

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, April 3, 2024 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study



TITUS STUDY

“Tough Grace in a Difficult Place”

PAUL’S TEAM

Titus 3:12-15

“¹² When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. ¹³ Send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey with haste, that they may lack nothing. ¹⁴ And let our people also learn to maintain good works, ¹⁵ All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith.”-Titus 3:12-15 (NKJV)



BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TITUS:

(1) **Author: Apostle Paul** - Authorship by the Apostle Paul (Titus 1:1) is essentially uncontested.

- (2) **Date: A.D. 62-64** - Titus was written between A.D. 62–64, while Paul ministered to Macedonian churches between his first and second Roman imprisonments,
- (3) **Literary Type: Pastoral Letter** - Along with 1, 2 Timothy, these letters to Paul’s sons in the faith are traditionally called “The Pastoral Epistles.”
- (4) **Place of Origin: Nicopolis** – Paul wrote this letter most likely from Nicopolis in Macedonia (some have suggested that the letter might possibly have been written from Corinth. (cf Titus 3:12).
- (5) **Recipient: Titus** - This epistle is named for its recipient, Titus, who is mentioned by name 13 times in the New Testament. The title in the Greek New Testament literally reads “To Titus.” Titus, like Timothy, had become a beloved disciple and fellow worker in the gospel. Most likely, Titus served with Paul on both the second and third missionary journeys. Paul’s last mention of Titus (in 2 Timothy 4:10) reports that he had gone for ministry in Dalmatia—modern Yugoslavia. The letter probably was delivered by Zenas and Apollos. Although Luke did not mention Titus by name in the book of Acts, it seems probable that Titus, a Gentile, met and may have been led to faith in Christ by Paul before or during the apostle’s first missionary journey. **Later, Titus ministered for a period of time with Paul on the Island of Crete and was left behind to continue and strengthen the work.** After Artemas or Tychicus arrived to direct the ministry there, Paul wanted Titus to join him in the city of Nicopolis, in the province of Achaia in Greece, and stay through the winter. Because of his involvement with the church at Corinth during Paul’s third missionary journey, Titus is mentioned 9 times in 2 Corinthians, where Paul refers to him as “my brother” (in 2 Corinthians 2:13) and “my partner and fellow worker” (in 2 Corinthians 8:23) The young elder was already familiar with Judaizers, false teachers in the church, who among other things insisted that all Christians, Gentile as well as Jew, were bound by the Mosaic law. Titus had accompanied Paul and Barnabas years earlier to the Council of Jerusalem where that heresy was the subject.
- (6) **Setting: Crete** - Crete, one of the largest islands in the Mediterranean Sea, measuring 160 miles long by 35 miles at its widest, lying south of the Aegean Sea, had been briefly visited by Paul on his voyage to Rome (see Acts 27:7-9, 12, 13, 21).+ He returned there for ministry and later left Titus to continue the work, much as he left Timothy at Ephesus, while he went on to Macedonia. He most likely wrote to Titus in response to a letter from Titus or a report from Crete.
- (7) **Occasion: Pastoral help (encouragement and counsel)** - Like Paul’s two letters to Timothy, the apostle gives personal encouragement and counsel to a young pastor who, though well-trained and faithful, faced continuing opposition from ungodly men within the churches where he ministered. Titus was to pass on that encouragement and counsel to the leaders he was to appoint in the Cretan churches.
- (8) **Theological Themes: Various** In contrast to several of Paul’s other letters, such as those to the churches in Rome and Galatia, the book of Titus does not focus on explaining or defending doctrine. Paul had full confidence in Titus’ theological understanding and convictions, evidenced by the fact that he entrusted him with such a demanding ministry. Except for the warning about false teachers and Judaizers, the letter gives no theological

correction, strongly suggesting that Paul also had confidence in the doctrinal grounding of most church members there, despite the fact that the majority of them were new believers.

