

**THE SERMONS, LECTURES, AND SONGS OF
SIDNEY EDWARD COX**

Paul's Epistle to Titus
Chapter 1
Lesson 1

Editorial Note: What follows is one of a series of Bible lessons on the book of Titus.

These lessons were delivered to the Grace Bible Church in Detroit, Michigan sometime between 1967 and 1972. Sidney Cox was 80 years of age in 1967.

Sidney and Violet Cox resided in Detroit during their retirement years. In 1962, they retired to the Salvation Army retirement home in Detroit, "The Eventide." Violet was in failing health and ultimately died in 1967. Sidney continued residency there until a late in life move to Birmingham in 1972.

During the latter part of his life, Sidney Cox had developed a close relationship with the Christian and Missionary Alliance ("CMA"). CMA operates as a vast network of churches, similar to a "denomination." Grace Bible Church was a CMA church to which Sidney and Violet belonged during their years in Detroit. Sidney was often asked to lead Bible studies such as this study of Titus, and often filled their pulpit to preach.

John Douglas Cox, grandson of Sidney Cox. December 29, 2008.

...is the Epistle of Paul to Titus. This is the third, as you know, of a series spoken of as *The Pastoral Epistles* – I and II Timothy and Titus, *The Pastoral Epistles*.

And we shall be considering this lovely letter. And I wish I could tell you dear folks how eagerly I have been anticipating this privilege, not just this morning, but the fact that we can continue with it and let the water and loveliness of it flow over us and wash our hearts and cleanse our spiritual faces. This is one of the most beautiful sections of all of God's Word, and I have been eagerly anticipating the privilege of discussing it with you and thinking about it and talking about it with folks like you.

Now, if that's the case, I'm quite sure that you will do several things first. I hope you'll concentrate your reading somewhere near this. I'm not telling you where to read in your Bible, but I am hoping the Lord will tell you to read somewhere from the Epistle to Titus, so that it's familiar to you. Let your eyes and heart go over it. Let Him guide you. And do it constantly. Do it perhaps in your own personal devotions. Turn to it if it's only a fragment of it. Do it in your family devotions. Turn to it in your thoughts. Think about it as you drive along the road. It's amazing how God can talk to you when you're driving along the road, even though you do have to be watching traffic all the time. I know that's not easy, but it's a wonderful thing how God can talk with you, if you'll just let him. And he may be bringing some of these beautiful things out of the Epistles to Titus to your memory - some of these glowing, golden things that are there. Oh, we sure got them in this letter, we certainly have. I hope

you'll be praying for me, so as we study together today and next week and from then on for awhile this lovely thing that we call the Epistles to Titus.

Now dear, whenever you approach it, you need to be watching for two things. One, what has it to say to me? Not just what did it say to Titus years ago. Not what did it say to the strange churches that were on the Island of Crete all those years ago. Now that's important and we don't overlook that. But if you miss what it has to say to you personally, then you've missed something of great importance. This book will talk to you, personally. It'll point its finger right at you. It'll come and sit down right beside you. Over and over again.

And then again, I think we ought to keep in mind that this book will have something to say to the Grace Bible Church. If it doesn't, then we're just wasting our time. Not only to you personally, but to the group of us here, who think of ourselves as the Grace Bible Church. If ever there was a message that ought to come to the Grace Bible Church, this is it. For out of the heart of this book, this little letter, that we call the Epistle to Titus comes one of the most majestic declarations of the grace of God that you can find anywhere in the Bible. And it just leaps at us - this beautiful thing. The grace of God that bringeth salvation has appeared to all men. Did you hear it? It's like the sound of the "Hallelujah Chorus." And it comes right up, and it'll say something to the Grace Bible Church. If we emphasize grace in the Bible, as we do in our very name. We emphasize grace, it'll tell us something, not only about the doctrine of grace, but the behavior of grace, as well. For grace without behavior is but an empty shell. The doctrine of grace without the behavior of grace is but an empty shell. And this letter will talk to us, and we as the folks who gather together under the name of the Grace Bible Church, we ought to be listening with both ears to see what this letter has to say to us about the wondrousness of God's grace and the marvel of the word of God that's in the very title of our church. We're the Grace Bible Church.

