

Titus 3:12-15

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[0:00] Good evening everyone, thank you very much for being with us this evening. We're coming to the end of our studies in the book of Titus. This is the last passage we're looking at this evening. Four verses, and you may think, as I thought when I first read them, there isn't much to say about these verses.

But every problem is an opportunity, and we're going to take some of the themes, I think, which come out directly from these verses and develop them a bit as we go through.

So Titus chapter 3, and we're going to read from verse 12, and it will appear on the screen as well in a second. Titus chapter 3, reading from verse 12.

And Paul writes, As soon as I send Artemis or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, because I have decided to winter there.

Do everything you can to help Zenos the lawyer and Apollos on their way, and see that they have everything they need. Our people must devote themselves to doing what is good, in order to provide for urgent needs, and not live unproductive lives.

[1:08] Everyone with me sends you greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. And God, I'm sure, will bless his word as we think about it together.

Church is a people business. That's the broad, overriding theme of what I want to talk about this evening. I work, ultimately, for a big bank.

And you might think banks are all about money. Well, they are all about money. But when we talk within the bank, we tend to talk about people. We talk about customers. We talk about colleagues. And when we're talking about making profits, we talk about our shareholders. Because, ultimately, it's people who've got their money invested in pension funds, or the savings or whoever that we exist to make profits for.

It's a people business. I'm sure you could say the same about any other business that you care to think about. It'd be difficult to think of a business that didn't have significant contact with people, even if it's only those who work there.

[2:08] Church certainly is a people business. It's all about people. Yes, it's about the gospel, absolutely. But it's about the gospel, as it affects us, through the Son of God, who became a man so that people like us could come into a living relationship with God and could have the assurance of eternal life and could enjoy fellowship with God the Father, with his Son, and with one another.

It's a people business. As always, we come to the end of Titus, as with all of Paul's books. There is a bit about people. People who are with Paul, people who are where Paul is writing to, and people who Paul is particularly interested in or concerned about.

Some of them we know reasonably well from the Bible. Some of them we know absolutely nothing about, except that the name happens to be mentioned at the end of Paul's book.

But they're all people who were Christians in the first century church and have their own stories and their own interests and their own needs, and we can learn from them. So we've got a broad structure to what we're going to look at, and we'll talk very briefly about verse 15, but it's verse 12 to 14 we're going to concentrate on.

And verse 12, I would suggest, is about Paul's team. He mentions Artemis and Tychicus, and we also have Titus. These were the people who were Paul's co-workers, who were part of Team Paul, if you like.

[3:39] Verse 13, I would suggest, is more about Paul's associates. I don't think that Zenos and Apollos were directly part of Paul's team, but they were gospel workers who Paul wanted to support and encourage in their work for the Lord Jesus.

And then in verse 14, we've got to call it Paul's people. Of course, it's the Lord's people, but Paul deliberately refers to them as our people. And this is the broad church.

In this context, particularly the church, our churches in Crete, but all of God's people and what it is that God wants from us as the people who belong to the Lord Jesus.

So we're going to think about Paul's team, think about our team, think about Paul's associates and other Christian work that we have associations with, and then we're going to think about lessons that are relevant to all of us as God's people and how we work together.

So first look at verse 12. And what I'm suggesting from verse 12 is it tells us that Christian service is collaborative. Collaborative just means that we work to support and help one another.

[4 : 52] So the situation is, Titus is in Crete, clearly. That's where the letter is written to, very clear from chapter 1. Paul quite likely is in Corinth. We don't know definitely, but good chance he is in Corinth at that time.

And Paul is looking ahead. And two things Paul was thinking about in his plans. One is, I want to spend the winter in Nicopolis. Now, Nicopolis was another town in Greece, on the west coast of Greece, probably quite a warm place, a nice place to spend the winter.

Of course, Paul wouldn't just be thinking about it as a nice place to winter. Someone might say, well, in the winter I go to Miami or I go to the south of France because it's a bit warmer there. Paul would be thinking, well, how can we best promote the gospel and reach out to other parts?

And I think he'd probably say that Nicopolis was the next part of Greece that he needed to go to and to preach the word. One way or another, he's going to Nicopolis and he wants to meet Titus.

Come back in a minute to why he wants to meet Titus, but he wants Titus to go to be with them.

And he said, I'm not going to leave the Cretans alone. We know there are a lot of problems in Crete as we've read through this book.

