

SAVED TO SERVE**Titus 1:1-4**

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SAVED TO SERVE

TITUS 1:1-4

Introduction:

- 1) It is a fortunate man who knows who he is and why he is here. Such a man was the Saul of Tarsus, the apostle Paul. A persecutor of Christians and an enemy of Christ, he stood in support of the murder of the first Christian martyr Stephen. Acts 7:58 says those who killed Stephen “laid down there coats at his feet.”
- 2) God, however, had a sovereign plan for this young radical. Traveling on the Damascus road with the intent of destroying Christian lives and homes (Acts 9:1-19) the risen and glorified Lord Jesus appeared from heaven and saved him. He saved him, not just to take him to heaven. He saved him, like he saved you and me, to serve.
- 3) Here is Titus 1:1-4, in one of Paul’s longest introductions, the apostle begins a short 3 chapters, 46 verse letter that weds in a beautiful duet the Christian sonnet of doctrine and deeds, belief and behavior, conduct and creed. Being sound in doctrine and zealous for good works are twin themes that tie this short, power epistle together.
- 4) This is a bargain basement letter. You get more than your money’s worth as Paul packs in so much truth, so much teaching, in such a short amount of space.
- 5) As I’ve examined it, I believe we could consider the theme “An Apostolic Manual for Church Planting.” Here is a blueprint for planting and building churches that will survive and thrive for the glory of God.

Transition:

Paul begins by telling us something about himself, something about salvation, something about preaching, and something about his son in the faith, a man named Titus. What then is his message for us today? What do we need to know about who we are and why we are here?

I. We are servants of our Lord. 1:1

Paul (meaning small, little, humble) is His Greek/Roman name, taken perhaps in honor of his first Gentile convert on his first missionary journey, a man named Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:7-12). Paul, the greatest missionary who ever lived, and the greatest theologian who ever lived (he saw no difficulty in bringing the 2 together) is in his latter years. While his eyes may be growing dim at this time in his life, his spiritual vision had never been better. He saw clearly just who and what he is “in Christ.”

- 1) We are slaves. (humility)
 “bondservant (*doulos*) of God.” Only here does he call himself a slave of God; normally it is “of Christ.” For Paul there is no difference. He is God’s slave, bought and paid for by the precious blood of Jesus (1 Peter 1:18-19). He is now no longer his own (1 Cor. 6:19), he is a slave of God. This speaks of our humility.

- 2) We are sent. (authority)
 “apostle (*apostolos*) of Jesus Christ.” Apostle is both a technical and a general term in Scripture. Technically it refers to the twelve, those who were eyewitnesses of the life, death, resurrection and ascension of our Lord. Paul was also an apostle, but one “born out of due time” says 1 Cor. 15:8, one placed into the office at a different time and in an unusual way. The term also has a general meaning that applies to every one of us, for we are “sent ones” as those who go on behalf of Jesus Christ. This speaks of our authority.
- 3) We are selected. (ministry)
 “according to” (*NIV*, “for”), “for the purpose” is the idea. Watch carefully! Don’t miss it. “The faith (here is human responsibility)...of God’s elect” (here is divine sovereignty). Paul again saw no dichotomy, no contradiction between the sovereignty of God and the human responsibility of man. Salvation from beginning to end is the work of God (Heb. 12:2), is all of grace (Eph 2:8), is the sovereign work of a sovereign God. And yet no one will be saved who does not repent and believe, and all who repent and believe will be saved (Rom. 10:13).
- ❖ I believe Paul was a theological and soteriological compatibilist. He believed that God elected and predestinated people to be saved but did so in such a way as to do no violence to their free will and responsibility to believe the gospel.
 - ❖ I am convinced that he stood against anything that questioned the sovereignty of God, and that he stood steadfast against anything that would harm a passion for missions and evangelism. This speaks of our ministry.
- 4) We are sanctified. (spiritually)
- ❖ The faith of those belonging to God was also for a purpose. Saving faith moves one to a full knowledge (*epignosis*, *NIV* “Knowledge”) of the truth that results in a new life of godliness. A knowledge of the truth and godliness are intimately connected in Christianity.
 - ❖ Hiebert says, “A profession of the truth which allows an individual to live in ungodliness is a spurious profession” (p.21). What I believe will effect how I live and how I live will effect how I believe!
 - ❖ Vance Havner, commenting on the church’s failure to move from faith to knowledge to godliness said, “We are challenged these days, but not changed; convicted, but not converted. We hear, but do not; and thereby we deceive ourselves.” (*NAC*, 267).
 - ❖ The child of God is to live a sanctified life, a holy life, a pure life, and a godly life. Here the genuineness of the truth of the gospel is lived out for all to see. This speaks of our spirituality.

Transition: We are servants of our Lord.

II. We are secure in the Lord. 1:2-3

Paul understood that radical service for the Lord Jesus Christ must be grounded in a security in Christ that sets us free to serve Him with an other-worldly abandonment that knows no matter what: I am His! In verses 2 and 3 Paul places before us 2 avenues of a sure and certain security. One is God's witness. The other is God's word.