Theological/Doctrinal Themes Affirmed in Titus:

1. God's sovereign election of believers (Titus 1:1-2)
2. His saving grace (Titus 2:11, 3:5)
3. Christ's deity and second coming (Titus 2:13)
4. Christ's substitutionary atonement (Titus 2:14)
5. The regeneration and renewing of believers by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5)

God and Christ are regularly referred to as Savior in Titus, and the saving plan is so emphasized in that it indicates the major thrust of the epistle is that of equipping the churches of Crete for effective evangelism. This preparation required godly leaders who not only would shepherd believers under their care, but also would equip those Christians for evangelizing their pagan neighbors, who had been characterized by one of their own famous natives as liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons. In order to gain a hearing for the gospel among such people, the believers' primary preparation for evangelization was to live among themselves with the unarguable testimony of righteous, loving, selfless, and godly lives in marked contrast to the debauched lives of the false teachers. How they behaved with reference to governmental authorities and unbelievers was also crucial to their testimony

Application Questions

1. What would you want to say (in love) to a Christian who declined to serve the Lord because "he was too busy"? *NOTE: You might not say it but you would want to say it! Why are we reluctant to say it? Should we say it! Can you rephrase so that it is more palatable (pleasant, acceptable, welcoming)?
2. What are some practical implications (effects, inferences, consequences) of the definition that ministry is the overflow of the life of Christ in you?
3. Why is the distinction between clergy and laity unbiblical? What implications does this have?
4. In *A Theology of Personal Ministry* [Zondervan], Lawrence Richards states, (p. 201), "The key to effective ministry is never found in its institutional setting, but always in its relational setting. Whenever believers come to know and care for others—and reach out to share, encourage, and help—*there* is the setting for the most significant ministries that can take place." Discuss the implications of this.

How do we get the good news of Jesus Christ... the gospel out to those around us? How do we reach our world for Jesus Christ? It is a good question. It's what we are called to whether we acknowledge it or not. It is not someone else's job. It's ours as believer and follower of Christ.

Maybe a place to start is to understand what we mean by “good news” or “gospel. The word *gospel* means “good news.”

2 Quick UnderstandingS of the Gospel:

- (1) The gospel is the message of forgiveness for sin through the atoning work of Jesus Christ**
- (2) The gospel is essentially God’s rescue plan of redemption for those who will trust in His divine Son in order to be reconciled to a just and holy God**

The essential content of this saving message is clearly laid out for us in the Bible. In the apostle Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, Paul lays out the content of the gospel message, *“Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”*

In this passage, we see four essential elements of the gospel message.

4 Essential Elements of the Gospel Message:

- (1) The sin of all men** - First, the phrase “died for our sins” is very important. As Romans 3:23 tells us, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” The reality of sin needs to be acknowledged by all who approach the throne of God for salvation. A sinner must acknowledge the hopelessness of his guilt before God in order for forgiveness to take place, and he must understand that the “wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). Without this foundational truth, no gospel presentation is complete.
- (2) The death of Christ on the cross to pay for our sins** - Second, the person and work of Christ are indispensable components of the gospel. Jesus is both God (Colossians 2:9) and man (John 1:14). Jesus lived the sinless life that we could never live (1 Peter 2:22), and, because of that, He is the only one who could die a substitutionary death for the sinner. Sin against an infinite God requires an infinite sacrifice. Therefore, either man, who is finite, must pay the penalty for an infinite length of time in hell, or the infinite Christ must pay for it once. Jesus went to the cross to pay the debt we owe to God for our sin, and those who are covered by His sacrifice will inherit the kingdom of God as children of the king (John 1:12).
- (3) The resurrection of Christ to provide life everlasting for those who follow Him** - Third, the resurrection of Christ is an essential element of the gospel. The resurrection is the proof of the power of God. Only He who created life can resurrect it after death, only He can reverse the hideousness that is death itself, and only He can remove the sting that is death and the victory that is the grave’s (1 Corinthians 15:54–55). Further, unlike all

other religions, Christianity alone possesses a Founder who transcends death and who promises that His followers will do the same. All other religions were founded by men and prophets whose end was the grave.

