Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Commitments of a Powerful Leader, Part 4
Scripture: Titus 1:4
Code: 56-4

Take your Bible and open now to the book of Titus. We're still trying to get our way through this introduction and we find ourselves at verse 4. Some of the messages that we have given have been somewhat deep and doctrinal as we've sort of moved through this. This will be more practical and personal, a refreshing look at the man Titus and something about the whole life and ministry of Paul as it relates to people. Let me read you the opening four verses.

"Paul, a bondservant of God and an Apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of those chosen of God in the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, in the hope of eternal life which God who cannot lie promised long ages ago but at the proper time manifested, even His Word in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior, to Titus, my true child in a common faith, grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior." Just a notation of Titus' name here brings to mind the tremendous devotion of Paul to partners in ministry. And as I was looking at this verse and wondering how we could just take one verse and talk about it for a whole Sunday morning, one which is so very apparently simple in what it ascribes, I thought to myself, "What better way than to come to grips with Paul in terms of his relationship to other people." In fact, you will remember that as we've moved through this section we've had a little outline based upon Paul's commitments. We said that what made him the unique man he was was he had commitments. He was committed to God's mastery. We saw that in that he designates himself as a bondservant and a messenger of Jesus Christ, one under command under orders. That he was also committed to God's mission and we noted that in verses 1 and 2, that mission involved evangelism, edification and encouragement. And then we said he was committed to God's message, namely the Word, God's Word noted in verse 3. And then last time that he was committed to God's means which is the kerugma, the proclamation with which he had been entrusted by the commandment of God.
Here was a man then who had as the foundation to his ministry certain commitments, a commitment to God's mastery, mission, message and means. And that leads us to the fifth point which we find in verse 4 and we could simply call it he was also committed to God's men. He had a way of multiplying himself by pouring himself into the lives of others. And that's really the word here that I think the Lord would have us look at. Titus is a part of Paul's team. He's a major player. In fact, it wouldn't be stretching the point at all to say as Paul looks to the end of his life, he writes to two men...Timothy and Titus...and we could conclude from that they were the two most important leaders for the next generation. So here is a man about whom we know less than we do Timothy but about whom we need to know more because Paul gives him weighty responsibility in this letter and in other places

has already done that and will yet do that as we shall see when we get through this message. Here then is Paul's devotion or commitment to others.

And this is certainly a part of powerful leadership. Nobody is a powerful or effective leader who can't delegate. Nobody is a powerful or effective leader who can't disciple other people to do what he does, that's precisely what Paul was involved in. He functioned in a very, very large network of people that he was continually influencing in one way or another.

When you think about Paul you probably start out thinking about his early companion, Barnabas. You probably think about Silas or as he is called, Silvanus, you probably even think about Luke or as Paul calls him on occasion, Lucas. Paul had from the very outset association with men who were partners in ministry. And as his ministry went on from the early days, the network of people around him just grew and grew and grew.

To illustrate the point of how involved he was in a common ministry with other people, we need only to look at Romans chapter 16. And I want you to look at it just by way of an introduction this morning and I want you to meet some of the people in Paul's life, some of his friends who came alongside him and assisted him because I think the greater point to be made is this man was very intensely and on a very wide scale involved in the lives of people. And that is why his ministry was so far reaching. He was not an isolationist, quite the contrary, he was a people guy and he was involved on all kinds of fronts in relationships with people which he encouraged and which he thanked God for repeatedly.

Let's look at Romans 16 because more than any other chapter in the New Testament in relation to the life of Paul, we get a feeling for his involvement with people. Having written 15 chapters of great theology as we all know the book of Romans to be, and culminating with some tremendous practical truth from chapter 12 on, he comes to the last chapter of Romans and all of a sudden we get a long, long recitation of the names of people and somewhat minimal information about what it was they were engaged in with regard to partnership and ministry alongside Paul. But it is a good look at how involved he was in team building.

He starts out in verse 1, "I commend to you our sister Phoebe who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you for she herself has also been a helper of many and of myself as well." Having written this glorious epistle which is so marvelous in terms of its doctrinal content, when it was completed he gave it to this woman named Phoebe, no doubt, who took it to Rome to deliver it to the church. He had been writing in the city of Corinth and it was somewhat of a journey to get it there and Paul put it into her care to be delivered. She was a very special woman in his life. He designates her in three ways--sister in verse 1, servant, that's diakonos, one who waits on tables, one who serves and then as supporter down at the bottom of verse 2, the word "helper" means to support, it's an old Jewish word usage...I should say an old Jewish usage of this word referring to a patron, someone who financially underwrote some kind of activity.

