

## 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
  - ii. 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 give and entrusted with?
      - a. Ans – the Gospel
        - i. Gal. 1:11-16
        - ii. 1 Corn. 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/discernment
    - 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 undisputably 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 word 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