

Titus 3:12–15

Opportunities for Fruit and Fellowship

Thursday, November 30, 2023 • Read Titus 3:12–15

Questions from the Scripture text: Whom will the apostle send later (v12, cf. Ac 20:4; Eph 6:21; Col 4:7; 2Tim 4:12)? What is Titus to do, when his ministry sub arrives? In what manner? Why? What two people are bringing this letter (v13)? What is Titus to do with them? Who else is to do such things (v14, cf. v8)? To meet what? What does this give them an opportunity to do? Who already greet whom (v15)? How many of them? What is Titus to do on their behalf? To whom? What is the final/closing greeting? From Whom does that ultimately come? How does the apostle attest the finality and faithfulness of this letter?

What goes into believers' plans and greetings? Titus 3:12–15 prepares us for the second serial reading in public worship on the Lord's Day. In these four verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **believers humbly see their neediness and seek/accept help, but also rejoice at opportunities to be used by Christ to meet others' needs**

The apostle's great need. In v12, the apostle tells Titus, "do your utmost to come to me." The reasoning is that the apostle has made a strategic decision for the best place to spend the winter. In addition to being needy of an advantageous location for these months of ministry, he has the humility to see his need of Titus's help as well. Apparently, he especially needed his best helpers in the wintertime (cf. 2Tim 4:21). It is good for Christ's servants not to think of themselves more highly than they ought (cf. Rom 12:3) but as being needy of the gifts that Christ has invested in other servants as well (cf. Rom 12:4–8).

The church's great need. Despite Paul's own need, the church in Crete was needy of Titus's help, and the apostle was not about to have him abandon that congregation and newly trained elders. Instead, he would send wither Artemas or Tychicus (v12). Tychicus, in particular, he calls a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant (cf. Ac 20:4; Eph 6:21; Col 4:7; 2Tim 4:12). Titus is not to leave Crete until his substitute arrives. It is more important to Paul that the church be helped than that he himself be helped.

The church's opportunities for fruit. Needs, themselves, are opportunities to bear the fruit of the gospel. When Zenas and Apollos came through (probably carrying this letter), whatever they lacked would become an opportunity for Titus to do his utmost (v13; "haste" translates a different form of the same root as "be diligent" in v12). And once they had gone on, Titus was to continue to lead the congregation in Crete "to maintain good works" (v14).

This was the very thing that he was to affirm in his ministry of the Word (cf. v8), and we should probably conclude that the third person plural imperative here refers to the parallel work of the diaconate in that church. Deacons are the sort of men who help the church see "urgent needs" as opportunities to "not be unfruitful"—or, to put it positively, to see urgent needs as divinely appointed opportunities for fruitfulness.

Believers' opportunities for fellowship. Finally, we see that Paul's writing to Titus was an opportunity not just for Paul, but for all the believers with him, to express their affection for Titus (v15). The wording of the next phrase, especially "those who love us," both acknowledges that believers in Crete have expressed love toward them, as well as reciprocating that love back.

"In the faith" reminds us of where such affection among believers comes from: Christ Himself, into Whom they have believed together, and Whose love for them they now share with one another (cf. Phlp 1:8, 1:9). The more that we know Him together, the more we will increase in love or one another and desire to take our opportunities to express and receive that love.

Everyone's ultimate neediness. The letter closes with a final greeting that is really a greeting not from the apostle or the believers with him, but from Christ Himself. "Grace be with you all. Amen." This is a reminder that we have no good in us, but depend entirely upon Christ to be our goodness (cf. Eph 2:8). And it is a reminder that we have no strength in us, but depend entirely upon Christ's strength in us (cf. 2Cor 12:9). There is no shame in knowing neediness, when there are riches of grace in Christ to be prayed for, received, depended upon, and lived from out of.

In what situations might you need to admit your need of help or fellowship? What are some ways that you can prioritize the church's corporate needs over your personal needs? What needs in others might you need to be viewing as opportunities for you to bear fruit? What opportunities are you taking advantage of, for expressing the fellowship and affection that are specifically for other Christians and because they are Christians?