So here was a woman, maybe wealthy, she was a servant of the church at Cenchrea, a port of Corinth about nine miles from Corinth on the Saronic Gulf, probably a sister church to the Corinthian church which Paul planted over an 18-month period, had been planted there, it may well have met in

her house. She was a supporter of the church. She had been a supporter of Paul as well, probably meaning she had contributed to his needs perhaps in a very generous way. God has always used women in His Kingdom, still does and all of us who minister are dependent on many of them who serve loyally with joy and devotion and sacrifice. So Paul starts the chapter by introducing this wonderful lady who has been such a tremendous helper of many and even of the Apostle Paul.
Then in verse 3 he introduces some more of his friends, Prisca which is a diminutive form or a familiar form or sort of a nickname form of the word "Priscilla." This woman is called Priscilla a number of times in the New Testament, Paul prefers to call her Prisca which is certainly because he had familiarity with she and her husband, they were good friends. "Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus." They were also tent makers, by the way, who met in the synagogue because synagogues seated people according to trade. And on one occasion the Apostle Paul was allowed the privilege to sit with these people and consequently to make their acquaintance. You can read about that in Acts chapter 18. He calls her by this diminutive form four out of the six times she appears...her name is first, it could well be because she was a noble Roman who married a humble Jewish tent maker, we're not too sure about that. But Paul had met them in Corinth there in the synagogue in chapter 18 and a really great friendship ensued. Two years later they moved to Ephesus and now they're back at Rome. They show up later on in Ephesus again, according to 2 Timothy 4:19, after Paul's first imprisonment. They're best known, I think, for discipling Apollos, the great and powerful Old Testament preacher. They're also well-known for having a church in their house in Ephesus, according to 1 Corinthians 16:19, they had a church when they lived in Ephesus and now here. Obviously these people are again giving their lives and probably in verse 5 we are safe to say that there's this major church that meets in their house, again noting they may have been people of means. So they were very devout, they were ministering, they were discipling, they were teaching people, they were having church in their own home very sacrificially giving up their home for that purpose.
Their service is commended in verse 4 in a unique way. It says, "For my life they risked their own necks, they put their heads on the chopping block." We don't know what incident that records. We don't know the specifics of where and when. So he says, "I am not only the one giving thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles." Everybody is thankful that they were willing to sacrifice their lives for my sake because, of course, of the effect of the Apostle Paul. Everybody would be grateful for their endangerment of themselves because the ministry of Paul was benefited and carried on because of their sacrifice.
So all the churches were indebted to them for sacrificial service. Here is a couple in whom Paul put great trust and made great effort for their own development spiritually and they paid immense dividends in his life. In verse 5 we note that the church in their house is to be greeted.
Then in verse 5 also we start to get another list of people, "Greet Epaenetus, my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia." Asia Minor, the area of the seven churches of Asia Minor noted in Revelation 2 and 3, that region which would be modern Turkey. He says the first convert there was a man named Epaenetus. The fact that he says the first convert is indication that there were a lot more

to follow but this man was first and of special note and well beloved by the Apostle Paul.
Verse 6, he says, "Greet Mary," now there are six Marys in the Bible, this is one of them, an unfamiliar one. All we know about her is she worked hard for you, she was very hard working, kopiao, to the point of sweat and exhaustion, with regard to the church at Rome she was a servant, a diligent hard-working servant of that church. Paul had come somehow to know her and she was a part of his life and a part of the team and a very faithful friend of those in Rome.
Verse 7, we meet Andronicus and Junias, and frankly, we are not sure whether they are male or female names so we can't make any conclusion about them. They could be a couple. They could be two men. In fact, they probably could be two women. He says, "My kinsmen," it could mean that they were Jewish, "And my fellow prisoners" certainly means that in their ministry they had also experienced imprisonment like the Apostle Paul had. He had many imprisonments, according to 2 Corinthians 11. And here were some who also had been imprisoned in the preaching of the Word of God. He then says about them thirdly, "They are outstanding among the Apostles and they were also in Christ before me." They came to know Christ before the Apostle Paul. In fact, they may have been targets for the persecution that was led by Saul of Tarsus against the Christians while they were still in the Jerusalem church for if indeed they are Jews, as noted by kinsmen, then they were probably a part of the church at Jerusalem, having been converted before Paul's conversion, and may well have been feeling the heat that was breathing on their necks from his own fury. They may have prayed for his conversion. Who knows? But by now when once they were converted they were such faithful servants they have become of note among the Apostles. That is they're highly esteemed by the Apostles, they have an eminent reputation as godly people, fellow servants of the King of kings and Paul notes that about them.
Then in verse 8 there's an interesting name, Ampliatus, and he says, "My beloved in the Lord." Here's another guy we don't much about. That's a slave name. In fact, freemen usually had three names, slaves only had one. This particular slave name was somewhat common in the imperial household. Just a thought of note, I'm not sure we can make an absolute connection, but it's an interesting thing as a possibility. There's a cemetery that is one of the earliest catacombs. You remember, the Christians buried their dead in catacombs in the ground. I've traverse through those catacombs in the city of Rome, it's quite a fascinating experience. They were the graves of the early Christians. And one of the very earliest ones has a tomb that is highly decorated and there's only one name over it. That's a bit unusual because freemen always had three names and very often there were more than one person...there was more than one person put in one of those little tombs with slits. But this one has one name and a single burial apparently took place there, it's a very ornate tomb and the one name that is over it is Ampliatus, this very name. We know it's a slave name, again because it is a singular name, and freemen always had three names at least. And so here we find a tomb obviously a tomb of some note because it is decorated the way it is. And what it tells us is that in Christ there is neither bond nor free. There was no respect of persons. Here was a simple and humble slave name with a very ornate tomb which means he became highly beloved and honored by the church. Rank and social strata meant nothing in the early church as it should not mean.

