

Women's Bible Study, March 14, 2025
Holy Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church
The Pastoral Epistles
Lesson 12 (Titus: Introduction & A Study of Titus 1:1 through 2:10)

Highlights/Notes for an Introduction to Titus

Note: Much of this first section of general introduction (points 1. and 2. below) comes from our first study on the Pastoral Epistles. This provides us with a good review of introductory material before we get into Paul's letter to Titus. (Also see introduction SG p.56.)

1. **General information about the Pastoral Epistles** (from our first introductory lesson on these Pastoral Epistles):

a. To whom and reason for Paul writing these letters:

1) *Pastoral counsel to Timothy and to Titus*, who were coworkers, "sons of the faith" to their spiritual father Paul, and who were loved and especially close to Paul. Paul had chosen Timothy and Titus, coworkers that he had trained, to carry on the Lord's mission. (Note: "Like Timothy, Titus was one of Paul's converts. Unlike Timothy, who had a Jewish mother, Titus was a Gentile." [TPB p.179])

* "[Paul] is led by the Holy Spirit to give divine counsel to those who will succeed him in order that the Gospel and its ministry will continue just as he received them from the Lord." (SG, p.9)

2) These letters are often called "Pastoral Epistles" not necessarily because of who Paul addresses, but because these letters address issues concerning the Office of the Holy Ministry (the pastoral office). (SG, p.9)

* Timothy and Titus were not apostles, and they were probably not what we would consider to be a pastor (an overseer) of a specific congregation. Rather, we'll see in this study that Paul gives them instructions about pastors, about shepherds of congregational flocks. It may be best to regard Timothy and Titus as apostolic representatives, delegated by Paul to carry out special work (as Paul had done, Acts 14:23) in establishing & organizing churches within the regional Church, and selecting, teaching, and guiding elders (Titus 1:5) in their appointed pastoral role within a church. (CSB, Introduction to 1 Timothy)

3) These letters are also written *by inspiration of the Holy Spirit* to all generations yet to come, to pastors and to all church members, with *instruction and encouragement "to maintain faithfulness to the Lord and to keep the faith."* (TPB, p.1; SG, p.9)

b. General Content of the Pastoral Epistles:

1) These epistles contain *pastoral advice* to Timothy and to Titus on how to deal with problems in churches both in Ephesus and in Crete. Paul gives advice as to qualifications for pastors and lay leaders, with instructions on worship, and instructions on "how they are to serve the members of their flocks, the young and the elderly, the widows and the older men, the wealthy and the servants." Paul also warns of the significant problematic issue of false teachers and false doctrine! He "encourages faithfulness in teaching and godliness in conduct." (TBP, p.1)

2) Note: The word *pastor* is derived from the Latin word for *shepherd*. Timothy and Titus were more than pastors, as we understand that role. They had the responsibility of overseeing (shepherding) *the development of an entire church body in a specific region*, which would have included several smaller house churches. (Recall our study in Acts 20:17-38, Paul's meeting in Miletus with the elders from Ephesus. The church of Ephesus was actually *made up of a number of local churches or congregations* [house churches, since church buildings were not constructed until the third century].) Paul provided instruction and encouragement to both Timothy and Titus in their work of building up the church body in such a way so that the local churches in Ephesus and in Crete could stand on their own. (SG; and our Acts study notes)

c. Primary reason for Paul writing these letters, which guided the content of these letters (again under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, God's word given): Paul's deep concern for the future of the Church is evident in these epistles.

- 1) Paul provides instruction & encouragement for the ministry of the Church.
- 2) He warns of false doctrine.
- 3) He encourages faithfulness unto Christ.

2. An overview of the Epistle to Titus (from our first introductory lesson on these Pastoral Epistles):

a. The historical setting (SG, pp.12,69-70; TPB, pp.174-175; CSB Introduction to Titus):

1) This epistle isn't chronologically the third of the pastoral epistles. Paul wrote Titus about the same time as Paul's first letter to Timothy. (Note: According to the EHV: "The approximate date of writing may have been 66 AD, in the fall. See Titus 3:12." [This is a different date than I put in our first introductory lesson notes on the Pastoral Epistles.]