1) We have His witness. 1:2

- ❖ Paul now addresses one of the great promises of Scripture, placing all its weight upon the character of God. Note the wonderful "chain reaction!"
- ❖ The saving faith of those who belong to God leads to a knowledge of the truth which will lead to godliness all of which rest upon the hope of eternal life in a God who cannot lie! What a promise! What a hope!
- ❖ Hope is a confident certainty and expectation of something that is not yet yours, but will be.
- ❖ Eternal Life is the very life of God. It is both a quantity of life (forever) and a quality of life (Christ in and through you, "the hope of glory.")
- ❖ This wonderful chain reaction is founded upon the very character and integrity of the unlying (*apseudes*) God (cf 1 Sam 15:29; Heb. 6:18). This God stands in contrast to Satan who "is a liar, and the father of lies" (John 8:44), as well as the Cretans whom v. 12 describes as "always liars."
- ❖ Paul points out that this hope of eternal life was promised before time began (lit. "before times eternal"). The plan of salvation, the promise of eternal life looks both ways down "God's highway of grace" (Hughes, 277); it runs into eternity past and it lasts into eternity future.
- ❖ Some theologians see in v. 2 an allusion to what is called "the covenant of redemption" whereby the Father showed His love for His Son by promising Him a redeemed people who would love, serve and glorify Him forever. (cf John 6:37, 40; 17:23-24, 26). To complete the picture we must add that the Son showed His love for the Father by becoming the lamb who was slain before the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:19-20), and that the entire plan of redemption was an eternal promise made to sinful humanity as a demonstration of God's love for us. Our salvation is no after thought with God. He planned it down to the last detail a long time ago.

Transition: We have His witness.

2) We have His word. 1:3

- ❖ The eternal promise of eternal life entered time and space at "just the right time." The *NKJV* says "in due time", the *NIV* says "at his appointed season" Peterson in *The Message* paraphrases, "when the time was ripe,

he went public with his truth.” Now the “chain reaction” of God’s wonderful plan adds another crucial link.

- ❖ The eternal promise of eternal life of the God who cannot lie stepped into history as the Word of God made known thru preaching (*kerugmati*) which has been entrusted (*NKJV* “committed”) to Paul (and now us) by the commandment of God our Savior (3 times in Titus; 1:3; 2:10; 3:4).
- ❖ Amazingly God has placed His eternal plan of salvation in the hands of people like you and me. We as heralds of the gospel are recipients of a divine trust, a sacred treasure. The message we preach is not our word, it is His word. This is our commitment. This is His commandment. This is our calling. We preach His word and no other word. We preach His gospel and not another gospel.
- ❖ Certainly some may preach the gospel better (!), but no one will preach a better gospel.

Transition: We are His servants. We are secure.

III. We are separated unto the Lord.

- ❖ Paul now introduces us to the recipient of this letter, a man named Titus. Titus is mentioned 13 times in the New Testament. (2 Cor. 2:13; 7:6, 13, 14; 8:6, 16, 23; 12:18 (2 times); Gal. 2:1, 3; Tim. 4:10). He was a Greek, a non-Jewish convert who became something of a “test case” for the gospel and the fact that one does not need to become a Jew, evidenced by circumcision, to be saved. Titus had a special relationship to the troubled church at Corinth, and his work there and here on the difficult island of Crete reveals Paul’s confidence in him. Playfully we can say he was Paul’s “hit man,” his “Green Beret,” his “spiritual Navy Seal” who could go into the hard places and set things in order, get things fixed, make things right.
- ❖ Paul again provides a word of encouragement concerning our security in Christ and the fountain of blessings from which we drink as we draw strength for service.

1) We share a common faith.

- ❖ Titus is a true (Gr. “legitimate”) son (*tekno*, “child”) in a common (*koinen*) faith. Paul used this same expression “true son” for Timothy in 1 Tim. 1:2. It suggests that Paul was their spiritual father, having led both to faith in Christ.
- ❖ “Common faith” may refer to the same saving faith both had experienced. More likely it refers to “the faith,” the body of Christian truth, “which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). The message Titus would preach is the same message Paul preaches. It is the faith that was to be taught in the 1st century and the faith that is to be taught in the 21st century. Methods may, do, and should change, but never the message. The “sound doctrine” (v. 9) necessary to build a vibrant, dynamic and

genuine New Testament church is rooted and grounded in this common faith. There is no room for wavering or compromise on this.

2) We are in God's family.

- ❖ There are many beautiful metaphors and images that describe the relationship of God to His people. We are His temple, a building, a body, His bride. We are also family, and that is Paul's focus as he brings his greeting to an end.
- ❖ When we receive Jesus as Savior we also receive God as Father. It is interesting to note that as "God is our Savior" in v. 3, the Lord (deity) Jesus (humanity) Christ (God's anointed) is "our Savior" in v. 4. The title Savior appears 12 times in the New Testament and 6 of those times in Titus. The issue of who is Savior must have been an issue on the island of Crete. 3 times it is applied to God (1:3; 2:10; 3:4) and 3 times it is applied to Jesus (1:4; 2:13; 3:6). The equality of essence as God and yet their distinction in person is plainly and clearly revealed.
- ❖ Because we are family we are loved by our Father and Savior. Flowing from that love are the 3 Christian blessings of grace, mercy and peace.
 - Grace – unmerited favor; it is what gets us in the family.
 - Mercy – unlimited compassion;
 - Peace – unsurpassing wholeness; it is what we enjoy once we're in the family.

All of this and more is ours, because we share a common faith and we are a part of God's family.

Conclusion:

Grace inspires godliness. Salvation inspires service. Those who understand that God's love for them and desire for their salvation originates in eternity past and continues through eternity future will be compelled to love Him and serve Him. They will do so not out of obligation, but out of gratitude. A man who is captured by the love of his wife will love her back, not because he has to but because he wants to. A person captured by the love of Jesus will love Him back, not because he has to but because he wants to. He saved you that you might serve Him. Make sure you are living the way a saved person should live.