[6 : 02] Some not very flattering things said about the people of Crete. Paul doesn't want to leave them without someone to look after them and care for them. So he's going to send either Artemis or Tychicus to be with them.

Artemis we know absolutely nothing about apart from what's in this verse. Tychicus we do know a little more about and we'll talk about him in more detail in a few minutes.

But the key point, I think, from this is that Christian service is collaborative. It's about working in teams. Now there have been Christians who've gone to work on their own.

There have been Christians who perhaps have been turned down by missionary societies, some fairly well-known ones, and have gone and done pioneer works on their own and been blessed by God. But I would suggest that is very much the exception.

For most of us, what God calls us to do is to work together in teams and to use our gifts together for his glory. No one has all the gifts.

[7 : 01] No one can do it by ourself. We need others to work with us. We need to be collaborative in our work for the Lord Jesus. And a great example of that is Paul.

I jotted down. I don't think this is comprehensive. I jotted down the names of some people as they read through the letters that we can say were part of Team Paul. The ones in the left-hand column you'll probably be fairly familiar with.

The ones in the right-hand column may be a bit less so. So Barnabas, who Paul went with on his first missionary journey. Silas on his second missionary journey. Timothy was very much Paul's apprentice.

And the one who Paul was particularly building up for Christian leadership. Titus, Luke, Aquila, Priscilla, Mark, and lots of others. Paul never worked on his own.

When he was left on his own, as he was at times, he really missed his companions, his colleagues, and he recognized the need to have others working alongside him.

[8 : 02] He was a team player, and the call is for us, too, to be team players. Within our church, we should work together. We should work collaboratively. We should work in a way that glorifies God by getting on well with our Christian brothers and sisters, by working alongside them, by complementing us, complementing with an E, complementing one another in the work that we do.

We are part of a team. Two things in particular that I think we can notice from verse 12 about the team, as Paul brings it before us.

How is it collaborative? It is collaborative first because there is mutual support. The members of the team are there to strengthen and support one another.

I quite like the picture. It's not an original picture. The picture of a church team or a Christian team as being like a Swiss army knife. You know these knives you get that have all these mounted-shooter tools on them, a tool for everything that you might need.

And some of the tools you might think, well, what's the point of them? And then one day you're out walking, you see a horse that's limping, you say, I know this tool, that's for taking the stone out of his hoof, that kind of thing. But all of us within the church, we have gifts that have been given to us by God.

[9 : 18] They're all different. They're all complementary. And whatever need arises in the church and the team, then there should be one of us whom God has given the gift and the calling to be able to meet that need.

It is a need for mutual support. So two elements of support, I think, in this passage. One we'll come back to in a second is the support that Paul and Titus can give to one another.

And the other is the support that Artemis or Tychicus was going to give. So Titus, as I've said, was in Crete. Crete was a church which in many ways was in crisis, certainly needed a lot more support from outside so that the Christians could develop real character and get away from some of the worst aspects of life on the island.

And Paul said, we're not going to leave them alone. We are going to support these Christians in Crete. And we're also not going to leave Titus alone.

Perhaps Titus had come to the point where he'd been there for a while. He was finding it difficult. He was finding it tough in the environment that he was in. And perhaps Paul decided, it's now time for Titus to have a short break, to be taking someone else, perhaps in Christian service, and I will send someone else to take his place.

[10 : 44] There will be mutual support. Titus doesn't feel as he's in Crete, that he's there on his own, that no one cares about him. Paul is there to help and to provide support for him.

Very good lesson for us there. In our church and other Christian works we might be involved in, it's very easy for people to get into a stage where they're finding they're going hard, where perhaps they're becoming even a bit stale in the work and they're really struggling with it.

We should be able to identify these situations and we should be able to support them. And we should also be willing, as God leads, to go into a different environment, a different sphere of service, and to provide support there to serve the Lord in the way that he calls us to.

Collaboration, working collaboratively, is about providing mutual support for one another. And then it's about providing mutual encouragement.

We'll come back to this as we think about Tychicus, but let's just think for a few minutes about the kind of encouragement that we see in this verse. Paul wants to be encouraged by Titus.

[12 : 00] Titus was a great encourager. Titus was the man who Paul sent to Corinth. When the church in Corinth was going through a really bad patch, Paul was really concerned about it.

He had to write some very stern words to it, the sternest of them not even in the Bible. The ones that are there are stern enough as they stand. Paul sent Titus to Corinth.

Titus was encouraged and refreshed as he saw that Corinthians had paid attention to what Paul said. Paul was feeling a bit lonely in Macedonia. Titus comes back with the good news and Paul is really encouraged.