Now my dear, when you approach a letter like this, and we shall be reading a little bit of it later, but when you approach a letter like this or any other letter of similar kind, you will find there are certain questions that immediately come to your mind. Obvious questions, you're asking them now if you're thinking at all. If your mind is on what we are doing at all, you'll be asking some questions, silently of course, but you'll be asking, who wrote this letter? To whom was the letter written? Why was it written? Was there a location that was mentioned in connection with it that is important? And we ask these questions and they stand right before us.

And we turn to the very first verse and we find out who wrote the letter. And I don't think there's anybody in the theological area that goes around picking up pins that has ever doubted that Paul was the author of this. I don't know of anybody who has got down that low in their thinking that they questioned this authority as to the authorship of this particular letter. It's generally accepted. Everybody who believes, believes it. And here it is. And there are certain things that we ought to know about this letter and the man who wrote it. There his name stands right at the very beginning of it - Paul. Now we're going to talk about him a little later on, but let me remind you of one thing. Whenever you approach any of the Epistles of Paul, and you find his name standing right there, you'd better take a good look at it. Not merely because of the majesty of the name, of the man whose behind the name, but because in every Epistle, Paul appears to us in a different manner. And what we want to know is what kind of a Paul are we looking at now. What kind of Paul wrote the Epistle to Titus? Now, when you see Paul writing to the Romans, and you see Paul writing to the 1st and 2nd Corinthians, and you see Paul writing to the Galatians; and then you turn from that and you watch Paul writing to his friends in

Phillipi, and to his friends in Ephesus, and to his friends in Colossi. Thank you Brother Nelson for that. That was a heartwarming moment, wasn't it? It sure was.

But you see you've got a different picture all together. You've got a different photograph. Not just the same. Sometimes you find him with a smile on his face. Sometimes you find him with his brow deeply sorrowed. He's the same Paul, of course. Sometimes you find him at ease. Sometimes you'll find him definitely not at ease. It is the same man, of course. But it helps you to understand the letter he writes. If you can catch sight of the photograph, the pose of the man, you see him. What kind of a Paul do you have here when he writes to Titus.

Well there are certain little indications there, but wherever you find him, you can be quite sure of this: that you've got Paul, the Christian gentleman. No matter where he is. No matter what he's doing. No matter if he's hot under the collar, and he is over and over again. But he's always the Christian gentleman.

You wonder sometimes if Paul didn't originate some of the distinctly Christian phrases. Such phrases as, "I beseech you." Such phrases as, "I implore you." Such phrases as, "I entreat you." That's the gentleman talking. See, there's no command there, no coercion there. Not at all. This is the gentleman talking. Wherever you find him, he's always that. Never a moment of variation in it. From the time he first appears in all of his majesty on the scene of things until the time he disappears, it's always the Christian gentleman. Whatever he says, he's not only saying it, but he IS what he says, all the way along. This man.

Notice the way he talks about Titus. This Gentile convert of his. This was so important to him. He had two magnificent young helpers there. Timothy was born of a Jewish mother and a Gentile father and Titus, who was totally Gentile. And here they are, these young men who are taking the responsibilities of the churches – that responsibility that had prematurely aged the Apostle Paul, so that six years before, he had written Philemon and called himself Paul, the aged. The weight of the churches, the care of the churches, to use his own phrase, had prematurely aged him, and it does too. It sure does. The care of the churches. And here he was, this Christian gentleman addressing a letter to a young man there, and speaks of him as, "Mine own son" in the Gospel. My beloved son. Can't you see, that's the gentleman talking. No question about that, that's the gentleman talking – and emphasizing the only relationships that have eternal value, that's your spiritual relationship. Much more precious than anything else; much more vital than anything else; much more real than any fleshly arrangement can ever be - the spiritual arrangement that God in his mercy has brought about. We are born of God, and we are brothers and sisters and sons of God, and the relationship has eternal value. The rest of it doesn't. And here is this man talking to his son in the Gospel, of course he is.

Talks to him about what he's going to do in a very difficult place. He's on the island of Crete. By the way, again, I'm not going to talk much about the island of Crete, but I'm going to ask you to find out all you can about the island of Crete. If you don't mind accepting a little homework, take that one. Find out all you can about the island of Crete. Where was it located? How big was it? How big is it? Not was it. How big is it? What kind of a place is it? How big is it? Can it be compared to something else? Was it bigger than Palestine, or less? What was there on the island of Crete that caused the letter to be written? Wasn't just a friendly Epistle to a young man named Titus, who happened to be there. There was a problem there. There were churches on the island of Crete, and Paul didn't say they were not Christian churches, and I think they were, because the only kind of churches that the Judaizers attacked

is naturally Christian churches. They don't attack any other kind. They've already got them. But one of the things that we find here is the Judaizers were attacking these churches on the island of Crete.

