The Faith of God's Elect

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Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect,

and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; in hope of eternal life....

Titus 1:1-4

Theme: Paul's summary of apostolic Christianity and his authority to direct Titus in the island of Crete.

Preparatory Reading: Titus chapters 1-3; I Timothy 1; II Timothy 1; II Timothy 3; Ephesians 3.

Related Links:

1. Sacred Heralds – God's Preachers.
2. *Mysteries of Hidden Wisdom (2001)* … Mysteries of Hidden Wisdom (5 sermons).
3. *Great Mystery of Godliness (2013 Slides)* … Great Mystery of Godliness – Slides.
4. Great Mystery of Godliness *(2013 Sermon).*

Introduction:

1. Paul often opened his epistles with fabulous, lengthy summaries of our faith to get his epistles rolling.
2. This precious summary of Paul's apostolic ministry briefly touches on many aspects of our religion.
3. His epistle to Titus on Crete has only three chapters and only 46 verses, and it is one of his simplest.
4. But we will limit ourselves primarily to his opening sentence of 90 words that summarize his ministry.
5. What a privilege to have a personal letter written by the great apostle to one of his trusted ministers.
6. What Paul summarized briefly in this epistle, he opened more fully in his longer epistles to Timothy.
7. For those born of God and walking in the Spirit, they will embrace, enjoy, and pursue every word here.
8. Without being foolishly dramatic, consider this brief description of Paul's purpose in writing Titus:

As a general of an army, who hath a large country to conquer, cannot stay long in a conquered city, but leaving it with a garrison, under commanders, he must go forward in his conquests, and by his letters directs those whom he hath left governors in his conquered places how to behave themselves; so the apostle of the Gentiles, having a large field to run over, before he could finish his course, could not himself stay long in places where he had brought people into subjection to the gospel, but after a time, leaving them as a garrison to keep Christ's possession in the place, left them under the conduct of some trusted minister and preacher, to whom he afterwards wrote letters directing such ministers to settle the church in such a place, what and how to preach, and how to behave himself; thus he left Timothy at Ephesus and Titus at Crete (M. Poole).

1 Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness;

Paul.

1. This man demonstrates the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus for all (I Tim 1:12-17).
2. After our Lord, no other man did so much for the kingdom of God, especially Gentiles.
3. Born Saul of Tarsus, Luke identified a name change, likely to help Gentiles (Acts 13:9).

A servant of God.

1. What a pleasure and privilege to be a bondservant of Almighty God and His Son Jesus.
2. If you are a slave to men, you are Christ's freeman; if free, you are His slave (I Co 7:22).
3. Your greatest pleasure and privilege should be to serve God every day in all you do.

And an apostle of Jesus Christ.

1. The apostles were *messengers sent forth* as ambassadors from Jesus Christ the king.
2. Paul was called, appointed, ordained to be an apostle (Rom 1:1; I Tim 2:7; II Tim 1:11).
3. Apostles had the highest office, greatest gifts of the risen Christ (I Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11).
4. They were eyewitnesses of Jesus and His resurrection (Acts 1:21-22; I Cor 9:1; 15:8).
5. Paul's great office that he magnified was apostle (messenger) to Gentiles (Rom 11:13).
6. How and what did this chosen and special vessel of Jesus Christ write to a minister?

According to the faith of God's elect.

1. Paul continued to describe himself and his apostolic ministry with various short phrases.
2. His epistles to Timothy, being much longer, treat the apostolic topics in more depth.
3. As apostle, Paul was a preacher and teacher of Christian truth for the elect to believe.
4. He knew election was necessary for faith; he knew the doctrine for them to believe.
5. His ministry was dedicated to a body of doctrine and helping the elect believe it well.
6. Faith is a possession of God's elect; He gives faith to them (I Peter 1:2; II Pet 1:1,5).
7. The remnant elect are seen with faith in Jesus (Rev 1:2,9; 6:9; 12:11,17; 14:12; 20:4).
8. **According**. In a manner agreeing with, consistent with, or answering to; agreeably to.
9. Paul's ministry was agreeable to and consistent with bringing elect to faith in Christ.
10. We can include the body of doctrine they believed and how they came to believe it.
11. The gospel had been obscurely held by the elect from the beginning e.g. Abraham.
12. There has always been a remnant body of true believers in the earth chosen by God.
13. According means what the elect believe, why they believe it, how they believe it.
14. Paul was a master of proper faith as to its origin in hearers and also its necessary content.

