



ORCHARD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Bible Study

FEBRUARY 2012

MALACHI & TITUS

This continues from our studies on 1 Timothy in September and November 2011. Titus, like Timothy, was one of Paul's faithful associates. When problems arose in a church, Paul knew he could depend on either of them to handle the situation. In Titus, one of the Pastoral Epistles, Paul encourages his younger colleagues in their roles as pastors. He advises them on several issues and encourages them in their journey of faith and ministry.

Let us explore some of the key passages of this Pastoral Epistle and learn from its insights, guidance and encouragement for pastoral and lay leaders today. In the process, we as a congregation may not just understand our leaders' roles and responsibilities but also learn how we may support and encourage them to fulfil their calling as our shepherds and overseers of the body of Christ.

SERMON DATE **5 FEB 2012**

THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALL RISE
MALACHI 4

SERMON DATE **12 FEB 2012**

OUR CALLING: SERVANTS OF GOD
TITUS 1

SERMON DATE **19 FEB 2012**

OUR FOCUS: CHRIST'S RETURN
TITUS 2

SERMON DATE **26 FEB 2012**

OUR HOPE: ETERNAL LIFE
TITUS 3

- c. Who will come before this day of the Lord when the 'sun of righteousness' will appear (v5)? Has this person come? What will he do? (Cf. Matt 11:7-13; Lk 1:13-17)

Notice God's mercy in sending a messenger before the day of the Lord. In view of his mercy, how should we live? (Rom 12:1)

3. Response required (4:4, 6)

As Malachi prophesies about the coming day of the Lord – he tells the Israelites the response that God expects from them as they look forward to that day.

- a. What is this response? Looking back at the 4 chapters of Malachi, we can see some practical examples of what this response means. (1:13-14; 2:7, 14-16; 3:3, 8-10)
- b. Malachi was prophesying before the coming of Christ and so before the day of the Lord. We are now living between the two comings of Christ. The Law of Moses has been fulfilled in Christ. So then, how are we to live as we await the second coming of Christ? Consider Matthew 22:37-40; Galatians 3:6-14; James 2 (vv 8, 13, 17-19)).

DISCIPLESHIP POINTERS

God's righteousness shall preside over everything in the last days; let us live in reverent fear of God.

The 'sun of righteousness' (with reference to Jesus Christ) has come and will come again. We are living in the in between times. The Church is the people of God today. We are to live as people of faith – people who have faith that Christ died for us and saved us for God. Our deeds cannot save us – yet as a saved people of God – we need to show our faith through our deeds. Are we doing so? Do we know the difference between those who serve God and those who do not?

Many Christians today have the idea that the godly will be blessed financially in the world now and the ungodly will suffer in the world now. But this is not what the Bible teaches. This is not what Malachi is saying. If Malachi was preaching to us – what would he say to us?

FAMILY/GROUP MOMENTS

- As you look around your family, your workplace, your neighbourhood, and the common place, what 'unrighteousness' do you see?
- As Christians, people of the 'sun of righteousness', what should we do about those areas of identified 'unrighteousness'?

OUR CALLING: SERVANTS OF GOD

TITUS 1

GENERAL SURVEY

Topic:

Key Verse:

Main Person/s:

Key Ideas and Questions:

INTRODUCTION

This is Paul's pastoral letter to Titus and he opens his letter with an emphasis on his apostleship and the reason of his calling into ministry. From there, he goes on to exhort Titus about the need to appoint godly leaders in the churches he is in charge of. These leaders are first and foremost to be godly men whose lives do not see a separation of belief and behaviour. They are to be servants after God's heart. True leaders not only know doctrine but also know how to exercise their duties appropriately within the church.

FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

Getting to know Titus the man:

- He is a Greek and a Gentile (Gal 2:3);
- Accompanied Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem during the apostolic council (Gal 2:1; Acts 15:2);
- Likely to be the carrier of Paul's letter to the Corinthians which has since been lost (2 Cor 2:12-13; 7:6-7, 13-14);
- Acted as Paul's representative at Corinth and commissioned to organise a collection scheme there. Carried letter (which is now known as the Book of 2 Corinthians) from Paul to the Corinthians (2 Cor 8:16f);
- Paul described him as his partner and fellow worker (2 Cor 8:23) who would not think of exploiting those entrusted to his care (2 Cor 12:18);
- Accompanied Paul to Crete after Paul's release from Roman imprisonment; he was then left there to finish the work (Tit 1:5f);
- Paul asked Titus to join him in Nicopolis once Artemis or Tychicus arrived to take over from him in Crete (Tit 3:12); he was subsequently sent to Dalmatia (2 Tim 4:10).