Then in verse 9 it gives us the name of Urbanus, again that's a common name suggesting a native Roman, probably a Gentile. He says, "Our fellow worker in Christ." Our helper in Christ, both Paul and the church, the "us" there would incorporate the church and Paul, this guy had helped them both.

Then you meet Stachys, my beloved. He has tremendous love and affection for these people. Stachys is really a funny name, an uncommon Greek name meaning "ear of corn." I can't imagine a mother in her right mind naming her child after an ear of corn but this poor guy bore that stigma all his life. And he is identified...actually if you want to know what his name really means, if you're wondering about that, it's "cob." So he was "cob." And in spite of his name he was beloved by the Apostle Paul for ministry.

And then in verse 10, "Greet Apelles, Apelles, the approved one in Christ," a tried man, a tested man, a proven man, faithful and dependable, lived up to the standard of faith which Paul had established by revelation. What a wonderful commendation. Here's another team member we don't know much about.

And then interestingly enough in verse 10 he says, "Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus." Now we would say here probably Aristobulus is not a believer, that's safe to say, or he would have said, "Greet Aristobulus and his household," perhaps. There's reason to think that Aristobulus may not have been a believer, but there were many in his household or some in his household that were. So that's why he says, "Greet those of Aristobulus or of the household of Aristobulus." Lightfoot has an interesting suggestion, Lightfoot is an eminent Greek scholar, he says, "This man, Aristobulus, was the brother of Herod Agrippa I and the grandson of Herod the Great," the one who would have killed the Lord Jesus Christ. "This man," also says Lightfoot, "was on very intimate terms with Claudius." Claudius was the current Roman Emperor, the current Caesar. And so, "Aristobulus was a very intimate friend of Claudius. When Aristobulus died, his entire household and everything he possessed became the property of the emperor. So the household of Aristobulus would have passed into the control of Claudius therefore whoever the Christians were in the household of Aristobulus would have been Christians right in the Imperial Court...right in the very palace of the Caesar." Servants of the Lord, fellow Christians with Paul, right in the main heart of emperor worship cultic life, faithful in the hardest place, and Paul wants to be sure they're greeted in Rome.

Then in verse 11, "Greet Herodion, my kinsmen," another Jew identified there as such, perhaps by the kinsmen term he does mean those who are Jewish. Some think that because there maybe some Jews in here who aren't identified as kinsmen, he may be referring to someone who is his relative, but we can't be certain.

Then he says, "Greet those of the household of Narcissus," again, like Aristobulus, Narcissus appears not to have been a Christian but there were in his household some who are in the Lord, those of his household who are in the Lord. This is quite an interesting thing because the most famous man named Narcissus at this time was a freeman who was the secretary to Claudius. You can find this in some of the Roman history. Claudius the emperor had a secretary. And the secretary did what any secretary does, secretary opened his mail, that's basically it. And the secretary therefore

determined what he saw. Now that was a position of tremendous power, tremendous power because you could literally filter what got to the emperor. The record tells us that this man, Narcissus, became a multi-millionaire by today's terms, accumulated a massive fortune because of the notorious influence he exercised over Claudius. And how did he do it? Basically bribery. Everything that came to the emperor had to come through him. And if you wanted to make sure the emperor saw it, you paid. So he was literally in a position to make a fortune, which he did.

When Claudius was murdered and Nero came to power, Narcissus survived a little while longer and eventually committed suicide. When Narcissus committed suicide, by the time he had done that he had a huge fortune which would show up in possessions and slaves. And his whole fortune passed immediately into the possession of Nero. So when the Apostle Paul here in verse 11 identifies Christians in the Lord in the household of Narcissus, again he may be making clear reference to a group of slaves who belonged to this household which had now passed into control, which eventually, I should say, passed into the control of Nero when he took charge, right there in the palace, right in the heart of Rome, right in the Imperial Court. Christianity had penetrated to the slaves of the emperor himself and they were part of the ministry team of Paul in strategic places.

Then in verse 13...I'm sorry, verse 12...you have those two names, probably women and maybe twins, Tryphaena and Tryphosa. It says about them that they were workers in the Lord, kapiao again, their work was exhausting, they worked to the point of sweat and exhaustion again. Their names mean "delicate and dainty." Now I hope they were small because if they weren't they probably had to battle snickers all their life. But anyway, Delicate and Dainty were two women who...whose work wasn't delicate or dainty, they worked very hard, two precious friends.

And then there is Persis which literally means a Persian woman. We don't know much about this woman but she was the beloved who also worked hard. And the indication is there she may have worked harder than Delicate and Dainty even, labored much, beyond the two prior names. Perhaps she was older since the past tense is used, her working was in the past. But she also is distinguished as one who is beloved, deeply loved by Paul as a part of his team.

