
Contents

CHAPTER	PAGE
Preface	vii
Introduction	ix
1. Commitments of a Faithful Leader	1
2. The Qualifications of a Pastor—part 1	17
3. The Qualifications of a Pastor—part 2	33
4. Men Who Must Be Silenced	53
5. The Character of a Healthy Church—part 1	69
6. The Character of a Healthy Church—part 2	91
7. Saving Grace	105
8. The Preacher's Authority	125
9. The Christian's Responsibility in a Pagan Society	135
10. The Last Word on Relationships	159
Bibliography	171
Index of Greek Words	173
Index of Hebrew Words	174
Index of Scripture	174
Index of Subjects	178

Commitments of a Faithful Leader

1

Paul, a bond-servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago, but at the proper time manifested, even His word, in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior; to Titus, my true child in a common faith: grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. (1:1–4)

The first four verses of this letter, which form the salutation, comprise one long, involved, and poignant sentence. The greeting is somewhat more formal than those in either letter to Timothy, but the purpose of all three letters was much the same—to encourage and strengthen a young pastor who had succeeded the apostle in a difficult ministry. As will become apparent throughout this epistle, the emphasis is on God’s saving work (both God and Christ are repeatedly called Savior: 1:3, 4; 2:10, 13; 3:4, 6). The opening greeting sets this theme by centering on the nature of gospel ministry.

Because Paul had spent much less time himself in founding and establishing the churches on the island of Crete than he had spent with

the single congregation in Ephesus (where Timothy now pastored), it was particularly important that believers in the Cretan churches understood that Titus was not operating on his own but ministered with the designated authority of Paul. Titus was the direct legate, envoy, or ambassador of the apostle, sent to Crete to strengthen the churches for the purpose of effective evangelism in that pagan culture. Anyone, therefore, who attacked the authority and teaching of Titus would be attacking the divinely delegated authority and teaching of Paul himself.

But Paul's opening statement about himself (one of the clearest representations of his ministry anywhere in the New Testament) is much more than a dogmatic declaration of apostolic authority. Although he had deep personal feelings and even certain personal objectives in ministry—such as his desire to bring the gospel to Bithynia (Acts 16:7) and to Spain (Rom. 15:24)—he did not write under the impetus of emotion or personal desire, much less of impulse, but under the compulsion of divinely revealed absolutes from the Lord in the power of the Spirit. God, who desires to save sinners, wanted to prepare Titus for the building of congregations able to reach the lost.

In this rich salutation to Titus, Paul reveals five core features that guided his living and his service to the Lord, foundational principles on which the service of every dedicated leader in Christ's church must be built.

COMMITTED TO GOD'S MASTERY

Paul, a bond-servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, (1:1a)

The first feature is that of commitment to God's mastery. Above all else, the apostle saw himself as a man totally under divine authority, as expressed in the phrase **a bond-servant of God**.

As mentioned in the Introduction to this volume, the apostle's Hebrew name was Saul, after the first king of Israel. Soon after his miraculous conversion and calling by Christ, however, he came to be known exclusively by his Greek name, *Paulos* (**Paul**).

With full truthfulness, **Paul** could have identified himself as a brilliant scholar, a highly educated Jewish leader who also was learned in Greek literature and philosophy. He could have flaunted his inherited Roman citizenship, an extremely valuable advantage in that day. He could have boasted of his unique calling as apostle to the Gentiles, who was granted full privilege and authority alongside the Twelve. He could have boasted of being "caught up to the third heaven, . . . into Paradise" (2 Cor. 12:2, 4), of his gift of miracles, and of being chosen as the hu-

man author of a great part of the Scriptures of the new covenant. He chose, rather, to identify himself foremost as **a bond-servant of God**.

Doulos (**bond-servant**) refers to the most servile person in the culture of Paul's day and is often translated "slave." Paul was in complete, but willing, bondage to **God**. He had no life that he called his own, no will of his own, purpose of his own, or plan of his own. All was subject to his Lord. In every thought, every breath, and every effort he was under the mastery of **God**.

