

“Paul, Titus and Us”

Penetrating a Dark World

Titus 1:1-4

Dr. Bruce Bickel

February 17, 2017

Bruce: Don, are you ready, sir? Let's go before the Lord. (*Music*)

Lord Jesus, we pray that You would give us a vision of yourself. Would You be our vision in times of pain and agony and hurt? We just need a clear vision of who You are. We pray that you would be with Rock and his family, that You would wrap your arms of grace around them. Soothe the pain of the loss of their daughter. And Father, we just give You all those men and women who are associated with us in this small group, that You would be pleased just to honor Yourself by attending to them through Your marvelous grace. May it be so for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Men: Amen.

Bruce: Let's turn in your Bibles, please, to the book of Titus. We just began our study two weeks ago of this pastoral epistle, the book of Titus. It's one of three pastoral epistles —1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. Paul is writing to the young proteges in ministry, encouraging them about the proclamation and building of the Kingdom. I'd like us to read verses 1-4 again, reading from Titus chapter 1, verses 1-4, from the English Standard Version of the Bible.

“Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began, and at the proper time manifested in His word, through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior, To Titus,. My true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.” This is the word of the Lord.

Men: Thanks be to God.

Bruce: Amen and Amen. Men, I want to teach us a little bit about Paul this morning. And I want to teach us a little bit about Titus this morning from these verses, because I think that the relationship that Paul had with Titus was unique. But it's also emblematic of the type of relationship that you and I have because of our common faith in the Person and work of Christ. And I think that if I can do this well, it will give us encouragement about what it means to be a member of the church, because Paul is describing a unique relationship that he had with Titus. And when you look at the ingredients of this relationship, they are exactly the same ingredients that you and I have with each other if we have true saving faith.

And it also means this. The same relationship that Paul had with Titus, and the same ingredients, are the same ingredients that you and I have as a whole church, the true church, those who are truly in Christ Jesus. So I want to look at this, first of all, to learn about the relationship that Paul had with Titus, and then to see the kind of relationship that you and I have with each other that is very, very similar to and emblematic of what they had together. And so it's a means by which we can understand the value of our relationship.

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Men, all of life is about relationships. And one of the unique relationships we have is with the body of Christ. Ted showed me something last week which was very interesting. Ted, Jim and I were talking about a gentleman who had written about fifteen or sixteen key doctrines of the faith. And Ted asked us a question. “Which one of these is not listed?”

And so we threw out a couple suggestions. But the one he suggested which is very, very predominant is this. There was no doctrine of the church.

Can we overlook the church? Men, we can't do that. We cannot overlook the church. And I hope I can do this today: describe the relationship Paul had with Titus, to let us see that this is the relationship that I have with you. And you have it with me because of the same ingredients. These are also the same ingredients we have with the church of Jesus Christ. And we need to emphasize the church, the relationships that we have in the body of Christ, and understand the significance of that.

So let me tell you just a little bit about Paul, and then I'll tell you a little bit about Titus. And then we'll take a little bit of time, looking at the relationship they had and the unique brotherhood they had in Christ.

Paul basically describes himself in two words, and those are the two things that restrict his ministry. One is the word *servant*, and the other is the word *apostle*.

He describes himself as a *bondservant*, who surrendered his rights to God and His will. And so he's describing there a restriction that he has. “I can only do certain things because I'm a bondservant of God.”

And that means he surrendered his will. He surrendered his rights. That was one of the two restraints.

The second restraint is this. He derived his authority from Jesus Christ Himself. Now we know that there are no longer apostles in the sense that the apostles are the ones who wrote the Scripture. We don't have those apostolic men now, as we did then. There are people who are sent out. That's one of the ingredients of an apostle. But we don't have apostles today because the apostles Paul is referring to are the original apostles who penned the Scripture.

So when you and I have authority, what gives us authority is the same authority that Paul had. His came directly from the Lord Jesus Christ. Whenever you and I preach apostolic doctrine, we have the same authority. We're taking this apostolic doctrine that the original apostles were given. The Holy Spirit moved in their hearts to pen the Scripture. And as a result of that, you and I, whenever we preach the gospel and preach apostolic doctrine, we have the same authority that Paul had. Do you see how that works?