- (4) **The offer of the free gift of salvation to all** - Finally, Christ offers His salvation as a free gift (Romans 5:15; 6:23), that can only be received by faith, apart from any works or merit on our part (Ephesians 2:8–9). As the apostle Paul tells us, the gospel is *“the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile”* (Romans 1:16). The same inspired author tells us, *“If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved”* (Romans 10:9).

These, then, are the essential elements of the gospel: the sin of all men, the death of Christ on the cross to pay for those sins, the resurrection of Christ to provide life everlasting for those who follow Him, and the offer of the free gift of salvation to all.

For a few moments, erase from your mind the past 2,000 years of church history. Go back to the first century. Rome ruled the world. If you were to ask for a list of the prominent religions of the world, Christianity would be missing. Perhaps it would be listed as a minor offshoot of Judaism. Its followers claimed that some obscure Galilean Jew who had been crucified was the promised Jewish Messiah and that he had been raised from the dead. But the average man on the street had not heard the good news of Christianity. The world was essentially pagan.

Into that scene, project an obscure little Jewish man named Paul, who hailed from the southern coast of what we call Turkey. He had met the risen Lord Jesus Christ, who had commissioned him to take the gospel to the Gentile world. It was an enormous task! How should he go about doing it?

Remember, he had no mass media. He couldn’t broadcast the message by radio or TV or tapes, CD’s, some podcast, on some social media platform. He didn’t have the printing press, much less the internet. He didn’t even have a post office to send out bulk mailings. Furthermore, there was no rapid transportation system. He couldn’t drive on modern highways or take a train or jet from city to city. He had to walk or take a boat. He couldn’t pick up the phone, push a few buttons, and talk with his key workers. He communicated with them by hand-carried letters that took weeks or sometimes months to deliver.

Yet, in spite of these limitations, Paul pulled it off. He launched the Christian message to the Gentiles and permanently changed the history of the world. How did he do it?

How did God choose to get His good news (the gospel) out?

- (1) **God chose to reveal Himself through creation** – Paul wrote in Romans 1:19-20, *“¹⁹ ... What may be known of God is manifest¹ in them, for God has shown it to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood*

by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.”

- (2) **God chose to get His gospel message out through the power of the Holy Spirit** – In Acts 1:8 Jesus said his followers to, *“⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”* We might say God get His good news out through Holy Spirit empowered men!
- (3) **God makes His good news known through those who preach it** – Romans 10:14, *“¹⁴ How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?”*
- (4) **God chose primarily to get His good news out through men and women just like you and me** - Jesus said to his followers in Matthew 28:19-20, *“¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.”* The Bible clearly teaches that God uses human agents to spread Jesus’ message of forgiveness (Mt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 5:20; Rom. 10:14). And yet, God did not need to use humans to spread his message.

The Bible clearly teaches that God uses human agents to spread Jesus’ message of forgiveness (Mt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 5:20; Rom. 10:14). And yet, God did not need to use humans to spread his message. God could’ve used angels to spread his message (Rev. 14:6), and yet, he chose to use humans instead. The question is *why?* The Bible doesn’t directly answer this, but we can speculate a few answers.

Why did God choose to use human agency in delivering his message to others?

- (1) **That He might receive a greater glory using broken and fallen people** - Consider the old show *MacGyver*. In almost every episode, MacGyver would break out of prison with nothing more than a toothpick, some dental floss, a match, and some rubbing alcohol. He would use the *worst* materials to bring about the *best* results. Some people would rather have just seen MacGyver use a key and a gun to break out of prison, but by using scraps, MacGyver showed his brilliance and ingenuity in a way that wouldn’t have been otherwise possible. In the same way, when all the dust settles, God will have used the worst possible people to bring about the greatest possible result (1 Cor. 1:26-29).
- (2) **God speaks powerfully through relatable fallen man** - Many people are often cynical of decrees given by the boss of their company, but they are willing to listen to a coworker more readily. Perhaps, by listening to a fellow sinner, God’s message is easier to accept. Moreover, our usefulness does not pertain to this life only. God will use restored human agents for the ages to come (Eph. 2:7).
- (3) **That He might impart to His children (followers) responsibility** - In a parent-child relationship, the parent enjoys allowing the child to learn to do things on their own. It

could be that God wants people to learn to do spiritual work like him. By using human agents, God teaches people about love and patience (Mt. 5:46) –an invaluable commodity.

