



BELLVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Congregation of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa

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Titus 1

~ Brent Russell ~

- Unless you have stood in a pulpit you will not understand how **hard preaching is**
- Not only **delivering** sermons
- But **preparation** can be very hard to do
- **Energy levels and creativity levels are sometimes low**

- Also at times ministers feel more distant or close to God and that thoroughly affects how we prepare our sermons
- **For a whole bunch of reasons I have chosen today to study this scripture with you rather than preach to you**

- **I want to draw out some things that you might not have noticed otherwise**
- **And hopefully you will feel edified, encouraged, challenged and perhaps filled with more faith than you arrived with**
- This letter from the Apostle Paul is a very **practical letter** to a young church leader to help him make some **decisions about running the church**
- As the letter is an arrangement of practical advice I want us to treat it as such
- **And so we will run through it together verse by verse and I will make some comments on the statements made by Paul**
- And then I will tie it all together for you towards the end
- **We don't know much about the young man Titus**
- He is also a son of Paul in the faith as was young Timothy
- Paul writes in **Tit 1:4** "To Titus, my true son in our common faith"
- Other than the fact of His **salvation coming under the ministry of Paul**, we know that Titus and Paul travelled at some point to the **island of Crete** where Titus has stayed to sort out some things in the life of the church there
- There is not a great deal else that we know about Him from the scriptures other than what is presented here

- We do know from **Galatians 2** that he travelled to **Jerusalem** at some time with Paul and Barnabas
- And from **2 Corinthians** we know that he ministered in the **church in Corinth** at some point in time
- As with many of the people in the scriptures we know but a name and a few simple details of their lives
- Their bodies have long since returned to dust
- And they have been raised to Glory and we will meet them one day
- But for now we have these glimpses into their lives
- So lets look at this passage one verse at a time so that we might understand something of the oppositions he faced
- and similar opposition that we face

Vs 1

- Immediately Paul understands that His **apostleship is not for himself but for us**
- He is deeply aware that the title of Apostle given to him by God is not one of authority but one of servant hood
- **He is a servant of God for the faith of other people**
- What a marvellous understanding of His calling and a lesson for us that our faith and calling to Christ comes with gifts of the Holy Spirit which are for others
- **The gifts of God are given to you for the faith of other people**
- 1 Corinthians tells us that gifts are given to build up the church
- And what a great statement by Paul that he understands His calling is so that the Kingdom of God may grow
- **And so too have you been called so that others may be added to the kingdom**

Vs 2

- **God is not a liar**
- **Satan is the father of lies**
- But there are times when God withholds sometimes information from us when our minds are not ready for it
- **There are eternal mysteries which our minds cannot grasp**
- And so he hides them from us
- **But he is not a liar – These words of the gospel are truth and they are about the TRUTH**

- **They are not made up stories to make us act or behave in certain ways, instead that are Gods revealed truth to us**
- **This means we believe these truths revealed in scripture, we do not doubt them**
- **But we implicitly trust Jesus who is himself truth revealed, and Who will lead us to the hope of eternal life**

Vs 3

- **The appointed season**
- **The events of scripture and the eternal events of our salvation are not chances or coincidences**
- The writer of the **Ecclesiastes** tells us there is a season for everything under the sun
- **And so in these eternal events there are seasons that are by Gods appointment**
- **The day Jesus died was appointed by God**
- **The day you chose to believe was appointed by God**
- **Even as Paul writes here the teaching you hear at various times and places in your lives are not coincidental**
- **They are appointed by God**
- How often have you gone to church to hear a message as if it was **preached to you?**
- At my **best friends wedding** some months back I was telling the couple in the sermon how good it was that they where getting married and how pleased God was that they had not lived together
- And I spoke a little about the lie of living together
- **And about 5 couples said to each other afterwards he was talking about us!!**
- These are the teaching of God appointed to be revealed at particular times and places

Vs 4

- **You know the saying blood is thicker than water**
- That our **allegiance to our families** are more secure than those to others around us as much as we might care for them
- **Well Paul's understanding here is that our spiritual bond with those around us who have faith are in fact the truest bonds of all**
- **Jesus says** in Marks gospel that those who do the will of God are his brothers and sisters
- Simply the **bond of the spirit** with those around us is a more powerful bond because it is **eternal**
- **Our bodies will die, but our spirits live on**

- **And so Titus is Paul's true son in the faith – not a biological son but a true son because they share a common faith in the Son of God**
- And so you are **more closely related to those sitting next to you** than even to your blood family
- What a great statement