2) Titus is another faithful coworker with Paul. But we don't know much about Titus. Luke did not mention him in the Book of Acts. (Note: Titus may have been from Antioch, where Paul had worked for an entire year before his missionary journeys. [Acts 11:26; TPB p.174])

3) Titus is first mentioned in Galatians 2:3, where Paul speaks of him as a Gentile Christian. Recall from our study of Galatians that Paul refused to circumcise Titus when the Judaizers demanded it was necessary for being a true Christian. Paul refused in this situation for the sake of the Gospel.

4) Titus accompanied Paul to the Council at Jerusalem, Acts 15. (mentioned in Gal. 2:1,3)

5) Paul mentions Titus often in the second epistle to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 2:12-13, 7:5-7, 7:13-15, 8:16-18, 8:23, 12:18). Titus worked with Paul at Ephesus during the third missionary journey, and from there Paul sent him to Corinth to help that church with its work.

* "It is clear that Titus was a vital part of Paul's ministry in Greece and Asia Minor. He is a trusted brother and esteemed minister of the Gospel. He shared Paul's own pastoral work and spirit in ministering to the difficult church in Corinth. Titus was charged with receiving a collection from the Corinthians and showed pastoral sensitivity in dealing with them in the face of a disciplinary matter." (SG, p.69 #5)

6) When Paul stopped on the island of Crete after his first imprisonment in Rome, he and Titus worked briefly in Crete. Paul had Titus stay there as his representative and to complete needed work there. Titus was a very capable and resourceful leader, probably younger than Paul, but older than Timothy. He was trusted and a respected troubleshooter, which Crete needed.

7) Later, upon Paul's request, Titus met Paul at Nicopolis (in Greece), and then went on a mission journey to Dalmatia. Last mentioned in 2 Timothy 4:10. (Note: "Titus must have been with Paul in Rome during a part of his second imprisonment, for Paul sent him from Rome to Dalmatia." [TPB p.175])

b. How Paul addresses Titus in Titus 1:4 - :

"To Titus, my true child* in our common faith:
Grace and peace from God our Father
and Christ Jesus our Savior." (EHV)
*["my true son" NIV]

1) Paul may have led Titus, a Gentile, to faith in Christ, in effect becoming his spiritual father. (TLSB 1:4)

2) "As with Timothy, Paul is reminding all who would question Titus's authority or legitimacy that Paul himself has appointed this man and he enjoys the apostle's full approval. The words 'in a common faith' affirm that Titus's doctrine is that which is revealed in the Gospel and therefore known and believed by all true Christians and not like that of false teachers, which is private doctrine that only specially anointed teachers may know." (SG, p.70 #6a)

c. The special task Paul gave Titus to do in Crete, Titus 1:5 -

"The reason I left you in Crete was so that you would set in order
the things that were left unfinished
and appoint elders in every city, as I directed you." (EHV)

* This appears to be "putting into order" the "unfinished" work of organizing and establishing these churches, with significance placed upon the appointing of elders/pastors for churches in *every* town. Most important is that these churches are provided with qualified pastors. The significance and priority of the pastoral ministry for our churches is evident. (TPB, pp.181-182; TLSB 1:5; SG, p.70 #6b)

d. Paul's description of the Cretans in Titus 1:12 -

"One of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, said,
'Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.'" (ESV)

1) This is a description of the Old Adam in all of us, and as manifested in the world's various cultures. These sins interfere with hearing and believing the Gospel. Note the sins prevalent in our own culture or community that lead us to not always hear God's Word in its truth and purity. (SG, p.70, #7)

2) I think this explanation from TLSB is fitting, *considering the context*: "Paul likely cites the passage as a rebuke to the Cretan false teachers and not to Cretans

generally. He challenges the Cretan churches to reject the false teachers among them, who apparently claimed prophetic authority. This teaching strategy suggests that Paul wanted Titus to share the Letter publicly with the churches on Crete." (TLSB 1:12)

