

# Titus & Philemon

June 11, 2023

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ online ministry. This week's message is Titus and Philemon. Thank you to Geoff, Rhonda, Dianne, and Don for being part of the video. The scripture reading is Titus 1:1 to 4. Happy anniversary this week to Tina and Earl.

## Welcome, Announcements, Prayer

Good morning. One. I got one. Good morning. Let's try it again. There we go. That's a little better. All right. We have some wake up. I don't think I can read this name. Ei-ah-shah. Somebody's having a birthday over here. We have Justin and Alicia letting us know that in their latest update that they're going to be moving to Marseille to work with that church plant. So to have a look at that it's posted at the back and it's in the bulletin so you can read more. All right. Jon who is here today somewhere, there he is. Had a back injury but I hear you're doing a little bit better. Well that's good. Keep praying for him. Mike's friend Roy is scheduled for abdominal surgery this week and he's asking that you keep him in your prayers. Dianne gives thanks for the potluck last week and she has a card here that I'll post on the back board and I'll just read what she says. It leads right into what I was going to say actually.

Dear church family my brothers and sisters in Christ thank you so much for celebrating my birthday 80th at that. She wrote it. How time flies. I love all of you for your kindness and goodness. My family so appreciated your open heart. Love Dianne hugs and kisses. And as I said that leads directly into what I wanted to say today and so that's why I chose to do it in that order. As I read from Don's scripture reading that you'll hear later today in the book of Titus there are a lot of deep ideas about being chosen, about faith, truth, and hope. But what struck me this time because every time you read scripture something else jumps out at you was relationship.

First there is the relationship between Paul and God. He calls himself a slave of God. Behind that is the relationship of Jesus to his father who delivered God's message with words yes but also with the sacrifice of himself and I thought about that idea of being a slave or some translations a servant. Jesus epitomized the servant. And then there's the relationship between Paul and Titus. Paul calls him his true son. Paul feels like a father to this younger man and Paul says he is a son of a common faith in lots of translations but because I don't read a lot of Greek sometimes I like to look at other translations and see what it has to say. And believe it or not sometimes I turn to the easy to read version because they try to get things into words that children and new English speakers can understand and I liked what they said instead of choosing to say a common faith they said a shared faith and that says so much to me. We are here today because we share in the family of God and that's exactly what Diane was getting at we are a family. So let's celebrate. Let's go to God in prayer as we praise him for this family that he has blessed us with.

Father, we are so thankful for this morning. We are so thankful to be here to spend time devoted to you. The father who loves us. The father who blesses us. The father who protects us. And the father who welcomes us. We celebrate this morning the joy of the victory of your son. We break bread to remember him because it was his gift to us that accepted us into your family. And father we look forward to that day when all will be new and there will be no more back pain. Father we continue to

pray for, for those we mentioned this morning for Mike's friend Roy while we're here in the body but we look forward with so much greater joy to a day when that will all be behind us because of the love of your son in whom we pray Amen.

## Communion

Before I start this morning some of you accused me of being a rubberneck and I'm going to prove to you that you're right because this morning I noticed that Dorothy is here and that's just exciting because Dorothy hasn't been here for a long, long time and she's a pillar of this congregation and a person that in my 47 years of being here who has been an inspiration to me and I'd like to also welcome Brian and Brianna who are here with their, their children and, and thank you for coming this morning and I thank you for being here.

Okay I'm going to read some scriptures and you're going to be thinking "why is she reading that?" but anyway be that as it may I'll explain it to you in the end. Okay, Jonah prayed after he had been swallowed by the fish and it says from deep inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God in my distress the Lord I called to you and you answered me from deep in the world of the dead I cried for help and you heard me you threw me down to the depths to the very bottom of the sea where the waters were all around me and all your mighty waves rolled over me I thought I had been banished from your presence and would never see your holy temple again the water came over me and choked me and the sea covered me completely in the seaweed wrapped around my head I went down to the very roots of the mountains into the land whose gates lock shut forever but you are Lord my God brought me back from the depths alive when I felt my life slipping away then oh Lord I prayed to you and in your holy temple you heard me.

The sea was not always considered to be a wonderful place a lot of people like the sea and like the water but it wasn't always considered to be wonderful notice that he says from the deep in the world of the dead the sea was considered to be the world of the dead it was considered to be where Satan was and and it was considered to be the place of the dead and and the waves would roll over him and the waves were also something that the people feared then I'd like to read Psalms 107 and I'm in verse 23 some sailed over the ocean and ships earning their living on the sea they saw what the Lord can do his wonderful acts of the seas he commanded and a mighty wind began to blow and stirred up the waves and ships were lifted high in the air and plunged down to the depths in such danger the sailors lost their courage they stumbled and staggered like drunks all their skill was useless then in their trouble they called to the Lord and he saved them from their distress he calmed the raging storm and the waves became quiet they were glad because of the calm and he brought them safe to the port they wanted they must thank the Lord for his constant love for the wonderful things he did for them so another Old Testament thing about the about the water.