Sample prayer: Lord, forgive us for when we have been too proud to see how we need help, like Paul could see that he needed Titus. And, forgive us for when we have prioritized our own personal needs over the church's corporate needs, unlike Paul's willingness not to receive Titus until the church in Crete was taken care of. Forgive us for our lack of interest in bearing fruit, which is exposed when we don't see others' needs as an opportunity to bear that fruit. And, forgive us for not taking whatever opportunity You give us to express to others the affection and fellowship that we have with them, simply because we are Christians. Indeed, we need Your forgiveness, Lord, for there are even times when we are forgetful of our need for You and live as if we were not dependent upon grace alone. But, You are full of grace, and we look to You both for forgiveness of sin and cleansing of all unrighteousness, through Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP197 "Christian Unity" or TPH409 "Blest Be the Tie That Binds"

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Titus 3 versus 12 through 15, these are God's words. When I send Artemis to you, or You don't come to me. And the copulous for I have decided. To spend the winter there. Send Xenis the lawyer and a palace. On their journey with haste that they may lack nothing.

And let our people also learn to maintain. Good works. To me to urgent needs that they may not be on fruitful. All who are with me, greet you Greet those who love us in the face. Faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.

As the apostle. Closes out the letter. He does. So with some humility, he Acknowledges, he is needy of titus. In crete similar to His closing out of second, Timothy, Um, There's apostle needs to touch us to come from crete, rather. Uh, same at the end of second Timothy Uh, urging.

Timothy to get to him by winter. Of when that letter was written as well. Here again. Uh, winter is coming and Um, he doesn't ask for a cloak or books. Apparently, he's got the There's things, but He has to figure out a good place. For himself to minister during the winter.

And he's chosen a couple of us, but he's also needy. Of Titus's, help. It's good. For us, not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought. As romans 12, verse three tells us. To consider ourselves. Was sober judgment and accordance of the measure of faith that god has given us.

Um, remembering that. Our resources are not primarily our ability. But measure of faith. Indicating first by the fact that it's faith. That our resources are The lord himself upon him, we depend and even the word measure there and Romans 12, verse 3, reminding us that the faith itself. Is given by god.

Uh, but humility than before God and Romans 12 3. Expresses itself in the next five, verses Romans 12 verses 4 through 8. And recognizing that there are gifts that the lord has invested in other believers. That our needful for us, well, similar here. With paul and with titus. He does not think paul does not think of himself.

As having everything that you needs in himself, He has the humility to recognize. That he's needy of titus. It's good for us to recognize. That we are needy of others. Because ultimately, we are dependent upon the lord and it has been his pleasure. This wisdom. To. Supply, what we need?

Not only. Uh, directly. To us and in us and in our An individual personal relationship with him. But in what he gives us by means of other believers as well. So there's the apostles, great need but notice that he prioritizes the church in crete over himself He hasn't decided yet, whether he's going to send Artemis or guests teticus, is it

reads in english, but there's a key there to cook us.

Um, Artemis must have been. Good pastor. That he was in the running, still in the apostle's mind in verse 12. Because Titus Uh, we read in Acts. 20 verse 4 and if he's in six verse 21 and Colossians 4 verse seven and second, Timothy 4 verse 12, That he is a Beloved brother.

Faithful minister and a fellow servant. Uh, so he was A really good pastor. And although, Um, Although Titus was going to, Um, Be with paul, paul did not want to. Bereave or deprive is a better word. The cretin church. Um, And so he's going to send a good pastor, he prioritizes the church's Corporate need.

Over his own as we all. Ought to the church is, The bride, the body. Of our lord Jesus christ. If she has Needs that. Uh, we can sacrificially. Uh, give to Whether by self-deprivation. Uh, for her sake. As here in. Um, the end of titus 3, Or maybe financially or time.

Uh, whatever it is. Has. We should prioritize the church's needs. Um, over our own

Because we should see the needs of others as opportunities for fruit. That's the apostle communicates to Titus personally. Regarding. Zenith and the palace. Who were perhaps the ones who are going to carry this letter to him. As they were on their way to some other. Ministry or service that the lord had called them to that.

The apostle was sending them for And, Uh, when the apostle says,

Send them with haste that they may lack nothing. That with haste, is actually, Uh, Translating another form of the same root as the phrase be diligent. Or what's translated with the phrase, be diligent in verse 12 and both of those The root there means to do your utmost and so he says Do your utmost, they may lack nothing, in other words, anything that they might lack is an opportunity.

For you to supply. For them. Uh, so that we see the needs of others. Um, not as Frustrations. Because of what we have to give up now. Or because we feel like we have to do something. But we see the needs of others in the church as opportunities. To bear fruit.

