



BIG IDEA

This week we begin a dive into the book of Titus. Titus is a book written by Paul to Titus about the Cretans. This first week we looked at Paul's word to the elders. Elders in the church had a big responsibility, so God wanted them to be above reproach, i.e., they needed to have street cred with their congregation. We saw that elders needed to be ethical, empathic and logical with their congregation.

The word Cretan has become a synonym today for a rough people. In ancient times, it was a word used as a verb meaning "to lie". So you can imagine the baggage a person from Crete had interacting with other cultures. You may not be from Crete, but we all have baggage or lies that we believe about ourselves.

Let's dive in to the scriptures and look deeper.

Titus 1:5-9 NLT

An elder must live a blameless life. He must be faithful to his wife, and his children must be believers who don't have a reputation for being wild or rebellious. A church leader is a manager of God's household, so he must live a blameless life. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered; he must not be a heavy drinker, violent, or dishonest with money.

Rather, he must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must love what is good. He must live wisely and be just. He must live a devout and disciplined life. He must have a strong belief in the trustworthy message he was taught; then he will be able to encourage others with wholesome teaching and show those who oppose it where they are wrong.

Paul's warning's and help to the Cretans

First of all, Cretans faced a crisis of identity regarding the Jewish rite of circumcision. It was commonly being told to Gentiles that they needed to follow Jewish laws in order to “fit in” with the Jewish Christians.

Titus 1:10

For there are many rebellious people who engage in useless talk and deceive others. This is especially true of those who insist on circumcision for salvation.

Acts 15:5

But then some of the believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees stood up and insisted, “The Gentile converts must be circumcised and required to follow the law of Moses.”

Galatians 2:3-4

And they supported me and did not even demand that my companion Titus be circumcised, though he was a Gentile. Even that question came up only because of some so-called believers there—false ones, really—who were secretly brought in. They sneaked in to spy on us and take away the freedom we have in Christ Jesus. They wanted to enslave us and force us to follow their Jewish regulations.

Second, Cretans were known as pretty rough character, even as liars.

Titus 1:12

Even one of their own men, a prophet from Crete, has said about them, “The people of Crete are all liars, cruel animals, and lazy gluttons.”

We all have baggage and negative scripts. Paul responds to this negative image the people of Crete needed to war against.

Titus 3:4-5

But— When God our Saviour revealed his kindness and love, he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit.

Third, Cretans needed to replace their negative script with positive things. We’re focusing on negative things if we always say, “I shouldn’t do this or that.” Paul emphasizes learning to replace the negative focus with positivity. Rather than walk around saying, “Don’t be bad, don’t be bad”, walk around saying, “How can I help others. How can I focus outside myself for a second and make a mark on this world for His glory”.

Titus 3:14

Our people must learn to do good by meeting the urgent needs of others; then they will not be unproductive.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. We all have negative scripts in our life. What is a negative script? A negative script is something we believe to be true about ourselves. "Man, I'm just really bad with money". Somewhere along the way, you began to believe that your ability to handle money was an identity issue. It defined you. It doesn't! We are not our problems or bad behaviors. We're creations of God, wonderfully made, and he craves to know us. What negative script (self-thought or belief) have you been holding on to?
2. We've been talking a lot about values last week. How can the value of We-not-me be applied to Paul's message to the Cretans? Are you the Jew in this story who judges the Cretan? Or are you the "Cretan" who deals with major self-image problems. Feeling dejected because of how people view you or how you view yourself.
3. Just because a church has elected leaders doesn't give us the right to say, "Hey that's them, I'm just here for the ride"! What ways can you take ownership at The Collective? What are some Next Steps you could take to impact others in your community? (Church community or other) And lastly, do you believe leadership is limited to pastors and deacons?
4. How do you feel when you mess up? Does it ruin your week? Read Titus 3:3-4 and discuss how you think we should view mistakes, grace and our own righteousness. (HINT: it's His righteousness we carry now, not our own. It's like we're holding daddy's credit card. He paid the bill on the cross)
5. What is one tangible way you could bless a member of your community tomorrow or this week? A family member, friend, co-worker, helper. It could be a note of thanks or maybe offering to pray for them if they're open to it.