Now, how they began there, we can only conjecture, but we do have some little faint inkling that goes back to the day of Pentecost, and you will find that it is definitely stated that people from the island of Crete were present on that particular day. And evidently they went back there telling folks about what they had seen and heard. And something happened. And little communities of believers gathered together, feeling their way into things. With lots of mistakes that were made - of course there were. They didn't have any handbooks of doctrine. They didn't have any handbooks to guide them into how to organize their churches. They were just doing the best they could. And there were mistakes made. Mistakes in organization. Mistakes in behavior. Mistakes in a lot of things. The great apostle had visited there evidently, and left behind Titus, and gave him the instruction - you set in order the things that are wanting. And that's the business of it. We take a look at a book like this. The purpose of it.

Let me remind you again that it is one of a series of threes, and you will find that these letters to these young preachers deal with two related subjects. One is doctrine, and the other is the behavior that flows out of the doctrine, and without which the doctrine is just so much religious noise. Now that's what he's talking about. And in I and II Timothy the emphasis is on doctrine. But, in Titus the emphasis is on deeds - good works. You'll find it over and over again - good works, good works, good works. Turn to the last chapter, verse 8, and you'll find, "Maintain good works." Turn to the last chapter, verse 14, "Maintain good works." Not just start them, and then forget all about them. Go on with them. Make it the business of your life. Not splurges.

I had/have a little wife who used to say to me, "I don't like splurges - starting something or other and then not finishing it. Starting something or other, and all of the fuss and then in a good while, it's forgotten." If you're going to do anything, go on and do it.

You see. And Paul is saying the same thing. You've maintained good works. You know the difference, don't you between works and good works? We've discussed this, I'm quite sure, somewhere, because you can't avoid it when you see the two side by side - works here and good works here. What's the difference between them? Why is he saying good works? Why? What does he mean by, good works? You'll find them both together when Paul writes his letter to the Ephesians. And you'll find, "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."¹ Works on the one side. Good works on the other. You'll find them in contrast one to the other, in this book and a thousand other places in the New Testament.

Good works. Works. What is the difference? What? Works, my dear, is that which an unregenerate man, the natural man does in an effort to bring himself into favor with God - to buy something that will bring God's favor upon him. And we call it works. But, good works is something that the Holy Spirit produces in the life of the believer who has been brought into favor with God. That's the difference. Good works is something that the Holy Spirit produces. Works is just something that we do ourselves - the natural man trying to bring himself into favor with God. And all you've got to do is to let your mind go a little way and you wonder how many folks in the city of Detroit, who are unsaved, unregenerate, or

¹ Ephesians 2:8-10.

be trying to buy themselves into favor with God by leaving something in their wills or something for somebody beforehand. And you can see it everywhere you look, the natural man trying to buy favor with God by something that he does. But, good works, the Holy Spirit produces that. Good works is not something that we do, it's something he does. Good works have to do with character. I mentioned the gentlemanly man who is writing this letter. Like good works, the behavior of a Christian - that's good works, not just something that a Christian does. It's what a Christian is. His behavior - the loveliness of his Christian character. And God shines it out of the midst of it. Good works. Good works. Good works.

If you want a sentence that will sum it all up so far as these Pastoral Epistles are concerned - you can't separate them all together, even though you're interested in just one of them for the moment. There's these three little letters. They say this to us, "Now, listen." They say this to us, "You guard the truth that produces godliness." And that's the thing it's saying to us all the way along to us. "You guard the truth that produces godliness," all the way along.

And in I Timothy, you will find the emphasis on, "Protect it." And II Timothy, the emphasis is on, "Proclaiming it." And in Titus, the emphasis is on, "Practice it." The three words: protect it, proclaim it, practice it. And in case you're in the thanking mood due to thank someone for those three words, don't thank me. You thank Dr. Jay Sidlow Baxter² for that. I know I'm thanking him, that's for sure. I certainly have. Be careful to maintain good works - this thing that flows out of the Christian character. That's the thing. And this is the emphasis there. We shall suggest an outline for you later on, but not today.