Because Paul refers to himself as **a bond-servant of God** only here—at all other times referring to himself as a bond-servant of *Christ* (see, e.g., Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:10; Phil. 1:1)—he may have intended to place himself alongside Old Testament men of God. John calls Moses "the bond-servant of God" (Rev. 15:3), and the Lord Himself spoke of "Moses My servant" (Josh. 1:2). His successor, Joshua, is called "the servant of the Lord" (Josh. 24:29). Amos declared, "Surely the Lord God does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). Through Jeremiah, God said, "Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have sent you all My servants the prophets" (Jer. 7:25).

Because many of the false teachers in the churches on Crete were Judaizers, "those of the circumcision" (Titus 1:10; cf. v. 14), Paul may have desired to affirm his authority as the **bond-servant of Yahweh** (Jehovah), the covenant name of the **God** of Israel.

There is a general sense in which every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ has "been freed from sin and enslaved to God," a bondage that results "in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life" (Rom. 6:22). To be a Christian is to be **a bond-servant of God**. We are not our own but "have been bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6:20), being "redeemed [not] with perishable things like silver or gold, . . . but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ" (1 Pet. 1:18–19). And because we no longer belong to ourselves, we "should no longer live for [ourselves], but for Him who died and rose again on [our] behalf" (2 Cor. 5:15).

Paul's specific duty to God was to fulfill his servanthood by being **an apostle of Jesus Christ** (cf., e.g., Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1). Even as he neared the end of an extraordinarily blessed and fruitful life, he was still driven by the desire to be an obedient bond-servant. His apostleship, in fact, had brought increased duties of servanthood, demanding greater faithfulness, greater submission, and often greater sacrifice.

Nevertheless, Paul counted his bondage to God and his escalating suffering to be a blessing. He testified to believers at Philippi that "even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all" (Phil. 2:17).

He reminded the elders from Ephesus, “I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may finish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24).

Apostolos (**apostle**) carries the basic meaning of “messenger” and was sometimes used of even the lowliest person who carried a message on behalf of someone else. But the term was used most often of a special messenger, a type of ambassador, who was sent with a specific message and spoke with the authority of the one who sent him. The authority of the message, therefore, did not derive from the messenger but from the sender.

Above all things, Paul was an ambassador of his divine Lord and Savior, **Jesus Christ** (cf. Acts 9:15–16; 22:14–15; 26:15–18). Just as calling himself a **bond-servant of God** may have been meant to establish his authority with Jews in the churches on Crete, his referring to himself as **an apostle of Jesus Christ** may have been meant to establish his authority with Gentiles in the churches there.

All effective, fruitful, and genuinely spiritual leaders in Christ’s church have a deep awareness that they are under divine authority. That awareness becomes the controlling reality of their lives. They do not seek to fulfill personal agendas, create personal fame, or build personal empires. They are content and feel honored for the privilege of being wholly subject to the Master who has chosen and sent them.

COMMITTED TO GOD’S MISSION

for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, in the hope of eternal life,
(1:1b–2a)

Because of Paul’s devotion to God’s mastery, he had unswerving commitment to God’s mission. It is the same mission that binds every preacher and teacher and, in a more general sense, every church leader and even every believer. As seen in this text, that mission includes evangelization, edification, and encouragement.

EVANGELIZATION

for the faith of those chosen of God (1:1b)

Paul first recognized his responsibility to help bring God’s elect, **those** who are **chosen of God**, to saving **faith** in Jesus Christ. About a

year after he wrote this letter, the apostle told Timothy, “I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory” (2 Tim. 2:10). Paul was called as a divine bond-servant and apostle to proclaim the message of the gospel in order that the elect might be brought by the Holy Spirit to **faith**, which is required to activate, as it were, their election by **God**. As he explained to believers in Rome, “Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Rom. 10:17).