- (4) **While it is a mystery why God uses people, it is also a privilege** - The fact that God uses people means that God wants to give us an incredible purpose in life, impacting eternity.
- (5) **Jesus designed his message of forgiveness, so that it would be as simple and easy to communicate as humanly possible** - Wouldn't it be cruel if Jesus made his message so complex that only a PhD could understand it? He didn't. He made it easy to understand, so it would spread with ease (Mt. 11:25; 2 Tim. 3:14-15).
- (6) **If we should hope for a single message to be true, we should hope that it is Jesus' message** - If there is only one message that can bring us to God, then let's hope that it is Jesus' message, because it has reached the most people in the least amount of time. Ultimately, it is a mystery as to *why* God uses human agency. But, according to the Bible, it is not a mystery *that* he uses human agency. While we can speculate about this subject, if we trust the biblical account at all, we see that humans have a vital role in reaching the world for Christ.

So, let's personalize it: **How can we get the message to our own community and beyond?** The same way that Paul did it, of course! Titus 3:12-15 provides a window through which we can get a glimpse of how Paul reached the world for Christ. It is not a complete picture, of course, but it is a valuable one. These verses show that...

Paul reached the world through a team of believers committed to ministry.

Paul was not a one-man-show. He always worked with and through a team of people who were committed to ministry. These verses show Paul's team—not the entire team—but a few significant members of the team. I'm going to go down the roster and introduce you to the team members. Then I will show you a number of principles for team ministry to which these members were committed and which made this team a winner.

THE TEAM MEMBERS

Again, Paul was not a one-man-show. He always worked with and through a team of people who were committed to ministry. These verses show Paul's team—not the entire team—but a few significant members of the team. I'm going to go down the roster and introduce you to the team members.

8 of Paul's Team Members:

- (1) **Titus** - We have already met Titus, of course. He was Paul's faithful delegate, sent to Crete to work with a difficult group of people. He was a Gentile, probably in his late thirties. He passes off the pages of Scripture (2 Tim. 4:10) being sent to Dalmatia, modern Albania and the Balkan states. He was a solid, faithful man of God.

- (2) **Artemas** - This is the only reference to this man. From his name we can guess that he was a Gentile. From the fact that Paul considered him a worthy replacement for Titus, we can surmise that he was a competent, knowledgeable, faithful, mature man of God. If Paul ended up sending Tychicus to Ephesus and Titus met Paul in Nicopolis and then headed north to Dalmatia (2 Tim. 4:10, 12), then **Artemas probably replaced him in Crete**. It is significant that Paul had such a relatively unknown, yet qualified man at his disposal. How many other such men he had we do not know.
- (3) **Tychicus** - He was another faithful Gentile believer, a native of Asia (western Turkey). He had traveled with Paul, along with some other men, at the close of Paul's third missionary journey (Acts 20:4). Later, he was with Paul during his first Roman imprisonment. Paul sent the letters to the Ephesians and Colossians with Tychicus, who told those churches about Paul's circumstances (Eph. 6:21-22; Col. 4:7-9). **Later Paul sent him to Ephesus to relieve Timothy**, so that perhaps Timothy could join Paul in Rome before his execution (2 Tim. 4:12). Paul calls Tychicus "our beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord" (Col. 4:7). He was a valuable team member!
- (4) **Zenas the lawyer** - This is the only reference to Zenas in the Bible. His Greek name has caused some to surmise that he was a Gentile lawyer, but the fact that he was poor enough for Paul to ask Titus to help supply his needs may mean that he was a Jewish expert in the Mosaic law. In any case, he had set aside his career long enough to accompany Apollos on this trip. **The two men probably carried the epistle of Titus to Crete**.
- (5) **Apollos** - He was a Jew from Alexandria in northern Egypt, an eloquent orator, mighty in the Scriptures, and fervent in spirit (Acts 18:24, 25). He came to Ephesus where Paul's teammates, Priscilla and Aquila, took him aside and taught him the way of God more accurately. **The fact that he listened shows that he had a humble, teachable heart**. Later, he had a powerful ministry in Corinth.
- (6) **"Our people"** - This refers to the Christians in Crete. All believers, even those who go unnamed, even those from obscure villages in Crete, were a part of the team. They were to learn to take the lead in good deeds (the same Greek phrase as in 3:8).
- (7) **"All with me"** - We don't know where Paul was; he may have been in Macedonia or Achaia. But we know that he was not alone. Besides Zenas and Apollos, there was a church where Paul was staying and he fellowshiped with these saints. He did not hole up by himself.
- (8) **"Those who love us in the faith"** - These were Paul's friends and fellow saints in Crete. There may be a subtle allusion to those who did not love Paul in the faith, the false teachers who needed to be silenced. The reason we love one another is because we share a common faith in the Lord Jesus.

