

Sermon Series: Book of Titus
Sermon title: Putting Equipping into Order
Scripture reading: Titus 3:12-15
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Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church
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Well, today is our last message from our summer series in the book of Titus. It has been such a delight for me to study this book in great detail and read it over and over again. I hope that you have read it yourself many times over the past few months. My faith has been strengthened and I hope that your faith has as well.

Titus is a letter that is written by Paul to a man named Titus who has been left on the island of Crete. Most certainly, two men that we will mention today named Zenas and Apollos have hand-delivered this letter to Titus from Paul.

Paul is giving specific instructions on some things that need to be 'put into order' in all of the churches that have been planted on the island. He is to 'put Elders into order'. These are local shepherds who teach people the word of God. He is to put sound doctrine into order; people need to know the gospel.

He is also to put 'good works into order', which is a major theme that we've already seen and will conclude with today.

Let's pray together.

I'd like to begin by reading again to you, Titus 3:12-15. When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing. And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need and not be unfruitful. All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.

We don't know how long Titus has been on Crete but just from reading the letter, it doesn't seem that he's been there long. Paul tells him what the Cretans are like, introduces him to the false teachers and gives him some ideas of what godly living looks like. It appears the general tone of the letter is not to someone who has lived there a long time.

It's astonishing to me that in the end of the letter Paul gives him instructions to leave Crete whenever either

Artemas or Tychicus shows up. One of these will come to take over for Titus. It appears to be Artemas due to Tychicus having been sent elsewhere in 2 Timothy. He has a huge task it seems and a short time to accomplish it. The establishing of local leaders called Elders in the churches all over this island would take us years! But Titus is not going to stay there long.

Paul is likely writing in the autumn from somewhere else and plans to spend the winter in Nicopolis, a town in northern Greece. He wants Titus to come to him either before or after the winter.

And it seems from 2 Timothy that Titus did go to Nicopolis to meet Paul and did not return to Crete but went to Dalmatia.

This model of equipping and sending people appears to be short term, transient and intentional. It is quite unlike how we do things now. And I believe there are reasons that we will get to later.

So, Titus is to 'do his best' to come to Nicopolis to meet Paul. This phrase '[do your best](#)' is mentioned twice in verses 12-15 and it is important.

It can mean either “speedily” or “diligently”. It’s where we actually get the word ‘speed’ in English. So, this could read, “Come quickly to Nicopolis” but surely means, “make every effort to come to Nicopolis.”

But those are very similar ways to speak. If I said, “Hurry home” it wouldn’t be that different than saying, “Make every effort to get home.”

So, Paul really wants Titus to come quickly...or to make sure that he comes....to Nicopolis to meet Paul whenever his replacement arrives.

In the closing of this letter we are introduced to some more Apostolic Associates of Paul besides Titus.

Artemas, Tychicus (who is mentioned in some other places in the New Testament), Zenas the lawyer (mentioned only here) and Apollos, who is mentioned in various places as well. Paul is mobilizing them and they are sent out... carrying on the task of preaching the gospel and establishing churches.

They are missionaries.

The first instruction in this section is what we have just seen.

I. Titus is to make sure he comes to Nicopolis when his replacement (Artemas?) arrives.

For some reason, Paul doesn't want Titus to stay there for years. There's another plan for him and another plan for the churches on Crete.

The second instruction that Paul has for Titus in this section is:

II. Titus is to make sure that Zenas & Apollos are sent forth and sent forth well.

Verse 13

Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing.

The emphasis on this sentence is put on the second phrase, "in order that they lack nothing." So, Titus and the church are to *make sure* that wherever Zenas & Apollos are going and whatever they are going to do, that they are to be taken care of by the churches.

I think a good translation would be,

"Spare no expense in sending Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way."

J.B. Philips translates it well in saying, "See that Zenas the lawyer and Apollos have what they require and give them a good send off."

The Message likewise does a good job in saying, "Give Zenas the lawyer and Apollos a hearty send off. Take good care of them."

There is a similar passage in **3rd John verse 5** Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are, **6** who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God. **7** For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. **8** Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth.

This instruction is pretty clear and easy to make application for us! Those who are doing the work of church planting among the nations, those missionaries who have been sent out for the sake of taking the gospel to the neglected harvest fields should be supported by the churches.

Which leads us to point number 3.

III. Titus is to make sure that the Christians on Crete devote themselves to good works.

And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need and not be unfruitful.

Now the reason why this phrase is here again in part is because part of the good works that the churches are to do is support gospel workers. Specifically, in this case, workers who have gone out to preach the gospel and establish churches. That is a very good work!

As we look to the autumn and our World Missions Offering it would be a very good work for us if we would fix our gaze on some areas of the world that are unengaged, with little or no workers; in some areas that are gospel starved...and give our money..“to help cases of urgent need and not be unfruitful.”

That'd be a good work church. Pray for our mission's team as we will meet soon.

But there's something else here. There's a strong emphasis in this whole letter on good works. I think God is trying to say something by his use of repetition in Titus.

- The false teachers on Crete are unfit for any good work (1:16)

- Titus is to be a model of good works. (2:7)
- God's people are to be zealous for good works. (2:14)
- God's people are to be ready for every good work. (3:1)
- All believers are to be devote themselves to good works. (3:8)

And now again....

And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works.

Why didn't Paul just stay in Crete?

Wouldn't that have been good?

Why is Paul telling Titus to leave and come to him at Nicopolis and likely to never return?

Why not send Artemas AND Tychicus to replace Titus?

Aren't two better than one?

Wouldn't it be really good for Crete if Zenas the lawyer and Apollos stayed in Crete instead of moving on so quickly?

Why is it so important for Titus to establish Elders in all of these churches?

What's the point?

And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works!

You see, everyone has a job to do. Paul is mobilizing at this point. Titus and Artemas and Tychicus and Apollos and Zenas are watering. The Elders are to teach. And our people, all believers, are to be continually learning to devote themselves to good works.

Everyone in the kingdom is to be devoted to good works.

But, many..if they were really being honest and by their practice they show this....they believe that it's really the pros that are to do the good works. Many want Zenas to do the good works. Apollos needs to get busy! I think this is why Paul didn't leave these guys here very long. So that the people wouldn't be dependent on them.

Many of you have ideas for reaching people.

Many of you have gifts that need to be used.

Many of you are waiting on Zenas or Apollos to show up and do something. They're gone. They're not here. You're it. You're the one! You lead it. Stop saying, "I'll help" and start saying, "I'll lead".

Everyone in the kingdom is to be devoted to good works.