

The Books of Titus, Philemon, and Jude

Lesson 6: Final Instructions -- Titus 3:12-15

There is a particular kind of holiness hidden in the closing lines of a letter. After all the great themes have been laid out, the writer comes to the practical end: who is coming to visit, who needs a coat for winter, who sends their greetings. We are tempted to skim these verses, the way we skim the credits at the end of a film. But slow down. The way Paul ends this letter is itself a quiet sermon about how the gospel turns into ordinary, daily faithfulness. Grand truth becomes travel plans, hospitality, and a reminder not to be unfruitful.

Paul is making arrangements. He will send either Artemas or Tychicus to Crete, and when one arrives, Titus is to come to Paul in Nicopolis, where he has decided to spend the winter (v. 12). He asks that Zenas the lawyer and Apollos be sped on their way, well supplied, lacking nothing (v. 13). These are real names, real journeys, real needs. The work of the gospel has always moved forward on the backs of such ordinary logistics, people going, people sending, people making sure the travelers have what they need.

Tucked into these final lines is a sentence that gathers up the whole letter: “And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful” (v. 14). There it is one more time, the great refrain of Titus: good works. Not as a way to earn God’s favor, but as the natural, expected fruit of people who have been saved by the washing of regeneration. Paul does not want a church of spectators. He wants a church that has learned to meet urgent needs, a church that bears fruit.

And then the warmth of the ending: “All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith” (v. 15). The letter that began with the God who cannot lie ends with the affection of believers who love one another in the faith and the simple blessing, “Grace be with you all.” From start to finish, this is what the Christian life looks like: rooted in unchanging truth, expressed in ordinary faithfulness, bound together in love, and carried along by grace. As you read these final verses, ask the Lord to make your own ordinary days fruitful in just this way.

Group Discussion: Paul ends his letter not with lofty theology but with travel plans, practical needs, and a charge to “devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful” (v. 14). Why do you think God includes these everyday details in Scripture, and what does it teach us that the gospel is meant to become this kind of ordinary, practical faithfulness? Where have you seen a church quietly bear fruit by meeting real needs?

Personal Reflection: Paul charges believers to “devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful” (v. 14). Be honest about the fruitfulness of your own life right now. Are you mostly a spectator, or are you actively meeting real needs around you? What is one urgent need near you that God may be asking you to help meet?

Study Questions

1. Paul makes specific plans, sending Artemas or Tychicus and calling Titus to join him for the winter (v. 12). What does it reveal about the spread of the gospel that it advances through ordinary cooperation, planning, and the sending of faithful workers, rather than only through dramatic events?
2. Paul moves people around to where they are needed, calling Titus from Crete to Nicopolis (v. 12). Are you holding your own plans loosely enough to go where God might send you, or to stay where He has placed you? Where is the Lord asking you to be more available to His purposes than to your own preferences?
3. Paul asks Titus to “speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing” (v. 13). What does this instruction teach about the church’s responsibility to support and supply those who carry the gospel, and why is this kind of practical partnership a genuine part of ministry?
4. Paul wants traveling workers to “lack nothing” (v. 13), which means someone had to give. When was the last time supporting God’s work actually cost you something, time, money, comfort? What would it look like to move from admiring gospel work to materially partnering in it?
5. Paul writes that believers must “learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful” (v. 14). What does it mean that devotion to good works is something we must “learn,” and how does this verse define the purpose and fruit of the Christian life?
6. Paul warns against being “unfruitful” (v. 14). Jesus, too, looked for fruit and was grieved by its absence. Where in your life do you sense the Lord looking for fruit that is not yet there? What is one barren area that, with His help, could begin to bear fruit this season?
7. Paul says good works are meant to “help cases of urgent need” (v. 14). How does this connect the inward grace of the gospel to outward, practical love for people in real trouble, and why is meeting urgent needs a fitting expression of a church saved by mercy?
8. Paul assumes that loving believers will naturally notice and meet urgent needs around them. How attentive are you to the urgent needs of the people right around you, in your congregation, your neighborhood, your family? What keeps you from noticing, and how might Christ open your eyes this week?
9. Paul closes, “All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all” (v. 15). How does this ending reflect the unity and mutual love of the New Testament church, and what does it teach us about the bonds that are meant to hold Christ’s people together across distance and difference?
10. Look back across the whole letter to Titus, which you now complete. Paul has moved from the God who cannot lie, through godly leaders, sound doctrine, saving grace, the washing of regeneration, and now ordinary fruitful faithfulness. Name one specific way you sense Jesus

forming you through this letter. What is the single truth from Titus that you most need to carry forward?

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: Romans 16:1–16, Paul's warm greetings and the network of co-workers in the early church; 3 John 5–8, supporting traveling workers for the sake of the truth; John 15:1–8, abiding in Christ so as to bear much fruit; Galatians 6:9–10, not growing weary in doing good, especially to the household of faith; Philippians 4:14–19, partnership in the gospel through practical giving.