

Acts 20:28-35; Titus 1:1-9; Luke 10:1-9

St. Titus, Pastor and Confessor

Sunday, 1-26-14 at 8:00 & 10:45 + Monday, 1-27-14 at 7 PM

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ, today is a special day in the church year when we remember St. Titus – *not to worship him* but to →remember his life of faithful service to God and →be encouraged in our own faithful service!

This sermon: *The three assigned readings and some explanation.*

With each reading I urge you to ask these two questions:

1. **What** is God calling me to remember? (*Write it down!*)
2. **How** is God calling me to take action? (*Do it!*)

FIRST READING: Luke 10:1-9 NIV

Earlier in Jesus ministry He had sent out the twelve two by two (Mark 6:7-13). Then, *just prior to this passage*, Jesus replied to three men who wanted to follow Him. They seemed to speak with sincerity, *but Jesus knew their hearts*; they wanted to follow Jesus *on their terms*, not His. So how are we following Jesus?

Now, *in this passage*, Jesus instructs and sends out the 72:

¹ After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. ² He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. ³ Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.”

- Like crops, *ripe and ready to pick*, so some people back **then** and **today** are ready to hear God’s Word of truth!
- Jesus knew what He was doing – sending them out “*like lambs among wolves*”; He wanted them to ♦*dismiss all fear* and ♦*trust in Him!* Let us also *live for Jesus* in those ways!

⁴ “Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.”

- Those “*instructions required the apostles to trust God. Their daily needs were to be met by those that received their ministry...*” (LSB, 1729, 9:3)

- “*Polite greetings could be time-consuming...*” (LSB 1733)

Instead, *let us make the MOST of our time!*

⁵ “When you enter a house, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’ ⁶ If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you.”

- “*Peace to this house*” is NOT like saying, “Be happy.” God’s Word *does what it says to those who receive it by faith!*

⁷ “Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house. ⁸ When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. ⁹ Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God is near you.’”

- “*Stay in that house*” could be applied today to a pastor – *he should not look elsewhere for more compensation*; at the same time, his congregation should care for his needs.
- Why did Jesus instruct them to HEAL and TELL? The “*healings revealed the hidden power of the Gospel...*” (LSB 1729, 9:2) Since God can heal physically, *He God can also heal spiritually, thus eternally!*

SECOND READING: Acts 20:28-35 NIV

Paul addresses the Ephesian elders/pastors! He had trained them, now instructs them, and will leave them to God and His Word!

²⁸ “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers [*ἐπισκόπους* – see “Elder” bro.]. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.”

- The Holy Spirit has called men to be overseers, shepherds of those whom God has made members of the invisible Church, *which Jesus purchased with His precious blood!*

²⁹ “I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. ³⁰ Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples [*followers of Jesus*] after them. ³¹ So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.”

- The “*savage wolves*” are *false teachers*; we live among many such people today. They say words which ♦*please the ears* but ♦*harm the soul*, so **abide in God’s Word!**

³² “Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. ³³ I have not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothing.

³⁴ You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. ³⁵ In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

- Since all *have sinned* and *do sin*, I urge you to *not* fully trust any person – *even me*; instead, fully trust God and His Word – *for this life and forevermore!*
- “It is more blessed to give...” so God gave His Son and, *through His Son*, forgiveness and eternal life! Now that we have freely received, let us – *as blessed ones* – freely give!

THIRD READING: Titus 1:1-9 NIV

Who was Titus? He was one of Paul’s many converts and helpers in his ministry. More specifically, Titus, *an uncircumcised Gentile*, ♦was with Paul when he met with the Jerusalem leaders, ♦worked with Paul at Ephesus, ♦helped with the church in Corinth, ♦was with Paul in Crete, and, *as you will see in this reading*, ♦was left in Crete to carry on some very important work. (CSSB, 1864)

¹ 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-- ² a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, ³ and at his appointed season he brought his word to light through the preaching entrusted to me [*Paul*] by the command of God our Savior, ⁴ To Titus, my true son in our common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

- Paul was literally ♦*a slave of God* and ♦*one who was personally sent by Jesus* for the benefit of the elect – those whom God chose to be His own, *even before creation!*

- We, *as believers in Jesus*, are certain of eternal life **because** God has given us confidence *in Him* and *His promises!*

⁵ The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.

- You can see that Paul trusted Titus to choose godly men in every town to serve as *elders*, the same as today’s *pastors*.

Now, *as I read the qualifications of an elder/a pastor/an overseer*, Titus was to appoint on *the basis of qualifications*, not on the basis of popularity. Also, note that pastors are not without sin, *but they must go all-out to practice what they preach!*

⁶ An elder must be blameless [*above reproach*], the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient [*first the home; then the church*]. ⁷ Since an overseer is entrusted with God’s work, he must be blameless--not overbearing [*stubborn*], not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent [*a bully*], not pursuing dishonest gain [*greedy*]. ⁸ Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. ⁹ He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage [*urge, exhort*] others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

- Pastors are similar to head coaches; when things go bad, *they tend to get blamed!* In some cases that is legitimate, but in other cases it is not – *you should seek out the truth!*
- Pastors are called to live and speak God’s truth – *never their own version of God’s truth!* Furthermore, they are called to refute/speak against those who oppose God’s “trustworthy message as it has been taught...”

Conclusion: We praise God for the example of people like Titus – *saved through Jesus*; then *faithful in living for Christ!* Regardless of what our position in life might be, let us →rejoice in God’s salvation and →be faithful followers of Jesus! **Amen!**

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