3. **Paul's similar message to Titus as he wrote to Timothy** - Provides us with a good review and an increased awareness of pastoral needs & qualifications necessary in an era of increasing false teaching that was/is infiltrating the Church. (*Also see introduction paragraphs SG pp.111-112.*)

Highlights/Notes for Titus 1:1 - 2:10 -- A Summary of the Christian Life

1. **Theme Verses** in the Lesson:

a. "[An elder]...must hold firmly to the trustworthy *message* ...so that he can encourage others by *sound doctrine* and *refute those who oppose it.*" (Titus 1:9, NIV)

b. "...teach what is in accord with *sound doctrine.*" (Titus 2:1, NIV)

c. "...showing all good faith, so that in everything, they may *adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.*" (Titus 2:10, ESV)

2. **Objectives** in this Lesson (from SG p.111):

"By the power of the Holy Spirit working through God's Word, we will...

* ...thoroughly absorb Paul's instructions in the Pastoral Epistles pertaining to the Christian life;

* ...appreciate once again the teaching ministry of Christian pastors;

* ...recognize the threat of false and impure doctrine."

3. **Titus 1:1-5, Opening Greeting**

a. Length of this opening greeting: (Note vv. 1-4 is one long sentence.) Except for his introduction in Paul's letter to the Romans, Paul's greetings here in Titus is longer than any other epistle that Paul wrote. (SG p.112 #98) Why is this?...

* The people of Crete were not that familiar with Paul (as opposed to the people of Ephesus knew Paul well). "If it were only for Titus, the lengthy assertion concerning himself and his ministry would not be necessary. For the people whom Titus was serving in Crete, however, where Paul had been only a short time, it was important to be reminded that the writer was 'a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ'" (TPB p.177)

b. **Discussion Question (SG #98, pp. 57 & 112):** "How does Paul in each of the Pastoral Epistles set forth his official position?"

1) Besides the length of this greeting (as opposed to those in the epistles to Timothy), Paul wanted to make sure that the people of Crete knew of Paul's authority as "an apostle of Jesus Christ", and to know the significance of his calling to preach the Gospel. (See v.3.) He was sent out by Jesus Himself. Paul was speaking for God, by divine authority, and as His "servant" Paul was carrying out God's will. He preached and wrote what God wanted to be preached and written (divine inspiration, God-breathed). (TPB p.177; SG pp.56,112)

2) Paul also wanted the people to know that Titus was serving as Paul's representative and was teaching them and preaching God's Word in its truth and purity. (SG p.112) Titus (like Timothy) was a "true son" to Paul in the faith they shared in Christ Jesus. [v.4]

3) Paul wanted them to know that their message was from God, and...

a) ...would bring God's people to "faith" [v.1] (to believe in Jesus Christ, our common faith)

b) ...would cause them to grow in "the knowledge of the truth," and that would "lead to godliness" (godliness is faith in action), [v.1]

c) ...and it provides sure "hope of eternal life". [v.2] "This hope is not a pipe dream. It has been promised by 'God, who does not lie.' Satan is the father of lies and makes lying promises [causing us to doubt]. God's promises, however, are true, sure and certain. With the passing of time, they are not terminated but fulfilled." (TPB p.178) God's promises are certain; His saving grace and redeeming love for us through Christ has been fulfilled. He never lies! And we can be sure that we will have blessed eternal life with our Savior yet to come. He keeps His promises!

c. **v.3 & v.4** - An interesting note about Paul's prayer for Titus (in v. 4) to receive "grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior": While Paul usually refers to Christ

Jesus as our Lord, here in verse 4 Paul calls Him "our Savior." And in v. 3 Paul had referred to God as "our Savior." While TPB indicates this could indicate that the entire Trinity is "our Savior" (TPB p.180), according to TLSB the interchange with 'God our Savior' (v.3) affirms the deity of Jesus Christ.

d. v. 5 - Paul's assignment to Titus in Crete

1) Setting the scene (historical background):