1. Greetings from Paul to Titus (1:1-4)

- a. Paul's opening lines in this letter are longer than most of his other pastoral letters (e.g. 1 and 2 Cor, etc.). They tell us a few things about his ministry as a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ (vv1-3). What is the purpose of Paul's ministry? What does he hope to achieve?
- b. Paul declares that knowledge of the truth (God's truth) leads to godliness (v1b). Does this represent how we think about the relationship between truth and godliness? Do we study, know, believe and live out the Bible because we desire to be godly and to please God?

2. Guidance to Titus for appointing Elders (1:5-9)

- a. An elder must be 'blameless' (vv6&7). Does this mean 'flawless' and 'faultless'? According to verses 6 to 8, what does being 'blameless' in their conduct entail?
- b. What must an elder principally do, according to verse 9b? How is an elder able to do this successfully (v9a)?

- c. If elders are appointed according to these qualifying criteria, how would the church benefit from their service as 'overseers'? What would be the likely consequences for the church if such criteria are not consistently applied?
3. Instructions to Titus for dealing with False Teachers (1:10-16)
- a. What are the characteristics of the false teachers in Crete? (v10, 11b, 15b and 16a)
- b. What are these false teachers teaching that is 'false'? (v14) Is there any modern-day equivalent to such false teaching?
- c. How are the Cretan Christians affected by the false teachers and their teaching? (v11) Consider how we may be affected in the current day by false teachers and false teaching.
- d. Paul instructs that these false teachers must be 'silenced'; the elders must 'rebuke them sharply'. Paul describes the false teachers as 'detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good' (v16b). These are rather strong and harsh words. Why do you think Paul feel so strongly about this? What practical lesson(s) can we learn from Paul's approach?

DISCIPLESHIP POINTERS

The church needs godly elders who hold firmly to the biblical truth and who do not hesitate to refute any false teaching.

- Elders must be blameless in their family life, their character and their doctrine.
- The church must guard against, and deal firmly and decisively with, false and unbiblical teaching and beliefs, to ensure that the church remains sound in its doctrine and life.
- Elders have the primary duty to safeguard the church's purity in doctrine and life.

FAMILY/GROUP MOMENTS

- What specific questions might be appropriate to ask potential eldership candidates in view of the qualifying criteria set out in Titus 1?
- How do/can we hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it is taught? Do we read the Bible regularly, and strive to obey God based on what is found in his word?

OUR FOCUS: CHRIST'S RETURN

TITUS 2

GENERAL SURVEY

Topic:

Key Verse:

Main Person/s:

Key Ideas and Questions:

INTRODUCTION

Real Christian living is rooted in the Gospel, which in this case, is in direct contrast to the behaviour of false teachers. This is Paul's primary concern for anyone in the church, whether leaders or not. The understanding of right doctrine must be translated into godly behaviour that is rooted in the Gospel. In this chapter, Paul called for right behaviour in speech and conduct as males or females, as family members, and as people in their homes.

FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Godly Living (2:1-10)

- a. List down what Paul tells Titus to teach to each group of the people in the Cretan church. Who should each group model after?

Older men:

Older women:

Young women:

Young men:

Slaves:

Temperate:

- b. Based on the above, where do you need to grow in your own character and godliness?

2. Godly Learning (2:11-12)

- a. In what areas are Christians to exercise godliness (E.g. 1 Tim 2:2; 4:8; 6:6, 11)?

- b. In today's world, what are some examples of ungodliness and worldly passion?

Examples of ungodliness	Examples of worldliness
1 Tim 6....	1 John 2:16....

- c. What is their charm? Why must we say 'no' to them (vv11&12)? What if we say 'yes' to some; what does it mean (consider Romans 6)? Do you say yes to any?

3. Godly Leaning (2:13-15)
Paul urges the practice of godliness (v12) and the zeal in doing good (v14), while 'waiting'('expecting') for the appearing of Jesus (v13).
- a. Who is Jesus Christ (v13)? What did he do for his people (v14)?

 - b. What does 1 Thessalonians 1:10 further tell about this 'waiting' What will the ungodly and the worldly expect in the end (Rom 2:5-8; Rev 6:16, 17; Ps 76:6-9)?

