



1 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; ⁴ To Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

Qualifications for Elders

⁵ This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you— ⁶ if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. ⁷ For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, ⁸ but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. ⁹ He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

¹⁰ For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party. ¹¹ They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach. ¹² One of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." ¹³ This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, ¹⁴ not devoting themselves to Jewish myths and the commands of people who turn away from the truth. ¹⁵ To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their minds and their consciences are defiled. ¹⁶ They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work. (Titus 1:1-16, ESV).

This is a letter to another man just like Timothy who had spent time with Paul and had traveled with him. Paul had left Timothy behind in Ephesus, and Titus was left in Crete. We don't quite know as much about Titus as we do Timothy as he is only mentioned about three times in the Bible. We know he was a Greek. The text is presented in the ESV to give a little different take than we had going through first and second Timothy.

V. 1 Paul again refers to himself as a "bond servant" (doulos) - which is a bond-slave. We need to understand that in that culture, at that time, slaves were often in that position because of debt. It is not slavery as we're accustomed to thinking of. Bond-servants were usually working off a debt of some kind. When the debt was satisfied, a person was free to go. But there was a provision in the Mosaic law that if the servant liked or loved his or her master, and if they wanted to continue to serve him for the rest of their life, they could choose to be his

servant/slave for life. The parties would go to the city gate, and there, the slave would have an ear pierced, and publicly declare that he or she would become the servant of the master for life.

Paul saw himself as a life long willing servant of the Lord Jesus. He explains that as an apostle he was sent by God for the sake of the faith. Apostle simply means “sent.” My goal when I get up to teach you each week is that your faith will be affirmed, strengthened, and built up. Paul states these same goals for Titus. Likewise, my job is to give you a “knowledge of the truth.” All of us know and recognize that much darkness has come over the world. It has brought bondage to people in all kinds of ways. Sometimes I see these reels that present themselves on Facebook or Youtube which often contain interviews with drug addicts, prostitutes, and other kinds of street people. I find these things to be very sad. When I see those interviews, I pray for those people. I pray that the Lord would bring someone into their lives to show them the light of the gospel and the freedom in Jesus. You know, one of the curious things about bondage and sin is that when someone is in it, they have the mistaken idea that they are living free. That is part of the deception of sin and debauchery. It is a dominator which wears a mask of total independence.

Paul says that the teaching of the truth “accords” with godliness. Those who are Spanish speakers know that the word “*acuerdo*” (just like accords) means to be in agreement with something or someone. When we get into the Word of God, it lines up and agrees with godliness and righteous living.

V. 2 With our salvation comes a living “hope” of eternal life. Let me say that this is not a hope that is a whimsical hope. It is not a far-fetched hope. It is not a hope akin to, “I sure hope that it rains soon.” It is a hope loaded with expectation. It means running and getting your umbrella and putting on your raincoat because you’re expecting it to rain. Again, other languages convey these thoughts a bit better than English does. When we say “*Yo espero*” in Spanish, it means both I “hope” or “I wait.” You’re waiting on the thing to happen. You’re waiting for the show to start because it’s supposed to start at a certain time. It is an expectant hope.

Paul says that our hope of eternal life is a hope based on the promises of God. Part of the faith-walk of every believer is learning and trusting in the promises of God. His promises are many. They are not something we know innately, but they must be taught and learned. That is one of the many purposes of good Bible teaching. We learn the promises of God, and then we learn that we can trust the promises of God. And then, with greater maturity, we trust the promises of God. The promise of eternal life with Christ is probably the greatest promise for each and every believer. The disciple John recorded Jesus’ promise to all of us. ¹⁶*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16, KJV).*