And perhaps Paul is hoping that this will happen again with Crete. That as he's written to Crete, as he knows there are problems, as Titus comes back, he will be able to really encourage Paul with news about what God is doing among the people, among the elderly young Christians that are there in Crete.

Equally, Titus will be encouraged by Paul. An older brother, older in the faith, more mature, been through it all, seen all the problems and difficulties before.

[13 : 12] If Titus is finding things quite hard as he comes back to Paul, Paul will be able to encourage him from the Scriptures and to revitalize him in his ministry for the Lord Jesus.

Whether that ministry is told to be in Crete or elsewhere, Paul will be able to give encouragement to Titus to keep going, to be strong in his faith, and to be faithful in his service for the Lord Jesus.

Mutual encouragement. Very important in churches and the teams that we work in within the church that we are there to encourage one another. But there is that word of encouragement when someone's finding the going difficult or perhaps the word of encouragement when someone's done something particularly well and we see God at work in them and we encourage them by saying that

to them.

Encouragement two, just to keep going, just to remain strong as Christians as we go through times of trial as things are not always straightforward in our service for the Lord Jesus.

That's a characteristic, both of them, of mutual support, mutual encouragement. They're characteristics of teams that we see in the world, in the workplace. How much more should there be characteristics of us in a church?

[14 : 27] In a church as a whole and in whatever team we are within in the church, whether it's a leadership team, whether it's a team working with young people or with women or something like Basics Bank or other ministries of the church.

We should be there to support one another when we need to. We should be there to encourage and build one another up in our service for the Lord Jesus.

Christian service is collaborative. We're in it together. We're there to support and to strengthen and to encourage one another in the Lord's work.

Let's move on to verse 13. Oh no, let's not move on to verse 13. I said I talked about Tychicus, so let's talk about Tychicus. Apologies to God, I was going to do that. Tychicus is a man whom we know a reasonable amount about from Paul's letters and from the book of Acts.

This is one of the verses that's about Tychicus from Colossians and Paul says, Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord.

[15 : 33] Similar verse in Ephesians which we'll refer to in a minute. Tychicus was a real team player within Team Paul. Three characteristics.

He was someone who was reliable. We first come across Tychicus in the book of Acts. In the book of Acts, as Paul is going to Jerusalem, he is taking with him a number of men who are bringing gifts from the churches largely in Asia and in Macedonian Greece.

The Christians in Judea are going through a difficult time. There's been a famine there. They're in physical need and the churches whom Paul has been out evangelizing have recognized that need and they put their hands in their pockets to give some support to the Christians in Judea.

And Paul says, when he's writing to the Corinthians, that they are to choose men who are approved by them to take the gifts to the church.

Now Tychicus was from Ephesus, probably. He wasn't from Corinth, but I'm sure the same message went to all the churches. We want men who are approved by you. We want men who are reliable.

[16 : 44] And the church in Asia, possibly a church in Ephesus, chose Tychicus and he went with Paul to Jerusalem. He was someone who was reliable. You knew if you gave him something to do that he would do it and that he would do it well and that if you gave him money, he wouldn't try and steal it or waste it away.

He would keep it for the purpose for which it was intended. He would make sure it got there safely. He was someone who could be trusted, someone who was reliable.

Alongside that, I've just said the word, he was trusted. Tychicus was one of these people who Paul knew he could send anywhere and he would do a good job.

He was someone who Paul could trust absolutely to go for him. I've sometimes thought slightly unflatteringly of Tychicus as Paul's postman and he was that to some extent.

He took a letter to Colossae. He probably took a letter to Ephesians as well. He was someone who Paul was happy to send with his letters and to trust them to him. But he didn't just trust him with the letters.

[17 : 54] And that's where the verse in Colossians comes in. As Paul says, this man I'm sending to you, he'll tell you the news. He's a dear brother, a faithful minister, and a fellow servant in the Lord.

And it wasn't always easy errands that Paul sent Tychicus on. When Paul sent Tychicus to Colossae, he had actually quite a difficult job.

Because along with Tychicus, Paul was sending a man called Onesimus. Onesimus, I'm sure you know, was the slave who'd run away from his master, who had become a Christian in Rome, and Paul was sending him back to Philemon, his master, who was in Colossae.

And you can imagine that might create two potential issues. One for Tychicus as he went back to his master. Tychicus knew that in normal circumstances, the best he could expect was to be branded as someone who'd run away from his master.