The point is... you can see that Paul didn't labor alone. He had a team of believers committed to ministry, who labored with him in the cause of Christ. He viewed every Christian as a gifted member of the team, with a vital role to fulfill. None were benchwarmers. That is true here—if you know Christ as Savior, the Holy Spirit has given you a gift to use in ministry for Him. You need to see yourself as a vital team member, committed to ministry.

As one preacher, Dr. Stephen Cole, has said it, “The word, ‘ministry,’ may scare some Christians because it has taken on a stained-glass connotation.”

- *What do you think he means by that... “a stained-glass connotation”?*
- *Is this a correct view of ministry? Why or why not?*
- *Why do you think the concept of “ministry” scares some Christians?*

Some Simple Statements About Ministry to Keep in Mind:

- (1) You may think, “Pastors are in the ministry, but I’m just a layperson,” but that is not a biblical distinction - Ministry means service and every Christian is saved to serve Jesus Christ.
- (2) Ministry should be the overflow of your walk with Christ. If your cup is full to the brim with Christ, you can’t carry it without slopping over on others -
- (3) Ministry may take on a structured form - Such as teaching Sunday School, singing in the choir, serving on a committee, leading a discipleship group, or whatever.
- (4) Ministry may take on a organic form – It may mean inviting new people at church over for a meal and encouraging them in their walk with Christ. It could be helping someone in need or sharing an uplifting word with someone who is down or hurting.
- (5) There should be no such thing as a benchwarmer Christian - If you’re saved, you are called to ministry on God’s team.

TEAM PRINCIPLES OF MINISTRY:

I want to show you a number of principles for team ministry to which these members were committed and which made this team a winner. Although at first glance these verses may seem like irrelevant throwaway verses at the end of this short letter, there are at least ten principles of team ministry embedded here.

10 Principles of Team Ministry:

- (1) **Every member is responsible to engage in good deeds** - I just mentioned this, but note again Paul’s emphasis on good deeds in this short letter.
 - In 1:16, he denounces the false teachers, who were “detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.”
 - In 2:7, he exhorts Titus “to be an example of good deeds.”
 - In 2:14, he says that Christ “gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.”
 - In 3:1, he tells Titus to remind the believers “to be ready for every good deed.”
 - In 3:5, he clarifies that we are not saved on the basis of good deeds.
 - But in 3:8 he again emphasizes that “those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds.” The Greek verbs there are literally, “will give thought to take the lead in good deeds.”

➤ Now, again (3:14) he repeats one last time that Christians must learn to take the lead in good deeds.

You don't get the impression that good deeds are an optional extra that you may want to consider in your spare time! If you're a Christian, you must be zealous for good deeds!

(2) **We are interdependent as the body of Christ** - Although Paul was an extremely gifted man, he needed others. It wasn't just a one-way street, where the Christians needed Paul. Paul needed Titus at his side badly enough that he asked him to leave the work in Crete and spend the winter with him in Nicopolis. You may argue that your brain or your heart are the most important organs in your body, but they cannot function without your nervous system, your blood vessels, and just about every other organ in your body. An untreated cut in your finger can result in the death of your brain and heart! The whole body must function in interdependence. It's the same in the body of Christ.