So that means this. We don't say, “Scholars say.” We don't say, “the church says.” We say, “the Scripture says.” That's our authority. And so when we confine our preaching and our teaching to the apostolic authority, we have the same authority that Paul had. And so we don't say, “the church says it.” We don't say, “the scholars say it.” We don't say, “the interpreters say it.” We say, “the Scripture says.” That's the authority that we have. So the same authority that Paul had we have when we preach and teach apostolic doctrine.

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Paul also says this about himself. “This is what I am. I’m a bondservant. I’m an apostle.” But now he says, “This is what I’m for.”

Oftentimes, you know, when somebody is voting for a leadership position, we say, “What are you standing up for? What are you for? Don’t tell me what you’re not against, but tell me what you’re for.” So Paul says, “This is who I am.” And now he says, “This is what I’m for.”

And this is what he says in the Scripture. Notice those verses. He is for the faith of God’s elect.

Now the compelling factor in his life that directed his life was *evangelism and teaching with a view to saving faith and sanctifying knowledge*. The thing that compelled him more than anything else was evangelism and teaching with a view to saving faith and sanctifying knowledge.

Notice what he says. “*For the sake of God’s elect.*” In other words, he wants to see true saving faith in those whom God chose from before the foundation of the world.

And notice what he does. He speaks about election and evangelism in the same breath. A lot of people say this. Well, if God has chosen the elect before the foundation of the world, why do we preach the gospel? That’s a logical question that people would ask.

But Paul answers that for us very critically when he puts the two together. What Paul basically says is that he speaks in the same breath about election and evangelism. Election and evangelism are not opposed to one another. But election makes true evangelism possible.

Now let me give you an illustration of what I mean. Turn with me to Acts chapter eighteen, around verses nine and ten.

The context of this is that Paul is in Corinth. Things are not going well. In fact, there’s a plot perhaps to even take his life. And so he’s very, very discouraged. And oftentimes ministers get discouraged in the preaching of the gospel because we don’t see the results that we would like to see.

Now notice what the Lord does when He appears to Paul in a vision in Acts chapter 18. We pick it up at verse 9. “*And the Lord said to Paul,*” (one night in a vision), “*Do not be afraid. But go on speaking and do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you. For I have many in this city who are My people.*”

Now notice what he says. He doesn’t say, “Paul, hang in there. Don’t get discouraged. Suck it up for the Gipper.” (*Laughter*) No, he doesn’t say that. He says this. “Paul, keep on preaching, because I have many people in that village. I’ve got many people in that city.”

What’s He saying? He’s saying, “I’ve got many of My elect who are there. Keep on preaching, Paul, because election and evangelism go together.” Election is what makes evangelism a reality. And election makes evangelism powerful and possible. “So keep it up, Paul, because I have many people in this city.”

So the first thing that Paul wants us to know is this. Evangelism and election go hand in hand. They’re not opposed. They’re friends. They’re friends together.

I think that the second thing Paul wants us to know is this. Evangelism and election are the best of friends. The second thing is this: *knowledge of the truth*. Notice what he

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says in verse two. *“For the sake of the faith of God’s elect and their knowledge in the faith, which accords with godliness.*

The second triumphant truth is this. Election and evangelism go together. And the second is knowledge of the truth. Teaching and evangelism must also go together. Election and evangelism go together. Teaching and evangelism must also go together, because the last thing we want to do is to invite people to come to a Christ who they don’t know. And how often do we do that? In our evangelism we are so excited about getting somebody to give a response that we never teach him who Jesus Christ is. Paul says this. Evangelism and teaching must go together just as much as election and evangelism must go together.

And the third thing that he says is this. *Truth leads to godliness, and godliness leads to the hope of glory.”*

So the three things that Paul is committed to are these: evangelism and election, teaching and evangelism, and truth and godliness to make us Christlike.

