



Repentance Tabernacle Church

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God's Messenger and God's Message!

Sub-Topic: Leadership in the Church!

Scripture: Titus 1:2-5

Paul wrote this letter between his first and second imprisonments in Rome to guide Titus in working with the churches on the island of Crete. Paul had visited Crete with Titus and had left him there to minister. There was a strong pagan influence on this small island, perhaps because Crete was a center for training Roman soldiers. Therefore, the church in Crete needed strong Christian leadership.

People flocked to hear Paul's teaching. Educated, articulate, motivated, and filled with the Holy Spirit, this man of God faithfully proclaimed the Good News throughout the Roman Empire; lives were changed and churches began. **But Paul knew that the church must be built on Christ, not on a person.** And he knew that eventually he would not be there to build, encourage, discipline, and teach. So he trained young pastors to assume leadership in the churches after he was gone. Paul urged them to center their lives and preaching on the Word of God and to train others to carry on the ministry. Titus was a Greek believer. Taught and nurtured by Paul, he stood before the leaders of the church in Jerusalem as a living example of what Christ was doing among the Gentiles (Galatians 2:1-3).

Slowly and carefully, Paul developed Titus into a mature Christian and a responsible leader. The letter to Titus was a step in this discipleship process. He told Titus how to organize and lead the churches on Crete. *"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee"* (Titus 1:5).

Crete, a small island in the Mediterranean Sea, had a large population of Jews. The churches there were probably founded by Cretan Jews who had been in Jerusalem at Pentecost (Acts 2:11) more than 30 years before Paul wrote this letter. The Cretans were from an ancient Grecian bloodline. The early inhabitants of the island worked as agriculturalists in the interior and as fishermen on the coast. They were somewhat rude, turbulent, and independent. Among these people were the usual defects of the Greek character in its less cultured condition. Some of their defects were falsehood, both in the form of exaggeration and in that of treachery. To this lifestyle was added the gross forms of licentiousness and a propensity for insolent brawling. Paul calls for church order and right living on an island known for laziness, gluttony, lying and evil.

The islanders in Crete professed to be religious; however, their works—their deeds and actions—spoke louder than their words. Their works denied God, were abominable, disobedient, and reprobate. Titus's responsibility in Crete was to appoint elders to maintain proper organization and discipline, so Paul listed the qualities needed for the eldership (Titus 1:6-9). Their conduct in their homes revealed their fitness for service in the church. It's not enough to be educated or to have a loyal following to be Christ's kind of leader. You must have self-control, spiritual and moral fitness, and Christian character. **Who you are is just as important as what you can do.**

No matter the condition of the city or country, God has a messenger and a message for every place. If ever a generation of people needed a true messenger of God to deliver God's message to the lost, it is this generation. The apostle Paul's description of "other Gentiles" in Ephesians 4:17-19 surely describes also the people of our generation. *"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."* **Only a response of faith to the true message of the gospel can save such a people!**

There is a great need in this perilous hour for true messengers of God who have His message burning in their heart. **The preached Word of God is the only hope for this lost generation.** First Corinthians 1:21 says, *"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."* Tradition declares that Titus became the bishop of Crete and died peaceably at a very old age.