(3) **We must involve others in the ministry and trust them to do it** - If you have worked with people at all, then you know what I know—that it's often easier to do it yourself, rather than get others involved. D. L. Moody used to joke that “The best committee consists of three members where one is sick and the other can't attend the meeting!” But if you are involved in leadership at any level and you don't get others involved, you are not multiplying your efforts. You will eventually burn out and limit your effectiveness. Paul had recruited and trained Titus to oversee the work in Crete and now he has two possible candidates to replace him. He trusted these men with this important job. Also, Paul encourages Titus to enlist the churches in Crete to provide financially to help Zenas and Apollos in their travels.

Two observations:

1. ***Success is not in proportion to numbers, but rather to faith and obedience*** - Sometimes we mistakenly think that if we can just get enough volunteers, our efforts will succeed. But Jesus picked the twelve and then the seventy. Paul engaged many in the cause, but he worked through a few good men. John Wesley said, “If I had 300 men who feared nothing but God, hated nothing but sin, and were determined to know nothing among men but Jesus Christ and him crucified, I would set the world on fire” (cited in Paul Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7,700 Illustrations* [Assurance Publishers], # 7671). Ask God for a few faithful, obedient disciples.
2. ***Don't be afraid to enlist competent people on your team*** - Sometimes, a leader who is trying to promote himself more than Christ will make sure not to pick team members who may outshine him. But Paul was comfortable having Apollos on the team, even though he was a more eloquent speaker than Paul was. He trusted Titus, Timothy, Artemas, and Tychicus enough to entrust the oversight of key churches to their care. We have to look for faithful men and women and hand things off, trusting them to do the job well

- (4) **We must promote others' ministries** - Quite often in his letters, Paul promoted the ministries of others. Here he implicitly promotes the ministries of Artemas and Tychicus. He encourages Titus to help Zenas and Apollos. When the church in Corinth formed into factions, with some saying, "I am of Apollos," Paul didn't put down Apollos and promote himself. Rather, he pointed out that he and Apollos were both servants of Christ through whom the Corinthians had believed. Paul had planted, Apollos had watered, and God gave the increase (1 Cor. 3:5-6). Paul was willing to put Apollos on the same level as himself and to encourage others to benefit from Apollos' ministry. That is an important principle of ministry: promote your teammates and help them to succeed. We all serve the Lord and our aim should not be to promote ourselves, but rather to see the name of Christ exalted.
- (5) **Every team needs godly leadership** - Of course, the apostle Paul is the supreme example of leadership after Christ Himself. But Paul succeeded as a leader because he raised up other men to lead the churches. On the local church level, leadership should be shared among a plurality of leaders, but it is inevitable that on every leadership team, there will be a leader among the leaders. Peter was obviously the leader among the twelve apostles, although they all were leaders. But one of the main jobs of local church leaders is to work at raising up new leaders. The health of local churches is directly proportional to the godliness and competence of the leaders.
- (6) **A team leader must be a servant leader** - Even though the apostle Paul was an important man with an extensive ministry, he always showed practical concern for the needs of others. Here, he is concerned that the churches in Crete help Zenas and Apollos on their way, so that nothing is lacking for them. He also emphasizes the need for the churches to engage in good deeds and meet the needs of others. Paul set that example, working at his trade and paying the expenses of the men with him, so as not to be a burden to anyone (Acts 20:34; 1 Cor. 9:3-18). He was always demonstrating by his own example what it means to serve others.
- A good leaders should not expect to be served, but should be an example of serving.
 - A good leader should not seek to be praised, but should be quick to give encouragement and praise to others who are serving.
 - A good leader should not look for other to wait on them, but should be waiting on others.
 - Church leaders need to model humble service to others.
- (7) **A team needs to spend time together to function well** - Paul had some of the team members with him as he wrote to Titus. Probably, he and Titus would not be the only ones spending the winter in Nicopolis. Perhaps they spent that winter talking about biblical issues and about ministry, preaching to the church there, praying and talking about Dalmatia (to the north), where Titus would go. I've often been envious of living in

Paul's time, before there were telephones and cars and computers. If someone wanted to talk to Paul, he had to walk to visit him. I'm sure that they had time pressures of a different sort, but life then was a little more conducive to spending time together.

