

## Titus study: The Blessing of Belonging – Week 1

### A Call to Commitment for Social Reformation

#### Introduction

Titus is sent to a society that is upside down to establish a true church. It is a difficult assignment and the only hope for it is to establish an authentic church of committed believers.

<sup>5</sup>The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished ...

- ❖ Crete was a society of people who were without vision and had become a people without restraint.
- ❖ Crete was a society not unlike our own - where:
  - Lost sense of right & wrong
    - “Systems of justice end up making judgments of injustice.”
    - Human reasoning results in illogical and confusing conclusions.
  - There was a loss of conscience and many became corrupt.
  - Talkers and deceivers end up damaging the foundation of family.
  - People had become self focused and self serving – doing things “for the sake of dishonest gain.”
  - Nothing was pure, nothing was sacred - Immorality had become a powerful and corrupting influence.
  - People claimed to know God but their actions denied the nature of God.

<sup>10</sup>For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group. <sup>11</sup>They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach—and that for the sake of dishonest gain. <sup>12</sup>Even one of their own prophets has said, “Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons.” <sup>13</sup>This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith <sup>14</sup>and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth. <sup>15</sup>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. <sup>16</sup>They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything.

Titus assignment was difficult: It was to bring social change through the establishment of Christian leadership and a committed fellowship of believers.

Titus was to identify the Christians there and:

- ❖ Call them to a lifestyle of truth – “Doing what is good and biblical.”
- ❖ Call them to commitment – to fellowship, purpose and unity.
- ❖ Call them to become a people who by their example would influence and bring reformation.

Cultures can be changed – Example – Garden City

Clayton Williams memorial service:

- My talk with the retired mayor of Garden City – How much Garden city has changed as a result of men like Tom Blackburn & Clayton Williams.
- Tom Blackburn “tended the garden” for 40 years and it made a difference.
- We have tried to follow his example of faithfulness and do the same.

## Seven ways Titus was to build a church that would bring social reformation

### 1. Teaching Biblical truth

<sup>2:1</sup>You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.

<sup>1:1</sup>Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God’s elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness– <sup>2</sup>a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, <sup>3</sup>and at his appointed season he brought his word to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior.

- Be tenacious when it comes to Biblical truth – it is the foundation of true reformation.

Pope John Paul II – A man who was loved the world over because he was a man of unwavering faith but non-religious. He fought for what social justice and moral welfare based on Biblical truth. He is remembered for abandoning himself for the work of Christ. Even in his last hours he fought for Terry Shivo. He finished well and died with conviction and dignity.  
His whole life he had fought for the culture of life - The poor, the disabled, the weak & vulnerable. All life is valuable to God.

### 2. Be an example. Demonstrate the target with your own life

<sup>2:7</sup>In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness <sup>8</sup>and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

- Practice what we teach – especially leadership.
- John Paul II had even wanted his death to be an example of dignity and confidence in the God he had so faithfully served.

### 3. Establishing a core of leadership that reflected Biblical truth

<sup>1:6</sup>An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. <sup>7</sup>Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quicktempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. <sup>8</sup>Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is selfcontrolled, upright, holy and disciplined. <sup>9</sup>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.

- “*Revolutionary leadership*” went to the publisher last week.
- Leadership is everything when it comes to the health of church and ministry. A church can’t move farther than the competence and character of its leadership.

#### 4. Calling people to fellowship – accountability and commitment.

- ❖ Our history being birthed in the Jesus movement.
- ❖ In resisting membership we have denied people the blessing of really knowing that they belong. Belonging is a deep felt need.
- ❖ We belong to things that aren’t even important:
  - PTA
  - Rotary club or the Elks club.
  - Costco
  - Blockbuster booster club
- ❖ Resistance to Vineyard 101 – We called it “Welcome to the Vineyard Family” because it seemed more palatable to old hippies.
- ❖ There is blessing in belonging but belonging requires ownership and commitment.

#### 5. Calling people to participation and into a process of discipleship.

<sup>2:3</sup>...teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. <sup>4</sup>Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, <sup>5</sup>to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

#### 6. Exercising God given authority to bring correction without debate or fruitless arguments.

<sup>2:15</sup>These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. <sup>3:9</sup>But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless.

- ❖ We are called to be a family, an army not a social club.
- ❖ We are called to run a race to win and must go into strict disciple.
- ❖ Church discipline is illegal without church membership.
- ❖ Purpose of Vineyard 101 - We must know what we think and who we are – We must be a people with defined values and a clear vision so that we can avoid debate and people who will try to convince us to be something we aren’t called to be.

## 7. Teach them to do good works but always remember that you were saved by grace.

<sup>3:3</sup> At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. <sup>4</sup> But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, <sup>5</sup> he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup> whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup> so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life

- ❖ Let's never forget where we once were without Christ in our lives so that we become critical and cynical of a society that has yet to meet him.
- ❖ We are called to compassion and love not rules. Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom. When people live by the spirit there is no need for the law. [Gal. 5] Paul said, "...but by the grace of God there goes I."
- ❖ Often the most legalistic people are the people who have experienced the most grace.

Paul went on to say:

<sup>8</sup> This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.