

Lesson 1

Guarding & Establishing the Church In CONGREGATIONAL Life

Calling

Titus 1.1-4

I. GETTING STARTED

1. If someone would ask you what God has called you to do with your life, what would you say? Describe that calling and how it can help develop the faith of others in your family and church.
2. Read the 46 verses that make up this letter to Titus in one sitting. If you can manage the time, read them every day for a week. Each time try to find something new you did not see before. If you have a paraphrase, such as the *Message*, try reading this once and see if you discover something new again.
3. What do you feel is the overall tone of this letter?
4. Now read 1.1-4. How many things can you list from this passage that teaches about God?

II. DIGGING DEEPER

Crete was the 4th largest island in the Mediterranean, and 2% of the area of France. It is approximately 160 miles long and only 35 miles wide at its widest point. Crete had the first cities with regular street plans and the first urban system of running water, central sewage and storm drains. Cretan cities were the first jurisdictions to codify laws. It was against this urban backdrop that Paul, as a Roman prisoner, sailed along the southern coast of this island (Acts 27). In an effort to protect the ship and its passengers from the severe winds, Paul advised the sailors not to go further. He had been in at least

three shipwrecks before this. However he was sailing with seasoned men . . . sailors who made their livings on the water . . . they should have known. But they were eager to make headway . . . so eager they made some bad decisions. It is against this backdrop that we see Paul advising the sailors not to move on.

Paul showed one of his traits as a leader...he took the initiative and advised them. Why? For his own safety? For the safety of the other passengers? Was he trying to offer his own opinion? He advised them because that is what leaders do.

What does Jesus look for in a leader? What did Paul look for in a leader? We will see the answers to all of these questions as we begin to examine Paul's instructions to Titus.

PAUL'S GREETINGS TO TITUS — 1.1-4

1. Paul begins his letter by describing himself. Why do you think he did this?

2. What two words did he use to describe his calling?
 - a. _____ which refers to his position with God.
 - b. _____ which refers to his position with men.

Establishing and Understanding the Culture

What did Paul have in mind when he called himself a servant?

The ESV says Paul called himself a servant. This is a bad translation. The Greek says he called himself a slave! What is the difference in being a servant and a slave? Ownership. We are not servants of Jesus although we do serve at His pleasure. We don't own anything...we **manage** everything for Jesus. We are His stewards. He purchased us out of the slave market of sin and we belong to Him. Paul does not say he was a servant of Jesus, but His slave. He had the heart of a servant, but more importantly he had the heart of a slave. Examine your attitude...are you His servant or His slave?

Slavery in the Western world has quite a different connotation today than it did in Paul's time. We think in terms of the early slave trade, ownership and atrocities that were committed in our own country. But for Paul it was his identity and he considered it a privilege to belong to Jesus. He was consumed by the fact that Jesus had redeemed him from the slave market and set him free. Free to choose to serve Him. But Paul knew it was more than an identity. Although this was a very important part of it...it was his heart attitude, and it defined how he viewed the world around him. It meant he was sold out to Jesus as His

possession with no personal rights and completely at His mercy. For the early Christians, their desire was to be a slave of Christ and they were referred to in several places in Scripture as the Lord's slaves. They, as we are today, were owned. When you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you are accepting His mandate to become His slave. You serve at His pleasure not your own. You live to do His will not your own. You are devoted totally to Him.

The verb for **apostle** means “to send on a mission.” The concept of an apostle was very familiar to a Jew, especially one that had been displaced from Israel. The Greek word apostle comes from the Aramaic word *shaliach*. The Sanhedrin sent their teachers to instruct these displaced Jews. These *shaliach* went out with the same level of authority as if the Sanhedrin were there themselves.

1. Paul says he was called as a “slave-apostle” for two purposes:

- a. The _____ of God’s elect/chosen ones (building them up spiritually)
In this letter we learn that these early believers were having a really hard time knowing how to live as Christians. They were being tossed about from the initial teaching of Paul to heretical teaching that was upsetting these house churches. They may have been God’s elect people, but they were far from being salt and light to the world around them.

Their _____ of the _____ (building a foundation upon which they can live).

There are two words in Greek meaning “know”.

Oida – meaning to have a knowledge about something, but with not much depth.

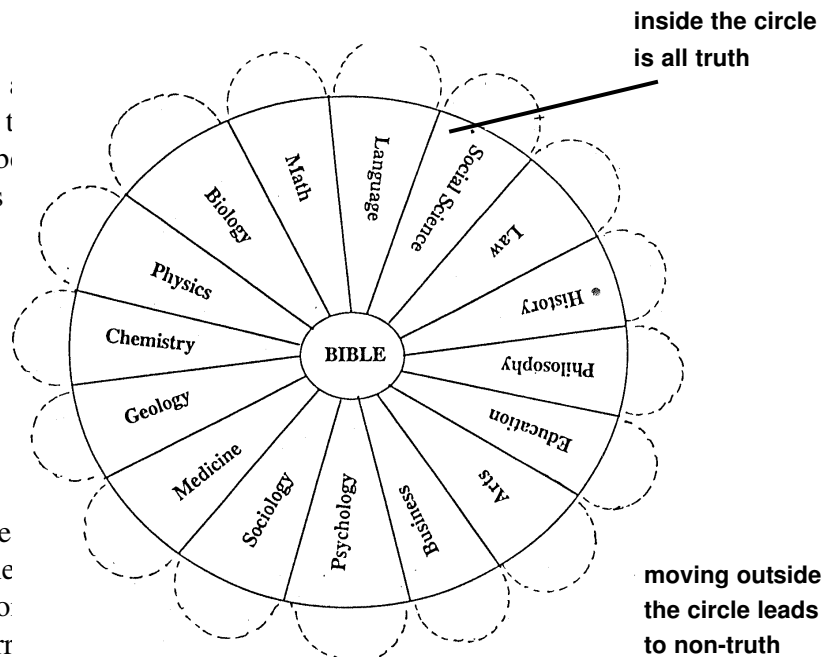
Genosko – meaning an intimate and personal knowledge.

