

Commitment of a Godly Leader

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 02 March 2015

Preacher: Tom Holland

[0:00] Last week we had an initial lesson in the book of Titus.

If you hadn't been here for two weeks, two weeks ago we had eight guys that braved the bad weather, so we just visited. We had our initial lesson last week. We've got a few copies left. And we were able to cover a verse and a half, so we moved pretty quickly. I'll give a very brief review for those who were not here.

Paul wrote a letter to Titus who, along with Timothy, was his son in the faith. Titus was ministering to the churches on the Isle of Crete, and he had there under his charge a number of pastors of local congregations.

Probably house churches, small. Now, it was vital for Paul to relate to Titus biblical truth, so Titus could then instruct the various pastors on Crete.

[1:17] Titus was over them. They would then be equipped to transmit the same truth to the members of the churches on the island.

It would be a unified message passed from Paul to Titus to the pastors to the flocks of Christians on Crete. And Paul began last week by telling Titus that God has mastery over all things.

God is absolutely sovereign. I tell people, if you find a molecule over which God is not sovereign somewhere in this universe, bow down and worship it. It's more powerful than God.

And nothing is more powerful than God. He has mastery. God's mastery or sovereignty was Paul's first foundational principle that we looked at last time, and it's in the notes.

Paul then revealed to Titus a second foundational principle that God has a mission for every church in every age, including the ones on Crete and including this one.

[2:32] He spoke of the brethren there who are the chosen of God, and that's Paul's descriptions for every true believer in Christ. And as we pointed out last time, no one comes to Christ unless the Father draws them.

And good news, guys, whoever comes to Christ, Christ will never cast them out, never be cast out. So what was God's mission for the churches on Crete?

And by extension, every church in every age, including ours. According to Titus 1b, the second part of that verse, to 2a, the first part, God's mission is threefold.

It encompasses evangelism, edification, and encouragement. That's what we looked at last time. Since that is God's mission for the church, it should be ours as well.

So we are to be committed to God's mission. Well, there's a third foundational principle that we come to tonight, and we're to be committed to that as well, and it is God's message.

[3:46] We read this starting in the second part of verse 2, and we start in mid-sentence. Which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago, but at the proper time manifested even His word.

So we have a third foundational principle of the gospel ministry. We are to have an uncompromising commitment to God's message as revealed in Scripture.

The first foundational principle was a commitment to God's mastery over all things.

We could describe that as a sovereign control. The second, which was already mentioned, was a commitment to God's mission. And here we have the third principle, commitment to God's message.

Now, there's going to be two more foundational principles before we conclude tonight. So we're going to get a total of five in the last two weeks. Obviously, a commitment to God's message is directly related to God's sovereign mastery and His mission for the church.

[5:01] They're inseparable. And by the way, when we say church, remember, always please, that's people. We're talking about people. The church is not brick and mortar.

It happens to be the place where we meet, but that's not the church. People are the church. So Christian people are to adhere to God's mastery, mission, and message.

Now, how do we know about these three principles? We know them through the Scriptures, what we're looking at tonight, one of the inspired books of the Bible, the book of Titus.

It is in the Scriptures that we learn about God's people. It is there we learn about the necessity of faith for those chosen by God. It is necessary to have faith for salvation.

The Bible teaches us about the knowledge of truth that leads to godliness. It is the Word of God where we come face to face with the hope of eternal life found only in His Son and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

[6:10] The only place you're going to find salvation and eternal life. We know about God's plan for the redemption of lost sinners because God inspired man to write down that great reality.

And they wrote it down. Always remember that the God who wrote these things down through the agency of men is also the same God who is incapable of lying.

You know, dwell on that a little bit this week. God speaks to us through that book. And He has no capacity to lie.

Can't lie. Won't lie. God cannot lie. That is self-evident and is attested to by the Scriptures. God is both the source and measure of all truth and therefore, by definition, it is impossible for God to lie. The devil lies because it is His nature. And, you know, we think in terms of the first sin committed in the universe being in the Garden of Eden, but it wasn't.

[7:25] The first sin was in heaven. Lucifer, the highest created angel. And he lied. And a third of the angel, angelic host, followed him in his lie.

He's going to be higher than the Most High God. The devil lies because it's His nature. Men lie because it is their fallen nature. I dealt with a guy all day today.