And, after Jesus fed the 5,000 he went up into a mountain to pray but before he went up in the mountain he told his disciples to get into a boat and go across the water and so they did and between three and six o'clock in the morning Jesus came to the disciples walking on the water when they saw him walking on the water they were terrified it's a ghost remember this is where Satan dwells they said and screamed with fear Jesus spoke to them at once courageous said he said it is I don't be afraid then Peter spoke up Lord if it's really you order me to come out of the water to you come answer Jesus so Peter got out of the boat and started walking on the water to Jesus but when he noticed the strong

wind he was afraid and started to sink down in the water save me Lord he cried and once Jesus reached out grabbed hold of him and said what little faith you have why did you doubt they both got into the boat and the wind died down then the disciples in the boat worshiped Jesus truly you are the Son of God they exclaimed

Well, first off, what in the world does Jonah have to do with anything? And it says in my scripture here Matthew 16 verse 31 it says the Pharisees and Sadducees are asking for a miracle and Jesus says the only miracle that you'll be given is the miracle of Judah or is the miracle of Jonah rather the miracle of Jonah. The miracle of Jonah was that he went down into the depths and he came back up that's going to be the miracle they're going to see. They're going to see Christ die on the cross, they're going to see Christ go down into the depths with Satan and then come back up and that's the meat that's the importance of Jonah. Jonah is a representation of Christ; of Christ's death, burial, resurrection, and ascension and that's the importance there. Jesus walked on the water. Jesus could walk on the water and they would know that scripture in Jonah they would know that scripture in Psalms they would know what water meant and what water meant to people in that day and Jesus walked on the water. Jesus was the first person and the only person that could walk on top of Satan. He had complete control over Satan; he could walk on Satan and he could walk on Satan's abyss and he could do that.

And Peter spoke up and he said if it's really you (meaning that they knew that scripture) if you're really God, if this is really you, well, you come out that what you order me to come out on the water and Jesus said come and he came. But then he started to fall and he was falling into the abyss and Jesus grabbed hold of him and that's exactly what happens to us. Jesus says come come follow me come and be baptized into me but then it's not long till we fall. But he grabs us by the hand and he grabbed us by the hand by his death and burial and resurrection. That's how he grabs us by the hand: He has saved us from the abyss. And they both got into the water, er, got into the boat, sorry, and the wind died down then the disciples in the boat worship Jesus. They got into the boat. When we're in the boat, well then God is in control of our lives and when we're in the boat and God's in control of our lives that helps the winds to die down the winds of Satan die down and we worship Jesus. And we're in the boat when we do that. And I think, I think that's very much the essence of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection and, and the importance of what it means to us is that that we are in the boat and that you know what we're going to we're going to have times when we start to fall into the abyss but Jesus is there to grab our hand if we will just reach out and take it in. And this is something that has to do with faith not has to do with our righteousness but with our faith. Our righteousness is in God and our righteousness is in what Christ did. Our righteousness is not in ourselves and as long as we keep holding on with faith we're gonna be okay. Let's pray.

Thank you, God, for--for this opportunity we have to partake of your body and of your blood and and thank you for grabbing hold of us. And thank you for walking on the water and thank you for for saving us from the sins that we have and--and for for giving us the comfort to know that that we have you and you have us. And we pray that that we will have life abundantly with you. In Jesus' name, amen.

## Reading

So, the reading is from Titus: Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness of faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time. And at his

appointed season he brought his word to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior. To Titus, my true son in our common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. Amen

