**THE TRUSTWORTHY MESSAGE**

Titus 1:1-16

Key Verse: 1:9

“He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.”

**Introduction**



 There are many similarities between the letter Paul wrote to Timothy and the letter he wrote to Titus. They were both evangelized by Paul and called as Paul’s spiritual sons to follow in Paul’s footsteps. They were both left to serve in difficult churches; Timothy in Ephesus and Titus in Crete. They were both faced with the task of correcting doctrinal errors that were spreading in the churches of the time. They were both given the responsibility of preaching the sound gospel teaching to promote a healthy church environment. They were both also tasked with establishing qualified elders to take care of the affairs of the church. In this first chapter of his letter to Titus, Paul reminds Titus of three of these responsibilities; Carry on the gospel work (1-4) Ordain qualified leaders (5-9) Silence false teachers (10-16).

1. Read verses 1-4. How does Paul identify himself? (1a) What is the purpose of his writing? (1b-2) How did God bring to light the knowledge of the truth at the appointed time? (3) How did Paul address Titus? (4)

1-1, Read verses 1-4.

 Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ to further the faith of God’s elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness— **2** in the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, **3** and which now at his appointed season he has brought to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior, **4** To Titus, my true son in our common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

1-2, How does Paul identify himself? (1a)

**Background of Titus**

* This letter to Titus was written around 62-64 AD. **Titus** was one of Paul’s converts, he was a Greek, and Paul had taken him to Jerusalem to show that salvation had also come to the Gentiles without circumcision (Gal 2:3).
* Paul had sent him to deliver the severe letter to the Corinthian church, which caused them godly sorrow (2 Cor 7:6-7). Paul was worried this letter would hurt them, but when Titus gave the good report of their repentance, Paul was comforted and his joy was greater than before.
* Titus was also the person to deliver the letter of 2 Corinthians (2 Cor 8:23), and chosen by the church to make a collection for Jerusalem to help with the urgent need there (2 Cor 8:19).
* After his third missionary journey, Paul and Titus preached together in Crete. Paul had to leave, but he left Titus on Crete to finish the work.



* **Crete** is the 5th largest island on the Mediterranean Sea. It is 160 miles (260 km) across, and around 300 miles (500 km) south of Greece.
* It is home to the oldest civilization in Europe, the Minoan civilization, which existed from 2600 to 1100 BC.
* It was actually quite an advanced civilization for its time, but the civilization ended either by invasion or volcano.
* Today it is part of Greece, but in Paul’s time it was under the Roman Empire. There was already a thriving community of Jews on Crete in the time of Jesus.
* On the day of Pentecost, Cretan Jews were present when the Holy Spirit was poured out in Jerusalem, and they heard the apostles speak in tongues.
* It is possible that some Cretan Jews were converted that day, and established a Christian community on Crete when they went back home.
* Paul and Titus would arrive more than 30 years later to continue to build the church of disciples like Ephesian church.
* While Paul had to go, he commissioned Titus to remain and carry out the rest of what needs to be done. Titus would be his representative.
* This letter was written directly to Titus to instruct him on what he needs to do, so that they would know Titus was authorized to organize the churches.
* This letter was also kind of an official written document to commission Titus to continue the work in Crete.

***Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ***

* Paul begins with identifying himself as a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ.
* Many people knew who the Twelve apostles were, but Paul was originally known as a persecutor of the church and converted after Jesus ascended to heaven.
* But here he is claiming authority as an apostle, equal with those such as Peter, James and John, through whom were passed on the teachings of Jesus Christ.
* Paul identified himself as God’s slave, for he considered God to be his one and only Master.
* At the same time, he was also an apostle of Jesus Christ, sent to be his representative.
* This means that he had the authority to proclaim the gospel message of the Lord to the world, especially to all the gentiles.
* That was Paul’s lifelong identity. He identified himself like this not only in letters but that was what he believed and thought of himself always.
* We too have a clear identity in God and in Christ Jesus that we must hold it firmly always.

1-3, What is the purpose of his writing? (1b-2)

***to further the faith of God’s elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness—***

* The purpose of his writing was to further the faith of God’s elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness.
* Knowledge is important, and knowledge of the truth is even more important.
* One way we can know that we are learning the truth is that we are growing in godliness, that is, we are growing in reverence, respect and sincere devotion toward God.
* Take notice of order here, faith, knowledge of the truth, and godliness.
* Faith is not something stagnant; it is something dynamic, meaning that it grows.
* It tells us that every person who has even a small seed of faith in their hearts has the potential to grow into a giant of faith.
* To do that, we need the knowledge of God. This knowledge is not mere information. The knowledge here is heart knowledge that transforms our inner person. And it transforms us into godly people.
* Knowledge that does not transform our inner lives will only make us proud and useless, like the Pharisees.
* But the knowledge of the truth here has a dynamic power to change us into the image of God.
* To be godly means to grow in the image of God, in his humility, in his kindness, in his love, in his generosity, in his faithfulness, in his mercy and compassion, justice and righteousness.