And now, I want to read to you the first sentence of the Epistle to Titus. Have you got your Bibles open? If not, why not? Let's open them now. Say one sentence. Wait a minute now, don't jump to conclusions. Not too soon. I want to read you the first sentence of this book, and this is what it says:

"Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; but hath in due time manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Savior; to Titus, mine own son after the common faith: grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior."³

One sentence. Did you hear it? Just one sentence. And in case you're wondering, there are 90 words in it. One sentence, 90 words long. When Paul wanted to say something, he said it, didn't he? He sure did. When Paul wanted to say something, he used the right words too, and enough of them. Plenty of them, so that the truth was not obscured. You can read it there. 90 words long. One single sentence. And we've got it here.

And, with this we open the door to the Epistles to Titus. Push the door open, and when you do, what do you see? Here's a man standing before you. And you take one look at him, and you're almost

² J. Sidlow Baxter (born in Australia, 1903; died 1999) was a pastor and theologian who authored as many as thirty books analyzing the Bible and advocating a fundamentalist Christian theological perspective. His most popular work was *Explore the Book*, a 1760 page tome that analyses and summarizes each book of the Bible. Baxter was raised in Lancashire, England, and attended Spurgeon's College in London before pastoring in England and Scotland, in Northampton and Sunderland.

³ Titus 1:1-4.

overwhelmed by his magnificence - this man who is so majestic. So gigantic. As he stands before us, this man who for two millenniums, has cast his beneficent shadow over the Christian church, and it's more wonderful now than ever. He's bigger now than ever. He's greater now than ever. He's more majestic now than ever. Did you hear it? And I'll tell you something that'll happen, my dear - maybe two things. You take a good long look at him, and two things may happen. Related things. He'll grow bigger, and you'll grow smaller. Did you hear that? You take a good look at Paul, and he gets bigger every time you look at him. And we get smaller. More insignificant. More puny. Every time we look at him. And isn't that a good thing - anything that will magnify the man God magnifies and causes us to realize how small and insignificant and no good we are. My, what a good thing that is.

You stand and look at this man, and you say, "I'm not fit to clean his shoes." And you're not either. You're quite right about that. We're just not fit to clean his shoes. This man there with a look on his face where he scorns the things that we pay so much attention to - threw them in the waste paper basket, into the garbage can. And concentrated all of his thought on the things that have eternal value. He didn't care about anything else than that. And we look at him and we say, "My, how great thou art, and how small I am." The more you look at him, the smaller we become. And that's good for all of us. It sure is.

So here's the man. This majestic man, who stands there at the entrance and invites us to come in and share something of the blessing of his personal correspondence. And we'll be wise if we do. And we'll be very unwise if we don't. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we can get twice as many folks next week. And we could if you wanted to. You can fill these benches anytime you want to. Don't tell me it can't be done. I know better. To fill these, wouldn't it be wonderful to get enough some of our folks getting their hearts thrilled and on fire about this thing. Wouldn't it be wonderful? It certainly would. It certainly would.

And here's this man who stands there. And we look at him in amazement, an almost adoration. Somebody wrote, "God give us men, tall men, sun crowned who live above the fog of earthly strivings." Did you hear it? "God give us men, tall men. Sun crowned who live above the fog of earthly strivings." But He has given us such a man. He has, and he's right before our eyes this morning - a tall man, sun crowned, living above the fog. And my dear, when you talk about putting a crown on Paul's brow, you'd better be careful what crown you put on his brow. It's alright to put a crown on there, but don't you put any crown on that head that he doesn't deserve, because if you do, he'll take it right off and throw it at you. And he's done it over and over again in his writings. "Don't you put any crown on my head. I'm the least of all the saints and the chief of all the sinners, don't you put any crown on my head." And he says that, but we do it almost instinctively, don't we? We do it almost instinctively. We want to put a crown on his brow, but you better watch out if you're going to do that. Make quite sure it's the right crown. Some of God's great and lovely folks have been terribly embarrassed, because crowns have been placed on their brow that should never have been there at all.

Without getting too theological about it, I think the two of the most embarrassed people in Heaven are Peter and the Virgin Mary. If they look down and see what we stupid humans have done so far as they're concerned. I think they're embarrassed about it all. Old Peter, the Pope. My, what a laugh that is. It sure is. And what they've done with the gracious and lovely person of Mary. What they've done with her. I'm quite sure she shudders sometimes as she looks at it - some of these folks that would make her a member of the godhead. If you're going to put a crown on Paul's brow, you make quite sure it's

the right one. And I know what he'll do of it, even if it is the right one. I know what he'll do with it. He'll take it off and cast it at the feet of Him who loved him and gave Himself for him. Of course he will.