15. He knew that God's grace had given him faith in Christ (I Tim 1:14; II Tim 1:13).
16. He knew only the ordained to eternal life would believe (Acts 13:48; I Cor 1:22-24).
17. He knew God's eternal purpose for the elect was revealed to faith (II Tim 1:8-11).
18. He knew to dumb down his preaching to promote real faith (I Cor 2:1-5; 3:10-17).
19. He willingly endured all things to bring practical salvation to the elect (II Tim 2:10).
20. He knew a positive response to his teaching was by God's choice (II Thess 2:13-14).
21. He knew that preaching plain truth caused him to always triumph (II Cor 2:14-17).
22. The sense of faith here includes the true religion of the elect, called the faith (Jas 2:1).
23. Though the amount of truth vastly increased, the elect heard it from the start (Gen 3:15).
24. Paul in this section began a progression from faith to truth to godliness to hope. Amen.

And the acknowledging of the truth.

1. Paul further described himself and his ministry as promoting truth God sent to His elect.
2. **Acknowledge**. To own the knowledge of; to confess; to recognize or admit as true.
3. Acknowledging truth is God's gift to escape confusion and the devil (II Tim 2:25-26).
4. The Bereans were noble for receiving preaching with all readiness of mind (Acts 17:11).
5. He chose before time to save us from error by truth and preaching (II Thess 2:13-14).
6. God sent Paul to tell His truth, and we should acknowledge him and it (I Cor 14:37-38).
7. The fabulous language Paul used for truth conveyed is not an exaggeration (Col 2:1-3).
8. Your benefit from the truth depends on your affection and esteem of it (I Thess 2:13).
9. Paul explained next, godly living accompanies God's truth as expected from believers.
10. Paul in this section began a progression from faith to truth to godliness to hope. Amen.

Which is after godliness.

1. Paul continued to describe himself and his ministry as believing the truth unto godliness.
2. **After**. In accordance with, according to a custom, wont, fashion, manner, kind, sort, example, pattern. After the nature of; according to.
3. **After**. Compare Bible usage in Rom 8:1, *Which walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit,* and Acts 13:22, *A man after mine own heart*.
4. The truth of God's religion is in perfect agreement with changed lives and holy living.
5. Therefore, we easily grasp that admitting the gospel is true should lead to godly living.
6. For us to be apostolic Christians, we need more than just detailed doctrinal accuracy.
7. We must conform our lives to the gospel or we appear as reprobates (Titus 1:14-16).
8. In its simplest form, faith in God and His gospel must have works (James 2:14-26).
9. In developing that combination, faith that works by love is what counts (Gal 5:6).
10. There is great harm done to the cause of Christ by believers ungodliness (II Pet 2:2).

11. Eternal life needs good works (I Thess 1:2-4; II Pet 1:5-11; Rev 12:17; 14:12; 22:14).
12. Godliness is a key and important theme of this epistle identifying lofty gospel goals.
13. It is possible to acknowledge the truth by mental assent and be a belly worshipper.
14. Most that do so are reprobates, not the elect as here, but some few are carnal fools.
15. Bishops were to be chosen carefully for godly character and conduct (Titus 1:5-11).
16. They must sharply rebuke any habits contrary to right conduct in truth (Tit 1:12-14).
17. They must preach against the natural lusts of each age and sex group (Titus 2:1-10).
18. Because the true preaching of God's grace should lead to holy living (Tit 2:11-15).
19. The grace of God justifying and regenerating changes men's conduct (Titus 3:1-7).
20. Ministerial reminders were to be made constantly for the profit of believers (Tit 3:8).
21. Faithful ministers were to avoid anything distracting from godly conduct (Titus 3:9).

2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

In hope of eternal life.

1. The greatest enemy of men is death, and the greatest desire of men is to live forever.
2. They will do anything, spend any amount of money, and go anywhere to avoid death.
3. Death is the greatest fear men have; the idea of living forever is a fabulous fantasy.
4. Though not the point here, sin is the cause of death and nothing can even slow death.
5. But the Christian religion has the certainly of eternal life and full explanation for it.
6. **Hope** = a certain expectation of future blessings, not speculation of it (Rom 8:24-25).
7. Paul here claimed faith, truth, godliness, and hope in order for evidence of eternal life.
8. The elect, though varying in degree of truth revealed, always had hope of eternal life.
9. Abraham and his family looked for a heavenly country and city (Hebrews 11:8-16).
10. Job knew he had a living Redeemer that would destroy bodily death (Job 19:25-27).
11. David and Asaph knew a resurrection was coming to defeat death (Ps 49:15; 73:24).
12. Hosea gave a glorious prophecy of future resurrection that Paul quoted (Hos 13:14).
13. N.T. promises of eternal life are far greater than the earthly, weak ones of the O.T.
14. Without this hope, our religion is miserable for counting on eternal glory (I Cor 15:19).
15. With hope of eternal, weighty glory, earthly pain and troubles are light (II Cor 4:17-18).
16. The greatest, highest, most glorious victory over death approaches (Rom 8:17-25; etc.).
17. Never forget or misunderstand your baptism; it declares eternal life by resurrection.

