

**Sermon Series:** Book of Titus

**Sermon title:** *Putting Salvation in Order*

**Scripture reading:** Titus 1:1-3

Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church

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We are continuing our study today in the book of Titus. In Paul's greeting in verses 1-3 he come to the deepest part of his letter. In fact, it is a topic that many would just skip over and get to the practical instructions in the letter.

When preaching through the Bible we don't have the luxury of skipping parts. We need to know all of God's word. If he thought it was important enough to put it in there, we should read it and study it and preach on it. But in this greeting he is going to show us how to '**Put salvation in order**' or how to understand God's work of salvation in the right way.

### **Titus 1:1-3**

Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness, 2 in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began 3 and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching

with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior;

## **1. GOD'S PEOPLE, THE ELECT.**

Every doctrine in the Bible has been argued about but the doctrine of Election has puzzled man since the Bible was written. I don't intend today to answer all the questions and objections to the doctrine. But, Election is in the Bible. God's elect is mentioned here.

### **What is meant by God's 'elect'?**

We get this word from the Greek here which is the word Εκλεκτων (Eklekton). It means picked out, chosen or selected. So you could read this phrase, "*God's chosen and their knowledge of the truth.*" It is the biblical teaching that God has chosen beforehand who he will save.

**Election:** *"An act of God before creation in which he chooses some people to be saved, not on account of any foreseen merit in them, but only because of his sovereign pleasure."* Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology.

This is a teaching that is all over the Bible. It cannot be ignored for sure. The debate comes on 'how' it works. Let me show you some places that we have 'election' and then I'll try to help us understand it.

### **John 15:16**

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit

### **John 15:19**

If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

### **John 6:37**

All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

### **John 6:39**

And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life.

### **Acts 13:48**

And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.

### **Romans 8:28-30**

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

### **Ephesians 1:3-14**

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as **he chose us in him before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things

on earth. In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

I don't have time today to give you all the verses but if you'd like them all I can give them to you.

So, God's sovereign choice to elect or choose some to save is all over the Bible. We know not everyone will be saved. Some will and some won't. Those who will be saved are called 'God's elect'.

Paul says here in Titus 1 that 'God's elect' is his target audience! He is a slave of God and a messenger of Jesus Christ.....for the sake of...God's elect and their knowledge of the truth. So, God is saving people all around the world. Paul doesn't know who they are. Titus doesn't know who they are. But Paul is saying that his life purpose as one who is owned by God and

sent out by Jesus Christ...his whole life...is for the sake of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth. In verse 1 he tacks on a little phrase there. It says, "which accords with godliness". What that means is that the knowledge of the truth should be accompanied by a lifestyle that matches, a lifestyle of godliness. He's mentioning that for a reason we will see later in the book.

In verse 1 we see WHO will be saved, that is called God's elect. Not everyone will receive eternal life. Some will. God has guaranteed that he will save some. He WILL give them eternal life. They will not fall away but will make it to the heavenly kingdom. They will persevere to the end.

## **2. GOD'S PURPOSE, ETERNAL LIFE.**

Now in verse 2 we see WHY God is saving people, to give them eternal life. Paul has been sent out by Jesus and his life mission is to see God's elect come to the truth so that they have eternal life.

This phrase, "*Hope of eternal life*" he mentions again in **Titus chapter 3.**

**4** But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, **5** he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and

renewal of the Holy Spirit, **6** whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, **7** so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

### **3. GOD'S PROMISE, FROM ETERNITY PAST.**

To amaze us even more, he says that this saving of God's elect in order to give them eternal life was promised "*before times eternal*" or before time began.

Paul's own testimony in **Galatians 1:15** says this  
But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the nations

We already read **Ephesians 1**. It said that "he chose us in him before the foundation of the world"

**2 Timothy 1:9** says, "he saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began"

So, in Titus 1:1-3 we see Paul begin by putting the doctrine of salvation in order and declaring his purpose in it.

**Paul is under God's ownership and has been sent out by Jesus Christ so that that God's elect (those whom he has chosen before time began) will come to a knowledge of the truth and have eternal life and live in a way that is consistent with this calling.**

#### **4. GOD'S PREACHING- ENTRUSTED & COMMANDED TO BELIEVERS**

3 and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior;

So, God in his infinite wisdom has decreed that God's elect (those whom he has chosen before time began) will come to a knowledge of the truth and have eternal life but he has also sovereignly ordained that man be involved in his purpose of saving people.

We have no idea who will be saved and who won't be saved. That is not our job.

We are not to spend our lives trying to reconcile in our head the balance between God's sovereignty and man's responsibility.

Putting salvation in order means that we accept the mystery of how God does it and how he is able to hold man accountable and responsible while at the same time being sovereign over all things.



His ways are higher than our ways. The Bible says what it says and we must accept that.

Our job is to do like our brother Paul and obey the command of Jesus and give out the gospel, to preach, to share.

### **Application-**

### **How can you pray for people in light of the truth in Titus?**

**John 6:44**

**John 6:65**

*"God I pray that you will draw \_\_\_\_\_ to yourself that they might be saved."*

You can pray with confidence that God can save people because it's not just about a person making the right decision or not. Pray knowing that God can overcome their hard heart and draw them to himself.

### **How can we share with others in light of the truth in Titus?**

Share with confidence knowing that it doesn't depend on you saving everything perfectly. And share knowing that God WILL save people.

**Acts 18:9-10**

**Let me close with a summary.**

1. All people are sinful and need saving.
2. God doesn't owe anyone salvation.
3. Salvation is a gift from God. No one can earn it.
4. Man is held accountable to God and responsible for what he does with the message of Jesus.
5. Not everyone will go to heaven.
6. Some will go to heaven. Some will go to hell.
7. We don't know who God's elect are and therefore must live AS if any and every person can and will be saved by God.
8. We must share with confidence knowing that God WILL save not CAN save.

Let me close with an illustration from Donald Grey Barnhouse. He used a great illustration to show how to reconcile God's sovereignty in salvation and man's responsibility to respond and to be held accountable to God. He said,

**Imagine a cross like the one on which Jesus died, only so large that it had a door in it. Over the door were these words from Revelation: "Whosoever will may come." These words represent the free and universal offer of the gospel. By God's grace, the message of salvation is for everyone. Every man, woman, and child who will come to the cross is invited to believe in Jesus Christ and enter eternal life.**

**On the other side of the door a happy surprise awaits the one who believes and enters. From the inside, anyone glancing back can see these words from Ephesians written above the door: "Chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world."**