"The ship that took Paul, the prisoner [Paul's first imprisonment], to Rome had stopped briefly on the island of Crete in the Mediterranean Sea south of Greece (Acts 27:7,8). After his release [2 years later], Paul appears to have stopped there on his way to Ephesus and to have done some mission work together with Titus. Cretans already are mentioned among those present in Jerusalem at the first Pentecost (Acts 2:11). By the time Paul left Crete to continue to Ephesus and Philippi, groups of Christians could be found in every town on this island." (TPB p.181)

2) Paul left Titus in Crete to "straighten out [set in order. EHV] what was left unfinished" - Although "Paul and Titus perhaps had already preached in Crete, they had not had time to organize churches." (CSB 1:5) This would now involve seeing to it that qualified elders/pastors were appointed in the various towns where "groups of Christians...in every town on this island" were meeting. Paul stressed the importance of appointing only those who were qualified, as outlined in next verses, vv. 6-9...

4. Titus 1:6-9, Qualifications for Elders (Pastors); A Blameless Ministry

a. Compare the list of general qualifications with that of 1 Timothy 3:1-7. While the lists are not identical, they do cover the same central themes. The differences suggest some degree of flexibility to meet the needs of the local churches, the different situations in which Timothy and Titus ministered. For example, 1 Timothy 3:6 requires that elders not be recent converts. This constraint is not mentioned in this list to Titus, perhaps because all the Christians in Crete were relatively new converts.

b. Note the interchange of the title "elder" and "overseer" (vv. 6-7): "Elder" stresses the Christian maturity and experience; "Overseer" focuses on leadership, as a manager "entrusted with God's work" (v.7), having the responsibility of watching over God's flock. Both terms are used for the pastor, the shepherd of the church flock. The pastor "needs to be 'blameless,' as everything he does reflects on our gracious God and affects God's work." His life genuinely reflects Christ's authentic disciples. (TPB p.183; TLSB 1:5,7; CSB 1:7)

c. Five negatives (v.7) and six positives (v.8) to further elaborate on being "blameless" ("a broad, general qualification [see 1 Timothy 3:2,10]"). "He should be the kind of person who cannot be accused openly and publicly." (TPB pp. 50, 182-183; *Luther's Works*, Vol. 29, p.18)

1) Note that these describe the qualities that pastors are to have in general. Pastors are not perfect, but they are to be known as having lives that generally reflect these qualities of being "blameless" (Reference: "30 Minutes in the New Testament" [a 1517 podcast], Titus 1:1-16). Their perfect-blameless-status comes through the blameless/spotless Lamb of God, for whom they live and of whom their lives & teaching proclaims.

2) Note in particular that of being "self-controlled." This fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) comes up several times in Paul's Letter as he encourages Titus and the Cretan Christians in growing in godly living... a working of the Holy Spirit. (TPB p.183; TLSB 1:8)

d. **v.9** - "Paul concludes with what must be considered the most important qualification. All other items mentioned will not qualify a man to be a pastor... if this final one is missing... Sound doctrine." (TPB p.184). "...he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it." (v.9)

Discussion Question (SG #99, pp.57,112): Why does Paul lay so much stress on sound doctrine?

1) Everything a pastor teaches must be "based on the Word of Christ" (TPB p.184). "Sound doctrine" is the "Word of Truth handled rightly" (2 Timothy 2:15), keeping the Gospel straight by keeping Christ front and center...

"...It's the front and center of everything that you do and that you teach, that you preach, and you don't deviate from it. You don't adulterate it by turning the Gospel into something we do for God. Instead, the Gospel is the good news of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. The reason keeping the Gospel straight is so important is because the Gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes. It's the way that God delivers to us the riches of Jesus Christ." This is sound (healthy) doctrine. (See notes to Lesson 9, 2 Timothy 2:15, p.10 of notes, quote from transcript of 90-second video by Chad Bird, see References.)