Vs 5

- Titus is directed by Paul to appoint elders
- **The basis for our Presbyterian system is Elders – Presbyters -Greek for elders**
- And so we follow these ancient models of church government in how we run our church
- **Rod and I teach and preach the scriptures to you – but the elders make the decisions about running the church a true Biblical model of church leadership**

Vs 6

- **These are commands and instructions for elders and leaders but they are as much for all members of the church**
- These are some of the ideals towards which we should all aspire if we are to please God
- But in particular for those who have the responsibility of leading others
- Leaders of the church are to be **blameless** – there is nothing that will stick to them
- **No accusations** against them – good, innocent, spotless people in every way
- **No suggestion of ungodliness or evilness in the actions**
- They must have one **wife**
- **You know the punishment for having two wives?**
- Two mothers in law!
- **But how is this for a tough one? their children must love the Lord too!**
- **Parents the responsibility is on you for the faith of your children**
- Do not leave it up to them to make decisions on faith – you must help them
- This is a **heavy responsibility** but there is an unambiguous understanding here that you as parent are responsible for the spiritual development and faith of your children
- Do you have **family Bible study?**
- Do make sure you kids come to **youth, Sunday school** or some small group?
- If they don't want to go to school on a Monday you make them because you know they need an education – how much more a spiritual education
- **The responsibility is on you as parent for the faith of your kids**

Vs 7

- Leaders must not be **overbearing or arrogant**
- Paul's words at the beginning are a reminder that the greater our responsibility the more we understand that we are servants of God and others
- We must at all counts have **humility**
- **Leaders must not be quick tempered or violent but slow to anger**
- **Not given to much wine**
- **There are plenty of people in the church not only leaders who like far to much of the fruit of the vine**
- To much of it will make you **look stupid**
- It will make you **lose control** and say and do things that are **unbecoming of a follower of Christ**
- **Do not drink too much so that others would mock you and your faith**
- **You are ambassadors of Christ in the world– we try to win others over to Christ – not to live like them**
- We are not to be people that **pursue dishonest gain**
- In any way if your **business dealings** are dishonest or are treading those grey areas where we kind of know it is not right but we'll get away with it
- Then we are doing things that are for dishonest gain
- **Leaders in particular, but all of us in fact; are to be blameless, pure and people of great integrity and we are all to aspire to be people such as these**

Vs 8

- **Self controlled and disciplined**
- Great words and **great concepts** but not in great value these days
- I really don't believe that the concept of self control has much value in our society of **excess** and **instant gratification**
- **TV advertising** gives us a great insight into how people are thinking and behaving these days
- On one hand we have ads telling us to **indulge** in unhealthy foods and lifestyles – to live without discipline or self control
- **To live as if there are no consequences**
- **And then we have other ads claiming to be able to help us undo the damage of our lack of self control**
- **Food, smoking, spending**
- Friends in all things we need to be disciplined and self controlled not lead by shallow desires or fleeting emotions
- **Paul writes in Ephesians 2:3 about those who are disobedient, as people who follow the desires of the flesh**
- **We are people who belong to Jesus and who are no longer ruled by flesh but by the Spirit**

Vs 9

- **We must hold trustworthily onto the message as it has been taught**
- **I preached on this two weeks ago**
- **Clinging to the truth** as it has been passed onto us by the tradition of the church in the scriptures
- If you want to work for God in **encouraging people**
- And in **refuting those who stand for evil**
- Then you will need to cling to the scriptures and teaching of the church
- The church needs and particular her leaders need to be people that are not easily swayed by new teachings
- People who do not follow every new wind of teaching
- **Eph 4:14** *Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.*
- The church all of us but especially the leaders need to be well founded in the truth and teaching of the church in every way so that we will **recognize evil**
- And so that we can **encourage others**

- **The only true encouragement we can offer people is the encouragement of scripture**
- If you know **someone who is dying** how do you encourage them with anything other than platitudes – you encourage them with the promises of Scripture that they will share eternal life with Christ
- If you know **someone who is hopeless and helpless** how do you encourage them with anything other than empty words – you encourage them with the promises of scripture that speaks of our unfailing hope in Christ
- Hold firmly to the trustworthy message so that you can oppose the lies of evil and encourage others

