

Fulfilling the Unfinished Task

Text: Titus 1:5-16

Introduction:

When was I was kid, we live in a urban place. Our street was the main street in our village. Commonly, tricycles were the main public transportation inside the village. During afternoon, I together with my cousins would sit at our terrace and would count tricycles passing by. One...two...three... (Reflection) Where is there destination? What does it feel being the passenger; how about being the driver? How much would the fare cost?

Nevertheless, their task is to transport passengers from one place to another. Likewise, they determine how fast they should go, and how much the fare will be. After counting a lot of it, my neck hurts.

Background:

Just by reading verse 4 of Titus chap 1, we can see that this letter was written for Titus by Apostle Paul (v1).

Titus had been with Paul many times. First, during the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15; Gal. 1-2). Second, from Ephesus he was sent to Corinth (2 Cor. 8:6, 16-17). Third, they met again in Philippi—then returned to Corinth. Fourth, he was assigned to Crete. Fifth, asked to meet Paul in Nicopolis (Western Greece). And lastly, he was tasked to go to Dalmatia (Montenegro/ Yugoslavia).

Titus exemplified what a true follower of Christ must be. The same with Timothy, Paul told them that a Christian must teach others also so that they can also share the gospel of Christ (2 Timothy 2:2).

“May we have the same zeal for the Lord that Titus showed. Every believer would do well to model Titus’s commitment to truth, fervor in spreading the gospel, and enthusiastic love for the church.”

Main Idea:

Reading our passage, there are two things that Apostle Paul commanded Titus to do in Crete. These are the very purpose of his stay in Crete. Let us read verse 5:

⁵The 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.

Two things: first, “to put in order what was left unfinished;” second is to appoint elders. First one: there are unfinished business in the lives of Christians. There’s something missing,

something lacking that each of us must long for. We are not perfect nor in a glorified state of life. Hence, the need of putting things in order in our lives through discipleship, prayer, and growing intimacy with our Lord and Savior.

Due to sin, man's life is not in order—we miss the aim or target of righteousness; we go astray from the Words of God. Hence, we need correcting, reminding, intentional discipleship. This task of putting in order is inseparable with the next task which is to appoint elders. Meaning, in order to put things in order in the church, one must have elders; and by appointing elders, it leads to putting matters of the church in order.

Second task: appoint elders. Now, in here, I might challenge some of the existing views that some of you might have. In 1 Timothy 3, Acts 6, and even here in Titus 1:5, it clearly states that we appoint elders. It does not say, ballot boxes nor election, nor pushing someone to be an elder. But by appointment. This has been the practice of the early NT church, so as we.

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. 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.

These are the qualities of an elder.

1. Elders are shepherds.
2. Elders are pastors.
3. Elders are plural.
4. Elders must be godly and should model godliness.
5. Elders should be able to teach.
6. Elders must lead. “overseers”
7. Elders are not Jesus. (1 Pet. 5:4, Jesus is the Chief Shepherd.)

Moving forward

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.**

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] 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.

Examples of Gospel myth: (1) Extreme Positive thinking similar to Prosperity gospel, entailing that each of us should be blessed materially or financially, if not, then there's something wrong with our life. This prosperity focuses on (a) what you want to hear, rather than what God wants you to hear; (b) on your fleshly desires, rather than your spiritual desires; (c) worldly gains, x heavenly blessings; (d) a gospel that makes you feel good, than a gospel that convicts you for a need of savior.

(2) The myth that you can be saved by your own work. Attending Sunday services, Bible studies, doing good works, and helping others will gain me a reservation seat in heaven. (3) The contrast is also true. Not attending church services, nor Bible study, fellowships is just fine since I am already saved. The former is called, Pelagianism, while the latter is called Antinomianism or hyper grace. Both were declared heresies during the early church history.

(4) Those who say that the Bible is not the word of God is another danger. They reduce the Scriptures to mere historical record or a genre of its own when it comes to philosophy and literature. This is not true. We strongly oppose this view as written in our 'statement of faith'. (5) Others would say that Jesus Christ is a mere man, a great teacher but not God. (6) The Spirit is just a force and not another person of the Trinity. All these views are untrue, false, and oppose the biblical truth.

(7) Last myth, we discussed this yesterday during the Theology class (we should have a name of our group), Pluralism. Pluralism says that we can find salvation or know God through any world religion. Stating that the Allah of Islam is the same with YHWH of the Old Testament and the Jesus Christ of Christianity. Also, the Buddha of Buddhism, Vishnu and Krishna of Hinduism. Of course, this is not true. There is only ONE WAY to God, only ONE NAME under heaven, only ONE LORD and REDEEMER of humanity—that is Jesus Christ.

Applying these principles, the church must realize the need for appointing elders to put things in order by God's grace.

Three Directions:

1. Deep Worship
 - a. Preaching
 - b. Prayer

2. Deep Discipleship

a. Studying the Word

- i. “Encourage others by sound doctrine” v9a
- ii. Defend the truth: “refute those who oppose it” v9b
- iii. “Rebuke them sharply” v13

b. Transforming Lives

- i. Paul said, “Imitate me, just as I imitate Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1).
- ii. We conform to the Elders as they conform to Christ. They are our spiritual models. Hence the need of higher qualities of being a follower of Christ.

1. 1 Cor. 4, ¹⁶ *Therefore I urge you to imitate me.* ¹⁷ *For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.*

3. Deep Evangelism and Missions

- a. The purpose of Paul sending Titus to Crete is the advancement of the gospel of Christ. The church is more than a mere institution, but we should be missional.
- b. We are not doing it right if we are just focused on the things about ourselves and not longing for the expansion of God’s Word.

Conclusion:

Paul and the early NT church stated the significance of elders. There is a correlation with having elders and putting things in order in the local church. This is the unfinished task that Paul was telling Titus. A task that we should also adhere and obey.

Overall, by fulfilling this task, the church shall be led towards deep worship, deep discipleship, and deep missions and evangelism.

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