And then in verse 13, "Greet Rufus, a choice man in the Lord, also his mother and mine." Now this is really fascinating. Rufus had a brother named Alexander, apparently Alexander wasn't a believer, both of them are mentioned in Mark 15:21. You know why they're mentioned? Because they were the two sons of Simon the Cyrene, the man who carried the cross of Jesus. And this man who carried the cross of Christ obviously became a believer, his wife obviously became a believer because in speaking of his wife Paul says that the mother of Rufus was also my mother, so somehow this dear Christian woman not only the mother of Rufus, making her the wife of Simon, but also in some way had a motherly role in the life of the Apostle Paul. She was a part of ministry, a partner in some way in meeting the needs of this dear Apostle. And her son Rufus, a choice man in the Lord, likely refers to him being selected for special leadership, in contrast sadly to his brother Alexander who apparently was not a Christian at all. Must have been a heartache to the family, such a sad thing when your father could tell you the wonderful story about carrying the cross of Jesus Christ to have you reject Christ whose cross your father carried.

In verse 14 he goes on to say, "Greet Asyncritus, Phelgon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brethren with them." And we don't know who these people are, five men perhaps of one household, maybe the leaders of a local house church within the larger Roman church.
And then in verse 15, "Greet Philologus and Julia," and again we don't know much about them but some more team members. Then this interesting name, "Nereus and his sister and Olympas and all the saints who are with them." Now what about this Nereus? Well, it's an interesting note. In A.D. 95 there was a great event that shocked Rome. Two of the most distinguished people in the Imperial Court, two of the highest people in Caesar's court were condemned to death. And the reason they were condemned to death was they had become Christians. They were husband and wife and the husband was named Flavius Clemens, he had been the consul of Rome. The wife was Domitia who was of royal blood. And so they were a very prominent...in fact, I guess by name you would have to say the most prominent Christians that we know about in ancient times. She was the granddaughter of Emperor Vespasian, Titus Vespasian had conquered and destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D. She was the niece of Domitian who was the reigning emperor at the time in A.D. 95. In fact, the two sons of this couple had been designated to be the successors of Domitian in imperial power. So this is a royal family and this is a very high-up family and they become Christians, the husband and wife. Flavius was executed. Domitia was exiled, banished to the island of Pontia.
You say, "What's the point?" The point is, when you look at the Roman records they had a chamberlain, that is one who was most intimately associated with their personal family life. And the chamberlain who took care of their personal needs was named Nereus, the very same name that is used here in verse 15 and his sister. Could it be that slave Nereus was the instrument whom God used to bring the gospel to this couple which ultimately resulted in the husband losing his life and the wife being banished. Interesting.
Now all of these looks and glimpses here...you say, "Why did the Lord include all of this?" Well the Lord included it to let you know that Paul was a man who was involved with people, that he was not isolated. And there were more and so he just says all the saints who are with him and just give everybody a holy kiss and all the churches of Christ greet you. I mean, his life was just filled with people. And so he gives greeting to all of those people.
Drop down to verse 21 and find that he sends greeting. He not only gives it he sends it from some folks. "Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you." We all know Timothy, his protege, son in the faith and beloved. Then he says, "So do Lucius," that is perhaps a form of the word Lucus which Paul used on a number of occasions, such as Colossians 4:14, Philemon 24, 2 Timothy 4:11 to refer to Luke. And then he also mentions Jason. Jason was Paul's host on his first visit to Thessalonica, according to Acts 17. Sosipater was a traveling companion with Paul at this time. You'll see his name in Acts 20 and verse 4, another of his kinsmen, a Jew. And then he notes Tertius who was the amanuensis writing down Paul's dictation in the letter of Romans. And then there was Gaius, also called Titus Justus in Acts 18, a man who worshiped God and lived next door to the Corinthian synagogue, a Gentile whom Paul baptized as noted in 1 Corinthians 1:14. And then there was Erastus, by the way, Gaius was also a host not only to Paul but the whole church, he had a church in his house. Erastus

was the city treasurer. Interestingly enough in the city of Corinth where Romans was written there is a plaque with his name on it that archaeologists found. And then there's Quartus the brother, maybe the Christian brother or the brother of Erastus, we don't know.

But all of these people just make up Paul's life. Now Romans 16 gives you the biggest family portrait, the biggest team photo. But there are some names that aren't here. You know them, Apollos, the household of Stephanas, Fortunatus, Achaicus, Tychicus, Epaphroditus, Epaphras, Mark, Onesimus, Philemon, Jesus Justus, Carpus, Aristarchus, Crescens, Demas, Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia, the household of Onesiphorus, Trophimus and he's putting his arm around all of these people and I suppose you could accumulate well...well the forty to fifty names, there were 24 at least just in Romans 16 in the list that he greeted.