## Sermon

Good morning, everyone. Thank you so much for being with us. We're going through the epistles (obviously in the New Testament) and today we're going to cover two books: The book of Titus and Philemon. Don't be nervous, this will not be lengthy. They're both brief books but they're very, very positive books and Titus teaches us in a very unique way to feel comfortable with your faith; to feel happy with your faith. Even though there are cultural differences between Jew and Gentile, everyone's welcome to come to the table of God and it's a wonderful book. It's a very, very positive book and Titus has an encouragement for Paul and others to keep pursuing the gospel and in chapter 1 of Titus in verse 5 he says, the reason I left you on Crete was that you might strengthen, straighten out what was left un- unfinished. Appoint elders and that's, that's not always easy, appointing people to a specific cause and a specific purpose but he does so and he gives them instructions about how an overseer is to share and be hospitable and so forth. But he says, but it's not always going to be easy because in verse 10 he says there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers (especially those of the circumcision group) which sounds very strange but circumcision had to do with the difference between Jew and Gentile in a very strict order as well. And he said they must be silenced because they're, they're ruining whole households and I just can't imagine coming together as a church and everyone going home and being angry and confused. That wasn't a very good church service, wasn't a very good teaching because the welcome of Jesus is for all people but in Crete there were people that were very strong. Cretans it says were liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons. The testimony is true! Rebuke them sharply so that they will be sound in the faith. Don't follow all of these myths that people have made up on their own.

So, in chapter 2 he says we must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. Teach older men and older women and so forth and all the way through he gives all of these instructions: Love one another. Wives love their husbands; husbands love their wives. So forth and so on and relationships all coming together as one. See, we live as Christians today and we sort of know all of that how to get along with one another. How to love one another. How to be encouraging. How to, how to be able to say "I'm sorry." But it seems like in this first century in this particular church, there was a lot of rancor. It wasn't comfortable. It wasn't really feeling very, very good.

So, he says in chapter 3, do what's good. Just do what's good. He says remind the people to be subject to the rulers and authorities. To be obedient. To be ready. To do whatever is good, not to slander anyone but to be peaceable and considerate and to show true humility toward all people. You see he says, at one time we too were foolish. We were disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, listen, he saved us. Not because of righteous things we had done but he saved us because that's who he is. He saved us because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by God's Holy Spirit, listen, whom he poured out generously on us. He poured himself out on us generously and he still does. Having been justified by his grace we have become heirs, having the hope of eternal life. It is a trustworthy saying and I want you to stress these things so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing

what is good because all of these things are excellent and profitable for everyone. And then he says something that I think is very practical for us today. In verse 9: avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law (meaning the Old Testament) rules. Just, just don't do that. Warn people not to do that and then he says and if they won't just, just leave them alone. If that's what they want to do, fine, but don't you participate in all that.

Because you see as Christians, we are called Christ-ians. Christ-ians. We are believers of Christ; we belong to him. We are Christ's ownership of us we are Christians and we're not just in word or a name but in our activity in our thoughts in our dreams in our sharing in our teaching in our preaching and so Titus is reminding all of us that even back then it was difficult, but it can get better. And today it's true no matter what we're going through God will always be with us and so he, he leaves these final remarks he said as soon as I sent Artemas and Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me because I've decided this is where I will spend the winter. Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos and so forth and our people we must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good in order that they can provide for the necessities and live productive lives. All of that advice is good for us.

So, that's the first book of Phile- of Titus. Now we're going to go to the book of Philemon which is so different for us today. I don't know about you but after we talk some about this you may agree with me, I'm so glad we live in the time that we live today. There are a lot of times when difficulties were so— Paul writes this letter to a believer whose name is Philemon and along with others. Believe it or not he was a slave owner, which sounds terrible but slavery in the New Testament was fairly common. Onesimus, a slave had done something very, very serious. He had apparently stolen some money and then run away and under Roman law that was punishable by death. And yet Onesimus comes across this gentleman that you all heard—the Apostle Paul—and the Apostle Paul teaches him and he becomes a Christian and now his life changes. Everything in his life changes. The way he thought, the way he read, the way he lived, everything changed.

And so there was this encouragement even throughout scripture for example in Colossians 4 and 1: Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair because you know that you also have a master in heaven. But this person this Onesimus stole from his owner and that was the most heinous thing that could be done. So what's going to happen? Well, the Apostle Paul comes along on the scene and teaches him to forgive, teaches him to help understand even more and more of this. So, in Ephesians 6 it says, slaves obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, with sincerity of heart just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly. Serve the Lord wholeheartedly, serve Jesus wholeheartedly, serve the Holy Spirit wholeheartedly because God serves us; He's given us so much. Jesus serves us; He's given us so much. The Holy Spirit serves us by encouraging us so much. The gifts of God can never be measured and so basically he's saying is all the gifts that God gives us share that with others and that's still true today. But even though the slavery thing that seems so difficult for us it was their standard of life. Slaves obey your masters with respect and fear and with sincerity of heart just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you but like the slaves of Christ doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly as if you were serving the Lord and not men because you know—listen—that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he's a slave or not or free. And then bosses: Masters treat your slaves in the same way. Don't threaten them since you know that he who is both their master and your master is in heaven and there is no favoritism in him.

