

DOING GOOD: "Last But Not Least"

INTRODUCTION

- In this final passage of the epistle to Titus, Paul returns to his theme of **good works**.

Titus 3:14 – And let our people learn to **devote themselves to good works**, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful.

GOSPEL STRATEGY (TITUS 3:12-13)

- **3:12-13** is a report on the movement of Paul's missionary team.
 - **Artemas or Tychicus** will come to Crete and replace Titus; Titus will go join Paul at Nicopolis.
 - **Zenas the lawyer** and **Apollos** probably brought the letter from Paul to Titus. Most likely they stayed in Crete for some ministry.

Lessons from Paul's Gospel Strategy:

1. **The Need for Fellowship** – "our people" (3:14); "All who are with me" (3:15); "those who love us in the faith" (3:15).
 - Paul was not a one-man band; he names over one hundred people in the New Testament (e.g. Romans 16; 1 Corinthians 16).
 - **Application:** We need to lock arms and join hearts in "striving side by side for the faith of the gospel" (Phil 1:27).
 2. **The Need for Forecasting** – Paul is like a master chess player who is thinking two to three moves ahead.
 - Artemas or Tychicus will replace Titus in Crete (3:12); Zenas and Apollos will move on to a location that is undisclosed.
 - **Application:** What can we do next to further the ministry of the gospel?
- "I will go anywhere, provided it be forward." (David Livingstone)
3. **The Need for Flexibility** – We are not sure if Paul ever made it to Nicopolis (3:12) because he got arrested and spent the winter in Rome (2 Timothy 4:10, 12, 21).
 - **Application:** There should be some elasticity in how we make our plans (Acts 16:6-10).

GOSPEL SERVICE (TITUS 3:14)

- **3:14:** Paul returns to his theme of **good works** (Titus 1:16, 2:7, 2:14, 3:1, 3:8, 3:14).

Key Points:

1. **The Contrast:** "Our people" versus false teachers and Cretans.
2. **The Command:** to "learn to devote themselves" through dedicated practice.
3. **The Compulsion:** "so as to help cases of urgent need"; remember that the greatest good works relate to the proclamation of the gospel.
4. **The Concern:** "not be unfruitful". Paul wanted Christians to be fruitful and rewarded (John 15:1-5; 1 Peter 1:5-9).

GOSPEL SENTIMENT (TITUS 3:15)

- Paul expresses true, tender affection towards those who are "in the faith" and ends his letter with an emphasis on **grace** (3:15 – "Grace be with you all").

Sermon Application Questions

September 29, 2019

PERSONAL RESPONSES

Have you ever heard of the names **Artemas, Tychicus, Zenas and Apollos** before listening to this sermon? Why were these men so important to Paul's ministry?

1 Question for Reflection: Why did Paul name over hundred people in the New Testament in passages such as Romans 16 and 1 Corinthians 16? What does this teach us about Paul's perspective in ministry?

David Livingstone said, "I will go anywhere, provided it be forward." It appears that the Apostle Paul was always asking what's best next when it came to the furtherance of the gospel.

2 **Prayerfully reflect on the meaning of this for your own life.** What will be your next move in making an impact for Christ? How can you look "two to three steps ahead" in pursuing maximum ministry for God's glory?

DIGGING DEEPER

1 Take some time and reflect on some of the key passages related to this week's sermon. Ask the Lord for help in making application of these truths to your life.

2 Timothy 4:9-13

Do your best to come to me soon. For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry. Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments.

2 Timothy 4:19-22

Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. Erastus remained at Corinth, and I left Trophimus, who was ill, at Miletus. Do your best to come before winter. Eubulus sends greetings to you, as do Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brothers. The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

John 15:1-5

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

2 Peter 1:5-9

For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

2

Read Romans 16:1-23. Why does Paul take the time to greet so many individuals in Christ? What does this teach us about Paul's perspective on life and ministry?

What are some practical ways that we can "lock arms and join hearts" in contending for the faith of the gospel?

PERSONAL APPLICATION

1

Todd Wilson has written, "Devotion to good works requires learning. It does not happen automatically. Devotion to good works is not our default setting. You don't come preprogrammed with a devotion to good works. Instead, devotion to good works is something that must be cultivated, learned."¹

The following are examples of some of the "good works" that Scripture calls us to engage in. Choose one example of good works, or write in your own. How will you practice this good work this week? What is your strategy to "learn by doing"?

- Prayer (Intercession)** – Praying specifically for the needs of others and asking God for things that only He can do.
- Studying** – Engaging in diligent and organized study of God's Word for the purpose of greater spiritual understanding and maturity.
- Serving** – Meeting practical needs in the local church through faithful and sacrificial labor.
- Evangelizing** – Communicating gospel truths to unbelievers in a way that is clear and understandable.
- Comforting** – Engaging in ministry to those who are hurting and thinking of biblical ways to encourage or console them.
- Giving** – Supporting missionaries and short-term missions teams through regular and faithful financial support.
- Showing Hospitality** – Hosting people at my home (even when my house is not spotless).
- Other:** _____

2

The Apostle Paul had planned on spending the winter in Nicopolis (3:12) but it appears that he was arrested and instead spent the winter in Rome (2 Timothy 4:21).

Tychicus was to be sent to Crete (3:12) but instead he was re-routed to Ephesus (2 Timothy 4:12).

Name a time that you had to be flexible with your plans. How did God re-orient you in a different direction? What lessons did you learn from this time?

What are some of your current plans that need to be submitted to the Lord (James 4:13-15)?

¹ Todd Wilson, [Zealous for Good Works](#)