Which God.

1. These words describe and beautify the universe by Jehovah's sovereign right and might.

2. All things are possible to God; nothing is too hard for God; two words are glorious.
3. Whatever God does is forever and cannot be altered for man to fear Him (Eccl 3:14).
4. If God is for us, who then can be against us (Romans 8:31; Ps 118:6; Isaiah 50:7-9)!
5. He is life – I AM THAT I AM – He swears by Himself – I live forever (Deut 32:40)!
6. He breathed into man's dusty nostrils the breath of life … He can and will do it again!
7. He has committed Himself, His integrity (oath), His Son (death), for our eternal life!
8. Paul had *hope* of eternal life by God's *promise,* accepted as *truth,* and claimed by
9. Every good gift and every perfect gift comes down from this God, our Father (Jas 1:17).
10. There is no variableness, neither shadow of turning, in our God, for He cannot ever lie.

That cannot lie.

1. God is very different than men regarding truth (Numbers 23:19; I Sam 15:29; Rom 3:4).
2. Every source of earthly good is by human authority and character, and all men are liars.
3. Politicians often promise anything to get votes without ability or intention to perform.
4. God cannot lie, and the goodness He has for all creatures is very great (I Timothy 4:10).
5. The fabulous promises He has for His elect children greatly exceed in time and eternity.
6. Further, in case His inability to lie is not enough, He swore with an oath (Heb 6:13-20).

Promised before the world began.

1. This is a wonderful fact of the universe that no man can know without the divine library.
2. The natural creation reveals His eternal power and Godhead but not His promises.
3. Human conscience has elements of His law to accuse or excuse, but not promises.
4. His providence fills our hearts with good and gladness, but nothing like eternal life.
5. If God promised eternal life in eternity, why not preach it (II Tim 4:3-4; Jude 1:3)?
6. Our God's counsel stands forever without adjustment (Ps 33:11; Prov 19:21; 21:30).
7. It takes a Promisor, a promisee, the power to perform, and the Person to put it in force.
8. Jehovah, the independent and sovereign Creator and Ruler of all, is a sure Promisor.
9. The elect, note above, are the promisee as the object of His eternal purpose and will.
10. His will determines all causes and outcomes; His omnipotent power effects anything.
11. The Person to put His plan into effect is Jesus the Son of God, Who did so by death.
12. All of the above has been written in heaven (the book of life) and on earth (the Bible).
13. How did He promise and to whom before the world began – us in Christ by covenant.
14. Paul had described it this way in his other pastoral epistle to Timothy (II Tim 1:1).
15. He cannot acquit or clear sinners (Ex 34:7; Ezek 18:4; Nah 1:3; Romans 3:23; 3:26).
16. For much more about Jehovah's choices, decrees, and plans settled from eternity … Before the World Began.

17. For much more about Jesus Christ as the *Yea and Amen* of all God's promises … Jesus Is Our Yea and Amen (6 sermons).

3 But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour;

But hath in due times.

1. Time or times is interchangeable for a time or era (Gal 1:13,23 / I Tim 2:6; Titus 1:13 / Acts 14:16; Eph 2:11 / I Pet 1:20; I Jn 2:18 / Eph 2:2-3), unless modified with a number (Luke 17:4; Acts 11:10) or a context identifying intervals of time (Heb 1:1; Rev 12:14).
2. All events of time are under the complete control and rule of our great God and Father.
3. He not only rules dispensations of revelation, He also rules when you heard the truth.
4. Jesus came in the fulness of time (Gal 4:4), numbered 486 years earlier (Dan 9:24-27).
5. The inspired disjunctive *but* contrasts God's promise in eternity to its present revelation.

Manifested his word through preaching.