2) "Only sound, or healthy, doctrine can 'encourage' [v.9], that is, produce or strengthen faith, comfort, guide, inspire, and nourish. Any substitute is giving husks instead of the kernel." (TPB p.184)

3) "The teaching is called 'sound' not only because it builds up in the faith, but because it protects against the corrupting influence of false teachers. Soundness of doctrine, faith and speech is a basic concern in all the Pastoral Letters (1,2 Timothy; Titus). In them the word 'sound' occurs eight times but is found nowhere else in Paul's writings." (CSB 1:9)

4) "As stewards or guardians of the Church, leaders must identify, stop, and correct false teaching." (TLSB 1:9)

5) "For just as good and sound doctrine produces healthy Christians and edifies faith, so false doctrine destroys faith and spiritually ruins the lives of men." (SG #99 p.112)
And so, Paul's teaching on this continues...

5. Titus 1:10-16, A Pure Church in the midst of Problems in Crete

a. Through this section of the study, keep in mind this next discussion question(s):

Discussion Question (SG #100 pp.57, 112-113):

* What attitude should the Church take toward religious deceivers? (How can the Church best deal with false teachings that influence church members?)

** What harm is done by these religious deceivers? (How can the Church protect church members from such harm?)

b. **v.10** -- Who are these "rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group" ?? (Note: "This was not only a warning against false teachers in general. Paul was referring to specific people in Crete and now describes them. That is not to say that the description does not fit those who oppose sound doctrine in every age and place." It does fit, to be sure. [TPB p.185])

1) "rebellious people" -- Those not willing to be subject to a higher authority like that of Scripture. Sadly today, many who call themselves Christians, and who are so-called Christian teachers and leaders, will not recognize Scripture as an infallible authority. *They place their own reason and ideas above Scripture* and "rebel" against its clear teaching. (TBP p.185)

2) "mere talkers and deceivers" -- "With empty talk they deceive people. They want to convince their listeners that they possess a higher and more profound understanding of Christianity and the Scriptures. Actually they are destroying it." (TPB p.186)

3) "especially those of the circumcision group" -- Those who were legalistic and especially the Judaizers that Paul and other apostles had dealt with at the council of Jerusalem in Acts 15, and of whom Paul warned the new Galatian Christians in his letter to the Galatians. These "Christian"-Judaizers believed that, in addition to Christ's saving grace, circumcision and the keeping of Jewish ceremonial law was necessary for

salvation and/or sanctification. "They added these requirements to the Gospel of God's grace, effectively defining a salvation based partly on an individual's works and placing man-made rules above God's Word... Even today, many religions and cults add man-made requirements to the Gospel of Jesus Christ." (TLSB 1:10; CSB 1:10)

c. **v. 11**, "They must be silenced" -- Titus and the elders he appoints must block and correct the faulty teaching that was upsetting families and whole households and perhaps even those of certain house-churches (for that's where most of these churches met together, in homes, as there were no church buildings yet built). (TLSB 1:11; TPB p.186)

d. **v. 12-13** -- "Even one of their own prophets" has called his own people "liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons." Paul goes on to agree with this statement, saying it is true especially of the false teachers in their midst, and advises Titus of the necessity to "rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith."

1) "Paul was not an outsider making a racist statement. This was a Cretan speaking... about his own people." (TPB p.187) Paul is referring to Epimenides, a Cretan philosopher and a prominent poet of Crete (sixth-century BC) whom many pagans viewed as a prophet of their pagan gods. (CSB 1:12; TLSB 1:12)

2) "The original treatise from Epimenides was concerning prophetic oracles and those [pagan prophets] who spoke them. So Paul is most likely quoting this familiar passage as a rebuke to the Cretan false teachers and not to Cretans in general. He challenges the Cretan churches to reject the false teachers among them, who apparently claimed prophetic authority. This teaching strategy suggests that Paul wanted Titus to share the Letter publicly with the churches on Crete." (TLSB 1:12)