So his life is filled with people. And so when you come from there...let's go over to Titus...and you see Paul say to Titus, "My true child in a common faith," all of a sudden the bigger context comes into focus, doesn't it? We're being taught here that Paul was a man who built his life on principle. He was committed to God's mastery and God's mission and God's message and God's means. And he was also committed to God's men, and we might add women. Here in the case of Titus he was a man as, of course, all those pastors who are addressed, Timothy and Titus. So Paul was committed to God's people. He extended himself through others. He had to live an exemplary life. He had to share love. He had to be willing to meet needs, make sacrifices, to build deep relationships, to teach, to correct, to rebuke, to reprove, to exhort, to pray for, to give wisdom to. He knew that the Lord didn't expect or desire him to function alone, he knew the Lord didn't want him out there all by himself. He knew to spread the work. He had to pour his life into the lives of others. He had to delegate things to gifted, faithful and beloved friends who had both responsibility and authority. He was in to the very principle of 2 Timothy 2:2, "The things you heard from me, the same commit to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also." You've got to pass it on and multiply your team.

Now let's look at the name Titus and what do we know about Titus? Well one interesting curiosity about Titus is that his name never appears in the book of Acts. With all the names that are woven through the book of Acts, Titus isn't. And what that does is make it difficult for us to identify the time zone for him. We can't stick him anywhere in Acts because he's not named and it gives us a little bit of difficulty in identifying precisely when he was converted and precisely when the things that he's engaged in with regard to ministry occur. I might add for you that I think the ministry in Crete here that he's following up on will be after the book of Acts, after Paul's first imprisonment noted in the end of Acts. Paul has been released from prison and then Paul meets him in Crete and they do a ministry there. And so this is post-Acts. But he really got into the flow during the time of the book of Acts but is not mentioned there. He was another of the men Paul discipled and depended upon for strategic service and strategic leadership and we don't know as much about him as we do about Timothy but he certainly is a very important person. I personally believe that, as I said earlier, Timothy and Titus would be the two men that Paul would most like to hand the work over to...very gifted. Of all these men that we listed, these are the two that he identifies for strategic letters to wrap up his ministry as he knows he's moving on to glory.

Notice how he identifies Titus, and we'll say more about Titus, "My true child in a common faith," almost the exact same designation he gave to Timothy in 1 Timothy 1:2 where he calls Timothy, "My true child in the faith." Here he says essentially the same thing. Child is tekno, it means a born child, that is to say he's emphasizing the relationship of life between the parent and the child. He is saying Titus owes his spiritual life to God through me, I was the human agent by which God brought him spiritual life. And it was real. He is gnesios, he is legitimate, not illegitimate, he's not a bastard son, he's a real Christian, he's a real convert. His spiritual birth came by the will of God and the power of God through Paul's preaching and Paul's witness. And so like Timothy, he is a true child of Paul, he has been brought to faith by the influence of the great Apostle. And there is a wonderful attachment, there is a spiritually filial relationship between Titus and Paul. In fact, we'll see in 2 Corinthians their hearts beat together in the same kind of zeal and the same kind of passion. He really caught the fire of Paul's heart as well as doctrine.

To really get a fix on the uniqueness of this man, you need to go back to the book of Galatians. He is not mentioned in the book of Acts. He is mentioned twice in the book of Galatians. He is mentioned once in 2 Timothy and once in Titus. The nine other times he's mentioned is in 2 Corinthians...are in 2 Corinthians. But look at Galatians. We run into him in chapter 2. "Then after an interval of 14 years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also."

This is very important. We get a little bit of a time frame here. This is 17 years after Paul's conversion...17 years have passed. You remember he was converted, he talks about the fact that he was converted. In the book of Acts chapter 9 we have the record, and then he talks about it later on in the book of Acts when he's giving testimony to the authorities. His conversion was a very remarkable and unique situation. But immediately after his conversion, early in the first chapter there of Galatians, he says that the Lord began to instruct him. No man instructed him. The Lord sent him out into the wilderness. In fact, in verse 17 he says, "I didn't even go to Jerusalem, I didn't go to those who were Apostles, I went to Arabia," that's a Nabataean Arabia, the wilderness desert. And he went to that place, then in verse 18 he says, "Three years later I went to Jerusalem." There was a three-year period from his miraculous conversion which he gives testimony to, to the time that he went to Jerusalem. It was during that three years that he received his calling and his revelation from God personally. He did not come second-hand, he was a true Apostle. As the others had seen the living Christ, heard the living Christ, so did he during that time as things were revealed to him by God Himself in his wilderness experience. So three years after that he went to Jerusalem.

He stayed in Jerusalem, according to verse 18, 15 days and even then didn't see any of the other Apostles except James, the Lord's brother. So he's trying to say to the Galatians, "I didn't get my message from man, I got it from the Lord." But that just gives us a little time understanding.