The worst he could expect was that he might be executed because he is a slave who had run away. And you can imagine what kind of nervous state Onesimus might have been in as he went back to Colossae.

[19 : 06] And Paul sent with him Tychicus, who was someone who was trusted, who was reliable, who was encouraging, who was able to reassure him as he went on the journey that he was in God's hand and that everything would work out well.

And then when they got to Colossae, there was Philemon to be dealt with. And Philemon, his initial reaction might have been as he saw his runaway slave coming back, that this was a man who deserved real punishment.

And of course, Paul's letter to Philemon is very much a plea to Philemon to forgive Onesimus, to accept him back as a brother in the Lord Jesus, rather than just to think of him as a slave who'd returned.

But I'm sure, along with the letter, that the testimony of Tychicus would have been very important to Philemon. What Paul could only commit to the page and he does it very movingly, but his only words are on paper.

Tychicus in person would be able to pass on to Philemon. And Paul trusted him to do that. He was a man who was trustworthy, he was a faithful minister, he was a fellow servant in the Lord.

[20 : 17] And he was encouraging. He was one of these people who you could rely on when you talk to them that you go away feeling better than when you met them because they would really encourage you in your faith.

Paul, in writing to the Ephesians, says very specifically he'd send Tychicus on this errand to take the letter to them so that he could give them the news about Paul and so that they could be encouraged.

And so Tychicus was the kind of person who could go to a church and could stand up in front of them and tell them about the wonderful things that the Lord was doing and how he was blessing Paul and the work that he was engaged in.

He wasn't the kind of person who left you feeling depressed or wishing you'd never spoken to them. He was the kind of person who went away feeling really encouraged and rejoicing in the kind of work that God was doing.

What a great team player. Someone who's reliable, you know if they take something on they'll do it and they'll do it well. Someone who could be absolutely trusted, trusted to do the difficult things as well as the easy things.

[21 : 28] Someone who is really encouraging. Let's us try to be like that as well. Now we will move on to verse 13. And verse 13 I've said Christian service is cooperative.

This is nothing about getting your groceries. Cooperative means that we cooperate with one another. We're collaborative and we're cooperative. Now you might look at that and say what's the difference?

And if you look in a thesaurus you'll probably find the two listed as synonyms of one another. But I think they're not quite the same. Collaborative is about us working as a team.

Cooperative is about us working with people who are outside our team but who nevertheless share the same goals as us. I came across this on the internet I'm not sure why you can read it.

I've cut it down quite a little bit but I thought it illustrated quite well to me the difference. The picture at the top probably does it. If you're cooperating you've got kind of one line going into the various places. If you're collaborating you've got this kind of network this matrix of different things.

[22 : 32] Second bullet also I find quite interesting perhaps with my business background if you're cooperating you have shared goals. If you're collaborating it's very important that you have shared vision and values.

You're not just aiming to achieve the same end you're happy to do it in the same kind of way sharing the same vision and values as you go. So what's the relevance here?

Well in verse 13 I think we have two men who were not part of team Paul. The best guess about the situation here is that Paul had a letter he wanted to send to Titus in Crete and he grabbed hold of a passing evangelist Apollos and Zenos and said could you take this letter to Crete as you go on your journey they were going there anyway.

So probably they were the bearers of the letter from Paul to Titus. But as I said they weren't part of directly part of Paul's team.

Now Zenos we know nothing about from the Bible apart from the fact that he was a lawyer and not that many lawyers mentioned in the Bible but Zenos was one of them. There's a legend or a Christian myth that he was passed one of the 70 or the 72 or the outer circle of the Lord's disciples. [23 : 52] No script for evidence of that may or may not be right. There's also something in church history said he might subsequently become a bishop in the kind of area we're talking about here. But essentially from a Bible viewpoint we know nothing about him apart from that he was a lawyer and that he was travelling with Apollos.

Apollos of course we know a bit more about. Apollos was the man who was working in Ephesus and Aquila and Priscilla he wasn't preaching the true message of the Lord Jesus.

He had some understanding of the powerful preacher some understanding of the gospel not a full understanding and Aquila and Priscilla took him in and they taught him more carefully and more soundly God's words.

He also went to Corinth and while he was in Corinth there were a number of people who particularly aligned themselves with Apollos so in the beginning of 1 Corinthians Paul can talk about those who say we're of Apollos we're of Paul we're of Cephas we're of Christ and Apollos clearly made quite a big impression in Corinth he was a very fine preacher.