I want you to notice one thing about this. Go to Titus 1, verses 2 and 3. Now this is the significance of the message of the gospel. He deals with three time areas, three areas of time. He deals with *the promise of the gospel* in verse 2. He deals with *the revelation of the gospel* in verse 3, and *the consummation of the gospel* in verse 3.

Now notice this. The promise of the gospel is this: before history began, before the world began. When you preach the gospel you’re dealing with eternity past because you’re dealing with those God has elected unto saving faith before the foundation of the world. You’re dealing with past history when you preach the gospel.

Secondly, this. You’re dealing with the present revelation of the gospel, which is our history right now. When we’re proclaiming Christ, we’re dealing with history right now, for the faith of God’s elect.

And thirdly, the consummation of the gospel will end when He comes again. But notice the three areas. It deals with the promise of the gospel. It deals with the revelation of the gospel. And it deals with the consummation of the gospel. Do you see that in verses two and three?

Notice. *“For the sake of the faith of God’s elect.”* That’s the promise of the gospel. *“And the knowledge of the truth.”* That’s the revelation of the gospel. *“Which accords with godliness.”* The hope of the gospel is the consummation of the gospel. He deals with three areas, a time frame.

Men, what that means is this. When you and I proclaim the Person and work of Christ, we’re dealing with God’s sovereign history—past, present and future. That’s the power of the gospel. It deals with all ages,. It’s not just this present age. It deals with the past age. The promise of the gospel is for God’s elect. The revelation of the gospel is now. And the hope of the gospel is the consummation, when glory comes and we’re with Christ our Savior. Yes?

Participant: Just a couple things. Regarding what you said about God’s sovereignty and election and evangelism going together, and *“I have people in this city,”* as Jesus said, *“don’t be discouraged.”* It’s kind of like Elijah on Mount Carmel when he was depressed and discouraged. And the Lord said, *“I have seven thousand who have not*

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bowed the knee to Baal.” And I think that sometimes we tend to get discouraged with the political scene and everything going on in the world. Yet, you know, Christ has His church *“and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”* We’re on the victory side.

Bruce: Amen to that. Thank you, Don. My point is this. Paul is basically saying,-- Jim, you had something?

Jim: I was just going to ask you. Before the beginning of time, the promise, there were no humans.

Bruce: That’s right. See, there’s the promise of the gospel. The gospel is the most powerful message we can ever proclaim because it deals with three areas of history: the promise of the gospel—the past, the revelation of the gospel—current time, and the future consummation of the gospel, when we have residency with our heavenly Father in all of His glory. It’s just such a powerful message. And the point that I’m trying to make is that this is the message of the church. The message of the church is to proclaim the gospel.

And so that’s who Paul says he is. He’s a servant. He says that he’s an apostle. And this is what he’s for, the preaching of the gospel.

Now let’s talk a little bit about Titus.

Participant: Hey, Bruce?

Bruce: Please?

Participant: That promise was a promise that God made to Himself, right?

Bruce: It’s the eternal covenant. You see, in my mind the most critical component for the understanding of Christ’s relationship with His Father, the Father and the Son, is the eternal covenant, the covenant that God made with His Son when He said this. “I’m going to give You My people, My elect. You will not lose any of them. I give them to You. They are love gifts from Me to You.” That’s the eternal covenant. It all is based upon that. That’s the most important thing we can understand. It’s the covenant that Christ made with the Father, and the Father made it with His Son. He said, “I’m going to give you some of My creation, and they will become love gifts. Not one of them will die. You will not lose one of them, because You’re going to die and accomplish their salvation.” Yes, Brian?

Brian: You gave us an Old Testament reference for that last week, and I can’t remember where it was. Can you recall that by chance?

Bruce: Well, let me see. I’m sure I can. I can give it to you afterwards if I don’t have it here. See me afterwards. I’ll give it to you.

Now do you understand the eternal covenant? It’s an agreement that God the Father made with God the Son. “I’m going to give You some of My creation, and You’re not going to lose any of those.” That’s John 10 and John 17. “You won’t lose any of those.” That’s the eternal covenant. And everything is based upon that.