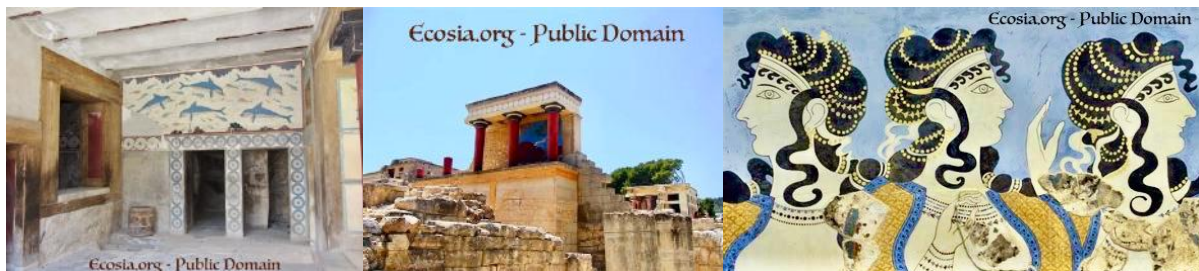
V. 3 Paul reminds Titus that this promise of eternal life was from times of old, and it is now in the fullness of time that this promise has come as a reality to mankind. Paul, as well as Timothy, has been entrusted with this truth for just this time. This great news, this gospel news, brings eternal life to all who hear it and believe it. You and I are likewise charged with bringing the good news to others.

V. 4 Here he tells us that this letter is addressed to Titus, who is one of Paul's many children in the faith. Ending the section there is grace and peace available to not only Titus but to each and every believer.

V. 5 Paul informs us that he left Titus in Crete as the Church had expanded there and was in need of elders. We should remember that elders, pastors, and overseers are all referring to the same person in scripture. I want to put a verse up that we looked at before that explains the interconnectivity of these three terms.

*The **elders** who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed:² **Shepherd** the flock of God which is among you, serving as **overseers**, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;³ nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;⁴ and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away. (1 Peter 5:1-4, NKJV).*

Paul has commissioned and commanded Titus to search out elders/pastors/overseers for all of the congregations that had arisen in Crete. The Island of Crete is large. It is over 600 miles long and it is the 5th largest island in the Mediterranean Sea as well as the largest of the Greek islands. It sits right at the bottom of the Aegean Sea.¹ Crete was the center of the ancient Minoan civilization which was at its height from about 3000-1500 BC. Sandy and I had the pleasure of going to Crete a few years ago, and we found the art and ruins to be absolutely beautiful.



Minoan Palace Interior

Minoan Palace Exterior

Minoan Wall Paintings

V. 6 Paul now echoes what he had told Timothy concerning qualifications of a pastor. When a church looks for elders/pastors it needs to do so by the criteria that God has laid out. These are repeats of what we saw in the letters to Timothy. A pastor must be a "one woman man;" meaning they're devoted to one woman in a long and tested way. This doesn't preclude a divorced man from being a pastor, but it is a great hurdle that must be overcome by examination of the details of the prior failed marriage. His children must not be "open to the

¹ Aegean is an interesting word. I suspect that it is a related word etymologically with Ocean. The indo-european word for water is contained within the word. The Irish word for ocean is *aigéan*.

charge of debauchery.” This means a pastor’s kids should be believers and not be involved in immoral behavior (drinking, drugging, premarital sex, etc.).

V. 7 This verse addresses the qualifications of one who is to oversee the activities of the church. He is a steward. A steward is someone placed in charge of the property of another person. If a candidate’s personal finances are in shambles, he’s not the man to lead a church. If a candidate’s business is in chaos, he does not qualify. He is charged with looking after church personnel, members, and property, and he needs to have the ability to do so. He must not be arrogant or quick tempered. Arrogant people are those who put others down in order to feel good about themselves. They are eaten up with their own ego and they are argumentative, attempting to control the attitudes and beliefs of others. Those kinds of people are a disaster as a pastor of a local church.

Likewise, candidates for the pastorate shouldn’t be persons given to violence (emotional, physical, or spiritual). A pastor must not be greedy for gain. If he’s overly concerned about his compensation and what the church body gives him, he’s not God’s man for the job. The church should compensate him fairly, but the church shouldn’t be a place for a person to enrich themselves.

V. 8 Paul then lays out some positive qualities that should be seen in a man who is pastor material. He is hospitable, meaning that he’s open to spending time with others and is generous with his time, talents, and treasure in helping others along. He’s constantly seeking what is good and is not looking for division. In seeking good, I would add that pastors should not be political animals. I’m not talking about a political party, but rather an attitude that isn’t always concerned about building alliances or being given to cliques. He is self-controlled not blowing up over every little thing. He shouldn’t be too excitable. His life must be upright, holy, and disciplined. The opposite of that kind of life is a life that is underhanded, fleshly, and in chaos.