It ruined my day, really. And he's wanting to claim his little seven-year-old son is being abused at school. And it started out, well, they did this.

Then he called me back. Well, actually, they did this too. I forgot. And then he kept adding. It's all lies. Every bit of it is a lie. But to get my attention, he tried to make it worse and worse and worse and worse and worse.

And we're not falling for it. Anyway, I threw that in for free. Men lie because it is their fallen nature. God always speaks truth because it is His nature.

[8:29] In fact, the Bible says God is the Father of truth. You remember Jesus referred to Himself as the way, the truth, and the life. I love what Dr. Schaeffer says about that because he referred to Jesus as true truth.

And I think that really captures the idea well. He is true truth. God made a number of promises in the Word. You know, will they come to pass?

Well, of course they will. Of course. Why? Because God cannot lie. He can't lie. One such promise was this. God promised that His chosen people would come to Him by faith.

They will come. And that is an absolute promise, as are all of God's promises. He also promised that through His truth, people would come to godliness.

Sanctification process. They would grow. That's because of God's promises. We have the certainty of hope in eternal life. And it is a settled hope because God is the one that made the promise.

[9:39] And God can't lie. The term long ages ago that Paul uses here does not refer to ancient human history.

It is true that God related these great truths to Abraham, Moses, David, and the prophets. But that is not what God has in mind here.

He says there, which God who cannot lie promised long ages ago. So, we're not talking about Abraham. We're not talking about Moses or David or the prophets.

They are not in view here. Long ages ago means before time began. It speaks of a period when there were no men or women, no angels, not even a universe.

So, here we see God in the mysterious and incomprehensible past making promises. He's making promises.

[10:46] And when those promises were made, they were also ratified because God cannot lie. And he changes not.

If he said something would come to pass, it will happen just as he said. And we've seen this in fulfilled prophecy time and time and time again.

So, in this eternal, mysterious past before time began, we have God making promises. Now, there were no people, no angels. And if you get this, disregard angles. That's a geometric term. So, to whom did God make these promises? And some would say, well, God made these promises to himself. And that wouldn't be wrong. But I want us to be a little broader in our thinking and specific at the same time. [11:48] God, in eternity past, existed as he does now. And very specifically, he existed in three persons.

There was the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. That's the Trinity, or we call that the Godhead. They have always existed. Never find a time when they did not exist. They are uncreated, co-equal, co-eternal. In eternity past, the three persons of the Trinity, and you find this in a lot of places in Scripture, they communicated with one another. There was love among the Trinity. People say, where did love come from? It came from the Trinity. Promises were made that would never be violated. The Trinity, the three persons of the Trinity, made an eternal covenant of love and life through the Lord Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, who would one day be manifested in human flesh and live among God's created people. [13:04] He came down and he tabernacled with us. He pitched his tent with us. We need to be committed to this message. Here is the message.

The plan of redemption for sinners did not come after men fell into sin. The plan of redemption came before man was ever created. When there was only the Trinity, there was a plan. The Father put on display his perfect love to his Son by promising Jesus a redeemed humanity who would serve and glorify him forever. That's really why we're believers, guys. Why God chose us. Why God brought us into the fold. Why God brought us into the fold. So that we would serve and glorify Christ forever. And may I add something here that I haven't stolen from someone else? When we are sinning, we are not serving or glorifying him. [14:19] That can be described as dead time for the Christian. we have been saved to serve and glorify him now we are committed to the message concerning the son the son's role was to be the perfect and eternal sacrifice for the sins of God's people so they could be redeemed and brought to glory before God provided this marvelous promise of forgiveness in heaven to sinful mankind he had given a promise to his beloved son the Lord Jesus Christ Jesus actually refers to this promise when he prayed to the father in John chapter 17 many call that the high priestly prayer I tend to think it was the Lord's prayer Jesus is praying it and this is what he says in John 17 24 Father I desire that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am in order that they may behold my glory which thou has given me for thou didst love me before the foundation of the world that's where love comes from that's where love comes from a year before Jesus spoke these words to the father he gave this message in public all that the father gives me shall come to me and the one who comes to me I will certainly not cast out for this is the will of my father that everyone who beholds the son and believes in him may have eternal life and I myself will raise him up on the last day sweeping truths out of John chapter 6