And so that’s why you can say that election and evangelism go hand in hand, because it’s part of the eternal covenant that God the Father made with God the Son. Are you okay with that? Do you follow? Yes, Bishop?

Bishop Rodgers: J. I. Packer said that he wouldn’t have the courage to preach the gospel if he didn’t believe in election.

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Bruce: Amen.

Bishop Rodgers: That’s one of his main points.

Bruce: That’s right. You see, what makes evangelism powerful is election. It’s what makes it even possible. And to deny election, men, says this. God has no mercy. When you deny election, you’re saying that God has no mercy, because remember this. We are not the accused awaiting trial. We’re the convicted awaiting sentence. There’s a difference. We’re not the accused, we’re the convicted. We’re not the accused awaiting trial. We’re awaiting conviction.

That’s what makes it possible. You see, when you deny election, you’re saying that God is not merciful. Do you understand that? That’s why it’s so powerful.

Participant: Unfortunately, there are people who say that if you embrace election, why isn’t God merciful to all? And they don’t understand this. Is He obligated to be merciful to anyone?

Bruce: That goes back to the eternal covenant, right? It goes back to the eternal covenant, that relationship between God the Father and God the Son. It goes back to that issue. But to deny election is to say that God has no mercy, because He doesn’t save anybody.

Now let’s take a look at the relationship between Paul and Titus. They had a unique relationship. What I’m going to suggest is this. As I describe some aspects of the relationship that they had together, may it rekindle in us some of the relationships that we have with each other. And I hope that it will stimulate us to have improved our relationships that we have with each other, improving our relationships that we have with the church of Christ, because exactly the same ingredients that make up the relationship between Paul and Titus are the same ingredients that you and I have today and that we have with the church. And I hope it will stimulate us to take the church more seriously, because all of life is about relationships. So let’s take a look at some of these things.

Among the friends of Paul, Titus was one of the most useful and one of the most beloved. Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles and Titus was also a Gentile. Now Paul had a special affection for Timothy, but Timothy’s mother was a Jew. And so he was more qualified to preach the gospel to the Jewish culture. But both of Titus’s parents were Gentiles, and so he was more suited to be after Paul’s heart, which was to preach to the Gentiles.

So Titus seems to be a man of great common sense, so that if Paul needed anything to be done, he’d call on Titus. When the collection was made at Corinth on behalf of the poor for the saints at Jerusalem, Paul sent Titus to administer that collection.

On one occasion Paul was comforted by the coming of Titus. At another time he was said to be sad because Titus was not there, and he hoped to be encouraged by him.

Now though we don’t know a whole lot about Titus from the book of the Acts of the Apostles or anywhere else, he is mentioned twenty-three times in the books of the epistles to the Corinthians and to the Galatians. He is mentioned twenty-three times. And the point is this. We can learn a lot about this. Paul was always willing to give credit to the people who worked with him.

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That’s our great fault, when we do not recognize the people who have encouraged us along the way. We should never do that. It’s a sad day when we don’t take time to thank the people who are part of our spiritual development. You see, Paul was always saying, “Look. I may be an apostle, but I need encouragement. Where is my brother Titus?”

It seems to me that when you put all the Scripture together, that Titus looks like a man who, when you would come to be with him, he would be one who would make you feel better. This is what Paul says. “I need my brother Titus to be here.”

Friends, there’s nothing wrong with being dependent upon people. You see, all of life is about relationships. And woe unto us when we do not take time to thank those people who have been an encouragement to us, who have helped us in our spiritual journey! Just because you’re in some position, do not be afraid to ask for people’s help, because the whole body of Christ is designed to be an encouragement. You see that in the relationship between Paul and Titus.

So men, I want to encourage us to always be very, very thoughtful about thanking those people who have been our spiritual mentors, and those people who have come along and helped us in our growth in Christ. That’s what Paul did with Titus. He always gave him recognition and gave him due honor because he was a man who came along and helped Paul in his own ministry.