Faith actuates justification, God’s gracious act by which He considers and declares as righteous those who have placed their trust in His Son, Jesus Christ. “To the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness” (Rom. 4:5). Yet even “faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe . . . [is] a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:22, 24). “By grace you have been saved through faith,” the apostle explains in his letter to the Ephesian church; “and [even] that [faith is] not of yourselves, it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8).

Paul himself rejoiced in his own reception of this grace when he wrote that he was found in Christ “not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith” (Phil. 3:9). All the other aspects of salvation attend this justification by faith—including regeneration and conversion, by which the believer not only is declared righteous but is transformed into a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17).

We sometimes hear even evangelical preachers and teachers say that the simple biblical gospel is not “relevant” to modern man and needs to be bolstered and adorned by various cultural adaptations to make it more attractive and acceptable. But how presumptuous it is to think that an imperfect, sinful human instrument could improve on God’s own message for bringing men to Himself! When the gospel is clearly preached to those who have been chosen, at some point the Holy Spirit will awaken them and they will believe and enter into the full benefit of their election.

Even as an apostle, Paul knew that the saving **faith** that he was called to preach could not be produced or enhanced by his own wisdom, cleverness, persuasiveness, or style. In his first letter to the immature and worldly church in Corinth, he reminded them that “we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men” (1 Cor. 1:23–25). “When I came to you, brethren,” he added a few verses later, “I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to

you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:1–2). The simple but infinitely powerful truth of the gospel of “Jesus Christ, and Him crucified” will never fail to elicit saving **faith** at the appropriate time in **those chosen by God**. The reality of divine election is all through the New Testament. It is the foundation of the whole building of the redeemed.

Jesus told the Twelve, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you” (John 15:16). Because Jews were the original chosen people of God to evangelize the nations under the old covenant, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first,” Paul and Barnabas told unbelieving Jews in Pisidian Antioch. But “since you repudiate” the gospel, they continued, “and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. For thus the Lord has commanded us, ‘I have placed You as a light for the Gentiles, that You should bring salvation to the end of the earth.’ And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed” (Acts 13:46–48). The church, taken from all nations (not excluding individual Jews), has replaced Israel as God’s chosen people until “the fulness of the Gentiles” has been completed and Israel is restored (Rom. 11:25–27). God has chosen sinners from all nations to save and to bring to Himself eternally, a vast gathering of elect individuals.

As divine sovereign of the universe He created, God is able to say with perfect justice and righteousness, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion” (Rom. 9:15; cf. v. 18). To those who ask, “Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?” the apostle replies, “Who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, ‘Why did you make me like this,’ will it? Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for common use?” (Rom. 9:19–21).

Paul reminded believers in Ephesus that God “chose us in [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will” (Eph. 1:4–5). To believers in Thessalonica he said, “God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth” (2 Thess. 2:13). He told Timothy, “Join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity” (2 Tim. 1:8–9).

Peter addressed his first letter “to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit” (1 Pet. 1:1–2). Later in that letter he refers to them as “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession” (1 Pet. 2:9). From eternity past, every believer’s name has been “written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Rev. 21:27).

The duty of evangelization can be summarized as preaching the gospel clearly, because of which the Holy Spirit will sovereignly and miraculously cause the elect to believe and be saved. That is the priority ministry of all who are servants of God and messengers of Jesus Christ.

EDIFICATION

and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, (1:1c)

Paul’s second responsibility in fulfilling his commitment to God’s mission was to edify those who believed by teaching them the full counsel of God’s Word so that they might be sanctified by **the knowledge of the truth**.

Knowledge translates *epignōsis*, which refers to the clear perception of a **truth**. Paul has in mind saving **truth**, the truth of the gospel that leads to salvation. It is that aspect of the truth that he mentions in his first letter to Timothy, in which he assures us that “God our Savior . . . desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:3–4; 2 Tim. 2:25). By contrast, a person who does not genuinely seek God or His way of salvation is “always learning [but] never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” that saves (2 Tim. 3:7).