I love John chapter 6 we spent some time there last time it's in the notes so we see this astonishing truth concerning the covenant made between the father and the son and I don't want to be guilty of leaving the third person of the Godhead out of all this the spirit of God he reveals this great truth to God's children this covenant is a magnificent expression of the love that exists between the Godhead and Paul also says that at the proper time when the Bible was being written and the eternal covenant was revealed and manifested he did that at the proper time true preachers and teachers of God's word understand this and preach or teach accordingly whatever truth is needed to edify believers is found in this treasure trove of God's word it's all in there now there's there's another foundational principle that Paul teaches Titus so he can relate it to these other ministers on the island of Crete and that is committed being committed to God's means in the proclamation verse 3b in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior

Paul understood something he had been called by God to minister in the name of Christ God called him and we're familiar with that on the road to Damascus I love to say when he knocked Paul off his horse there was no horse mentioned I don't know why where did I come up with that there's no

horse he may have been on a horse I don't know I know he didn't get knocked off a moped that's all I'm sure Paul said I've been called by God to minister I minister in the name of Christ same call Don has having been so called Paul also understood that God would use his own means to fulfill the ministry that he had called Paul to God's means committed to God's way of doing things this ministry of Paul's and every true minister of the gospel was the proclamation of his complete and inerrant word it's what

Don does it's what other ministers that have been here and other churches do the word proclamation illustrates a herald that provided information from his spirit from his superiors but in the bible proclamation is used interchangeably with the word preaching preaching is in view here Paul has in view here the public proclamation of his word through the preaching minister of God's servants this is the word of truth that brings men to saving faith builds them up in divine truth and then strengthens them for godly living did you get those three things word of truth brings men to saving faith builds up in divine truth and strengthens them for godly living now who does that really impact in the world of believers those fellows that are in the word of god they're in the word and I've said before as good as it is a couple hours Sunday and an hour 30-40 minutes

[20 : 29] Wednesday and 30-40 minutes in here won't do it that's a start but it won't do it we got to be in the word in the word in the word at home in the word with our wives and with our loved ones and our children or whatever I believe and I don't think Pastor Don will disagree that expository preaching and that is preaching that systematically and thoroughly verse by verse explains the meaning of scripture I think that's the only and best way to preach you don't leave anything out you know go to the next verse I was teaching through Hebrews many years ago first time I ever taught it I've taught it two or three times now and I'm teaching Hebrews one of the guys in our class long gone from here said why don't can't you do this in six or eight weeks weeks

I can't do it in six or eight weeks he said if you leave out the unimportant parts you could I said where do I find those I don't know you have to work at it he got he got he didn't like that he became a Methodist anyway not a slam on the Methodist or anything I truly believe that verse by verse is the way to do it so what is the role of the preacher let me tell you what it is not it is not to create messages dependent upon his wisdom or cleverness it is not to manipulate or sway his listeners by means of persuasiveness or personal charisma it is the role of the godly preacher to interpret explain and apply God's word as clearly as possible aren't you glad to be at Highland Park Baptist Church yes I am

Paul says he was entrusted with God's truth to proclaim it according to the commandment of God our Savior Paul was entrusted with God's truth he told the church at Galatia that he had been set apart from his mother's womb for this purpose Paul was to preach the gospel that leads to salvation Paul speaks here of God our Savior theologians over the centuries have debated and argued as to whether Paul meant the Father or Jesus talks about God our Savior it doesn't matter the plan of redemption involves the whole trinity we've already witnessed that tonight through the passages of scripture and then a fifth and actually this is our last

I've got to slow down or you guys will get out too early Paul reveals to Titus a fifth foundational principle that the true minister must be committed to God's people to Titus verse 4 to Titus my true child in a common faith grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior now in the previous verse he talked about God our Savior he talks about Christ Jesus our Savior Paul here reveals to Titus the fifth foundational principle it is a common faith we share a common faith fellas there's a lot of believers in China we have a common faith there's a lot of believers in Asia in Saudi Arabia in Iran I mean I've heard guys say if we could just nuke

