

## Godly Truth Titus 1:1-4

**(Show slide 1 as soon as Bible Reading ends)**

### What does it do?

This is a question frequently heard by **inventors** as they show their new creations to a watching world.

There have been so many wonderful inventions in the history of humanity.

Think about the **wheel**. Surely someone said, "This will go far!"

Or the **printing press**. Did someone respond? "This is going to be read about all over the world."

Or the **airplane**. If I'd been there I'd have said, "This will be a soaring success!"

**(Change to slide 2)** As we begin a new teaching series on the book of **Titus** we're going to investigate the **usefulness of faith**.

Or to use our starting question, **what does it do?**

### What is the point of faith?

Admittedly, there are those in our society who are very **negative** about faith. They assume it is dangerous.

- Some say faith is anti-science
- Others say it's the cause of all our wars

It may not be **harmful** but is it **helpful**?

**Titus** is a short book in the Bible that explores the **radical** and **beautiful transformation** that faith in Jesus should bring about in our daily lives.

**(Change to slide 3)** This theme is like one of those words found in a **seaside stick of rock**. No matter where it is cut open, we find the message repeated.

Let me show you some examples of this from the book of **Titus**.

Look at 1:1. **Read 1:1.**

Look at 1:16. **Read 1:16.**

Look at 2:11. **Read 2:11-14.**

Look at 3:8. **Read 3:8.**

Look at 3:14. **Read 3:14.**

As we embark on this journey through this short book, let's be praying for big changes. There is so much potential but we will need **the help of God** to produce the transformation that will be good for us and which will ultimately be glorifying to the Lord Jesus.

Today we start with two vital truths about faith in Jesus.

- Faith in Jesus is possible
- Faith in Jesus unites people

**First, faith in Jesus is possible (Vs 1-3)**

**(Change to slide 4)** Look at verse 1. **Read verses 1 to 3.**

Straight away we are introduced to **the human author** of this New Testament letter.

He describes himself in **two ways**. One is unique to him and one can be applied to us.

The one that can be applied to us is a **servant of God**. This is a radical identity that will transform everything.

God is not there to serve our interests, we are here to serve him.

This is for our joy. **Living for him is the way to thrive.**

However, if we want to serve the purposes of God whilst we are alive we need to know what his purposes are rather than projecting the purposes of our hearts onto his divine throne.

Paul also describes himself as an **apostle of Jesus Christ**. This is an identity that he doesn't share with Christians today.

As an **apostle**, Paul is one of Jesus' uniquely appointed ambassadors responsible for communicating and preserving the message he wants communicated around the world and across the centuries.

### **Why is this so important?**

Why are **words** such a feature of Christianity?

Listen again to what Paul says in verses 1 to 3.

### **Read verses 1 to 3.**

This is **super concentrated** theology that traces the connection between an **eternal promise** and **eternal life**.

Let's start with the eternal promise.

**Who was around before the beginning of time?** The glorious Trinity abounding in perfect love.

The Father made the Son a promise that he would grant billions of human beings the prospect of dwelling forever with the God who is full of love, light and life.

**Who are these people?** They are called God's elect.

The idea of God choosing some people instead of others may seem **strange to your ears** or it might even **ring theological alarm bells**.

However, this is a reality mentioned **frequently** in the Bible.

Divine election is required because of human sinfulness.

We are responsible for our decisions. But God is not taken by surprise.

As God in eternity past decides to create he knows what will happen in the years ahead. As a response, he freely chooses many to be saved and experience eternal life.

**On what basis did God make his choice?**

We normally choose based on **performance**. Whether it's choosing a **product to buy** or a **person to play on the team**.

But that isn't how God made his choice. Based on our moral performance we would be left out of the team. No questions asked. We are **spiritually corrupt** and **wholly self-obsessed**.

**Why did God choose many out of the mass of sinners to experience eternal life?** The Bible's answer is **love**.

God poured his **infinite love** on those who deserve nothing but his **wrath** and **condemnation**.

