, Behavior
    - ii. “The churches there were young, fledgling congregations without proper organization, leadership, or strong teaching. Titus was assigned the task of forming these gatherings into balanced, functioning churches.” – Knute Larson
- 4) What Paul was emphasizing here was not that the church be perfect, but that the church be growing into maturity and sanctification
  - a. Truth – no church will be perfect this side of eternity – but a church can be “good”
    - i. Good – reflective of Godly design, doctrine, and depth
    - ii. A good church will seek to combat the lies of this world and fill you with God’s truth that you may “grow thereby” (1 Pet. 2:2)

**5) Reality – living the Gospel walk is not always easy**

- a. We face the temptation to grow discouraged or complacent because our message and morality are often in the minority
- b. It's easy to grow tired, complacent, and compromise when faced with the overwhelming discouragement of our culture
- c. This struggle is not an isolated struggle – Titus faced this culture war as well
  - i. Crete was small but mighty
    - 1. Between 150-160 miles long
    - 2. Between 7-35 miles wide
    - 3. Around 3,200 square feet
    - 4. Roughly the same size of Delaware and Rhode Island combined
  - ii. Crete contained many “cities”
    - 1. Homer, 8<sup>th</sup> century, said Crete had 100 cities
      - a. Probably a poetic hyperbole
    - 2. Other historians record Crete having between 50-100 cities
    - 3. Likely, at Paul's time, Crete had 50-60 major cities
    - 4. V5 makes sense – “..in every city”
  - iii. Worship on Crete was pagan
    - 1. Mythological birthplace of Zeus
    - 2. Practiced Imperial worship – the Ceasar was the savior
  - iv. Crete was strategically located and boasted many important seaports
    - 1. Given the geographical location, Crete was a crossing point for sea travel
      - a. Greece – north
      - b. Asia Minor – east
      - c. Egypt and North Africa – south
    - 2. By the time of Paul's writing, Crete had many key seaports making it a natural stop for merchant and grain ships
    - 3. It is not a stretch to say – Crete was a maritime powerhouse
  - v. Crete had a low standard of morality – V12
- d. Knowing the setting Titus ministered in, Paul gave him the exhortation to straighten it out
  - i. Don't sacrifice doctrine because of discouragement

**6) You and I need to remain steadfast in Godly growth setting our lives in Godly order**

- a. Verses of encouragement
  - i. Gal. 6:9 – “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”
  - ii. 2 Thess. 3:13 – “But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing”
  - iii. Phil. 3:14 – “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”
  - iv. Heb. 12:12 – “Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;”

**The Competency of Leadership – V5-9**

- 1) In the next portion of chapter 1, Paul begins to expound on where Titus was to start when it came to “setting the church in order”
  - a. Ordain elders
    - i. Ordain – down + to set = to set down in an office
      1. Denotes appointing or establishing to an office
      2. Verb often implies public recognition or formal installation
    - ii. Elders – *presbuteros* – an official office of the NT church
      1. Word emphasizes the spiritual maturity that one must possess
        - a. Opposite of – novice – 1 Tim. 3:6 – “newly planted”
        - b. Notice – the world is plural, referencing a few
      2. 2 main offices in the NT church – Elder & Deacon
      3. 5 Titles the NT uses to describe the office of the elder
        - a. Elder – *presbuteros*
        - b. Bishop/Overseer – *Episkopos* – one who guards, supervises, oversees, Lit. to watch + over
        - c. Shepherd/pastor – *Poimen* – a shepherd, one who tends to a flock – not just one who feeds, but cares for
          - i. Eph. 4:11 couples this office with teacher – *Didaskalos*
        - d. A pastors/elder/bishop’s calling is – Teach, Lead, Guard
    - b. As I had appointed thee – given detailed directions to
      - i. Military term – giving orders to an officer
      - ii. Paul gave Titus specific instructions and Titus was to carry them out
  - 2) One of the major takeaways from V5 – Paul places an absolute necessity, and imperative emphasis on good Godly leadership of the church
    - a. Notice what is absent when Paul talks about a church that is “set in order”
      - i. Notice how opposite it is from the American church perspective
        1. No mention of music they sing
        2. No mention of “style” they practice
        3. No mention of the programs they have
        4. No mention of the median age of the church
      - ii. Rather – Paul mentions the Godly leaders and their Godly teachings
    - b. Paul knew the importance of a Godly leader in cultivating biblical order and straightening out unbiblical chaos
    - c. Here’s something to look for in the leadership of the church:
      - i. Are the leaders stewarding the responsibility of setting the church in order and straightening out the chaos which sin causes in the life of the congregation?
        1. If not – run

**3) I want to highlight the great task of the elder found in V9**

- a. V9 is the capstone of the description of Godly leadership
  - i. This is the ministry expectation of the pastor
  - ii. The elder is to have bible-centric ministry