This majestic man, who stands at the portal of this letter that we call the Epistles to Titus. We ask "Why, why a man like that? What's the secret of it all?" He tells us. He tells us in two simple words there, or two simple sentences. One of them, which you will not find anywhere else, he uses it for the only time right here. This is the only time Paul ever refers to himself as, "A servant of God." This is the only time. Here he is, a servant of God. You know what that means. It doesn't mean a hired servant at all. It means the bond slave. One to whom God has given the great blessing of liberty in the Gospel. And Paul has taken all of his liberties and flung them to the feet of Him who gave them to him, and he says, "I don't want my liberties. I'd rather be your bond slave." And God took him at his word. This is the old pictures in the Old Testament tell us, that a slave who made that decision, the lobe of his ear was pierced as the perpetual mark that he was the voluntary bond slave of his master.

Here's a man who stands there. His spiritual ears pierced - the mark of God upon him, the possessive mark of God upon this man. The bond slave of God. One who was given liberty, but put it all on one side. Does it again make you feel as if you want to get down on your knees and ask God to forgive you, when we think of how small we are, and how mighty and majestic he is? This man, the bond slave of Jesus Christ. Paul says, "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." And I'm quite sure we can understand something of that. But I'm deeply convinced in this heart of mine that that spiritual mark, the piercing of his ear, that mark of God's ownership, was one of the things that he meant when he said, "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Now, whether that be so or not, it's a deeply comforting thought to my heart. I like to think of it. I sure do.

And he's an apostle, why of course - an apostle for the traveling ministry, the missionary, as Kenneth Taylor so beautifully describes it in his paraphrased epistles. He's the missionary. Sure. He's in good company isn't he? He certainly is. But, God was the original missionary. He had his only son, and he was a missionary. And here's a missionary. And remember, my dear, that the only kind of folks that God ever appoints to be apostles are those who have first become bond slaves. Did you here that? He doesn't appoint anybody else. When you become the bond slave of God, the bond slave of Jesus Christ, bearing his mark of ownership, when that has been accomplished, God can do anything with you. Send you to the ends of the earth. He doesn't send anybody else. A lot of folks would go that God didn't send at all - just lots of them. Lots of missionaries that go, but God didn't send them, the denomination _____. There's just lots of them, which may explain some of the problems that appear on the mission field.

But here's a man. God sent him. God sent him because he had come down to the uttermost place of service for God - the bond slave. And here he is, the apostle. And he's working there with young Titus in this area where God's elect are and that produces godliness. Listen to what it says. All we've done is to look at the first verse of it, "According to the faith of God's elect." That's the faith that produces the children and the family of God. And, "The acknowledge and the truth which is after godliness," and that's the likeness that appears upon the children of God. Here, it's faith that produces a family, and at the same time produces a family likeness. We not only belong to God, we begin to look like him. We not only belong to the Lord Jesus, we ought to begin to look like him. There'll be something within our

hearts that's glowing - something on the inside that is seen in power and glory on the outside. That's the acid test of it all, isn't it? We haven't got much on the inside, if it isn't seen on the outside.

I think that's the word he would be saying personally to the Grace Bible Church. You took a lot of our grace, I don't mean in our private conversations, but we do in our title. We're the Grace Bible Church. And I think the Epistle to Titus is saying, "You'd better let as much grace be seen within, as there is on the outside in your title." See that grace is a real thing, flowing out of it.

Anybody who walks into this place for the first time, maybe not knowing anything about us, have a right to go out and say, "They're strange folks. They've been with Jesus. They're strange folks. There's a something about there and it may be what's in the title of their church. There's this wonderful something or other and maybe that's what they mean by the grace of God."

How much of it is seen in your life, my dear, and I didn't ask you that. All I'm talking about is this fellow. Keeps me so busy. Asking you questions, I haven't got time to ask you, but maybe the Holy Spirit will. How much of the grace of God is seen in our lives? Is it just a doctrine? Is it a belief that behaves? That's what this word is saying to us this morning, whether we're old or young. And the word of God is saying to us, "Make grace the garment that you wear, the glow that comes from the inside, and can be seen everywhere you go. The glory of the grace of God."

Our Father we pray for thy blessing upon us as we bring this service to a close for the moment. Let thy blessing rest upon us, we pray.