***2 in the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time,***

* We also grow in the hope of eternal life, having a joyful, confident expectation of eternal life.
* We can be confident in this hope because God does not lie, and he has promised to give eternal life before the beginning of time.
* So Paul tells us that all our faith and knowledge that we grow in has a solid foundation.
* They are founded on the promise of God which he made even before time began. God promises are everlasting and unchanging.
* For this reason we rest all our hopes on it. No human being can live without hope. Our hope is sure and secure in Jesus Christ who will come soon!

1-4, How did God bring to light the knowledge of the truth at the appointed time? (3)

 ***and which now at his appointed season he has brought to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior,***

* And this promise was secured at the time God has appointed. The promise was fulfilled when God sent his Son to die on the cross for our sins, and he rose from the grave to declare our debt is paid, our sins are forgiven and we are declared righteous in God’s sight by faith, justified.
* This is the good news that God has proclaimed to all the world. It is the message of salvation through God our Savior, who commanded and entrusted Paul and faithful and godly servants like Titus and others to preach this word.

1-5, How did Paul address Titus? (4)

 ***To Titus, my true son in our common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.***

* Paul was a Jew and Titus was a Gentile. But in Christ Jesus, all barriers had been removed.
* Paul became his father in the faith. And Titus became his son in the faith. More than that, Paul had great love and respect for Titus.
* He also says “in our common faith.” This is the faith of all believers, for all time. We share the same faith in one God, one Father, one Lord, one Spirit.
* Your faith is the same as Abraham’s faith, as Paul’s faith, and as Titus’ faith. Those who share this same faith on Crete should then accept the authority given to Titus by the apostle Paul.
* He trusted Titus as a leader, greeting him: “Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.”
1. Read verse 5-9. What was the reason that Paul left Titus in Crete? (5) What are the qualification to be an elder? (6-9) Why is important for an elder to hold firmly to the trustworthy message? (9)

2-1, Read verse 5-9.

The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. **6** An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Titus+1&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29899b)] and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. **7** Since an overseer manages God’s household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. **8** Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. **9** He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

2-2, What was the reason that Paul left Titus in Crete? (5)

 ***The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.***

* Now Paul wrote this letter to Titus instructing him to straighten out [put to order] what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town.
* Although the church in Crete was established, still they were spiritual young and vulnerable to false teaching.
* That’s why they needed spiritual leaders who could guide them in the truth and shepherd or mentor them.

2-3, What are the qualification to be an elder? (6-9)

***6 An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient.***

* “Elders” in verses 5, 6 is used interchangeably with “overseer” in verse 7.
* An elder must be blameless in marriage and family life. Any Christian who becomes an elder should demonstrate that they practice their faith in their own home. This is where true spiritual leadership begins.
* He must be faithful to his wife. That is, he must have an unblemished reputation in the area of his married life and morality.
* He must also raise his children in the Christian faith. We all know that there is no way that even the best of Christian parents can make their children Christians.
* Yet as long as parents have charge of their children as a responsibility from God, they have the responsibility to raise them in a Christian environment.

***7 Since an overseer manages God’s household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. 8 Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined.***

* An elder must be blameless in character and in deeds (7-8). An elder must not be overbearing; he must not be quick-tempered; he must not be given to drunkenness; he must not be a violent man; and of course, he must not pursue dishonest gain.
* Such a person would not be an elder but an abomination to the faith and the faithful.
* He must be hospitable; he must love what is good; he must be self-controlled; he must be upright and holy; he must be disciplined.
* Elders must strive to overcome the bad elements of their sinful nature and demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit in their behavior. They must be trustworthy.

***9 He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.***

* Most of all, an elder must be blameless in his doctrine and message, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.”