And so men, I just want to thank you for how much you’ve done for me in the years that you supported me in the twenty-two or twenty-three years we’ve been together, with all the surgeries I’ve been through and the encouragement you’ve given me. I just want you to know how deeply I love all of you, because you’ve been such a great asset to me. In whatever ministry the Lord has given me, you’re a major part of it. And friends, we should never, ever stop thanking people who mean a lot to us in the journey with Christ.

Men: Amen.

Bruce: So go back to your church today. Thank your pastor. Go back to the elders. Thank your elders, because they are the people who have made your growth in Christ possible. Do not ever take that for granted. Paul didn’t take Titus for granted. And we shouldn’t take the brothers and sisters who have helped us along the way for granted either. May it be so that we will always remember those people who have helped us in our spiritual journey.

Participant: Amen.

Second Participant: We love you too, Bruce.

Bruce: Well thank you. First of all they had a unique relationship. Then they had a close relationship. That’s the second thing I want us to see.

In the early part of their life together, they were probably strangers to one another. But now Paul views Titus as his own spiritual son. And it’s the grace of God that creates relationships of a very dear and tender nature. It’s the grace of God that creates those relationships, relationships which will endure through the problems of life, relationships that will outlast death, and relationships which will perhaps be stronger when we’re in eternity together. You see, it’s all of those graces in the closeness of our relationships. Men, don’t ever, ever take the closeness of our relationships for granted.

Participant: Amen.

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Bruce: It cost Christ His life to create that relationship that you and I have. And we should never take that for granted. When we take each other for granted, we’re basically saying that we’re taking the work of Christ on the cross for granted, because that’s where Christ gave us the ability to have that relationship with each other in the first place. And what a blessing those relationships are! There is no greater joy for me than to see you growing in grace and truth.

I’ll also say this about Paul and Titus. We all may have some degree to which we are somebody’s spiritual father, because we have helped them along their spiritual journey in Christ. But the one thing we should never do, having a spiritual side, is that we should never desire or take on the authority of a natural father. That is given strictly to the natural father, not to us. We have our spiritual sons and daughters. But we should never usurp that. As Peter says, “Do not lord it over God’s people.” We should never assume or desire the responsibility of a spiritual father to desire to be a natural father and to have control over those children that God gives us. We have to be sensitive to that. Just be careful that we don’t try to do that and take up the role of a natural father. He’s my spiritual son. He’s not my natural son. And so they had a unique relationship. It was a very close relationship.

Next, we see that they were brothers by a common faith. Our faith is common, men. It is the same faith in two respects, first of all because we believe the same truths. That makes us have the same common faith. We believe the same truths.

And secondly, because we believe them with like precious faith. There are certain things we believe that are very precious to us. Here is a list of just a few of the things that are precious to us. They form the basis of our relationship, why we have such a common faith. Here are some things we have in common.

To us there is one Mediator, Jesus Christ the Savior. We believe in the election of grace by the divine Father. We believe in the vicarious sacrifice of the eternal Son. We believe in the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, and the need of it in the case of every living man, woman and child, the need to be regenerated. We believe that. We believe in one Lord, one faith and one baptism.

I don’t know what you think about this, men, but I’m very, very grateful that we have a common faith.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: And it is the unity of this faith in which we believe, this like precious faith, which brings us to the point of rejoicing in one another.

Now I’ll have to admit this. I hope I can love all Christian people.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: I hope I can love all Christian people. But I’ve got to be honest. When I sit down and talk with somebody who embraces the doctrines of grace, I feel much more comfortable with them than I do with my brothers and sisters who don’t embrace the doctrines of grace. I hope I can love them both. But I’ve got to be honest. I’m much more comfortable with some of you guys than I would be with some other people, because we embrace the same common faith. The same things I hold dear you hold dear. And that’s the beginning of our relationship, and we should never take that for granted. That’s what

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allows us to hold hands in unity and cry out together, “Come, Lord Jesus!”, because we’re waiting for Him to return, because we have the like precious faith. You see, that’s the common relationship that Paul had with Titus. It’s also the same relationship that I have with you and you have with me. And I’ve tried it with all Christian people. But I’ve just got to be honest with you. It’s a lot easier when I do it with you guys than some of the other people that I’m called to love. We have a common faith.