Upon salvation, the believer is given an appetite for this **truth**, which causes him to desire to know more and to grow and mature **according to godliness**. Saving **truth** leads through salvation to sanctification as it produces increasing **godliness**, without which salvation cannot be considered genuine. **Godliness** is the manifestation of the Spirit’s work of sanctification. “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,” Paul later explains, “instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age” (Titus 2:11–12; 1 Tim. 4:7–8). Divine **truth** and **godliness** are inextricably related. No matter how sincere our intentions might be, we cannot obey God’s will if we do not know what it is. We cannot be godly if we do not know what God is like and what He expects of those who belong to Him.

Paul told the Ephesian elders that it was the Word that would build them up (Acts 20:32). Jesus summed up the relation between the truth and sanctification when He said to His Father, "Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

There is therefore no way to exaggerate the importance of sound doctrine. "If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing" (1 Tim. 6:3-4). "God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification," Paul declares (1 Thess. 4:7). As always, God's grace provides that which His righteousness demands. "His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the *true knowledge* of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence" (2 Pet. 1:3, emphasis added).

D. Edmond Hiebert writes, "There is an intimate connection between truth and godliness. A vital possession of truth is inconsistent with irreverence. . . . Real truth never deviates from the path of piety. A profession of the truth which allows an individual to live in ungodliness is a spurious profession" (*Titus and Philemon* [Chicago: Moody, 1957], p. 21).

In his first letter, Peter admonishes: "Therefore, putting aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord" (1 Pet. 2:1-3). In his second letter, he calls us to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18). Every pastor and teacher has divine responsibility "for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-13).

Like 1 and 2 Timothy, the epistle of Titus contains numerous warnings against false teachers and false teaching. In addition to being proved wrong when held against the truths of Scripture, false teaching also is exposed by the ungodliness that inevitably follows in its wake. "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing," Jesus warned, "but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor figs from thistles, are they? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit; but the bad tree bears bad fruit" (Matt. 7:15-17). Both truth and falsehood can be discerned by what they produce. God's **truth** produces **godliness**. The transformation wrought through saving faith is visibly manifest in holy conduct.

As noted above, God “chose us in [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him” (Eph. 1:4). God’s very purpose for choosing and saving us is to make us like Himself—holy, pure, blameless, righteous, and perfect. The evidence of our election is found in our justification. The evidence of our justification is found in our sanctification. And one day the evidence of our sanctification will be manifested in our glorification.

The spiritual leader and messenger of Christ is devoted to proclaiming the Word, which by the Spirit edifies the believer and trains him in godliness.

ENCOURAGEMENT

in the hope of eternal life, (1:2a)

Paul’s third responsibility in fulfilling his commitment to God’s mission was to bring biblical encouragement to believers, based on their divinely guaranteed **hope of eternal life**, of one day being glorified, wholly perfected in Christ’s own righteousness. That is the marvelous encouragement of **hope** about which every minister of God can assure God’s people and, in fact, all of God’s people can assure one another. Later in this letter he speaks of our “blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus” (2:13) and still later of our “being justified by His grace [that] we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (3:7).

Paul is not speaking of a wistful desire for something that is possible but uncertain. **The hope of eternal life** is the believer’s deepest longing for that which is affirmed and unalterably guaranteed by God’s own Word. Jesus will raise up His own on the last day, and no one who belongs to God will fall short of that promise (see John 6:37–40). The “Holy Spirit of promise” not only seals us in Jesus Christ but also is “given as a *pledge of our inheritance*, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory” (Eph. 1:13–14, emphasis added; cf. 2 Cor. 1:22). “For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan,” Paul reminded Corinthian believers, “being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, in order that what is mortal may be swallowed up by [eternal] life. Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us *the Spirit as a pledge*” (2 Cor. 5:4–5, emphasis added).

Eternal life is the pervading reality of salvation, and the **hope** of that **life** gives believers encouragement in a multitude of ways. It is an encouragement to holiness. “Beloved, now we are children of God,” John says, “and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know

that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure” (1 John 3:2-3).