And we can see that even more clearly with Titus personally in verse 13, With the corporate counterpart. In the instruction in verse 14, and let our people also learn To maintain good works to meet urgent needs. That they may not be unfruitful. In other words, this thing that you're going to do is zenith and a policy.

Remember, it's actually a duty of all believers. Believers are to be. Uh, careful to maintain good works. This was one of the things. That as a preacher. In verse 8, Titus was to a firm constantly and the elders that he was training. Were to a firm constantly that those who have believed in god should be careful to maintain good works.

Well, if you're preaching that in the pulpit, then you also need to lead the people And making application of that, and Yeah, it's interesting that in titus, there's no Reordaining. I'm sorry. Reordaining of a deaconate. The way there was in second in first Timothy So, perhaps things are not Quite so disorderly.

And the creatinine church here as they had been And the effusion church or maybe. Um, Instruction about the deaconet was something, Titus has already clear on but this is the sort of thing that the deacons Uh, would help with Reminding the people in real life circumstances. Us needs arrive.

Arise. That these are opportunities to bear the fruit of good works, which if Titus and the elders are Of following the instruction in verse 8 of this chapter. Uh, the congregation is hearing. Is hearing preached from the pulpit. And so a need arises. And, And the people have an opportunity, not to be unfruitful, they have an opportunity.

To bear fruit. So you have The church's opportunities for fruit. And just as A need is an opportunity for fruit. Any interaction then as an opportunity for fellowship, That we would not. Um, That we would not just Uh, That we would not have sterile on thinking unfeeling unaffectionate. Interactions.

And so, The closing, the Apostle taking the sending of the letter. As an opportunity for fellowship, all who are with me. Greet you. Okay, so paul is sending a letter to Titus. And there are a bunch of believers who holds letter to Titus as an opportunity for them to show effects into titus.

Make sure brother paul that you greet Titus for us. Uh, and then greet, those who love us in the faith. Uh, wonderful way of Describing the cretin believers. Not just greet. Those who are in the faith. But greet, those who love us greet those who, Have shown some of the effects of the faith in them by the love that they have for us and indicating then of course, that this reciprocal greeting is also reciprocal love.

Recognizing that our belonging to the uh to god through Jesus christ reconciles us. Not only to god, but also to each other. And that christ's preciousness to us. Makes those who are in him, also precious to us. And that this is something that we should enjoy. Being loved by believers for the sake of christ, and loving them back for the sake of christ.

Uh, so believers and churches ought, not only look for providential opportunities for fruit, which arise, whenever there is a need For bearing fruit. Uh, but also Believers in churches. Should look for providential opportunities for fellowship for showing christian. Affection. That. The love that we have for one another would be from the bowels of christ as Paul told the Philippians and Philippians 1 8.

And then his love for them, was from the guts of Jesus and immediately turns around in verse 9, of philippians 1. And tells them that he prays that their love would abound more and more. This is a big part. Of genuine recognition. Of christ in the believer's life. That we love and our loved for his sake.

And then the reminder of all of our ultimate neediness. At the end, the last greeting is not so much. From paul, or from those who are with him, but from the lord Jesus himself, Who is carrying paul along by the spirit as he writes this letter and he says grace, Be with you all.

And it's a reminder that we have no good in us but that There is all good in christ for us. Uh, by grace, you have been saved through faith. That not of yourselves, not of works. It's a reminder that we have no strength in us either, not just no good but no strength.

But all strength is in christ for us. My grace is sufficient for you. My strength is made perfect and weakness. And that. Uh, enables us to see that there's no shame. And knowing our neediness. When there are riches of grace in christ to be prayed for And received and dependent upon.

And lived from out of And, That the lord has given us our interaction with one another. For the bearing of fruit for the expressing. A fellowship even. As part of what he gives. Through one another. So that all the good, all the strength. Is from. The lord Jesus himself.

Which was what makes? This humility and This fellowship of the faith suite. In our interactions. So lord, give us that humility that recognition of christ. That affection. That glorifies Jesus. When his church operates this way. And the lord help us to. Watch out for needs. For they are opportunities to bear good fruit.

Let's pray. Our gracious gardener heavenly father, we thank you for this instruction at the end. I've titus. Let me pray that your spirit would write it on our hearts. To the glory of christ. And, Your glory in him, we ask in his name. Amen.