- (8) **A team leader needs to instill a vision for the world** - With such a simple thing as exchanging greetings between those who were with Paul and those in Crete (3:15), Paul was letting the believers in Crete know, "You're not alone! There are other Christians out here!" Paul wrote to the Romans that he wanted to visit them, but then he wanted to go on to Spain (Rom. 15:23-24). He always had his sights on those who had not yet heard and he imparted his vision for the world to others. Christ came to seek and to save the lost. We are not being Christlike if we isolate ourselves from the world. We must always keep our vision on the Great Commission and those who have yet to hear about Christ.
- (9) **A team leader needs to model living by faith** - God works through our faith. There is no area that requires more faith than that of financial support. While Paul was very open about mentioning the financial needs of others, such as Zenas and Apollos or the needy saints in Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8 & 9), you never once find him mentioning his own needs for support, except *after* the needs have been met (Phil. 4:10-20). He could have written to Titus, "Before you come, I must tell you that if the saints in Crete do not give generously to my needs, we will have to curtail the ministry and thousands of people will not hear the gospel." He could have bracketed it with a colored pen and offered his latest book in exchange for their contributions. But he never did that. Paul learned to trust God and be content when his funds were low. When he had plenty, he told his supporters that he had an abundance! He was more concerned about the fruit that was accruing to their account than he was about their gifts (Phil. 4:17). It was in the context of trusting God for support that he wrote, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13).
- (10) **A team leader needs to promote and live by God's grace** - Paul closed all of his letters with some mention of God's grace, but it wasn't just a polite formality. Here, the Greek text literally reads, "The grace be with you all." "The grace" is the amazing, abundant, sustaining, all-sufficient grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was His grace that reached down to that angry persecutor of the church on the Damascus Road and changed his heart. It was completely undeserved. Paul deserved God's judgment, but he received mercy. God's grace motivated Paul to suffer hardship and persecution for the gospel. It motivated him to serve Christ with unstoppable zeal (1 Cor. 15:10). God's grace as shown at the cross was Paul's only message. If anyone perverted the grace of God, Paul called down anathemas on him (Gal. 1:6-9). If any church turned from God's grace to a system of works, Paul rebuked it in the strongest of words (Gal. 5:4). God's grace was sufficient to sustain Paul in trials and keep him from exalting himself on account of the vision of heaven that he had experienced (2 Cor. 12:1-10). Paul's entire theology and his gospel may be summed up by that one word, grace.

There are so many Christians who may, at best, dabble at serving the Lord in their spare time, if it doesn't inconvenience them too much. But, how many can honestly say, "I'm a zealot for serving the Lord"? If you are not zealous for good works, it's because you have lost sight of the right motivation. That motivation is the kindness of God our Savior and His love for us as sinners that appeared in the person of Jesus Christ. He broke into our lives and saved us, not on the basis of deeds that we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy. By His power, He regenerated us from spiritual death to eternal life. He renewed us by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior. The result is that being justified by His grace, we now are heirs according to the hope of eternal life (paraphrase, 3:4-7). That's why we should be zealous in serving Jesus Christ!

CONCLUSION

That's how Paul reached his world for Christ—through a team of believers committed to ministry, who operated on these principles of ministry. Let me bring this home by asking two questions:

2 Important Questions for Ministry in the Church:

- (1) **Are you on the team?** - First, *are you on the team?* By that I mean, have you experienced the kindness, love, mercy, and grace of God at the cross? Have you been justified by His grace so that now you are an heir of eternal life? If not, do not make the mistake of thinking that you can do any good works that will get you into heaven. First, you must come to Christ as a helplessly lost sinner and receive by faith His free gift of eternal life
- (2) **Are you a benchwarmer or are you committed to ministry?** - If you have done that, the second question is: *Are you a benchwarmer or are you committed to ministry?* Are you using whatever gifts God has entrusted to you so that one day you will hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of your Master"? God wants to reach Flagstaff through a team of believers committed to ministry because they have tasted His abundant grace.