Reference

Richards, L.O, Expository Dictionary of Bible Words, Zondervan Publishing House, 1991, p546

DISCIPLESHIP POINTERS

Christians are to conduct themselves in all godliness and be committed to good works in view of Christ's coming 'Self-control' is mentioned many times in this passage (Ti 1:8; cf. Acts 24:25; Gal 5:23; 2 Pe 1:6.) It means 'to have power over oneself' and thus to be able to hold oneself in. Those without self-control are 'powerless, overwhelmed by the passions that tug at and control them.' (Richards, 1991, p546)

The origin of 'self-control' is found in Luke 8:35, brought about by our Lord Jesus. The elements involved include:

- a. Ruling of one' spirit (Prov 16:32)
- b. Soberness (Rom 12:3)
- c. Control of the body (1 Cor 9:27)

It is hindered by:

- a. Fleshly lust (1 Pet 2:11)
- b. Tongue (Ps 39:1,2)
- c. Drink (Prov 23:29-35)
- d. Sexual sins (1 Thess 4:3,4)
- e. Unclean spirit (Mark 5:2-16)
- f. Self-expressionism (Prov 25:28)

Extracted from 'The New Open Bible - New King James Version', 1983, by the Thomas Nelson, Topical Index, p292

FAMILY/GROUP MOMENTS

- Godliness in self-control - Where is/are your area(s) of vulnerability?
- How are you seeking prayer support for these?

OUR HOPE: ETERNAL LIFE

TITUS 3

GENERAL SURVEY

Topic:

Key Verse:

Main Person/s:

Key Ideas and Questions:

INTRODUCTION

In this final chapter to Titus, Paul reminded them of their behaviour towards people outside the church and the society. Our testimonies to the outside world are keys to the Gospel life. Walking the talk becomes critical because they watch us profess our allegiance to Christ by our living. What we say and do has to have a basis. That basis, for Paul is rooted in the hope found in the gospel of our Lord. Contrary to false teachers and their teachings, our claims to follow Christ must therefore demonstrate evidence of that claim. And all these are based on what Christ has done for us on the cross.

FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Verses 1 and 2 describe certain behaviour expected of Christians. Summarise key areas of exemplary behaviour:
 - a. Toward authorities:

 - b. Toward all men:

2. The following verses give reasons in support of such behaviour (Vv3-7).
 - a. Verse 3. Chief of these reasons describes our un-saved state. Our true nature shows that we need the gospel of grace. What are these descriptions? Which part of the verse still has a hold on our lives today?

 - b. Verses 4 & 5. The second reason is one which is initiated by God. By our own work and righteousness we will not be saved. What did God do? Refer also to Ephesians 2:8-9.

 - c. Verse 6. Who was the channel for this blessing?

 - d. Once justified by grace (v7), what do we become? Refer also to Roman 8:15.

3. The above facts in verses 1-7 drive the behaviour of a Christian (Verse 8-11)
 - a. Verse 9. What kind of arguments should Christian avoid?

 - b. Verse 10. For a divisive person - one who stirs up division (in context, it refers to a heretic), how should he be treated? (Compare with Matthew 18:17)

- c. Verse 11. How does Paul describe the heretic?
4. Closing greetings (verse 12-15).
- a. Christianity demands good works (see verse 14 and John 15:16). Discuss what the results of fruitfulness would be in the eyes of the world.
- b. Specifically in verse 14 what did Paul want Christians to learn?

DISCIPLESHIP POINTERS

Christians are to devote themselves to doing good because we have been justified by God's grace and have hope of eternal life

- Reflect on the state of your own salvation - what are the fruits that demonstrate the glory of God?
- What are our attitudes towards authorities, and do we pray and submit to rulers and authorities?
- Are we in a state of readiness for good works or do we scramble to get ready?
- Do we live as heirs or do we live as paupers dishonouring God?
- Do we devote ourselves to good works or are we unfruitful?

FAMILY/GROUP MOMENTS

- A family lives in the context of a country. As a group or family, discuss and pray for those in authority.
- Within the family/group are there quarrels? Lack of gentleness with each other? Look for opportunity to seek forgiveness.
- As a family/group - discuss ways to demonstrate group behaviour as heirs of Christ both to one another and to those outside. Discuss what should be visible?
- How may your family/group be devoted to good works? Discuss.