But Paul didn't see him as a rival even though the Corinthians might have he saw them as someone who should be encouraged and someone that the Christians in team Paul should cooperate with.

[25 : 13] So he says do everything you can to help Zenos the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need. So probably a situation as I said Apollos and Zenos are going possibly from Greece to Asia Minor somewhere like Ephesus or Colossae perhaps on the way there they're stopping up in Crete on the way and as they're there they deliver Paul's letter and Paul says to Titus make sure they're well looked after.

Offer them the hospitality that you would like to receive if you are in a similar situation make sure they've got enough for their journey both in food and perhaps also in money.

These are not our team but they're people who are doing God's work they're people who we want to identify with and to encourage in their Christian service.

Now I think that's very relevant to us as well. We have our team whether you think of the team as the church here or as a particular group within the church working together or indeed a team of Christians you're involved with in some service outside Brunsfield and that is the team.

But there are lots of other Christian workers both in the city and further afield who have the common goal with us that they want to see many people coming to trust the Lord Jesus they want to live in a way that's honouring to him and we should work in a way that is cooperative with them.

[26 : 46] We may not agree with all that they believe in the secondary things of doctrine. They may not do things the way that we think we would do them if we were in their situation.

It doesn't matter. As long as they're working to serve the Lord and to glorify him and they're not too way out in the way that they do it, they're our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

We want to support, we want to encourage them, we want to cooperate with them. One great example which we have in this church is the Basics Bank.

Now Basics Bank is a collaboration, so we have to have collaboration, a collaboration between this church and Edinburgh City Mission. but there are other churches round about, most notably Kings and Barclay Viewforth, who are tremendous supporters of Basics Bank.

They provide vast amounts of food to us every month. And they clearly see this as being a gospel work, as being a work among the needy, among those who are in desperate physical need as well, and they want to support it, they want to be associated with it, they want to cooperate with us in it.

[27 : 57] But they don't come to us and say, well how do you do this? What do you say to people when they come in? What are you trying to achieve through the work? They know that the work is to provide for those in need, and as opportunity arises to witness to them about the Lord Jesus, and they are happy to leave it to us to do that as the Lord leads.

It may be different from the way they would do it, but they see it as God's work, and they're happy that it's done in the way that the Lord leads us in it. And for us too, there are situations, I'm sure, where we could look at it in a similar way.

The mission works that we support, missionaries overseas, working in South America or in Africa, training people in discipleship, local works among students or in the Ferrywell project, not directly works of this church, perhaps not always done the way that we would do it if it was our choice, but

works for the Lord Jesus, seeking to glorify his name and to bring others to faith in him, and we support them, we cooperate with them, and we rejoice in the fact that God is working through them. And we don't want as a church to become too insular, to think we do our work here, we are God's people in Bransfield, and we are, and it's our job to work, to fellowship, to worship, to witness as a church, it is very much that, but we mustn't think it is all about us and what we do. It is very important that we have fellowship with our Christian brothers and sisters in other gospel churches around Edinburgh, and that we also are associated with God's wider work around the world.

[29 : 44] And in some ways that might be financial, it will certainly be in prayer, sometimes perhaps also it will be practical. But let's be aware of the great work that's being done that is not directly part of this church here, and let's cooperate with it, let's support our Christian brothers and sisters in the work they're doing for the Lord Jesus.

And finally, verse 14. I've described this as collective. So Paul writes, our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good in order to provide for urgent needs and not live unproductive lives.

So the message I take from this is that every Christian has a part to play in God's work. We're in it together. It's a collective vision and task that we have.

It's not just a task for the few. One of the things that slightly concerns me as I look forward to the summer when I'm taking up a role in the church here is that as we take on more staff members within the church there's a danger that other people feel squeezed out and not able to exercise the gifts that God has given them.

That's absolutely not where we want to be. It's not where I want to be. It's not where Graham wants to be. It's not where the elders and other leaders of the church want to be. We want to be those who are able to encourage all of you, all of the congregation in your service for the Lord to be actively involved in the church here to be using your gifts in the way that God has given them to you.

[31 : 22] We are all in it together. John Stott in one of his books tells about how sometimes someone would go up to him and say I've been called to go into the ministry.

And he would say to them well that's really interesting what ministry do you mean? And they say well the pastoral ministry. He said well why didn't you say that to begin with? Because John Stott was making the point every Christian is involved in ministry.