And we have a common benediction. Notice the two words. *“Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus.”* Grace to help and peace to rest.

Only grace can save you and me. And the grace of God shall be given to us and all believers exactly as we need it.

Now this is something we have in common. We have common grace. Grace saved us. Grace will sustain us. That’s what we have in common.

One person can carry a fifty-pound weight, and another person can carry a hundred-pound weight. *“But he who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered less had no lack.”* In other words, God gives you and me the grace just at the moment we need it, based upon what we need. Some people may be given fifty pounds of grace. But you won’t have anything more than you need, and you won’t be lacking anything. Somebody may be given a hundred pounds of grace. You won’t have any lack, and you won’t have any more than you need. God always gives us the amount of grace we need at the moment that we need it. That’s the common benediction that we have. It is God’s grace.

Remember this. God gives us grace at the moment of application, not contemplation. I’m thinking that I need God’s grace. When do you need it? Not when you’re thinking about it. Certainly you can pray for it and ask for it. Ask God to give you the grace when you need it. But it’s at the moment of application when God gives you the grace that you will need. And you will not lack any, and you will not have excess. You won’t have too much and you won’t have too little. God will always give us the right amount of grace. That’s one of the things that we have in common in our relationship with each other.

And I would encourage you with this, men. Absorb as much grace as you can. However much you gather, you won’t have too much. I would discourage you from thinking that you’ll have too little, because God will always give you the amount of grace that you need at the moment you need it. That’s one of the things that we have in common.

Now how do you absorb grace? What are the things that we must do to absorb grace, to put ourselves in the environment of absorbing grace? What are the things that we need to do?

Participant: Faith.

Second Participant: Fellowship.

Bruce: Fellowship.

Participant: Pray.

Bruce: Pray.

Participant: For me it’s the knowledge of the Scripture, that God is sovereign and we can rely on the Word.

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Bruce: What about the church? The way to absorb grace is the church! That’s where it happens! That’s where you hear the preaching of the Word. You hear the preaching of the gospel. That’s where you have the fellowship. That’s where you have the prayer. That’s where you have rejoicing. We have the singing. That’s where you have the encouragement.

Participant: You have the sacraments there, too.

Bruce: Absolutely.

Participant: Not in fellowship, but in the church.

Bruce: It’s in the church. You see, that’s where you absorb grace. Whenever I counsel somebody and he’s struggling, I say, “Go and absorb grace.”

“What do I do?”

“Go to church. Find a church where you can get involved.” That’s where you absorb grace. Remember this. When you absorb grace, you’ll never have more than you need and you’ll never have less than you need. God will always give you the amount that you need.

But friends, we need to get involved in the church. That’s why I’m stressing these relationships. We have so much in common because of our common faith, the uniqueness that we have. And those commonalities that we have are the truths that we believe, but also the grace that God gives us. So absorb all the grace that you can. But don’t ever think that you have too much, or you’re never going to have enough. God will always give you the amount that you need individually.

Notice Psalm 84 verse 11. We need to thank God that there is such a thing as *common grace*. Now common grace means such things as these. The Lord sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. The sun shines on the righteous and the unrighteous. If we did not have common grace, which all of us experience, we would be living in a hell on earth if we did not have common grace.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: So we need to thank God for common grace as well as our saving grace. Psalm 84 verse 11 says this. *“For the LORD God is a sun and a shield. The LORD bestows favor and honor. No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.”* Men, you’ll always have the amount of grace that you need at the moment you need it. You won’t have a lack and you won’t have an abundance. You’ll have exactly the amount that you need. That’s one of the common features we have in our relationship with each other.

Peace is a second part of this benediction. He says, *“grace and peace.”* Grace to help, peace to comfort. Peace is the conscious possession and awareness of adequate resources. And what is grace? G-r-a-c-e—God’s resources at Christ’s expense. And peace is understanding the resources that God gives you in grace. It’s the awareness of my conscious possession and the awareness of the adequate resources that I’m going to have through God’s grace. Yes, Tom?

Tom: I like what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:10. *“But by the grace of God I am what I am. And His grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that was with me.”* Grace empowers Christians.

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Bruce: Amen. Grace to help us, to empower us. Thank you.

If God has given us His peace, it is a treasure of untold value. It is a pearl of great price. Comforting peace can only come when we are at peace with God. You can only have peace yourself when you are at peace with God. Romans 5:1.

Transcriber’s Note: Romans 5:1. *“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Bruce: Isaiah 12 says it this way. *“You will say in that day, ‘I will give thanks to You O LORD, for though You were angry with me, Your anger turned away, that You might comfort me.’”* The only way you’re going to have peace in your soul, men, is to have peace with God, because He will take the anger away and He will comfort you in His grace and His peace.

The peace of God means being grateful for His past mercies. The peace of God means being conscious of His present mercies. The peace of God means the certain awareness of His future mercies.

Now peace of mind is something we all need, not only in our own hearts, but in our families and in our culture and in our world, and in our offices and our businesses. The peace of God is only going to come when people have peace with God, and then they will have peace in their own lives.

One of my Puritan friends says this. *“Grace is the fountain and peace is the stream which issues forth from this fountain.”* Romans 5 verse 1.

Isaiah 54:4 says it this way. *“For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but My steadfast love shall not depart from you, and My covenant of peace shall not be removed,” says the LORD, who has compassion for you.* “My covenant of peace is not going to be removed.” That’s because grace and peace are the two things you and I have in common, to strengthen our relationship. Yes, please?

Participant: I’m just reminded of a saying I’ve heard over and over again concerning false peace, that you can’t have the peace of God until you have peace with God.

Bruce: Amen.

Participant: You know, we must know Him and live in His grace, and we can have His peace.

Bruce: Amen. Romans 5:1. Peace with God and with one another is part of our union with Christ. And herein we can join hands and bless God that we have a unique fellowship and relationship because of the Person and work of Christ and God’s eternal covenant. We can join hands because we have peace with God. All good things come from God. All grace and peace comes from the heart of God.

Here’s another great saying from one of my Puritan friends. *“We have not anything that is worth having but what your Father gave to us. And your Father is my Father. And the hand that passes the blessing to you passes the blessing to me and to the whole family of God, the church.”* He’s saying this. When God gives you a blessing, the same hand that gives you that blessing is the same one that gives me my blessing.

Participant: Amen.

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Bruce: And the blessing to the church. That’s part of our union with Christ. You see, men, I hope I’m describing something that’s going to help us understand the power of the relationships that we have that mirrors the relationship that Paul had with Titus.

These blessings not only come from the same source—God the Father--, but they come through the same channel, Jesus Christ the Lord. What God ordained the Son accomplished and the Holy Spirit applies. God is the Source, Christ is the Channel, and the Holy Spirit is the Power. And the same source from which we receive blessing is the same channel through the same power of the Holy Spirit, and God the Son. What God ordained the Son accomplished and the Holy Spirit applies.

There is a sacred blood mark on every covenant blessing that you and I receive, whether you have it, your brother has it, or some other member of the church has it. There is a sacred blood mark on that covenant blessing that is unique to the body of Christ, because it comes from the same divinely appointed channel, the God-Man, Christ Jesus our Lord. The source is God. The channel is Christ Himself. We have that in common, men. That’s what unifies us. We have that in common.

I don’t know how you feel about all this, but it seems to me that this ought to bind us rather closely together, because we have the same Christ and the same peace. It comes from the same source and the same channel. I think that ought to bind us together and help us understand the significance of the church, because church members have the same sanctuary in Christ.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Well how does that impact us? How do you think about each other? Should that not change the way that we think about each other, the things that we’re learning about Paul and Titus and our relationship? We have a unique relationship with the covenant of grace. It’s a unique relationship that we have.

Every blessing that comes to us should remind us that it comes from our Father through Jesus Christ the Mediator. And we should begin to feel that we are truly one in Christ because of the same source and the same channel.

Here are some of the resources that God gives us through the channel, Jesus Christ. Here are things that we have in common, men.

Transcriber’s Note: The following Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version.

Bruce: He gives us rest. Matthew 11:28.

Transcriber’s Note: Matthew 11:28. *“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”*

Bruce: He gives us keys to the Kingdom. Matthew 16:19.

Transcriber’s Note: Matthew 16:19. *“And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”*

Bruce: He gives us power over evil spirits. Luke 10 verse 19.

Transcriber’s Note: Luke 10:19. *“Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”*

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Bruce: He gives us living water. John 4 verse 14.

Transcriber’s Note: John 4:13-14. *“Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.’”*

Bruce: He gives us the Bread of heaven. John 6:51.

Transcriber’s Note: John 6:51. *“I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.”*

Bruce: Eternal life. John 10 verse 28.

Transcriber’s Note: John 10:28. *“And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.”*

Bruce: And a legacy of peace. John 14 verse 27.

Transcriber’s Note: John 14:27. *“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”*

Bruce: Now men, those are things that if you are truly in Christ Jesus, part of our union with Christ is this. We have those things in common. Now should that not impact the way that we treat each other?

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: How we think about each other? How do you think about us when we are away from each other? Do you thank God for the unity that we have in Christ?

Participant: Yes.

Bruce: Or do we nitpick and say, “He was late, or he didn’t say this, or he didn’t do the right thing?” How do we look at people in the church? Do we wait for them to treat us well before we love them? Or do we realize this? I have that common bond of grace and peace with these people. And I have those things from God the source, through the channel of Jesus Christ. He gave me the same things. The same blessings I have they have, because they came from the same source and the same channel. Doesn’t that impact the way we look at each other inside the church? It ought to radically change how we have relationships in the body of Christ in my mind.

And lastly I would conclude with this. *They had a common relationship in the Lord Jesus Christ.* Notice: a common Lord. As Lord, He owns us, and we are bidden to obey Him. A common Jesus, a common Savior, the spotless Lamb, sacrificed for the payment of our sins, and a common Christ. He is to us the Anointed of God. As Prophet, Priest and King, we accept Him in all the offices in which He bears His anointing. We have that in common. We have the Lord Jesus Christ in common.

So men, as brethren in a common faith, we rejoice in our common Christ, whose anointing has fallen upon all of us. And may God give us the grace to think about each other correctly. Yes, Don?

Don: Yes, Bruce. It’s my observation as I look at other people here, or at church or whatever, just how precious that common bond in Christ is, and the contrast between that and talking to people of the world that I know. We may even enjoy the same kinds of

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music or whatever. But after a while, in the world the relationship is so shallow, whereas, you know, even if I don't have a lot in common with some people who I know who are Christians, yet it's that common bond in Christ that makes the difference.

Bruce: Amen to that. My point is this. Men, we need to look at the church that way. We need to see people and make sure that we have this common bond. We need to make sure that we're proclaiming apostolic truth so those bonds can be unified together, and that the unique relationships that we will have can transcend and penetrate a dark world.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: May it be so for God's sake and for His glory that it happens. Let's pray. Lord, I hope that some of this makes sense to all of us. Father, I just pray that You would help us understand the significance of our common faith that is mirrored as an example for using the lives of Paul and Titus. The very ingredients they had that made them so unique in their relationship are the same ingredients that we have today in our world among each other as followers of Christ. Help us recognize that this is part of our union with Christ, and the unity in the church. And Father, may we take this back to our churches. May we begin to think of people correctly, so the church would gain all of its power and be a harbinger of relationships. All of life is about relationships. And those relationships must be solidified and unified in the church. And may it be so for Christ's glory. And all the Brave Men said, "Amen!" (*Applause*)