Iran you kill a lot of Christian people and they're coming to the gospel in droves I was at VOM last week for some meetings people are starting to realize in the Islamic world the bankruptcy of Mohammedism of Islam and I'll tell you ISIS is helping that I don't like their brutality but they're driving people away from Islam and into the arms of Christian ministers and missionaries over there we had this last week a brother in this church that was in Iraq I think he's out by now I don't think he's back but he's at least out it's very it's a common faith you know one group doesn't have this faith another group has this it's a common faith all true believers have it where did they get it got it from the Lord now wait a minute you mean

[25 : 42] I didn't conjure up the faith to get saved no for by grace through faith are you saved and that not of yourselves it is a gift of God why would he do it that way well he tells you the next verse not of works lest any should boast can you imagine how much bragging there would be among

people if we had to conjure up the faith to get saved well I did it this way what about you well I did it well this guy did you know it would be sickening faith comes through hearing hearing through the word of God God brings us to the faith and it is a common faith we all have it if we're true believers it is what holds us together whether we are here at home or in the farthest reaches of the planet and I've had the privilege of being in 46 countries and you know my saying 47 you can't

Louisiana everywhere I've gone I've run into believers everywhere I've gone elevator in Beijing a secret house with no lights at 10 o'clock at night in Hanoi and I could go on and on and on I run into believers and as my good friend we call him brother Andrew in Hong Kong is not his real name told me himself the gospel is so powerful it will find a way to penetrate the darkest areas of the world I remember one missionary was with a tribal group and he learned their language and he was witnessing them about Christ and the tribal leader said I always knew he existed I just didn't know his name he said I could look up at night and see the cosmos and I knew he was there but I didn't know what his name was

I'm glad to finally learn what his name was I told a young Chinese boy young to me 29 years old about Christ and he said you mean this guy and I said where'd you learn that he said my grandmother took me out to a park away from the communists when I was five years old and she said the communists are going to teach you one thing now I'm going to tell you the truth and she told me about that person and I had not thought of him until you brought the name up and then all that came flooding back it's powerful common faith common faith used here relates to Paul as his father in the ministry to Titus it also relates to every believer Titus would ever come into contact with on the Isle of Crete he's superintending all that I would suggest that those that Titus has now met in heaven share a common faith it's a common faith

Titus like Timothy was dear to Paul Paul was his spiritual mentor Paul was his spiritual father so he tells this young protege grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior can you imagine salvation the feeling of euphoria that must have come over Titus this is Paul and Paul is saying Titus I've got a message for you from God grace and peace from God the Father and from Christ Jesus our Lord grace of course is that wonderful gift of God that brings salvation unmerited undeserved unearned I've heard it described that God treats us just as if we'd never sinned nothing wrong with that that'll preach but let me tell you something fellas it's deeper by grace

God treats us as if we are his son he treats us like he treats Jesus we're his son so we have grace and then he links peace he does that many times by the way peace comes to those who are the recipients of God's grace and let me suggest to you if you're not at peace go back and examine yourselves to make sure you receive the grace of God because they go hand in hand and I don't know how any unbeliever could ever be at peace ever I saw this graphically illustrated when Brezhnev died atheist prime minister then the Soviet Union and his family gathered around the casket and you could see it etched in the faces of his sons and sons in law they didn't have any hope and I remember one son his hands were just going like this he had no hope

[31:07] Brezhnev's wife though walked up to the casket and gave the sign of the cross probably the eastern orthodox sign and they said all the guys were there from the Kremlin they were stunned into silence she gave the sign of the cross very interesting peace we're at peace because we have God's grace interestingly grace and peace were the common greetings in Paul's day among Christians walk up to a brother in Christ grace and peace to you no accident John MacArthur's ministry grace to you grace community church Paul also reveals the source of grace and peace again great comfort to Titus great comfort to those that Titus would pass this message along to Paul says it is God the father and Christ

Jesus our savior who has delivered to us grace and peace and of course we all know it came at a very high price didn't it Calvary Calvary again we see the father and the son inseparably bound in the work of salvation now it's going to be up to Titus to appoint men sorry ladies to appoint men as elders to oversee the churches on Crete that's that's the role for Titus and Paul's going to help him Paul's going to say to Titus you're going to appoint these elders and they have to meet spiritual qualifications to be elders and we're going to cover that next time we meet you
Thank you.