We're not all pastors but we're all ministers. We're all those who are called to serve the Lord Jesus and to live and to work for him.

And if we're not doing that work then we're not serving God as we should. And so in verse 14 Paul tells Titus that he has to make sure that the Christians in Crete that they devote themselves to doing what is good to provide for urgent needs actually the technical or literal translation would be necessary needs urgent needs is probably the right translation and not to live unproductive lives. Now you may remember back in chapter 1 Paul described the Cretans as fat and lazy I'm paraphrasing slightly but not very much. So he's now saying well to Titus well as a reminder make sure that these people are involved in service for the Lord Jesus perhaps in the immediate context in providing for Apollos and Zenos but I think more widely as well.

[32 : 53] Because he says if we're not involved in doing Christian service if we're not meeting the needs that God puts in front of us that we're able to help with we're living unproductive or perhaps by a translation unfruitful lives.

We are wasting our lives if we're not living them in the service of the Lord Jesus. If God has given us a gift something we're able to do and we're not exercising it to his glory then we're being unfruitful we're being unproductive we're not living our Christian lives to the full.

All of us are called to Christian ministry all of us are called to serve the Lord Jesus and to do the things that he would want us to do and which he has gifted us to do through his Holy Spirit.

We are called to do good. And doing good is probably a good summary as we come to the end of the book of Titus. Now you'll gather I didn't make this up myself but I find it quite useful when I find it on the internet.

What does Paul say in Titus? Well he talks about a number of things. He talks about appointing leaders. What is the character of those who are in charge of the church who are pastors of the flock and they're very practical and down to earth things about Christian character.

[34 : 17] What is Paul to teach the Cretans? Well it is that they should observe sound doctrine and sound doctrine will lead to good practice. And what is he to remind them of? He's to remind them of

the grace of the Lord Jesus and the fact that they have to live good character not just in the church but in the world as well.

So we are to become godly people and what is the result of becoming godly people? It is that we do, we are full of good works. The order is important.

We become godly, we put our faith in the Lord Jesus, he through his spirit sanctifies us and makes us more like him and then we're able to do good works. We don't start by trying to do good works and work backwards.

We start with faith in the Lord Jesus and the inevitable consequence of faith in the Lord Jesus and sound doctrine and being committed to the Lord is that we do good works.

Good works in the way that we live. Mike a few weeks ago pointed out how often self-control for example is mentioned in chapter two and in the way we act and interact with others.

[35 : 24] Good works too in reaching out and in serving and in living for the Lord Jesus. I think if we take one thing away from Titus let it be this.

We need sound doctrine otherwise our faith is empty. But sound doctrine by itself is not enough. That sound doctrine should lead us to do good works.

To lead good lives and to be active in serving others out of love for them and out of love for the Lord Jesus. And if we do that we will be fully guarded against being unproductive or unfruitful or falling into some of the trap which appeared that some in Crete had fallen into.

Let's be those who know and love the Lord and as we do that let that be evident in our lives with others. Then verse 15 the customary greeting that Paul sends.

Greetings from those who are with him to those whom he is writing to and greetings particularly to those who love him and are associated with him in the faith.

[36 : 35] And that great word at the end grace be with you all. God's grace which is the greatest thing that we have the grace of God to us that we need continually to be refreshed and reminded of in our lives for the Lord Jesus.

Let's take the lessons. Let's as a team work together very well collaboratively. Let's look at others, look more widely as we cooperate with others and we support them in their Christian ministry.

And let's make sure that we are all productive in our service for the Lord Jesus in our work for him. Let's pray together. Father we thank you for your word.

We thank you for these very practical instructions that Paul gives in the book of Titus. Instructions about the best situations for people to be in.

the way that they should treat others. The way that they should live their lives. We thank you that it's all rooted in a knowledge of the Lord Jesus and of your grace to us.

[37 : 34] We thank you too that it is rooted in sound doctrine. In good teaching of your word and in understanding what it is you have done for us and what it is that you require of us.

And we pray that all of us may be marked by our real faith in the Lord Jesus. By our real love of your word and of sound doctrine and by a real desire to do good works.

To demonstrate our love for the Lord Jesus as we show our love for one another and for those who don't yet know the Saviour. Thank you for your presence with us as we've studied this evening your word.

We pray that you'll bless us, help us as we reflect back in the book of Titus that we may learn the lessons from it and we may be able better to be the people of God living in Edinburgh.

We give you our thanks and commit ourselves to you in Jesus' name. Amen.