Titus

When Faith Gets to Work

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Part 1: Growing Healthy Churches

What does a healthy church look like? What must a church do to become healthy and confront false teachings. What influences should society have on how churches are to function? These are questions that can be answered in Paul's letter to Titus.

Introduction



Paul writes to Titus, a trusted coworker serving churches on Crete. Across three short chapters, Paul shows what happens when the gospel takes root in a community. Chapter 1 calls for leaders who are spiritually mature, manage their households well, and are blameless. Chapter 2 shows what the church is to consistently teach. Chapter 3 then connects Christian beliefs (doctrine) with Christian behavior.

Background

Why did Paul write this letter? Paul gave Titus instructions to complete the work on Crete, appoint elders, address false teaching, and teach believers how to live in ways consistent with the gospel (1:5, 9–14; 2:1–10; 3:8).

Where was Paul when he wrote? His location is uncertain. Macedonia is one possibility suggested by the NIV Study Bible. Titus 3:12 identifies Nicopolis as the place Paul planned to spend the winter

Who was Titus? Titus was a Greek believer and a trusted partner in Paul's ministry. He went with Paul to Jerusalem and later helped the Corinthian church with its collection for other believers (Galatians 2:1–3; 2 Corinthians 8:6, 16–23). Paul calls him his true son in their common faith (Titus 1:4).

Where was Titus? He was on Crete, a Mediterranean island, a Roman province where Paul had left him to organize the churches in its towns (1:5). Churches in Crete consisted of both Jewish and Gentile believers.

Titus Chapter 1 (NIV)

Paul's Greeting and Purpose (1:1–4)

"Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ to further the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness-- 2 in the hope of eternal

life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, [3] and which now at his appointed season he has brought to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior, [4] To Titus, my true son in our common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior."

APPOINT QUALIFIED ELDERS (1:5–9)

"The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint[1] elders in every town, as I directed you. [6] An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe[1] and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. [7] Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless-- not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. [8] Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. [9] He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it." (Note: See the following Scriptures for more about the qualifications of an elder/church leader: 1 Timothy 3:1–7; 5:22, 24-25, Acts 20:17, 28–31, 1 Peter 5:1–4, 2, Timothy 2:24–26, Hebrews 13:7, 17).

THE THREAT OF REBELLIOUS PEOPLE (1:10–16)

"For there are many rebellious people, full of meaningless talk and deception, especially those of the circumcision group. [11] They must be silenced, because they are disrupting whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach-- and that for the sake of dishonest gain. [12] One of Crete's own prophets has said it: "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons." [3] This saying is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith [14] and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the merely human commands of those who reject the truth. [15] To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. [16] They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good."

Group Discussion Questions

1. **How would you describe a healthy church?**

2. **What kind of a person must meet the qualifications of an elder (1:6-9)?**

3. **Should churches take these qualifications seriously or use them only as guidelines? Explain your answer.**

4. **What are the primary responsibilities of an elder? (Titus 1:7-14)**

5. **Describe several reasons why elders are so important in churches today. (1:5-16).**

Summary

1. **A healthy church has _____ (1:5-9).**
2. **A healthy church teaches _____(1:9).**
3. **A healthy church rebukes _____ (1:10-16).**