So this slave owner has Onesimus, who stole. Paul comes across and gets to know him and there's this thanksgiving in prayer "I always thank my God my prayers because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and your love for all Christians. I pray that you would be active in sharing your faith so that you will have this full understanding, the full understanding and love that we have in Christ Jesus. And that love has refreshed many of the saints." And so here's this plea for Onesimus. How is it going to end up? How is it going to finish? How is all this put together? Well, I'll just read it to you. Therefore, although in Christ, Paul says, I could be bold, listen, in order you to do what you ought to do. But I appeal to you on the basis of love, on the basis of love. I then Paul, now an old man, and now also a prisoner in Christ Jesus—I don't know how many times Paul was jailed—I appeal to you for my son, Onesimus, not blood relation, but Paul, who we don't think was ever married, had lots of children. I mean because of faith. I don't mean physical children, but a lot of followers of Paul. I think when Paul went into different congregations, there were children that would run up to him and hug him. And if not, he would go out and hug them. There was this special relationship for especially new Christians. He says, I tip I appeal to you for my son, Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains when he was in jail. Formerly, he was useless to you. But now he has become useful both to you and to me. So, I'm sending him who is my very heart back to you. I would have liked to keep him with me. So that he could take your place in helping me while I'm in chains for the gospel.

Paul was thrown into prison so often. Someone's got to carry on this work. Some people would say, well, don't let it be. Onesimus, you can't trust him. Paul said, oh, yeah, I know how the Holy Spirit works. He's repented. He's gonna do good things for the Lord. But he said, I don't want to do anything without your consent. Perhaps the reason that he was separated from you for a while was that you might have him back for good, no longer a slave, but so much better, a brother in the Lord. He's very dear to me, and even dear to you, both as a man and a brother in the Lord. So, if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand, and I'll pay it back. Not to mention that you owe me your very salvation, your very self. I do not wish brother that I may have some benefit from you. I do wish brother that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ. Here's what I want you to do, but don't do it simply because I'm asking you to do it. Buy into the program, have faith, do what's right, encourage someone as you need to be encouraged as we all need to be encouraged. Encourage one another. Refresh my heart in the Lord. And I think that's what all of us are trying to do to refresh, to refresh our faith in Christ Jesus.

And then pretty cool how he finishes the book. One thing more, prepare a guest room for me because I hope to be restored in answer to your prayers. He doesn't say how long, but he says prepare for me. I'm going to do this together as a family. So that started off as a difficulty, then it sort of got better. And finally, we see a future. And I love the book of Philemon, and I love the book of Titus. But when the kindness of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ appeared, he saved us. Not by righteous things we have done, but by his mercy. He saved us by the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Christ Jesus, so we may be justified by our faith. May we love Jesus as much as he loves us. Amen.

## Closing

Just as I sometimes read the easy to read version because it gives me different insights, I sometimes read other translations that have a more poetic approach. And so I will finish my prayer this morning with a quote from Romans read from the ESV. Let's go to God in prayer as we close.

Father, we're thankful for the words we've heard this morning. The words that encourage us to do good, just as Titus was encouraged to do what is right, to encourage others and share faith. Father, we praise you for your plan of salvation. You gave up the most precious thing that you had in order to call us your sons and daughters. Father, help us to demonstrate that love that is like that love that Christ demonstrated, that we may help others. Father, that we draw people into your boat. We pray, Father, today a special prayer for the Wall family. We comfort them, Father. We see generational love for you here today. And as they meet to remember a father and a grandfather and even a great grandfather, we thank you for that kind of relationship with you. And may it be a guide for us. And now for all of us, Father, may the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

## Contact & Copyright

Thanks for watching or listening. The Beamsville Church of Christ meets at 4900 John Street, Beamsville, Ontario.

Scripture quotations marked NIV, taken from the Holy Bible, new international version, NIV, copyright 2011 by Biblica Inc., used by permission, all rights reserved worldwide.

Scripture quotations marked ERV, taken from the Holy Bible, easy to read version, ERV, international edition, copyright 2016 by Bible League International, and used by permission, bibleleague.org.

Scripture quotations marked NET, are from the new English translation Bible, copyright 2019 by Biblical Studies Press LLC, netbible.com, all rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked ESV, are from the ESV Bible, the Holy Bible, English standard version, copyright 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of good news publishers, used by permission, all rights reserved. You can learn more about the congregation on our Facebook page or at [BeamsvilleChurchOfChrist.ca](http://BeamsvilleChurchOfChrist.ca).