Now in verse 1 of chapter 2, after 14 years later, that's a total 17 years, I went to Jerusalem. He hadn't been to Jerusalem except for two weeks and that was 14 years before. And all this time he's been preaching among the Gentiles that Jesus is Christ and he's been calling them to salvation. Now he goes to Jerusalem after 14 years and he takes Barnabas who has been his companion and he also takes Titus. Titus is apparently a new convert. Why does he go? Verse 2, "It was because of

a revelation that I went up." In other words, God instructed him directly to go. "And I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles but I did so in private to those who were of reputation for fear that I might be running, or had run in vain." In other words, if I was going to get rebuked I wanted it to be in private. "So I went into those who were the authorities and I gave them the gospel as I had been preaching it to the Gentiles." Now remember, he hasn't been instructed by any of the Apostles, he hasn't been instructed by any of the authorities, he hasn't been around for 14 years. He's been giving the gospel that was directly revealed to him by God to give. But now he goes to Jerusalem. You say why? Because this was a Jerusalem Council. This was the Council in Jerusalem when the decision had to be made about what do we say when we go around the world and preach the gospel. There were Jews called Judaizers who said, "It's fine to preach the gospel but you also have to preach circumcision and Mosaic ceremony and that people need to know they have to become circumcised physically and they have to keep the Mosaic Law as well believe the gospel." And so the debate at the Jerusalem Council basically is...what is the content of the evangelistic message? And what do we say to the Gentile about that? And what do we say to the Jew about that? That was the discussion.

So Paul went, Barnabas went and they took Titus and Titus is the key player because verse 3 says, "Not even Titus who was with me, though he was a Greek, or a Gentile, was compelled to be circumcised, but it was because of the false brethren who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus in order to bring us into bondage." Here they arrive and Paul's got a trophy, he's got a Gentile convert by the name of Titus. And the Judaizers see this guy and they compel him to be circumcised. You've got to circumcise this guy or he'll not enter the covenant. Circumcision and ceremony, that was the Judaizing message. Salvation is not by grace through faith alone, it is grace, it is faith, it is also circumcision, it is also law keeping, ceremonies.

And so Paul is instructed by the Lord. He brings along Titus as a living illustration of a converted redeemed and saved Gentile who has never been circumcised. This is the unarguable illustration. You can see in his life, certainly the conversation was, his love for Christ. You can see in his life his love for holiness. You can see the transformation of his life. You can see his passion for God. You can see the man is genuinely converted, just as he is called in Titus a genuine child in a common faith, a true believer. He's real.

And so verse 5 says, "We didn't yield in subjection to them for even an hour so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you." In other words, we weren't about to succumb to those Judaizers and have him circumcised, no way. We didn't...we wouldn't do that for...in our vernacular, we'd say...for a second. They said for an hour. We wouldn't do it. Titus was living and unarguable proof that circumcision and Mosaic ceremonies are not necessary for salvation because here is a saved man who has subscribed to neither. And the Jerusalem Council, strengthened certainly by the illustrative testimony of Titus, refused to exceed to the Judaizers and have all the Gentiles circumcised, which is what they wanted. Perhaps as a note I should mention Paul did have Timothy circumcised, but that's because he was half Jewish and he wanted him to have access to the synagogues for sake of ministry. It would give him that opportunity, his circumcision, Timothy's had no relation to his

salvation, it did give him access to the Jews and the synagogues. Titus wouldn't have that anyway because he was a Gentile. To have him circumcised would have been to undercut grace and bring believers into legal bondage. And he calls the Jewish people who were pushing this, verse 4, "false brethren who are trying to spy out liberty and bring us into bondage." Paul would not adulterate the gospel of grace and faith by confusing the issue.

So Titus you know from that moment on was well known. Everybody knew Titus. That was, as I said, the Jerusalem Council 17 years after Paul's conversion. Now at what point prior to that Council Titus was saved, we don't know. But his salvation was very real in every sense and the testimony of God's power in his life set the Council in motion.

Now notice also in Titus, back to Titus chapter 1, that Paul says he was a true child in a common faith. That phrase can be objective or subjective, it's hard to decide which. That is to say subjective meaning he's talking about saving faith, he shares the same kind of saving faith that all the saved share. We all come by faith and it's the same faith that makes us, as it were, the faithful sons of Abraham. Or it could mean objectively he came into the common faith, that is Christianity. Our faith is called Christianity objectively, our believing is the subjective part, either case you might as allow for both and say he experienced a common saving faith which ushered him into a common faith or a common set of doctrines and truths. He was a genuine Christian, either way you cut it he had the kind of faith that saves and he was in the Christian faith.

Now as you look at him a little more closely, later on in his life, and it's hard, as I said, to track him, he came into Paul's life obviously during Paul's second missionary journey. We don't see him specifically doing any missionary work, however, until his third journey shortly after Paul's time at Ephesus, recorded in Acts 19. But he really begins to shine, he really begins to shine in reference to the Corinthian church. Now just a little bit about that. He's mentioned nine times in 2 Corinthians. Obviously he was an intimate associate with Paul, I mean, very intimate. To look at just some of those, in 2 Corinthians 8 verse 23, listen to this, "As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you." Now that's a very great commendation of this man...he's my partner and my fellow worker among you. Now if I were to ask you who studied the Scripture what is the...probably the worst church in the New Testament, you would...you would know that it was the church at Corinth, right? They had the most problems, or at least their problems are the most highlighted and detailed for us. Anybody that the Apostle Paul would send to straighten out Corinth would have to be a fairly formidable person...for sure. Here was a man who was Paul's partner and fellow worker. Also, he must have been a very effective guy in terms of spiritual leadership. Chapter 8 of 2 Corinthians back to verse 16, "Thanks be to God who puts the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus. For he not only accepted our appeal but being himself very earnest, he has gone to you of his own accord."