**4) Here's what Paul teaches about the elder - An Elder is in Possession of truth**

- a. Holding fast – to strongly cling to or adhere to
  - i. Nautical term – a sailor would hold to a rope in a storm
- b. The elder is to white-knuckle God's truth
  - i. The elder is not easily swayed by the trends of worldliness
- c. Holding fast – present tense – continually holding fast
- d. Notice what he hold on to – the faithful word
  - i. The trustworthy message
  - ii. The elder is called to respect God's Word, study God's Word, believe God's Word, obey God's Word, and cling to God's Word
  - iii. The elder is nourished by the Word of God then nourishes others by it
- e. An elder's leadership is not built on his personality, charisma, charm, education, or administrative excellence
  - i. The elder is called to be a man of the WORD

**5) An Elder is to have Precision in Teaching**

- a. The elder doesn't invent doctrine, he has inherited it and faithfully passes it along
  - i. As he has been taught
- b. Elders are stewards of revelation, not authors of innovation
- c. An elder knows – truth is not to be updated, but rather upheld

**6) An Elder is to give Proclamation of Doctrine**

- a. It is the responsibility of the elder to teach
  - i. 1 Tim. 3:2 – apt to teach
- b. Notice what his teachings produce
  - i. Health to the congregation
    - 1. Sound – health, we get our English word hygiene from it
      - a. Greek physicians used this word for a body free from infection
      - b. Paul uses it for a church free from falsehood
    - 2. Sound doctrine produces spiritual well-being
  - ii. Encouragement
    - 1. Exhort – to encourage, comfort, come along side
    - 2. Same root for the term "Comforter" when speaking of the Holy Spirit
      - a. John 14:16
    - 3. Sound doctrine doesn't just inform, it inspires and encourages
  - iii. Exposes
    - 1. Convince – expose, prove guilty, to convict
    - 2. Gainsayer – Lit. to say against
- c. The faithful elder encourages believers and refute falsehood through the Word of God

**7) The Elder knows the Bible is not just a resource, it is Divine revelation**

- a. The elder never treats God's Word as supplementary, but primary
- b. It is not a text, it is the ONLY text

### **The Reality of False Teaching**

- 1) Paul closes out chapter 1 by issuing a warning about false teachers/teachings**
  - a. Context is helpful here
    - i. Just got done explaining the qualifications for Godly elders who will set the church in order and keep it that way
    - ii. The doctrine of elders ends with an exhortation to “white-knuckle” the Word of God (V9)
      1. The following section is about to tell us why that’s so imperative
  - b. Now Paul is pulling back the curtain and saying:
    - i. Here are what the ungodly leaders are like
    - ii. Here are what the deceivers are like
    - iii. This is how they operate
    - iv. Here’s what you must do to guard your church
- 2) Notice - in V11 Paul gives Titus some practical instruction on how to handle the false teachers**
  - a. Essentially – Paul tells Titus to “muzzle” the false teachings
- 3) “Mouths must be stopped” – to bridle, to put something over the mouth, to restrain the mouth**
  - a. Imagery this word promotes is that of muzzling a dangerous animal to restrict their bite
  - b. No – Paul is not advocating for violence here, he is advocating for firm, authoritative correction spoken from the authority of God’s Word
    - i. This word speaks of bridling a horse – not to harm an animal, but to control it
      1. This is not a call to violence, it’s a call to confront
- 4) Point out – this was not optional for a good leader – this is a necessity**
  - a. Must be – a word which speaks of obligation, of a necessity, it must be done!
    - i. This word is a strong moral edification
  - b. Further – it’s stated in the present tense – continual and on-going task
    - i. Titus must be on continual guard ready to silence false teaching that creeps in
  - c. Good word – Paul’s command here shows us that false doctrine does not die by accident
    - i. It must be confronted with intentionality

**5) Begs the question – why must this happen?**

- a. V11b
- b. These false teachings are creating confusion and chaos in the congregations
- c. Notice their target – whole houses
  - i. This can refer to:
    - 1. Families
    - 2. Households
    - 3. House-churches
- d. Notice the damage – subvert
  - i. Lit. to turn up or over
  - ii. To throw upside down, ruin, destabilize
  - iii. A word of violence –
    - 1. Overthrowing government
      - a. Same word used in Greek political text to refer to a hostile takeover
    - 2. Destroying a city
    - 3. The crumbling of a structure
- e. Evidently these false teachers would not seek to teach publicly at a worship service, but rather operate in private seeking to overthrow families in the faith
  - i. Why?
  - ii. An isolated small group such as a family unit would be an easier target than a church gathering with wise, godly leaders
    - 1. This is why I am leery of para-church organizations who like to operate outside of the confines of a church
  - iii. One of their tactics was to go to the homes when the husbands were out and seek to lead the women astray – 2 Tim. 3:6

**6) Notice the message they teach – “things which they ought not”**

- a. That which is opposite of V9 – the faithful word
- b. Unsound doctrine
- c. The verb used here indicates more than the sharing of casual opinion, it refers to authoritative teachings
  - i. In other words, they present error as if it truth
- d. Their content was not doctrinally sound
  - i. It wasn't just that it was unhelpful, it was dangerous

**Closing**

**1) Recap:**

- a. The Priority of the Gospel
- b. The Necessity of Growth
- c. The Competency of Leadership
- d. The Reality of False Teaching