What's the connection between divine election and gospel proclamation?

Fascinatingly, Paul says that eternal life is brought to light in people's lives through the words that he speaks.

Their faith is definitely a response to what they hear about Jesus in the gospel.

However, if we ask a deeper question about why they believe when others around them don't, the Bible's answer is because they are God's elect.

This means God **ensures** that when the time is right, according to his perfect will, people will freely choose to believe that Jesus the Saviour and decide to follow him as their Lord.

We're not apostles, however, we are able to continue Paul's commitment to furthering the faith of God's elect. We do this by holding out the gospel to those around us.

Yes, we need to **hold onto it** but a church must also **hold out** the glorious truths about Jesus to people who desperately need a Saviour.

**(Change to slide 5)** Let me highlight **three truths** about divine election.

**First**, divine election should make us active not passive.

In order to respond like this we need to see the connection between God's eternal choice and what he uses to bring faith alive in the here and now.

**Second**, divine election should make us confident about mission.

Will the church grow? Will people become Christians? Yes!

**Why?** Not because of our persuasive arguments. Or our contemporary vibe. Or our knock down outreach strategies. No, ultimately it's because of divine election.

We stop our mission endeavours when we don't think there is a point. Divine election gives us a point!

**What should we conclude if someone has heard the gospel but doesn't believe it?** Does that mean they are not elect? No, it simply means they don't yet believe the gospel. If they don't believe the gospel throughout their entire life then that tells us something about whether they have been divinely elected. But as we are alive we have the opportunity to believe the gospel as it is held out to us.

If you are not yet a Christian, then keep on listening and keep on heeding the call to follow Jesus.

Come to **Knowing God**.

**Walking through an archway illustration.** One side. Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. On the other side, chosen before the creation of the world.

**Third**, divine election should make us grateful.

If we're Christians, what has God done for us? He has chosen us in Christ before the creation of the world!

**Are you struggling with thankfulness?** That's pretty common in a world full of relentless pressure and endless deadlines. But remember, God has poured his love out on us and that's the ultimate reason we believe in Jesus!

## **Second, faith in Jesus unites people (Vs 4)**

**(Change to slide 6)** Look at verse 4. **Read verse 4.**

Titus appears in different places in the New Testament.

Here in the letter that is written to him, there are two significant points to note.

**First**, Paul says he is his true son. He is not biologically related. This must be a reference to his spiritual beginnings. It's likely that Paul led him to genuine faith in Jesus.

**Second**, Titus is his true son in their common faith.

What is so wonderful about this?

Paul is a **Jew** and Titus is a **Gentile**.

Therefore, Paul referring to them as having a common faith is mind blowing in its social implications.

It is the bringing together of two completely different and separated worlds.

And yet this is what Jesus does.

He brings together people who wouldn't normally be seen in the same space.

**This isn't easy.** We instinctively feel more comfortable with those like us. Whether that's those who look like us, speak like us or eat like us.

However, the joy of Jesus is that he saves a whole range of people from very different backgrounds and brings us together!

That's beautiful! It means that if we are Christians then we have a common faith and belong to a common family.

Our constant challenge is to act like a family in the way that the Bible mandates.

However, let's not forget what God promises to do in us through the gospel message.

It is the knowledge of the truth that **leads to godliness.**

That is, we have a faith that changes us in dramatic ways.

In God's word, we're certainly told **what** we should do but we're also told **why** we should do it.

Think about living as a new spiritual family. The Bible instructs us to love each other in practical, sacrificial and generous ways. But it also tells us why. That in Jesus, we are brothers and sisters in the same spiritual family.

**The basis?** Not because of our performance but because of his shed blood. This knowledge, when taken deep by the Holy Spirit, leads to godliness in our daily decisions.

## In Conclusion

**(Change to slide 7) What does it do?** Genuine faith in Jesus does a huge amount. This morning we are just beginning our journey. I promise there is much more to come.

Let's be praying that the next few weeks are transformational for our church.

**Let's pray.**