Now we really don't know anything about this guy, to be honest with you, in his own personal life in terms of how he uniquely was put together. But all we hear about him, and this is the only characterization of the man, all we hear about him is that he had the same earnestness and the same passion as Paul. And really that's enough said, isn't it? Whatever Paul's concern was about the

Corinthians, he had the same concern. So Paul chooses him to be the key guy working with the Corinthian church. He had the...the unenviable task of being Paul's special envoy to the Corinthian church. It is possible that he even delivered the letter 1 Corinthians. If he didn't actually deliver it, he came soon after to follow it up.

In that letter, you remember, chapter 4 Paul says, "I might send Timothy," but apparently he did send Titus. It was a very strong letter to a very troubled church and Titus had a very difficult assignment. He had the task of working with that sinful mess in Corinth and try to straighten it out and then report back to Paul. So Paul sent him after the first letter or with it and said, "I'll meet you at Troas," and they wanted to meet before early November when the ships stopped sailing so that the rendezvous date would be early. So he said I want to meet you at Troas. In 2 Corinthians 2:13 when Paul got to Troas, Titus didn't show. The job was more difficult perhaps than originally thought and he was working hard there and Paul arrives at Troas and he's not there. And then it's too late because the ships don't sail after early November because of the storms and Paul knows that and so rather than sit around at Troas, he determines he's going to get on the road and head to Macedonia. As he gets on the road and travels along on the way to Macedonia, it's likely that they met. Titus trying to get to him and he trying to get to Titus and they crossed on the road. And when they met Paul was so eager, he wanted to hear, "What did they say? What did they say?" Because obviously there weren't any FAXs and there weren't any telephones and he had to wait for the report.

Second Corinthians 7 verse 6, he says, "We were coming in to Macedonia and our flesh had no rest...verse 5...we were afflicted on every side, we had conflict all over the place and fears within, but God who comforts the depressed comforted us by the coming of...whom?...Titus. And not only by his coming, I mean it was enough just to see the dear guy, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me so that I rejoiced even more." He brought a good report. He said it's all working out. Their longings are right. They're mourning over their sin. They're zealous for you. It's okay. Then in verse 8 he says, "Though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I don't regret it though I did regret it." He had a little afterthought after he had sent it, it was pretty tough. "But now I see that the letter caused you sorrow though only for a while and I rejoice that you were made sorrowful but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance." They repented under the leadership of Titus.

Verse 11, "You had godly sorrow." Oh he's so glad about that. He's so thrilled about that. Godly sorrow. And verse 13, "For this reason we've been comforted, besides our comfort we rejoiced even much more for the joy of Titus because his spirit has been refreshed by you all for if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I was not put to shame but as we all spoke...as we spoke all things to you in truth, so also our boasting before Titus proved to be the truth." I told him you were good folks. I told him you would respond. I boasted about you. I went out on a limb and you've indicated my boast. So they met and it was all a good word. Titus had gone into a buzz saw, a chain saw and come out to tell a story of joy.

What a wonderful servant he must have been. He succeeded in establishing an effective relationship with the church and with Paul, getting them back on track, bringing them through repentance. Paul

then sent him back, probably sent him back with the second letter, the one which refers to him so often. He probably carried that back because he was going back not only to take the letter but to collect more money for the poor saints in Jerusalem. And that's discussed, as you know, in chapter 8 verse 6, "Consequently we urged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you the gracious work as well." Titus when he was there the first time started the collection, he sent him back to finish it up, take the money, bring it to Paul, Paul would take it to Jerusalem to give the poor Christians living in Jerusalem. Titus was wonderfully successful not only with Corinth but he collected a large offering, gave it to Paul and Paul went off to Jerusalem with the money.

He must have been a great guy...to take a tough, tough assignment. Well now he's got another one. Now he's on the island of Crete...you can go back to Titus. He's on the island of Crete and in verse 5 it tells us that he's supposed to set in order what remains. In other words, fix up what's broken and then appoint elders everywhere. It's tough but he was up to this, he was a powerful guy, a pioneer, a builder, a church planter, an equipper of leaders, a peacemaker, obviously a man of conviction, zeal, passion.

In chapter 3 of Titus, look at verse 12. He says, "When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, make every effort to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there." He says now you're going to do this work in Crete but I'm going to send somebody to take your place. Once you get it established I'll send Artemas or Tychicus. See, he's working and managing all his people all the time. And he says I want you to come to Nicopolis cause I'm going to spend the winter there and that would be a commodious place to spend the winter and he wanted to meet with his dear friend Titus there at Nicopolis.

And then in 2 Timothy 4, the last mention of Titus, and this is the last letter of Paul, some time after Titus was written. He says in the end of verse 10, "Titus has gone to Dalmatia." So Titus was in Crete when he wrote this letter. Sooner or later Artemas or Tychicus must have come and replaced him. He went to Nicopolis, spent some time with Paul in Nicopolis and then was sent from there to Dalmatia by the time Paul wrote his last letter. Dalmatia was on the eastern shore of the Adriatic and he was probably sent there to plant churches and build leaders just like he had done everywhere else. A remarkable man.