1. **Manifest**. To make evident to eye or understanding; to show plainly, disclose, reveal.
2. Bible uses light to make manifest (Eph 5:13) and character (I Jn 2:19; 3:10; I Cor 11:19).
3. Paul taught God's eternal purpose and bringing it *to light* by preaching (II Tim 1:9-10).
4. He closed out the Roman epistle with a very similar comparison (Romans 16:25-27).
5. Jesus was foreordained before creation to die, but manifest in recent years (I Pet 1:20).
6. Preaching brings hidden things into full view (Eph 3:3-5; II Cor 3:12; Col 1:25-28).
7. The good news of the gospel reveals incredible, eternal promises and purposes of God.

Which is committed unto me.

1. God had identified Paul to be a special preacher to the Gentiles long before Damascus.
2. Jesus appeared to him and told him what he would do for the rest of his life for the truth.
3. He was an apostle by the commandment and will of God (I Corinthians 1:1; I Tim 1:1).
4. God revealed more to Paul than any other, and he fulfilled his calling with great zeal.
5. Paul never sought his role, but God committed a gospel dispensation to him (I Cor 9:17).
6. Paul in turn taught Timothy and Titus who in turn were to teach others (II Timothy 2:2).

According to the commandment of God our Saviour.

1. God commands things in the world, whether you agree or not, with or without your will.
2. Paul for years thought to do many things contrary to Jesus of Nazareth until God's time.
3. But God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, shined in Paul (II Cor 4:6-7).

4. How is God our Savior? How do we avoid confusion with this inspired phraseology?
5. God is the Savior of all men by providential mercy, especially believers (I Tim 4:10).
6. God is the Savior of the elect by His purpose to save in Christ (I Tim 1:1; Tit 3:4-7).
7. God is the Savior of the elect in that Jesus is fully God and died for them (Tit 2:13).

4 To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

To Titus.

1. We first find this man, not in the book of Acts, but Paul's trip to Jerusalem (Gal 2:1-5).
2. He was a test case and doctrinal evidence of Paul opposite of Timothy (Acts 16:1-3).
3. He had a helpful role in the church at Corinth (II Cor 2:13; 7:6,13-14; 8:6,16,23; 12:18).
4. We last read of him in Dalmatia, very close to Nicopolis (II Timothy 4:10; Titus 3:12)

Mine own son.

1. In this case, by choice of terms, *after the common faith,* we assume Paul converted him.
2. The *father and son* relationship can be biological, ministerial, and by gospel conversion.
3. If we confuse Jesus ripping Pharisees, we deny earthly fathers honor (Matt 23:7-12).
4. Paul had a ministerial relationship with Timothy like father and son (Phil 2:19-22).
5. Paul was gospel father of Corinth, Timothy, Onesimus (I Cor 4:14-17; Phil 1:10).
6. Paul called Timothy his son many times (I Timothy 1:2,18; II Timothy 1:2; 2:1).
7. For any of these three relationships, there is nothing wrong using *father* or *son* as terms.
8. Jesus, as Elihu, blasted flattering titles, certainly religious (Mat 23:7-12; Job 32:21-22).
9. Calling George Washington the father of America is not wrong on any level by Jesus.

After the common faith.

1. The common faith must be the faith that all participate in equally – eternal life in Christ.
2. Jude referred to this connection and bond of saints as the *common salvation* (Jude 1:3).
3. What truly binds a church, our church, together? It is common union in God and Christ.
4. The testimony of Jesus Christ is our great bond (Rev 1:2,9; 6:9; 12:11,17; 14:12; 20:4).

Grace, mercy, and peace.

1. This salutation is basically a prayer for God to grant these three things to Titus or others.
2. *Grace* is God's demerited favor for eternal life and our favored status now (Rom 5:2).
3. *Mercy* is God's longsuffering and forgiveness for faults, failures, folly (Lam 3:32-33).
4. *Peace* is tranquility of the soul that God can give that passes understanding (Phil 4:7).

From God the Father.

1. It is God the Father, without incarnation or proceeding, Who is the source of all good.
2. He is the One that gives all the good and perfect gifts and has no turning at all (Jas 1:17).
3. Asking God, as in this blessing, He will match or exceed (Luke 11:11-13; Ep 3:20-21).
4. Even gifts given by Christ e.g. the Spirit and ministry offices first came from the Father.

And the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

1. Jesus Christ is our Savior in a very direct, instrumental, and real way by death and life.
2. God's gifts to His church and to His people are connected to His covenant with Christ.
3. Jesus Christ is our great high priest and intercedes for God the Father's approval of us.
4. We may come boldly for a blessing to God's throne for mercy and grace (Heb 4:15-16).