

FPFWC Christian Development



Eternal Hope

August 2024

Summer Quarter

August 17, 2024

Lesson #3 – The Rules of Life

SCRIPTURE TEXT – Titus 1:1-3; 2:11-15

ICE BREAKERS-

1. What motivates believers to live righteous lives?
2. How does the return of Jesus Christ provide hope for the believer?

Key Verse: “The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.—Titus 2:11–13

LESSON BACKGROUND –

Paul’s letter to Titus comes from a part of the New Testament called the Pastoral Epistles. Whereas Paul wrote other letters to specific groups of believers in particular locations (examples: Galatians 1:1, 1 Thessalonians 1:1), the Pastoral Epistles were written to particular individuals: Timothy (1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:2) and Titus. The latter was a church leader Paul designated “mine own son after the common faith” (Titus 1:4).

The letter to Titus involved events that occurred after the conclusion of the book of Acts, but we have no exact knowledge of the sequence. By the time Paul wrote to Titus, the apostle had been released from his imprisonment in Rome and had found an occasion to visit the island of Crete. While visiting, Paul evangelized and started some churches. It is likely, however, that the gospel had already reached Crete many years earlier through unnamed believers (see Acts 2:11).

Crete was famous in antiquity as a source of culture and religion. The Cretan people, however, were not highly esteemed in the Roman world. In Titus 1:12, Paul quotes a native Cretan “prophet” who describes his own people as “liars, evil beasts, [with] slow bellies.” While Paul does not name this source, one possibility is the sixth-century BC writer Epimenides. This statement has been called the Cretan Paradox because if all Cretans are liars, and Epimenides was a Cretan, then was he lying when he made the statement?

Paul was accompanied on Crete by one of his most trusted associates, a Gentile believer named Titus (Galatians 2:3). The book of Acts does not mention Titus by name. Still, he figures prominently in the letters of Paul. In 2 Corinthians, Titus is named (in Greek) nine times (example: 2 Corinthians 8:23). Paul wrote his letter to Titus in about AD 65 after departing from the island. Paul had left Titus

behind to correct a chaotic situation in the Cretan churches. Most importantly, Titus needed to place an eldership in each congregation (Titus 1:5).

The church in Crete was troubled by people who professed to know God but lived demonstrably different lives (see Titus 1:16). Such people had deceived others, disrupted the community (1:10–11), and brought needless controversy to the church (3:9–10).

Today's lesson reveals Paul's solution to this challenging situation. What the church in Crete needed was "sound doctrine" (Titus 1:9; 2:1) and training in godliness (see 1:1; 2:12). This is the nitty-gritty of helping believers mature into godly men and women. Paul wanted Titus to grow the church by grounding them in the truth of the gospel and encouraging lives of holiness.

LESSON COMMENTARY

A. Paul Greets Titus (1:1–4)

1:1–4. Paul was under authority as a **bond-servant of God** (v. 1). He exercised authority as an **apostle of Jesus Christ**. This calling bound him both to the church and to the truth, which has godliness as its goal. The phrase **in the hope of eternal life** (v. 2) probably refers to the faith and knowledge that lead to godliness. The hope of eternal life is embraced by faith and motivates godly living. Paul emphasized God's timing in revealing the message of the gospel (v. 3; cf. Gl 4:4; Heb 1:1). The gospel re-articulates the ancient promise of eternal life with fresh clarity. Titus was Paul's **true child in the faith** (v. 4; cf. 2Tm 1:2). This language could indicate that Paul introduced Titus to faith in Christ. Titus may have been converted when Paul turned his focus to the Gentiles in Antioch (Ac 13:46).

B. Righteousness and Godliness in Life (2:11–15)

2:11–15. The assertion of v. 11 is especially poignant in light of the previous two verses. The voluntary submission of Christian slaves was radical proof that the grace of God was intended for every segment of society. The Greek word translated **instructing** (v. 12) in this verse conveyed the idea of training. Grace not only tells us what to do or not to do, it shows us how to comply. The deity of Christ is clearly affirmed in v. 13. He is both **God** (possessing all the divine attributes of God the Father, but a distinct Person from the Father; cf. Jn 1:1–18) **and Savior**. Paul calls Christ's return for the Church at the rapture **the blessed hope**, and with it comes accountability, providing the primary motivation for godly living in the current age. Jesus' death (v. 14) was a redemptive offering that purifies us from the guilt and power of sin. This verse emphasizes the comprehensive result of Christ's work. He redeems us from all wickedness and makes us eager to obey. Titus's teaching ministry in Crete included both encouragement and rebuke. The command not to let anyone **disregard** him (v. 15) may have been addressing Titus's demeanor, but it also had implications for his lifestyle.

LESSON NUGGET - God's grace not only saves us, but also teaches us how to live the Christian life. Those who use God's grace, as an excuse for sin have never experienced its saving power. (Romans 6:1; Jude 1). The same grace that redeems us also renews us so that we want to obey his Word. (vs. 14)

Sources: Moody Bible Commentary, Standard Lesson Commentary, and The Essential Everyday Bible Commentary