The hope of eternal life gives encouragement for service. We are assured that “if any man builds upon the foundation [Jesus Christ] with gold, silver, precious stones, . . . he shall receive a reward” (1 Cor. 3:12, 14). By far the greatest reward will be to hear our Master say, “Well done, good and faithful slave” (Matt. 25:21). Every believer should be able to say with Paul, “I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. . . . I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:12, 14). The “prize” when we are called up is Christlikeness (1 John 3:2-3), and while we are on the earth it is the “goal” that we strive for (1 John 2:6).

The hope of eternal life also gives encouragement to endure whatever suffering we may experience for the sake of Christ. Again, every believer should be able to sincerely say with Paul, “I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, . . . that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead” (Phil. 3:8, 10-11). We know “that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. . . . And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, *waiting eagerly* for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body” (Rom. 8:18, 23, emphasis added). Whomever God has chosen He will justify, and whomever He justifies He will glorify and make into the image of His Son (vv. 29-30). This glorious, eternal hope transcends all temporary pain.

COMMITTED TO GOD'S MESSAGE

which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago, but at the proper time manifested, even His word, (1:2b-3a)

That contemplation of the content of gospel ministry leads Paul to a third foundational principle of ministry, namely, uncompromising commitment to God's message, to divinely revealed Scripture. That commitment is an obvious corollary of the first two. Understanding of God's sovereign mastery and mission comes exclusively through Scripture. We know about His chosen people, about His requirement of faith for salvation, about knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness, and

about the hope of eternal life only through His gracious revelation. And we know certain profound realities regarding the eternal plan of redemption of sinners because God inspired men to write down those realities.

That **God . . . cannot lie** is self-evident as well as scripturally attested. The prophet Samuel reminded the disobedient King Saul that God, “the Glory of Israel, will not lie” (1 Sam. 15:29). Because God is the source and measure of all truth, it is, by definition, “impossible for God to lie” (Heb. 6:18). Just as “whenever [the devil] speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies” (John 8:44), so it is that, whenever God speaks the truth, He speaks from His own nature, because He is the Father of truth.

The **God** of truth **promised long ages ago** that those whom He has chosen, those who come to faith in Him through His truth that leads to godliness, have the certain hope of eternal life. **Long ages ago** does not refer to ancient human history. It actually means “before time began.” God reiterated His plan of salvation and eternal life to such godly men as Abraham, Moses, David, and the prophets, but the original promise was made and ratified in eternity past. Our gracious God “called us with a holy calling . . . in Christ Jesus from all eternity” (2 Tim. 1:9). “He chose us in Him [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His [eternal] will” (Eph. 1:4–5). His eternal will was manifested in His “eternal covenant [through] Jesus our Lord” (Heb. 13:20).

The plan of redemption for sinners did not come after men fell but before man was even created. The Father showed His perfect love to the Son (cf. John 17:23–24, 26) by promising Him a redeemed humanity who would serve and glorify Him forever. The Son’s role was to be the sacrifice for the sins of the elect so that they could be redeemed and brought to glory. Before God provided the marvelous promise of forgiveness and heaven to sinful mankind, He had given a promise to His beloved Son. That is the promise of which Jesus reminded the Father in His prayer on our behalf: “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 hast given Me; for Thou didst love Me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:24). A year or so earlier, Jesus affirmed that promise of the gift of redeemed souls when He publicly proclaimed: “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” (John 6:37, 40). One glorious day in eternity future, when our Lord Jesus has received the full promise of the Father to Him and all the saved are glori-

fied and made like Jesus to serve and praise Him forever, the Son, in a gesture of divine love, will give everything back to the Father. Paul records that future moment: “When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all” (1 Cor. 15:28).

It is astonishing to consider that those who are redeemed are caught up in this magnificent eternal covenant that two members of the Godhead have made with each other in order to demonstrate the infinite scope of their love for each other. **At the proper time**, that is, when the Bible was being written, that eternal covenant, together with its related truths, was **manifested, even His Word**. The only source of this monumental truth, the one true message about God, the only effective way of finding Him, the only way of pleasing Him, and the only hope of being forever with Him are **manifested in His Word**.

