

Sermon Series:

The Book of Titus- *“Putting Things in Order”*

Sermon title: Putting Ourselves in Order

Scripture Reading: Titus 1:1-4

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Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church

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We begin a new sermon series today in the Book of Titus. Back in the autumn I did a series on the Minor Prophets where we went through them one book at a time.

We just finished our Big Picture series where we zoomed way out to going through the major themes of the Bible.

Now, we want walk through the New Testament book of Titus and it'll be a change of pace because I want to go through it more slowly, like verse by verse.

It's my hope that you will read through the book of Titus with me and take some notes and ask the Lord to help you obey what is written in it.

Let's pray.

We don't write hand written letters much anymore.

If we want to communicate with people today it is quite informal. A text, a tweet, a post. Maybe if we really want to go deep, we will send a voice message.

But when was the last time you wrote a hand-written letter?

Well, let's say that it's the year 60 A.D. and you are writing a letter to a young church planter. In the letter it is customary to write a Greeting, expressing something about yourself; who you are, what your purpose is.

What would you say about yourself?

Who are you?

What's your purpose?

Turn in your Bible to the book of Titus.

The book of Titus, or better said the Letter to Titus, is short but there is a lot of depth to it. Paul is writing this letter to a man named Titus who he has been left on the island of Crete, off the coast of Greece.

Why was he left there?

Well, that's clear in chapter 1 verse 5.

Paul leaves Titus there to, "*Put what remained into order.*" So, the whole book is a letter giving Titus instructions on just what needs to be '*put into order*', (which is why I have given the series that name) and to encourage the congregation towards *good works*.

I want to begin today in verse number 1 with Paul's greeting.

What I want you to see today is this:

If we want to put a church in order and if we want to be a people who are devoted to Good Works, it begins with putting ourselves in order.

We need to begin by taking a good look at ourselves.

So, let's take a look at Paul's greeting in verse 1 and there is something for us to see here. Verses 1-4 are all one sentence in the original Greek.

Today we are simply going to look at part of verse 1.

1:1 Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ,

You may think that's not a very good beginning. Or you may be thinking, *"Oh no. If he's only doing a half a verse this is going to be a long series."*

How does Paul view himself?

Why does he write this way?

Is this the way you would start off a letter about yourself?

I. PAUL, A SERVANT OF GOD

What does he mean by that?

Unfortunately, our English language Bible doesn't translate the terms as accurately as they should.

There are several words in the original Greek that we translate as servant.

This word here that Paul uses is the word **δουλος** (*Duolos*). It means slave. It literally means someone who is bound to someone, tied to someone or chained to someone. It's someone who is totally at another person's disposal. It's often used in relation to a Master. It's a strong word.

Due to the history of the brutal and ungodly slave trade, almost all English language Bibles translate the word '*duolos*' as **servant**. Some translations will use the word '*bondservant*', which is a kind of made up word to try to give more meaning to it without using the word **slave**.

Duolos means slave. Paul says he's a slave of God. Paul uses this word to identify himself in Romans, Philippians and Titus. It's also used by Peter, James and Jude. Jesus used it way more than anyone.

Interestingly, Paul is a free Roman citizen who calls himself a slave. That's quite odd. At this time in the world, some say 1/8 to 1/2 of the people living under Rome's rule were slaves of some kind. To be free was a great privilege. Many of the people to whom the Bible was written were likely slaves.

This word is important for us to **‘put ourselves in order’**, to find our proper place, to have the right perspective on ourselves. We won’t be people who are able to even hear the things in Titus if we don’t get to the end of ourselves.

Is it only Paul who should talk like this?

Is it biblical for us to see ourselves as slaves of God, too?

Let’s look at some familiar verses where this word ‘*duolos*’ is used and see if we should apply it to ourselves.

Mark 10:43

But whoever would be great among you must be your servant and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Here, Jesus uses two different words in the same sentence to separate the meaning and show that they are not the same. ‘must be your servant’ is the word *diakonia*, where we get the word Deacon. It means to serve in various kinds of ways. But then Jesus add that ‘whoever would be first among you must be slave of all’. That’s *duolos*...which means slave. Jesus seems to imply that the higher you want to go (from great to first) means the lower you must go. Slave is the lowest.

1 Corinthians 7:21-23

Were you a slave when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.) For he who was called in the Lord as a slave is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise, he who was free when called is a slave of Christ. You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.

He's addressing the situation that people find themselves in when they become believers.

The phrase I want us to see most here is the phrase, "he who was free when called is a slave of Christ." It's ironic. He says that slaves are free men belonging to the Lord and the free people are slaves of Christ. Either way, we belong to Christ.

In the previous chapter, chapter 6, he has already used this same slave language.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Galatians 1:10

For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a slave of Christ.

A person cannot serve two masters. Choose which one you will serve. Choose the approval of man and trying to please man or be a slave of Christ.

1 Peter 2:15-16

For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil. but living as slaves of God.

Here Peter uses that same irony, saying that we are **free, yet slaves**. Slaves of God.

So, I hope you aren't putt off here by the slave language. It's a hard word to even mention with all the historical baggage that it brings, but the Bible mentions it. When the Bible uses this language, the main point is **OWNERSHIP**.

Putting ourselves in order begins by seeing that Christ purchased us off of the slave block. We were once owned by a slave master called Sin and we were bought with a price. Now we belong to Christ. He is our loving and gracious Master. Our Lord. He says, 'Go' and we go. He says, 'Come' and we come. He says, 'Do this' and we do it.

This is how Paul sees himself.

Do we see ourselves this way?

Do we see ourselves as people who were once slaves to Sin, who were then rescued and purchased by Christ..and so now belong to another owner?

I am afraid many Christians see themselves as people who were slaves to Sin yes, but then a man named Jesus walked by and said, “throw off those chains”. So, they rose up and found the strength and made a decision to throw off their chains and then went and followed and serve him.

So, now in this life Jesus has become more like a spiritual advisor to many. An analyst. A guru. A genie in a bottle. A pal....but not one who **owns** me.

We have lost a crucial and foundational point to the gospel:

LORDSHIP

Did you know that even your confession of Christ as Lord speaks of his ownership of you?

Romans 10:9-10

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

What does Lord mean? Κυριος (kurios) means the one who has supremacy, authority, ownership.

So, Paul is right to think of himself as a slave of God. We also should think of ourselves this way.

But God is not an evil task master.

He is a loving, gracious, faithful, generous and kind Master.

He provides all we need.

He cares for us tenderly.

He includes us in his kingdom work and sends us out as his representatives.

II. PAUL, AN APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST

αποστολος (apostolos) simply means '*sent one*'.

It was a military or maritime (seafaring) word where one was sent away as a messenger with orders from the base or the shore.

In Christianity, it was used as one sent as an eyewitness to the good news and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Paul sees himself as a slave & a messenger.

He is a **SENT SLAVE of God and Jesus Christ.**

He knew exactly who he was.

Putting things in the church in order starts with us putting ourselves in order.

Paul, a slave of God and a messenger of Jesus Christ.
How you would start your letters?

Who are you?

What's your purpose in life?

Are you the Master of your life or is Jesus Christ the Master of your life?

Who decides what job you will do?

Who decides who you will marry?

Who decides where you will live?

Who decides how you will use your time?

Is Jesus your Master and owner or is Jesus your advisor?

Is Jesus the Lord of your life or is he just someone you turn to make your life better?

I'll close with the words of Jesus.

John 13:16

Truly, truly I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.