2-4, Why is important for an elder to hold firmly to the trustworthy message? (9)

  ***He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.***

* Only those who hold firmly to the trustworthy message can be qualified to be elders in God’s household. No one else!
* So many claim to have a trustworthy message. But only the gospel message is a trustworthy message, for only in and through the gospel we can find forgiveness of sins— joy and peace— eternal life— and living hope in the kingdom of God.
* Only the gospel message transforms us to be godly people with meaning and purpose to bring the gospel message to the world.
* Only the gospel message can redeem our lives our homes, our families, our schools, etc. The gospel is the only trustworthy message.
* Elders should do two things. **First** is to encourage others by sound doctrine. This means teaching the word of God and putting it into practice by showing and living a good example, so that others may imitate and grow in godliness.
* **Second,** elders need to also refute those who oppose the gospel message. This means to guard and defend the gospel (2 Ti 1:13-14). The environment of Crete did not make it easy for Titus and his co-workers, the elders to defend the gospel.
1. Read verses 10-16. How does Paul characterize the circumcision group? (10) What is their motive in teaching disruptive doctrines? (11) Why should the Cretans be rebuked? (12-14) What happened to those whose minds and consciences were corrupted? (15-16)

3-1, Read verses 10-16.

**10** For there are many rebellious people, full of meaningless talk and deception, especially those of the circumcision group. **11** They must be silenced, because they are disrupting whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach—and that for the sake of dishonest gain. **12** One of Crete’s own prophets has said it: “Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons.”[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Titus+1&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29905c)] **13** This saying is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith **14** and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the merely human commands of those who reject the truth. **15** To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. **16** They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him.They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.

3-2, How does Paul characterize the circumcision group? (10)

###

***10 For there are many rebellious people, full of meaningless talk and deception, especially those of the circumcision group.***

3-3, What is their motive in teaching disruptive doctrines? (11)

***11 They must be silenced, because they are disrupting whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach—and that for the sake of dishonest gain.***

3-4, Why should the Cretans be rebuked? (12-14)

***12 One of Crete’s own prophets has said it: “Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons.”***

* There were many rebellious people, full of meaningless talk and deception. They were disrupting whole households by teaching things they shouldn’t teach for dishonest gain.
* Paul quoted a Cretan prophet, who said, “Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons”.
* Paul is quoting from an actual Cretan poet named Epimenides, who lived in the 6th century BC. It was well known in that region, that Cretans had a reputation for being dishonest and also greedy for money.

***13 This saying is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith 14 and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the merely human commands of those who reject the truth.***

* Paul instructs Titus to rebuke the false teachers sharply. If they were humble, gentle and mild false teachers, I’m sure Titus could deal with them gently.
* But because they were so hard-hearted, a harsh rebuke was required to maintain the health of the ministry.
* If they could be shaken from their false teaching, then they can be sound in the faith by paying no attention to Jewish myths or human commands.
* Again, to be sound means to be free from the mixture of error. Their faith will be purified. Some of the Jewish myths denied Jesus’ humanity, saying that he was just a spirit and walked around in a projection of a human.
* Other myths denied Jesus’ deity, saying he was just a man, perhaps a good teacher, but he was not the Son of God. Jesus is both God and man, to deny either is a false teaching.

3-5, What happened to those whose minds and consciences were corrupted? (15-16)

 ***To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted.***

* The pure can only be pure by being cleansed by faith in Jesus’ blood. To the faithful, the pure, all things are pure.
* To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure.
* Those who are corrupted are those who have mixed something in with their faith. Nothing is pure in their eyes.
* When we add requirements to our salvation, we cannot have peace. We are always judging ourselves or others by that requirement.
* “In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted.” This means the whole person is corrupt.
* The mind, and the conscience, which is the heart, is corrupt. Then both their head knowledge and their heart knowledge is corrupt.

***16 They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him.They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.***

* Paul calls the false teachers hypocrites. They claim to know God, but by their actions, they actually rejected what God has commanded.
* By holding to the traditions and ideas of men, they have elevated themselves above God.
* In the end, they are unfit for doing anything good. They have no understanding of what pleases God.
* Even if false teachers achieve many of the good qualities, one quality they will never have is holiness, which comes from God.
* False doctrine never leads to doing anything good. Sound doctrine makes a big difference. It leads to sound faith Sound doctrine is pure. It leads to godliness, and you are built up in faith, hope, love and truth.
* Sound doctrine encourages, and also enables us to refute those who oppose the gospel.
* Sound doctrine builds up your love and devotion to God. It builds up your awe and respect of God.

**Conclusion**

 Sound doctrine is the key to a pure and holy life. We may not all be elders, but we are all still called to be teachers and shepherds. We are all called to live holy and pure lives. We might be independent Bible teachers to our spouses, to our children, or to students, even to ourselves. We are all called to make disciples of every nation. 1 Tim 4:16 says, “Watch your life and your doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.” Sound doctrine results in a sound life. Persevere in this, and you will save both yourself and your hearers. Through sound doctrine may we live sound lives so that we may have an effective gospel ministry.

**One word: Sound Doctrine!**