Vs 10

- Paul writes to Titus about talkers and deceivers
- **People who are 'grootbek met min aksie'**
- All talk but their mouths are filled with lies
- **This particular group are focused on outward appearances**
- **It is impression that counts for such as these; especially those who where from the circumcision group**
- They where focused on **outward signs** that proved or disproved ones righteousness
- Their **belief based in their Jewish heritage** was that you had to be **circumcised** as all the Jews where if you converted to Christianity

- But Paul refutes this here and especially in **Ga 5:6** *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor un-circumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.*
- Do not let yourself ever become one of those people who judges people on outwards signs or appearances
- **What we judge about the heart from the outside is often wrong**
- **Perhaps the greatest surprise when you get to heaven is who will be there as much as who will not be there**
- **Outward appearances have little effect in eternal things**
- What **clothes** we wear to worship has no effect on our piety or eternal destiny
- The fact that you publicly **give large amounts** of money to charity has no effect of your holiness or salvation
- **It is the heart that counts**
- That is why when King David is chosen God looked at his heart not the outward appearance

Vs 11

- So Paul warns about these people
- **because they will lead others astray they must be silenced**
- If we where in a **mafia movie** Paul may suggest that they get concrete shoes
- They must be kept silent
- People who teach false doctrines
- People that teach that outward appearances count in eternal things
- **They must be silenced, even sharply rebuked in vs 13**
- When it comes to issues of doctrine the church must react sharply against those who teach false ideas for personal gain
- **We stick to the truth as it has been taught through the history of the church**

Vs 12

- Here Paul speaks ruthlessly against Cretans
- In fact so notorious where they as a nation that even the Greek word for liar is based upon the word Cretan
- A nation of liars and gluttons

Vs 13

- **The rebuke against false doctrine is clear**
- And as I made mention last week even though Paul is hard with those who are teaching false doctrine
- **His aim is restoration - Rebuke them SO they will be firm in the faith**
- We stand and speak against people who teach lies so that they will understand the truth and will learn to love the truth and to stand firm in the truth

- **If some of the teachings you hear from Rod and I are jarring in places against some of the ideas you may hold then take that as part of Jesus trying to lead you back into the truth that leads to eternal life**
- The truth is there are a number of ideas that some of you hold that are not true and good doctrines
- We must search the scriptures stand up for the truth

Vs 14

- Pay no attention to **myths**
- **Old wives tales**
- Not sure what myths, legends and superstitions you love
- But stay away from them
- **I despair when people come and talk to me and claim to be Christians**
- And then at some point they will say **Oh but I'm a Sagittarian that explains** why I behave that way
- **Have nothing to do with these myths**
- **Stand firm in truth – the truth of the scriptures**
- **The truth of Christ – Trust Him and Him alone superstitions and myths will pull you away from Jesus**

Vs 15 & 16

- These last two verses will make a fitting close for this sermon
- **Have you ever noticed that your attitude to things betrays who you are**
- If you are **unhappy** your focus is generally on unhappy things
- If you are **cynical** you see the cynicism of others
- If you are a **gossip** you somehow feel that everyone else is gossiping about you
- Well I believe that the scriptures here make the statement so clear for me
- **Those of impure hearts and minds find the world to be a horrible, painful impure place**
- **Ro 12:2** *Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*
- But those who have their minds transformed as in the letter to the Romans find **the world is a place of beauty and goodness**
- People who have had their minds renewed by Jesus to be pure; all things seem pure
- It's like the blond who goes to the doctor who asks her what is wrong
- So she points to various parts of her body and says "it hurts here and here and here"
- The doctor "yes, yes I see the problem – you have a broken finger"

Conclusion

- **Loved ones, when we have broken hearts, corrupt consciences, damaged minds then all things seem broken, corrupt and damaged**
- Every interaction with the world somehow **reflects the brokenness** of our insides back to us and so that is how we experience others in our lives
- **And yet somehow by the incredible power of God's spirit he gives to us a new heart, rebuilds our consciences and heals our minds**
- **He makes us pure**
- And our interaction with the world **reflects back to us the wholeness** of who we are in Christ
- We see **goodness** in all places
- We **recognise God's character** in people around us
- We see the **power of God restoring others**
- We give and receive the blessing of God to and from the world around us because we love the world in one sense like Christ
- **2 Co 3:18** *And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*
- As we come to Christ he transforms and renews us so that we love the world like he loved the world
- With gentleness, compassion, mercy and purity of heart
- What a marvellous truth!
- That to the pure all things are pure

And all of God's people said - AMEN!