One wonders, therefore, how a preacher or teacher who names the name of Christ can proclaim anything other than God’s own **Word**. Whatever truth we need for evangelism is found in **His Word**. That **Word** is the only seed that gives eternal life (1 Pet. 1:23). Whatever truth we need to edify believers is found in **His Word** (cf. 1 Pet. 2:1–2). All of the truth we are to teach is found in **His Word** (John 17:17; Acts 20:32). Those absolute truths and all others related to spiritual life are found there and nowhere else.

COMMITTED TO GOD’S MEANS

in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior; (1:3b)

A fourth basic principle of Paul’s life and ministry was his commitment to God’s own means for fulfilling the ministry to which he was called—the **proclamation** of His complete and inerrant Word.

Proclamation translates *kērugma*, which was used of the message that a herald would give on behalf of the ruler or town council under whom he served. In the New Testament, this term (often rendered “preaching”) is always used of the public **proclamation** of God’s Word, which, as the apostle has just pointed out, brings men to saving faith, builds them up in divine truth, and strengthens them for godly living.

It is for that reason that expository preaching—preaching that systematically and thoroughly explains the meaning of Scripture—is the only legitimate way to preach. The preacher’s responsibility is not to create messages from his own wisdom or cleverness or to manipulate or sway his listeners by means of his own persuasiveness or charisma

but to interpret, explain, and apply God's Word as clearly and completely as possible.

In his excellent book *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, Walter C. Kaiser writes,

It is no secret that Christ's Church is not at all in good health in many places of the world. She has been languishing because she has been fed, as the current line has it, "junk food"; all kinds of artificial preservatives and all sorts of unnatural substitutes have been served up to her. As a result, theological and Biblical malnutrition has afflicted the very generation that has taken such giant steps to make sure its physical health is not damaged by using foods or products that are carcinogenic or otherwise harmful to their physical bodies. Simultaneously, a worldwide spiritual famine resulting from the absence of any genuine publication of the Word of God (Amos 8:11) continues to run wild and almost unabated in most quarters of the Church. ([Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981], p. 7)

Although the full gospel truth had not yet been revealed in Jonah's day, Jesus said that it was through "the preaching" (*kērugma*) of that ancient prophet that "the men of Nineveh . . . repented" (Matt. 12:41). Throughout his first imprisonment and trial in Rome, "The Lord stood with me, and strengthened me," Paul testified, "in order that through me the proclamation [*kērugma*] might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear" (2 Tim. 4:17). He reminded believers in Corinth that "since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe" (1 Cor. 1:21; "message preached" translates the single Greek word *kērugma*). Later in that epistle Paul again reminded readers that his "message and [his] preaching [*kērugma*] were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (2:4).

Jesus Himself began His public ministry by preaching (Matt. 4:17), exactly as the prophet Isaiah had predicted (see Luke 4:17–21). The Lord called His earliest followers to "proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:60). After Pentecost, the apostles "kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ" (Acts 5:42), just as the Lord had instructed (10:42). Paul told Timothy to "preach the Word" (2 Tim. 4:2).

Paul **was entrusted** with a unique apostolic commission to proclaim God's Word according to **the commandment of God our Savior**. God "set me apart, even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace," he testified, and "was pleased to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles" (Gal. 1:15–16). Both

as “a bond-servant of God [the Father] and as an apostle of Jesus Christ [the Son]” (Titus 1:1), Paul was under **the commandment of God** to preach the gospel of salvation. “I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit,” he told believers at Colossae, “that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God” (Col. 1:25; cf. 1 Tim. 2:7). “I am under compulsion,” he said in his first letter to the church at Corinth, “for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel. . . . I have a stewardship entrusted to me” (1 Cor. 9:16–17).