3) "rebuke them sharply" -- False teaching is dangerous, requiring a clear, direct response. The Cretan false teachers needed the rebuke both as a judgment on their trouble-making and as an opportunity for them to repent and experience God's grace. Titus must meet the false teachers with Law and Gospel so that then "they may be sound in the faith." Faith must be pure and not compromised by false teaching or attempts to invent our own spiritual success. Only Jesus Christ can reconcile us with God." (TLSB 1:13)

e. **vv. 13-14** -- No one is beyond the reach of the Gospel. These Cretan false teachers, when taught the Law and the Gospel, may come to the true faith. And then they, along with the other Cretan Christians would no longer be swayed by such Jewish myths as the Judaizers and other false teachers were propagating. Nor would they be swayed away from the Truth any longer by those who were adding rules and mis-interpretations of God's Law, by which they were undercutting God's grace and distorting His plan of salvation. (TPB p.187; TLSB 1:14)

f. **v.15**, "To the pure, all things are pure" -- With their attraction to Jewish legalism (Jewish myths and commands of v.14) the difficult people Titus had to confront seemed to believe that "nothing is pure." They denied Christians basic and godly pleasure that were not sin.

1) Recall in 1 Timothy 4:3-4, Timothy having to deal with false teachers who forbid marriage and required abstaining from foods "which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth" (1 Tim. 4:3). This was false teaching requiring Jewish dietary laws to be applied to Christian believers.

2) Paul knew that Christians walk in the purity of the Lord, and therefore these things are "pure" to them. But to those of a legalistic mind ("those who are defiled and unbelieving"), they seem to believe "nothing is pure." The problem was with their defiled and unbelieving minds and consciences, not with the things themselves. (EW 1:15)

g. **v.16**, "They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny Him." -- The false teachers claim to know God, but their actions or works prove that they are not His people. (See Matthew 7:15-20.) Doctrine and practice must go hand in hand. (TLSB 1:16)

1) "They spoke about God and spoke with much authority, as though they knew God better than anyone else. Their actions, however, were a denial of what they confessed with their mouths. They were hypocritical deceivers. Nothing they did was good in the eyes of God..." (TPB p.189)

2) "They are...unfit for any good work" -- "Faith in Christ bears fruit in the good works He provides, but those without Christ's salvation are unable to bear this fruit." (TLSB 1:16) "...all our righteous acts are like filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6).

3) "They professed a profound knowledge of God's Word, but they were perverted in their teaching and abominable in their moral lives." (SG #100 p.113)

h. A good reminder for all of us to recall that the Gospel message we proclaim in our lives and with our words must be "purely" centered on Christ alone, His grace alone for salvation. The following is a good summary for this section of our study, from The People's Bible:

"We must ever realize that we are all sinners, proclaiming Christ crucified to people who are sinners. The same Christ is the only saving means for us all. This is the power and wisdom of God that wins victories for God among all races and nations and cultures throughout the world." (TPB p.189)

6. **Titus 2:1-10, Sound Doctrine in our Christian Life (Christian Character and Conduct)**

a. **v. 1** -- "...teach what is in accord with sound doctrine"

1) In sharp contrast to the false teachers, Titus is to teach sound doctrine AND how sound doctrine affects our Christian living. "Paul not only gives instruction but also points to the power source for such living, the motivating influence of the 'grace of God that brings salvation' that 'has appeared to all men'" (Titus 2:11; keep this in mind as 2:11 will introduce our study next lesson [on 2:11 through to 3:15]). (TPB p.191)

2) Here Paul shows Titus how he is to apply the sound doctrine of the Word to individual church members and various groups within the congregations. (SG p.57)

3) The idea behind this phrase ("in accord with sound doctrine") has to do with *right living* (the Christian Life), not just *right thinking*. (EW 2:1). This is keeping the Gospel, keeping Christ, "front and center" in all we do, as well as all we say.

b. **vv. 2-10** -- "Here, Paul builds upon a divine foundation to explain special emphases for teaching different groups within the churches. These exhortations are not as complete as the requirements for elder and overseer in ch.1, but both aim to encourage growth in areas of personal behavior that are important to individuals and their role in the Christian community.... These exhortations have both Law and Gospel applications in that they represent God's expectations and urge behaviors that God will enable, use, and bless through the Gospel." (TLSB 2:2-10)