Which word do you think represents what Paul was referring to? _____

Also, the word knowledge here has a preposition (*epi*) that intensifies the word. Therefore, this is not just knowledge, but Paul’s responsibility is to develop their FULL knowledge of the Truth.

Why would it be important for the church to understand the difference between knowledge and the FULL knowledge? What difference would that make in their everyday lives as a believer?

Truth – This is what this letter is all about. There are two sets of truth in the world, but only one can be absolute truth. Truth is broader than the Scripture alone. Not all truth is taught in the Bible. I.e., the Bible contains history, but not all history. The Bible teaches science, but not all science. The Bible, however, is the foundation by which all truth must be measured. The Cretans, as evidenced by the lifestyle, had no firm foundation which to judge truth from error thereby had no Christian worldview.



Scripture and the Church are to be understood as the repository of God’s Truth. In this diagram you can see the different “levels” of truth. There is the Truth found in God’s Word, and there is truth¹ found in God’s Kingdom, but if you go outside of this circle you have moved away from the truth. For example: There is history in the Bible, and it is true, but it is not a history textbook, and does not contain all of history. The same is true of science. The science found in the Bible is true and accurate, but again, it is not a science textbook, therefore there is more science to be found than is found in the Bible. Darwin started out inside the circle, but then moved outside with his theory of evolution.

However, the Bible serves as the pillar and foundation of Truth by which all other truth is to be measured and evaluated. This is why we can teach that ALL truth is God’s truth. It is only when we move outside of this circle that we are no longer in the realm of truth.

- b. All of this, Paul’s calling and the believer’s growing (sanctification), rests upon the hope of eternal life which God promised before the worlds were created (1.2).

Note **TWO** unusual thoughts are used by Paul here.

- 1) The truth which Paul wants these Cretan believers to have full knowledge of is _____ . (1.1) Their present lives were anything but godly, and Paul speaks of them in 1.12 as _____ in need of good works.

¹ *Making Kingdom Disciples: A New Framework.* Charles H. Dunahoo. P&R, 2005.

When Jesus says, “I am the Way, the TRUTH, and the Life,” He is saying that all Truth is in and from Him. Paul never wastes anyone’s time by not immediately linking what a Christian believes to the way he lives before God and the world. What we believe must match our lifestyle or we are no different from the unbelieving world (the Cretans here), thereby denying what we say we believe. Truth is not just something we talk about; we must live it out before a watching world. Otherwise the truth is not in us (1 John 2.4).

The God who gives the hope of eternal life is One (1.2). One of the blatant characteristics of Cretans is quoted by Paul in 1.12 as ...

The Truth here is foundational. If we are to have any kind of faith that enables us to live in this fallen world, we must have a firm and clear doctrine of God. If there is the slightest chance that He can lie, or that He might not always be consistent, then He is a liar and should never be trusted. If He lied even once, He is no different or better than us.

How do these two truths above tie in with the situation that existed in Crete?

3. Paul’s being entrusted with such a ministry of Truth is noted by him in 1 Tim.1.11 and in 2 Tim.1.11, in addition to Titus 1.3. In noting this, Paul speaks here of God as “Savior.”
 - a. This word “*Savior*” occurs as often in Titus as in all the other Pauline letters put together! (1.3-4; 2.10,13; 3.4,6)
 - b. Paul uses the term Savior for God (1.3; 2.10; 3.4) and for Christ also (1.4; 2.13; 3.6). What do you understand the role of each member of the Trinity to be in salvation?

Each member of the Trinity is involved in our Salvation:

The Father -

The Son -

The Holy Spirit -

4. In Timothy and Titus Paul saw two men in whom he could invest his time and life as well as this ministry of Truth. He recognized to be effective he needed to have those he would leave behind to carry on the work once he was gone. As far as we can tell, Titus was saved through the ministry of Paul, as Paul uses the same basic description for Titus as he does for Timothy: “*my true child*” (Titus 1.4; 1 Tim.1.2). No one else uses such a term in the New Testament. This word “*true*” is used in terms of the “common faith.”

The word Paul uses here to describe his relationship with Titus, as well as Timothy, is true, but it has more the direct meaning as “lawfully begotten” or “genuine”. He may not have been their birth-father, but the relationship he had with both these men was as strong as any that could exist between a father and his sons. This level of relationship develops a great bond of trust, which would be needed in the situations these men would be facing. This is the type of bond that develops through a mentoring relationship. This is what is going to need to happen in what Paul talks about in 2.1-10.

Put yourself in Titus’ sandals. You have been with Paul for several years, through good times and bad. Recognizing Paul’s claim to be a slave (1.1), how would you think of yourself if you were Titus?

How would this affect your behavior towards others?

Who is there in your life that could be your Paul?

III. WHAT DO I DO WITH ALL OF THIS?

From this first lesson, what have I learned about the character of God the Father and God the Son that shows me where I fall short of being like Him?

IV. HOW DOES THIS MAKE ME MORE LIKE JESUS?

The Cretans were not making the connection between God’s Truth and how they lived. Am I?

1. What truth(s) have I learned this week that will change my behavior?