V. 9 A pastor must be true to the Bible and the text which he preaches. I certainly try to do this. I realize that sometimes I chase rabbits, but I try to keep the rabbit chasing to a minimum. This is one reason I ask myself and all other speakers to give a BIG IDEA. This is another reason I create power point presentations. The Big Idea gets us back to the main point of the teaching if for some reason I’ve strayed and gotten off topic. So, getting back to point now, the pastor’s life must be exemplary in following the Word and living in holiness. If he isn’t doing this, he loses the standing and the right to rebuke others when needed. As I said last week, I’m super cautious about rebuking others unless I see that they are in great danger to themselves or putting others in danger.

V. 10 Paul then points out that there are some that need to be watched carefully. They are insubordinate. Insubordination means having an attitude that is defiant of authority. They want to be the top dog. They don’t want anyone telling them how it’s done. People like this say a whole lot of nothing. They love to hear themselves talk, and in the church they love to think of themselves as experts, upon whom all should depend. Be cautious of the person who thinks

they have a corner on the truth. They are idle and their words accomplish nothing. (In Timothy's case it was the religious Jews who were creating the problems.) Unfortunately, pharasaism is alive and well in the church. We can all drift towards that if we are not careful.

V. 11 Paul tells Titus to silence this type of person because through their words they create divisions in families. Apparently, families were being divided by such teaching. I would add that they can create all kinds of divisions within the Body of Christ.

Vv. 12-13 Paul characterizes Cretans as liars. Oddly, they had a reputation of not just being liars, but being compulsive liars. Liars can't be trusted with anything because they are in the habit of stealing the confidence of others. If you've ever met a compulsive liar, you will know it because they lie about things that don't matter. In doing a bit of research, I found the following.

The writer referred to by Paul was "Epimenides of Gnosus, a seventh-century BC poet, prophet, and native Cretan who characterized his own people as liars. Other ancient writers and philosophers concurred, and Paul's assessment serves to confirm the Cretans' character to be generally evil. The Roman poet Ovid referred to Crete as *mendax Creta*, or "lying Crete." The Greeks used the verb *cretize* as a synonym for *lie*.²

It's kind of amusing because we usually are to give people the benefit of the doubt. Here, however, Paul tells Timothy that these people just have a culture of lying so it will take some true rebuking to put them in their place.

I think there's a lesson in here for each of us. I know my co-pastors sometimes think that I'm not aware enough or suspicious enough of the wrong doings and wrong motives of others. They say I have a weakness in not seeing when people are up to nefarious no-good. I usually tell people that "trusting others has gotten me quite far in my life. However, there comes a point, when the trust is breached, and I am highly unlikely to ever let that person get too close to me again. When the trust is broken, I'm quite inclined to keep people at 'arm's length.'" I like trusting people, but Paul is telling Timothy, "Timothy, don't trust these people. They have a culture of lying. In fact, they are consistently liars. So rebuke them and set them straight."

Vv. 14-16 He finishes the chapter by telling Titus that these types of people get wrapped up in all kinds of side issues. They chase red herrings. They beat around the bush. They go down all kinds of rabbit holes. I love how Pastor Gene Peterson sums this up in his paraphrase in The Message.

Pastor Peterson writes, "Stop that diseased talk of Jewish make-believe and made-up rules so they can recover a robust faith. Everything is clean to the clean-minded; nothing is clean to dirty-minded unbelievers. They leave their dirty fingerprints on every thought and act. They say they know God, but their actions speak louder than their words. They're real creeps, disobedient good-for-nothings. (Titus 1:14-16, The Message).

² Gotquestions.org <https://www.gotquestions.org/all-Cretans-are-liars.html>

My comments on these two verses are that the Holy Spirit led person will trend toward doing the right things before God. The unbeliever will trend toward doing evil. Even the good that they do is done out of a wrong motive. They might profess to be following the word, but their actions speak louder than their words.

The **Big Idea** today is that we should know the Word, preach the Word correctly, and live the Word. Recognize the faults of those under your teaching, but encourage them to follow in living holy lifestyles. Don't be fooled by fake holier-than-thou Christians who just cause division.

Let us pray.

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868. Tel: 936-825-1227 (Edited and proofed by Amanda Neese- Webster, Texas.) All financial gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible as a 501 (c) (3) Corporation.