1) "All the instruction that a pastor gives to his members must be based on the sound doctrine of the Scriptures." Here Paul now gives Titus pastoral advice concerning teaching Christian living for the various general groups within the Church. (SG #101 p.113)

2) Note how closely these characteristics are intertwined with the Fruit of the Spirit (and far-removed from the "works of the flesh"). See **Galatians 5:16-25**. (For example, being self-controlled is mentioned with each age group; and with the undergirding foundation of love and faith demonstrating the goodness and grace of our Lord and Savior, all flowing from the Gospel.) Read each verse(s) for each group and then the note for each below:

a) **v. 2** -- Older men, By virtue of age and experience, they serve as natural role models for younger men. In Christ they set a solid example of spiritual vitality and maturity. Because of their age and maturity the congregation looks to them for leadership. Dignity, wisdom, steadfastness, faith and love reliably point others to the Source of such foundational grounding. (TLSB 2:2; TPB p.192)

Discussion Question (SG #101 pp.58,113): What Christian qualities are of greatest importance in older Christians?

b) **vv. 3-5** -- *Older women*, As with the older men being role models for younger men, so also older women are to teach and be role models for younger women. Older women in Christ hold a special spirit of reverence (corresponding to the "dignity" of the older men). This is a reverence toward the Lord, and a reverent nurturing spirit for their family. Love is integral in this aspect of their Christian lives. Self-control (which they are to also teach younger women) is evident in not being slanderers/gossips and not being addicted to wine (both of which were "vividly portrayed in the Cretan environment... Evidently in Crete the liability to these excesses was more severe than in Ephesus" [EW 2:3; CSB 2:3]). Their love for Christ they pass on through word and action, via the fruit of the Spirit ("taste and see" this fruit, and know "that the Lord is good..." [Psalm 34:8]). (TLSB 2:3; TPB p.193-195)

c) **vv. 4-5** -- *Younger women*, Paul assigns the training of the younger women not directly to Titus but to the older women. Who better to teach them than the women the Lord has trained throughout life in Him?! Older women are to "*train the younger women to love their husbands and children.*" Yes, love requires training. Training someone to love is best done by setting a good example and reinforcing loving behavior. Love is something we best understand in Christ and through the Fruit of the Spirit (1 Cor. 13; Love and submission Eph. 5:21-22).

Also, in **v.5** -- "*...so that the word of God may not be reviled,*" Paul indicates concern with not only the need to encourage godly behavior, but with avoiding ungodly behavior that might discredit the Gospel message. "No Christian will want to do anything that brings harm to the Gospel and hinders its work in the hearts of sinners. The loving, self-controlled, kind, submissive conduct of wives can do its part in bringing unbelieving husbands into God's fold (1 Peter 3:1)." (TLSB 2:4-5; TPB pp.193-195; CSB 2:4,5)

d) **vv. 6-8** -- *Young men*, Again note that "all age groups are admonished to be self-controlled" [Fruit of the Spirit]. And here it is "the only specific virtue that Paul mentions in regard to the young men. At an age when youthful passions press for satisfaction and fulfillment, self-control is most necessary." (TPB p.196)

Also, in **vv. 7-8** -- "*...show yourself to be an example, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned...*" Paul calls on Titus to be a role model for these young men especially, who are at an age when they are forming habits and character and looking for heroes to imitate. These

expectations reflect Titus's role as pastor or head elder as he leads young men into mature Christian discipleship and service. This is quite the responsibility for Titus as he sets an example for the young men while he also teaches the newly appointed elders/pastors and the churches on Crete. Titus is to be a good representative of his Savior so that no one can bring accusations against him and his teaching. (TPB p.196; TLSB 2:7-8, 2:7)

e) **vv. 9-10** -- *Slaves & Servants*, Slavery was common across the Roman Empire, but its practice varied widely from one area to another. Slavery was part of the social structure in the ancient world. Thus we find Paul repeatedly giving instructions to slaves and to masters. An important point to note is the place of slaves within the Church. In the ancient world, Christians shocked the larger culture by mixing slaves and masters in the social setting of the church service. This meant that a slave might go to church and be an elder over his own master. (TLSB 2:9; TPB p.197; EW 2:9)