Paul here speaks of **God** as **our Savior** rather than as **God** the Father, as in the following verse. He refers to **God** as **Savior** five other times in the pastoral epistles—in 1 Timothy 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; and two other times in the present letter (2:10; 3:4). God is not reluctant to save, as are some imaginary deities who must be appeased by their devotees and begged to be merciful. Jesus declared that “God [the Father] so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him” (John 3:16–17; cf. 1 John 4:14). Jesus also declared that “unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). The unfolding saga of salvation is the plan and the work of the entire Trinity. It is the joy of God to save sinners (see Luke 15:7, 10, 20–24) and the sorrow of God when they are lost (see Luke 19:21–24).

COMMITTED TO GOD’S PEOPLE

to Titus, my true child in a common faith: grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. (1:4)

A fifth foundational principle of Paul’s life that is illustrated here was his commitment to God’s people. He had loyal devotion to those such as **Titus, his true child in a common faith**. He used almost identical words of Timothy (1 Tim. 1:1; cf. 2 Tim. 1:2).

True translates *gnēsios*, which has the basic meaning of “being lawfully begotten.” **Child** translates *teknon*, which was used of a legitimate child, in contrast to one born out of wedlock. The two words together, therefore, intensify Paul’s statement of his close relationship to Titus, his spiritual son in the fullest sense. The apostle was likely the human agent used to bring Titus to salvation, and he clearly had the major responsibility for nurturing him in spiritual growth and for training him for spiritual service.

The phrase **common faith** can be interpreted subjectively or objectively. Subjectively it would refer to saving faith, which Titus

shared in **common** with Paul and all other believers. Objectively it would refer to the truths of the Christian **faith**, which Titus shared in **common** with the apostle and with all other believers who are sound in doctrine. Although Paul was here probably stressing the subjective aspect of Titus's **faith**, it is obvious from this epistle and from accounts in the book of Acts that Paul considered Titus to be sound in doctrine. He would not have left any church in the hands of a leader who was not thoroughly grounded in the Word.

Paul had trusted Titus even to work with the worldly and troublesome church at Corinth. In his second letter to that congregation he speaks of Titus nine times, always favorably. "But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus," he rejoices, "and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced even more" (2 Cor. 7:6–7). A few verses later he praises the young pastor, saying, "Thanks be to God, who puts the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus" (8:16) and calling him "my partner and fellow worker among you" (v. 23).

Throughout history, the most powerful and effective leaders in the church have been involved in developing partners and fellow workers who extend and perpetuate the ministry of Jesus Christ. Although Paul was the most highly gifted of the apostles, he never ministered alone, never attempted to carry on a single-handed ministry. Until his death, he was intimately associated with an amazingly large network of preachers, teachers, and other leaders in the church with whom he was a partner in service. He extended himself through others, knowing that the Lord did not call him to function alone. He realized the importance of delegating responsibility and of preparing others to carry on the ministry.

All of Paul's letters carry greetings from and to friends and fellow workers. In the last chapter of his letter to the church at Rome he sends greetings to twenty-seven men and women by name and commends many others who are unnamed. He genuinely loved his fellow believers and workers and built deep personal relationships with them wherever he went. He continually encouraged them and gave himself sacrificially to meeting their needs.

Like Timothy, however, Titus was especially dear to Paul, his spiritual father and mentor. We can but imagine the apostle's profound feeling as he wrote assuringly to his beloved Titus, **grace and peace [to you] from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.**

Grace is the wondrous gift of God that brings salvation, and **peace** is the wondrous blessing that He bestows on those whom He graciously saves. For that reason the phrase **grace and peace** became

a common greeting among early Christians, a practice perhaps begun by Paul.

To this greeting he added **from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior**, a simple but profound creed that testifies to the source of the believer's **grace and peace**. The apostle has just spoken of "God our Savior" in the previous verse, and now, at the end of the same sentence, he speaks of **Christ Jesus our Savior**.

Although God becomes the heavenly **Father** of all who place their faith in **Christ Jesus**, Paul's emphasis here is on the Father's unique relationship to "His only begotten Son" (John 3:16) and on the truth, mentioned above, that the **Father** and the Son, **Christ Jesus**, are inseparably bound in the work of salvation.