

Saved through Faith Titus 1:1-4

The letter of Titus begins with Paul introducing his calling for the faith and addressing his son in the faith. His calling from God for the sake of the Christian faith is rooted in him being a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ. As a servant or slave of God, he was called to live his life in complete submission to God and with the humility such submission involved. As an apostle of Jesus Christ, he was called to live his life under the special commission of Christ and with the authority this commission involved. Great humility and great authority were essential for him to fulfill his calling: to spread the Christian faith and strengthen the faith of Christians by formulating and proclaiming the truth of the gospel message.

The gospel that Paul formulated and preached was a message which promotes godly living. One of the objections made against Paul's preaching was that it promoted ungodly living. Some argued that his message of salvation by grace led to lawless living. One theme that runs through Titus is that godliness and good works are in line with the gospel. He expresses this again in 2:11-14 and mentions good works one time in chapter one, two times in chapter two and three times in chapter three. Paul's perspective on his gospel and godliness is expressed by Tim Keller, "The gospel devours the very motivation you have for sin, it completely saps your very need and reason to live any way you want. Anyone who insists that the gospel encourages us to sin has simply not understood it yet, nor begun to feel its power."

The good news that Paul proclaimed was also a message which promises eternal life. The hope of eternal life is also a theme that is found in Titus. Paul mentions it again in 3:4-7. He also spoke of this hope which is connected to the future appearing of Jesus Christ in 2:11-14. Eternal life is life that is everlasting and glorious. It refers not only to the quantity of life but the quality of life believers will have when Christ returns. When the weight of glory that is the inheritance of believers becomes real to us, it will change our perspective on our afflictions, making them seem momentary and light in comparison. In order to create complete confidence in us regarding this promise Paul adds that it was made by God, who never lies, before the ages began. The who and when related to the making of this promise makes it certain for us. The when, where and how of its manifestation also makes us more sure, since this is the outworking of God's promise and purpose to save the elect.

The introduction to Titus ends with Paul addressing Titus, his child in the faith. He refers to Titus as his true child in a common faith. This suggests that Paul was the human source of Titus's faith. He had fathered, or discipled, Titus in the Christian faith which was common to them both. It is important to know that Titus was born a Greek and remember that Paul was a Jew. This meant their ethnicities and backgrounds were very different. Both would have felt the beliefs and practices of the other to be very uncommon to their experience. Yet they now had a common faith. Paul as a Jew and Titus as a Greek had a common faith. This common reality supersedes and eclipses all others, bringing together people of different races, classes, interests and politics. When the gospel is made central these kinds of differences become peripheral.

In this introduction both God and Christ Jesus are referred to as our Savior (1:3,4). "Although the Father and the Son have different saving roles, both are engaged in the work of salvation and both together constitute the single source from which grace and peace flow forth." (Stott) The gospel makes it clear that the Father gave his Son and the Son gave his life to save sinners through faith. We are not saved by faith, but by the Father and the Son (as well as the Holy Spirit). We are saved through faith in the gospel.