This man illustrates the way Paul was committed to people. He poured his life into this man. He used him when he needed to use him as an illustration to a Council. He gave him minister responsibility when it suited his gifts. He gave him the tough jobs because he knew he was that kind of person. He moved him about where he thought his gifts could be most useful. And he was a willing and effective servant. And I submit to you that no one does the ministry of the Kingdom of God effectively with any kind of far-reaching impact who doesn't know how to mobilize people. It is to this precious child in the common faith named Titus that he gives the greeting, "Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior."

Just a note, grace is what brings us salvation and peace is what comes from it. Grace is what saves, peace is what we enjoy because we're saved. Those two words became the common Christian

greeting and I never read them without thinking...why have we lost that? Why do we say "hello, how are you?" when we could say "grace and peace." Just another note, God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior, please remind yourself when you see that in the epistles of the New Testament, the emphasis is not God the Father in the sense that He's our Father, but God the Father in the sense that He is the Father of Christ Jesus, therefore linking Christ with the Father, one in essence, the deity of Christ is being affirmed. It is noteworthy that at the end of verse 3 God our Savior appears, and the end of verse 4, Christ Jesus our Savior appears which is to say that Christ Jesus and God both being our Savior are one and the same. God who designs the saving plan effects it through His own incarnation in the form of Jesus Christ. And he's talking here in a creedal sense. There is a wonderful Christian greeting followed by an affirmation of a profound truth in the Christian creed and that is that God is the Father of Christ, God the Savior is the Father of Christ, that is to say God the Savior who is the Father is of the same essence as His Son who is the Savior. Equal to each other. And so he gives him that common greeting and certainly through him to the rest of the folks in the churches on the island of Crete.

There shouldn't be any mystery just in those four verses about why Paul was a powerful leader really. I mean, he was a man under orders. He knew how to serve and he served the King of Kings. He was a man who understood his mission, it was very clearly defined, he knew exactly what he was to do, evangelize, edify and encourage people in the light of eternal life. He was a man who understood the message. He knew the content of everything that was involved in his ministry, was in the Word of God, which was promised long ago and properly revealed in its time. He also knew the means by which God had ordained this communication to go forth was the kerugma, the preaching of the Word. And he also realized that he had to multiply himself through the team members and so he was committed to that.

No surprises why Paul was so effective, and there shouldn't be any surprises in our lives as to our own effectiveness as we as Christians commit ourselves to submissive lives, as we become the doulos, the messengers, the servants of Christ, as we are busily engaged in the ministry of evangelism and edification and encouragement at whatever level God has put us in the church, as we are engaged in knowing the message and knowing the Word, as we are faithful in proclaiming its truths and in multiplying our lives through the lives of others, we too shall be effective. This is...this is a marvelous pattern for ministry. It's our prayer, of course, that this kind of thing that we see in Paul will be true in our own lives for the sake of effectiveness and the sake of fulfillment. Let's pray.

Father, thank You for our time this morning. We have rushed through so many lives, we have perversed, as it were, the team photo of the Apostle Paul and we've seen the faces and maybe a little bit about them. And then there's Titus who occupies center stage for us today and we thank You for this dear man. We just thank You for the commendatory way in which he finds himself on the pages of holy Scripture. There's never any kind of blur on his life. There's never any slur. There's never any note of blame. And there's never any defection. There doesn't seem to be any weakness at all in his life, although we know those things are true in all of our lives, the Holy Spirit has left us with a testimony that leaves this man a man of integrity and virtue and godliness and loyalty and zeal and

passion and faithfulness. Lord, how wonderful it must have been for Paul to look at that man, to write him a letter here, to meet him at Nicopolis, spend a little time in the winter with him and send him on to Dalmatia and look into his face, touch his hand, have a meal with him, take a walk with him. How wonderful it must have been to see in him his own reflection. How wonderful it must have been to see in that dear man Titus hope for his future, hope for the people that he had poured his life into, hope for the churches that were so precious to him because he saw in that man the faithfulness and the ability to carry on the work he had begun. How important it is even as parents that we pass things on to the generation in our own house. How important it is that we as Christians disciple others to follow through. How important it is that we as Christian leaders raise up other leaders as Paul did. And what joy, what inexpressible joy to look into the faces of those who will carry the banner for us when we're gone, when we have to lay it down that they'll pick it up and march with it to the next generation. Father, make us people who have a wide influence. Make us the kind of people who have a long list of people we need to share our love with because they've carried the load alongside of us. We thank You for a man who had so many to greet and from so many to send greetings because he was among so many to whom he gave himself and who in turn gave themselves to carry out his great heart, his great vision. Thank You for such friends. How they enrich us. How indebted we are to them. How blessed.

And make us the kind of person Paul was with the kind of commitments that he had to experience effectiveness in the way that he experienced it. Use every person here, Lord, and help us to become committed to these principles which can make us fully useful. We thank You in Christ's name. Amen.

Available online at: http://www.gty.org

COPYRIGHT (C) 2014 Grace to You
You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright).