

***Theme: Transformed by the Letters of Paul***  
***“Titus and Maturing in the Christian Life”***  
***Sermon preached by Jeff Huber – October 14-15, 2017***

**Scripture: Titus 3: 3-11**

**VIDEO Sermon Intro**

**SLIDE “Titus and Maturing in the Christian Life”**

Please take out of your bulletin your Meditation Moments and your Message Notes. At the top you’ll find listed the Scripture text from first Timothy, which we will be looking at today, and then some blank lines to write things down that you would like to remember. I hope there is at least one thing you might hear today that you had never thought of before, or that you needed to be reminded of, and I hope you’ll use those lines to write those things down. Following that you will find a family or group activity to do this week, as well as reading for each day that will allow you to read the entire letter to Titus. There are questions and background materials to help you go deeper each day. I hope the sermon and the Meditation Moments together will help you go deeper into understanding the Scriptures in ways that you have never been able to do before.

We continue in a series of sermons we’ve been doing, looking at the letters of Paul, and how he invites transformation in our lives and our hearts as followers of Jesus. The first 8 weeks we looked at the 9 letters Paul wrote to churches, listed from longest to shortest in your Bible. Today we continue with one of the letters that Paul wrote to individuals, of which there are four. My hope is that this series of sermons will help you read these letters and they would have more meaning as we read them throughout our lives, not just over the few months of this series of sermons.

Titus is one of the “pastoral letters,” along with 1 and 2 Timothy. These

letters are written to pastors who are leading other leaders in the church. We learned last week that these letters are also disputed by a variety of scholars, who wonder why these letters are so different from others of Paul's letters. One theory is that these letters are a collection of letters, notes and recollections of Timothy and Titus about what Paul taught them as they traveled together for many years. We really don't know the full answer as to why these letters are so different, but if you want to learn more about what scholars say about this, I'm going to refer you back to last week's sermon on 1 Timothy that you can find on our website in written, video and audio form. You also can get a DVD of in our office. We are not going to focus on those issues today but rather take this letter at face value.

In this letter, Paul is writing to Titus, a young leader in the church. He is not as young as Timothy, but is a bit older when Paul brought him to Christ. We are going to try and understand who Titus was and the historical context of the letter, then see how that applies to us today. My hope is that we all will learn something today for our own spiritual lives, as individuals and as a church.

## **SLIDE                      Who is Titus?**

Let's start with this basic question. I have read Titus numerous times and I must admit that I needed to be reminded who he was. He is named 13 times in the New Testament, 9 of them appear in 2 Corinthians, 1 in Galatians, 1 in 2 Timothy and 1 in the introduction to Titus. He's not mentioned in the book of Acts, but let's take a look at what we learn about Titus in these passages. In 2 Corinthians we learn that Titus was sent as an emissary of the Apostle Paul and was called his co-worker in Christ. Paul would send him into troubled churches to do damage control and help fix things temporarily. We learned that 2 Corinthians is probably a compilation of 4 letters and Titus carried these letters back and forth to Corinth as he tried to help that church grow through the difficulties they were facing. Galatians pre-dates 2 Corinthians by a century and is a letter written to churches in what we know as modern-day Turkey that were primarily not Jewish, but gentile. Many who were not Jewish accepted Jesus as their Messiah.

Paul was then summoned to Jerusalem to meet with the disciple Peter,

James the brother of Jesus and others at the center of the church to explain his preaching and teaching to the Gentiles. In Acts 15 we read about Paul speaking before these early church leaders and with him is Barnabas, as he lays out before them the gospel they had been preaching. In Galatians, we learn that when Paul goes on this journey takes with him Titus, who was a Gentile and a Greek. He was one of the converts under Paul's ministry and he takes Titus to be the poster child for Gentile Christianity, to say to those early church leaders, "Here is one of the converts who has become a follower of Jesus. This man is a Greek and he is not circumcised and he is filled with the Holy Spirit. Talk to him and you will see Christ shining through him. What will you do with this man if you insist that people need to be circumcised and Jewish in order to be followers of Jesus." Titus becomes the example of a person who is a Gentile convert to the Christian faith.

We also learn in 2 Timothy, just before Paul's death when he is in a dungeon prison in Rome, he mentions that Titus has now gone out to Dalmatia to be an apostle and to take Paul's place in the ministry is starting churches. We also learned from post biblical sources that Titus was the Bishop of the island of Crete and ended his ministry there, leading those churches as they follow Jesus Christ. According to tradition, he lived to be 94 years old and was laid to rest on the island of Crete in the capital city. There are ruins of a church which was built on top of that place that you see in this photo.

**GRAPHIC            The Cathedral of St. Titus**

This Cathedral was destroyed in 894 when Arab forces invaded the island. His bones were taken from that place and eventually left in Venice, Italy. His remains were later returned to Crete where they remain to this day, buried at this modern St. Titus Cathedral. You also can see the interior and the beautiful icon to St. Titus. You also find the icon of St. Paul and St. Titus together, depicting them as traveling companions.

**GRAPHIC            Modern St Titus Cathedral on Crete**

**GRAPHIC            St. Titus Church Interior Greece**

**GRAPHIC            St Titus Icon Venetian Crete**

## **GRAPHIC          Icon of St Titus and St Paul - Traveling Companions**

Titus was a real person and he really ministered on the island of Crete. If you are wondering where Crete is, let's look at this map you find on the screen and also in your bulletins. It is the largest of the Greek islands and we know he visited Crete on his final journey to Rome where he would be tried before Caesar as a Roman citizen.

## **GRAPHIC          Paul's Journey to Rome through Crete**

We know Paul visited Crete on this final journey, and he may have visited earlier with Titus. The island is about 100 miles wide and about 40 miles north to south at its widest point. Christian missionaries had come to Crete before Paul and when Paul and Titus visited they found numerous churches in towns and villages. We have to understand what was happening in these churches to really understand this letter to Titus. The church had clearly met with a great deal of success on Crete and things were going well. They had been successful at reaching the inhabitants of an island which was composed primarily of Greeks and was known to be a wild and woolly city with lots of loose living because of the many ports of call on the island.

Those small churches were finding much fertile soil, and one of the main issues was how to have enough leaders and pastors for all the churches. We know this is true because of the first chapter of Titus, where we find what was happening in Titus' life and why Paul was sending him this letter. In Titus 1:4 we read.

**BIBLE          *4 I am writing to Titus, my true son in the faith that we share. May God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior give you grace and peace. 5 I left you on the island of Crete so you could complete our work there and appoint elders in each town as I instructed you.***

Paul has visited Crete with Titus and left Titus behind to fix things and in the first two chapters have to do with how to encourage and train up those who will lead the churches. In particular, Paul says we need leaders who walk the walk and talk the talk. Here is just one example found in Titus 2:1-3.

**BIBLE          *1 As for you, Titus, promote the kind of living that reflects***

***wholesome teaching. 2 Teach the older men to exercise self-control, to be worthy of respect, and to live wisely. They must have sound faith and be filled with love and patience.3 Similarly, teach the older women to live in a way that honors God. They must not slander others or be heavy drinkers. Instead, they should teach others what is good.***

Why does Paul write this? Because clearly there were issues of people coming out of a Greco-Roman lifestyle, becoming followers of Jesus, and then being asked to lead churches and it was challenging for them to leave behind their old ways. These words, and many like them in Titus that you will read this week, are why we have covenants for all of our leaders here at the church, including the staff. We ask everyone who steps into a leadership role to live their faith. This does not mean be perfect, but it does mean remembering an important truth. Paul gets at this in verses 7-8.

**BIBLE** ***7 And you yourself must be an example to them by doing good works of every kind. Let everything you do reflect the integrity and seriousness of your teaching. 8 Teach the truth so that your teaching can't be criticized. Then those who oppose us will be ashamed and have nothing bad to say about us.***

Here's the crux of the issue for every single one of us. When we say we are followers of Jesus, people are watching us and they are ready to pounce on anything hypocritical, where our words and teaching don't match our actions. I sat with way to many people who have been spiritual wounded because a pastor or church leader had an affair, or stole money, or was nice on Sundays and just plain mean and ornery the rest of the week, and it caused them to leave not only the church but Jesus Christ.

I have told you before that when I was in my first church appointed as a youth pastor, my senior pastor was removed for misconduct. He was later diagnosed with a narcissistic personality disorder, but the damage was done once multiple affairs were uncovered. I wanted to leave ministry because he had done my wedding! It makes you wonder if your wedding even counted and if any of the sermons he preached meant anything. Here are two things I learned from that experience. The first were words said to me be another

pastor who would become a mentor to me and provide me a place of healing as I went to serve with him. He was the only one in the middle of that to say these critical words that Paul is really getting at in this passage.

**SLIDE      Leadership is a privilege, not a right.**

Please hear that again. Leadership is a privilege, not a right. When you and I are asked to lead in the church, or anywhere, it's a privilege to do so and we can lose that privilege. There is a two-fold reason for this. First, we are meant to be an example and when we are not it causes damage to the body of Christ. Second, and just as important, when a leader has personal issues going on their life, we should support them and give them time to take care of them. We must willingly step out of our leadership role when this happens so we can focus on our own spiritual life, and our families if we have one. On more than one occasion we have asked leaders to sometimes step out of leadership roles so they can get healthy. This is not about judging them, but encouraging them to take of themselves and their family if they have one.

**SLIDE      Effective leadership requires being emotionally healthy**

In other words, we must get healthy because we can't lead when we are unhealthy. We just spread the unhealth. This is why in our church, myself and every staff person, are in accountability groups where we share with each other these questions. I would suggest that each of us should have people in our lives with whom we can ask these questions.

**SLIDE      1. How's your relationship with Jesus?**

What are you doing to fill yourself up? How are you remaining connected to the source that we believe brings life? We can't give what we don't have.

**SLIDE      2. How is your marriage or singleness?**

Our first ministry, if we are married, is to our spouse and kids if we have them. I once heard Andy Stanley, a great preacher and teacher and the son of Charles Stanley say, "There are only two roles that are unique in my life. Every other role I have someone can and will do." Someone else was Lead Pastor of this church before I got here, and someone else will lead this church

when I leave. Every paid or volunteer job you and I have can, and will, be done by someone else. The only truly unique roles I have are as my wife's first husband (because she can get a second one, but not another first!) and father to my children.

When I was struggling in our marriage after my senior pastor's removal, I went to see a counselor. I also had seen a counselor in my mid-twenties when I was dealing for the first time with being an adult child of an alcoholic and I found it very helpful. The counselor I saw early in my ministry said to me once, "Jeff, the best husband you are the better pastor you will be." No one had ever said that to me before. Somewhere along the way I had started to believe that I should work hard and find my identity in my work and success. But I have learned, sometimes the hard way, that being a better husband and father has always led me to be a better pastor for you.

**SLIDE      3. Who are the people you can turn to for support?**

We want each of our staff persons, and quite honestly every one of you, to know who you will turn to when the going gets tough...because life will get tough. I remind you all the time about the story of the paralytic who could not get to Jesus. His four friends carried him to where a crowd had gathered around Jesus but they couldn't get in. So, what did they do? Did they give up? No, instead they hoisted the man up on the roof, dug a hole through the thatch and mud, and lowered him down where he was healed by Jesus.

**SLIDE      Who will carry you when you can't get to Jesus?**

We all will have moments like this where we feel paralyzed in life. We can move and get ourselves to where we need to be. We all need 4 people in our lives we can call. Who are our four people? If you don't have one, then the first step is to BE one for someone else. This is why one of our churches focus over the next year will be to create more healthy groups, with healthy leaders, to create those kinds of connections.

The purpose of this series is not just to learn about Paul and these letters, but to see how they apply to our lives. Paul wrote his letters so those early followers of Jesus would experience real life change, transformation, where they were becoming more like Christ and experiencing true life. Many weeks in this series, we have let you hear from the people sitting around you



who have experienced life change in this church. Today I want you to hear from two members of our praise team, Nathan and Jenny Wicket.

**VIDEO                      Wickets**

We need relationships and to be with people because that is where transformation and change really takes root. Paul reminds of why we need the church and need each other in chapter 3 of his letter to Titus when says these words.

**BIBLE                      *9 Do not get involved in foolish discussions about spiritual pedigrees or in quarrels and fights about obedience to Jewish laws. These things are useless and a waste of time.***

I get pretty frustrated in the church at times when we start arguing about foolish things. One of the things I love about this church is that we have a wide variety of people and beliefs, from conservative to liberal. One more than one occasion I have had people come to me after being in a small group and say something to this affect, “Did you know that so and so is a conservative/liberal? I found out they believed the opposite of me on this or that issue, but you know what? They are not bad people?” Being in a group, in relationships, allows you to deal with the tough stuff and divisions at the heart and human level.

We live in a culture that is constantly trying to divide and dehumanize so we can cause hurt to “the other” without feeling guilty. I remind you that Paul said one more than one occasion, and in more than one way, that we are the BODY of CHRIST and each member has value. So when we put down or demonize the other, we are only hurting ourselves and our own humanity. In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, conservative or liberal or moderate for we are all one in Christ Jesus. There is one thing that we do all have in common for sure, and Paul hits on that a few passages earlier in chapter 3 of his letter to Titus.

**BIBLE                      *3 Once we, too, were foolish and disobedient. We were misled and became slaves to many lusts and pleasures. Our lives were full of evil and envy, and we hated each other.***

This was the other thing I learned, coming out of that experience of



working with my pastor who was removed for misconduct. If we are waiting for the perfect person to be our pastor or deliver sermons and provide wise teaching, we will be waiting a loooooong time. There are no perfect people and even through the Bible, including the Apostle Paul, God is constantly using broken vessels to carry his message.

**SLIDE                      All humans are broken vessels**

We all have been foolish and become slaves to our past and full of envy and even hated others. Paul does not say these things to beat us, or Titus, up, but to help us realize that we need each other to spur each other on to good works.

This is baseball pennant season, and I was reminded this week of the first part of the 1900s, when New York City had two major league baseball teams. One was called the New York Yankees. Do you remember the name of the other team? It was the New York Giants.

In 1957, the Giants decided they liked the climate better in San Francisco... and they moved. New York was shocked by this loss of their team and appealed to the National League to allow them to create the first expansion team of the century. In 1962, they got their wish.

What was the name of that team? It's the New York Mets. Things didn't start out so well for the Mets. In their first year, 1962, the team lost 120 games. The only thing that stopped that from being an all-time record, was that in 1899 the Cleveland Spiders lost more games in a single season than they did.

For the first few years the Mets gained the title of being the **lovable losers**. They lost so often that when they beat the Chicago Cubs in May 26th of 1964 by a score of 19 to 1, legend has it that a fan called a NY newspaper to get the score of the game. When he was told, "They scored 19 runs," he allegedly asked, "But did they win?"

They lost repeatedly because, as a new team, they had to take whatever players they could find. And they ended up with a roster of has-beens and wannabees. They lost their games so often and so miserably that their manager – Casey Stengel - noted: ***"The Mets have shown me more ways to***

***lose than I ever knew existed.”***

But Stengel never gave up on the lovable losers. Year after year he kept hammering away at the basics. He reportedly took the team out for a stroll around the diamond during the 1st practice and he turned to the players and said, ***“Them are the bases.”***

He pounded away at the basics again and again... and by 1969 – 7 years after the Mets became a team – they won their first national pennant AND a World Series.

Stengel realized he didn’t have much to work with but eventually he managed to turn the lovable losers into the Marvelous Mets. He turned a team filled with losers into a team of winners.

That’s how God works. He takes our lives that we often see as not worthy, and makes winners of us simply because he believes in you and me.

Paul goes on and writes what is our memory verse for this week. We have been encouraging you each week of this series to memorize a verse take from that week’s letter. Here’s this week’s verse, which reminds us of the one essential of the Christ faith. Let’s say it together.

**BIBLE**     ***4 “When God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, 5 he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit.***

Our ability to do good is meant to come from our new birth and the power of the Holy Spirit, by not only cleansing but helping us to see our brokenness because God see so much more. The first thing we need to recognize is that we’ve been saved by the kindness and love and mercy of God. God was motivated to save YOU and ME because God loved us.

God didn’t do it because we deserved it. God didn’t do it because we earned it. It had nothing to do with any righteous deeds that bought God’s attention. God simply loved us.

And because God loved us we were offered the opportunity to accept a free gift—a gift of mercy and forgiveness. Years ago, a preacher named Carl Ketcherside moved to St. Louis and began working with a group of teenagers

he described as, ***“a crew of ripped off long haired kids.”*** Most of them had a history of drug addiction, but he loved them and he listened to them, and one by one baptized them into Christ.

An affluent member of the church apparently wasn't pleased with having these young folks come to their church building and he asked Ketcherside, “How are you making out with those long haired, sad looking specimens you have been meeting with?”

Ketcherside replied, “Those aren't specimens, they are children of God. You are talking about my brethren in the Lord.”

The other man smirked and said, “They look to me like something the cat dragged in.”

Ketcherside replied, “No. They look like someone the shepherd brought home.”

Paul goes on...

**BIBLE**      ***6 He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior. 7 Because of his grace he declared us righteous and gave us confidence that we will inherit eternal life.” 8 This is a trustworthy saying, and I want you to insist on these teachings so that all who trust in God will devote themselves to doing good. These teachings are good and beneficial for everyone.***

Titus is a letter written to one of the key leaders in the early church by the apostle Paul, and gives us some glimpses into how we mature in the Christian life. We are not meant to stay the same, but we are meant to become a new creature in Jesus Christ, that was true for the people of Crete, and it's true for us today.

Mike's family was known throughout the community as the worst examples of humanity. The parents were irresponsible. The kids were troublemakers. They lived like animals, even eating food out of trashcans. Everyone who saw them thought, ***“That's just who they are. That's all they'll ever be. They'll never change.”*** But Mike did.

There came a point at which he heard the powerful message of Jesus' life, death and resurrection, and he decided that was what he wanted for his

life. He believed in Jesus, repented of his sins, and was buried in the waters of baptism for the forgiveness of his sins. He eventually became a preacher and part of his ministry reached into his family – of whom he baptized several.

Then one day, Mike was at the funeral of his brother-in-law. One of the women there who had not seen him since his conversion spoke with him and she said that she was amazed at the change that had taken place in his life. She was surprised at what HE had made of himself.

Mike responded: ***“Oh I really appreciate your compliment, but I really didn’t change myself. It was Christ IN ME that brought about the changes in my life.”***

That is why Paul writes his letters, and this one to Titus, to remind us that it is Christ in us that can bring about transformation. My prayer is that will happen for each of us as we read Paul’s letter to Titus this week. Let’s pray.

**SLIDE      Prayer**

*O God, we know that each of us struggles at times to live out our faith. It’s part of being human. Bring people around us who can help us love you better, love our families better and who will help carry us to you when our lives feel broken beyond repair. Help us to remember it is your kindness and love which saves us and makes us now. May your Holy Spirit live in me and help me to become more like Jesus in the world. In Jesus’ name. Amen.*



*Under the authority of Christ, we are becoming a community of Jesus-followers for the transformation of the world.*

## ***“Titus – Maturing in the Christian Life”***

**Theme: The Letters of Paul**

**Scripture: Titus 3: 3-11**

Things I'd like to remember from today's sermon

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**Family/Community Activity for the week:** As we look at Titus this week, we are reminded of the importance of people who not only traveled with the Apostle Paul, but also supported him. This is why Paul greets Titus so warmly in the first verses of the letter to him. As a family, have each person name someone who has supported them through a hard time. List those people on a piece of paper and then lift those names up in prayer each day, either at a family meal or before bedtime. Give God thanks for each person by name. Then, take some time this week to write a note or card to each person, telling them how much you appreciate them and why. This activity can be a blessing to them, and to you as you remember those who have supported you in your life.

**Meditation Moments for Monday, October 16** – Read Titus 1:1-4 and Galatians 2: 1-7. Titus was a long-term companion of Paul who was a valuable aid in two of Paul's greatest crises. Titus first appears in the New Testament in Galatians 2:1, where Paul says he took Titus along on his trip to Jerusalem with Barnabas. Titus was a Gentile, and the issue at hand was whether Gentiles should have to comply with Jewish ceremonial rites (circumcision, diet restrictions and so on) in order to be full members of the Christian community. With the young Paul at one side and Barnabas at the other, he was essentially "tried" (and acquitted) by the leaders in Jerusalem.

- Titus not only learned a great deal by traveling with Paul, but he also was a key support person when Paul faced difficult times. Have you ever been there for someone going through a hard time? What made you want to be there for them? Who in your life is there to support you in difficult moments? Are there people you can reach out to and ask to be there for you BEFORE you get there, since every one of us will go through difficult moments?
- Paul was Jewish and Titus was Greek, yet Paul didn't look at his brother in the faith differently. Are there people in your life that you look at differently because they are...well...different? This week take time to reach out to them and see them as God sees them.

***Prayer:** Dear God, thank you for the people in my life which have blessed me when going through hard times. Help me to realize that I am meant to see all people as blessings and children that you love. Give me the courage to love others well this week and always.*

**Tuesday, October 17** – Read 2 Corinthians 1:23 to 2:4 and 7:2-16. Titus appears again in the middle of Paul's struggle with the church at Corinth. In that deeply divided church, he represented Paul. He had the unwelcome job of delivering what we call the "severe letter" which Paul refers to in these passages, and then staying there for about a year. Then he delivered the letter we now call 2 Corinthians in which Paul takes on his critics and calls the church to honor an unfulfilled financial pledge.

- Have you ever been falsely accused of something by someone you never thought would do that? How did it feel when someone believed your "side of the story"? Paul was blessed by the coming of Titus in the midst of turmoil because he knew Titus would support him. Titus also was able to hear both side of the issues and help bring about some healing by loving both sides, Paul and the people in Corinth. How might God be calling you to see "both sides" of a conflict? How can you help to build bridges that bring about healing?

***Prayer:** Dear God, help me to listen well to the people that come across my path, even when I disagree with them. Help me to love in my listening and support people, even when we disagree.*

**Wednesday, October 18** – Read Titus 1: 5-16. Titus was in Crete at the time Paul wrote him. Crete was a seaport, a wild and wooly port of call for cargo ships traversing the Mediterranean. It had been socially backward for 1400 years when the Minoan civilization was destroyed by a devastating earthquake. We do not know exactly when Titus went with Paul to Crete, but one possible scenario places it after Paul's release from his first imprisonment in Rome.

- Why is Paul's list of leadership qualification in verse 6-9 focused primarily on "being" instead of "doing"? How do you think this list applies to you and your life?
- When did you come to a knowledge of Christ in the way Paul speaks in verses 1 and 2 of chapter 1 that we read two days ago? Who in your circle of friends have you admired and respected for their character and authentic leadership that seems grounded in following Jesus? Which qualities from this passage do you appreciate in them? Which of these qualities do you want to develop in your own life?

***Prayer:** O God, help me to walk the walk in my life, living as a person who follows Jesus inside and out. Help me not just to "do" the right things, but to "be" the right person who lives a life that others want to emulate. Amen.*

**Thursday, October 19** – Read Titus 2: 1-15. Paul had preached in Crete and was giving Titus the job of following through with developing a healthy church. This letter was sent while he was in the midst of his task and reviews his assignment. It shows Titus as a forceful personality and skilled administrator. It seems he was made of tougher stuff than Timothy, but his assignments were shorter. By the time Paul had written 2 Timothy, the job in Crete was done, and Titus had been sent on to Dalmatia (part of modern Yugoslavia).

- What is Paul implying about the importance of mentor, trusted models or guides? Do you have a mentor? If not, is there someone in your life you can ask? If yes, maybe write a note to thank them!
- What conflict do these verses imply we will face as followers of Jesus? Why do you think Paul emphasizes "self-control" and doing "what is good"? How effective are you at self-control in your life? How can you grow in this area of your life?

**Prayer:** *Dear God, thank you for the people who have mentored me, and for those mentors you will send into my life. When the time is right, help me to be a mentor to others and give me strength to live with self-control. Amen.*

**Friday, October 20** – Read Titus 3: 1-8. This letter gives us three very valuable things: (1) A showcase of Paul's strategy for leadership in the midst of chaos. Timothy was given a long-term assignment in an established church in Ephesus; Titus was sent to follow up an evangelistic movement on Crete and give the Christian body some coherence. (2) A model of hope in the face of a very messy situation. (3) The importance of our faith coming from the inside and moving out, so it is witnessed in our actions. Paul has confidence in the power of the gospel to affect change in our lives, and throughout the church. This confidence shines throughout the letter.

- Be honest, in what situation do you least exhibit your faith? In the checkout line? In a fender bender? After a tough test? At the company picnic? In sports? Are there other places? Why do you think those moments “trigger” you?
- Why do you think Paul stresses, yet again, “doing good”? What about human nature makes reminders necessary? What do verses 4-7 say about God’s character? How might a true understanding of these verses promote humility? Gratitude? A life of service? Have you seen this happen in your life? Why or why not?

**Prayer:** *Lord Jesus, when I’m honest, I have a hard time living my faith \_\_\_\_\_ (you fill in the blank.) Help me to have the strength, by the power of your Holy Spirit, to exhibit the characteristics you long for me to live in my life. May I be more humble, filled with gratitude and live a life of service, so I might be the presence of your Son Jesus Christ more faithfully. Amen*

**Saturday, October 21** – Read Titus 3:9-15. Verses 9-11 may be some of the most important verses in this letter, as they appear to deal directly with some issues going on in the church on Crete with which Titus is struggling.

- What does it appear is going on in these verses? (You might refer again to Titus 2:25-25 and 3:1-5.) How do Paul’s instructions reflect both “tough love” and uncompromising faith? What similar situations have you seen occur in today’s church?
- Going back to verse 3 in this chapter, does this paint an accurate picture of you in the past? To what degree? Where these characteristics an obvious part of your life, or more an underlying reality? In doing good, what motivates you? Call of duty? Fear of judgment? Gratitude for what Christ had done? Desire to make peace in your relationships? Needs of others? Over the past year, where have you sensed growth leading to a “productive” life as referenced in verse 14?

**Prayer:** *O God, these last words of Titus encourage us to have, “grace be with us.” Help me to experience your grace, that love that feels undeserved. You tell us through your son, and through Paul’s letters, that you made us to love us, but sometimes I don’t believe that. Help me to take that to heart, so I then could live out a productive life. Amen*