* Note: "I do not think for a moment Paul believed that the practice of slavery ought to exist. He believed to the fullest extent that the great principles of Christianity would overthrow slavery anywhere, and the sooner they did so the better pleased would he be; but, for the time being, as it was the custom to have slaves, they must "adorn the doctrine of God [our] Savior" (v.10 [ESV]) in the position in which they were." (EW 2:9 quoting Spurgeon)

** Slaves were often part of the extended household, and all aspects of their life could be seen by other members of the household. Thus the lives of the Christian slaves were a tremendous witness. Paul instructed Titus "to impress on the slaves in Crete who had become Christians that their lives now must differ from those of pagan slaves... Pagan masters, noting this difference in their Christian slaves, would see the wholesome effect that Christian teaching had in their slave's attitude and conduct." (TPB pp.197-198) In this way they would be "...showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior." (v.10 [ESV], this lesson's theme verse)

*** "The slaves' position in Roman society might be a lowly one, but what a gloriously honored position it was to make the Gospel attractive to their heathen masters, possibly to be instrumental in leading them to the only Savior-God." (TPB p.198)

Discussion Question (SG #102 pp.58,113): What are our obligations toward our supervisors and employers (1 Timothy 6:1-2)?

3) This all has broader application to our lives today. In our work place, and in all our interactions, our willing service, complete honesty, and trustworthiness we give witness of Christ and His Gospel. In one sense the Gospel doesn't need adornment. At the same time, we

can *show* the beauty of the Gospel by the way we live. We often think we need better *words* to adorn the Gospel. Better words are fine, but what we really need are better *lives*, Christian lives reflecting the glory of God's grace. (TPB p.198; EW 2:10)

"In urging the various age groups to live their Christianity, Paul repeatedly shows the effect their lives as Christians have upon the Word of God. As Christians we want to bring honor and not disgrace on the saving Gospel. We will not want to be the cause for whatever evil is spoken against Christ and His Word. May Christ be glorified in our lives, whether we are men or women, young or old!" (TPB p.198)

7. **In Closing** (from SG p.58):

- a. Consider and discuss what motivates professing Christians to turn away from the Truth.
- b. Recount briefly how a mature Christian influenced you in your Christian life.

References:

TPB = "The People's Bible (Commentary): 1,2 Timothy, Titus" 2nd edition, by Armin W. Schuetze. Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, WI. 2000 (2nd ed.). (Originally published 1988)

TLSB = The Lutheran Study Bible, English Standard Version, General editor Rev. Edward A. Engelbrecht. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO. Published 2009.

CSB = Concordia Self-Study Bible, New International Version, General editor Robert G. Hoerber. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis MO. 1986.

SG = Study Guide used in our Women's Bible Study (by participants in-person and via Zoom): "1 and 2 Timothy, Titus: Keeping the Faith" by A.C. Mueller. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO. 2006. (This is part of the Bible study series "God's Word for Today")

EW = Enduring Word Bible Commentary, Online, for Titus 1 and 2. (Minor supplemental resource only.)

Luther's Works, American Edition. General editors Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann. 56 vols. St. Louis: Concordia, and Philadelphia: Muhlenberg and Fortress, 1955-86. Vol. 29, p.18

Chad Bird 90-second video, 2 Timothy 2:15, "Rightly Handling the Word of Truth" (I transcribed the video to include in these notes. This is part of daily videos for Reading through the Bible in One Year [with 1517]. (Chad's videos can be found on YouTube and Facebook.)

"30 Minutes in the New Testament" [a 1517 podcast], Titus 1:1-16 (Episode 252) (1517.org/podcast-overview/titus-11-16-episode-252)

Bible translations used:

EHV = Evangelical Heritage Version

ESV = English Standard Version

NIV = New International Version