

SAVED TO SHARE

By John Richardson

SCRIPTURE

Titus 1:1–4

[1] Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness, [2] in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began [3] and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior; [4] To Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

OBSERVATION

Though listed in most Bibles as a greeting from Paul to Titus, these first four verses are packed with gospel truth. Paul unfolds his salvation and role of apostle all for the sake of those that would be saved. Paul (like every believer) was saved from sin and saved to share the gospel.

- Many people get overwhelmed by the word “elect” seemingly taking control out of the hands of man, but God’s Word uses it freely. Paul unfolds his election through understanding the election of others; in other words, Paul was saved for those whom God would save. The mission for Paul was not just for people to be saved, but that they would continue to grow in truth and manifest godliness. Personal faith is never just for one’s self; a belief in the gospel is impactful on the lives of others. In our western world, one can become fixated on individual pursuits, interests, and independence. However, the church operates in a different context, where one’s faith is united with the faith of another (v. 1).
- Paul’s mission was to point to the hope found in Christ. Now he does not mean hope as in the chance of salvation but hope as in the object of God’s promise. By the Word of God, salvation is extended, here in context, to the elect whom God will save. Every person who will be saved rests on the Word set by God before the world was ever created. The sureness of a believer’s salvation rests not on their ability or effort but is carried forth by the gracious hand of God. Though God made the promise before time, it became apparent through His Word. The Bible that a believer holds is the covenant binding Word given to them to understand the path to salvation. The method of getting the message of God and His plan to save the world is through preaching/proclaiming. In an age of TED talks and three-minute sound bites, the church relies on preaching and proclamation

because it is the path to deliver the God's Word. God not only outlined the content—the Word—He also gave the method—preaching/proclaiming (vv.2-3).

- In Paul's greeting to Titus, a reader can see the intimacy shared between them. Paul had spiritually adopted Titus; the bond was not merely shared among good friends but established by the gospel and developed through their common mission. One has to pause and think about their church family and see if they feel the connection expressed between Paul and Titus, a family bond of a true child. Paul would share little in common with Titus on the surface—Titus was a Gentile, uncircumcised, and likely not connected to the Temple worship customary to the life of a Jew. From different backgrounds, yet the truth of God and His salvation connected them tighter than any other family. A common faith propelled each of these men to God and one another (v. 4).

OBEDIENCE

God saved every believer for the purpose of proclaiming the Good News and joining in relationship with Him and His elect. The health of one's relationship with Christ can be seen through the path of proclamation and relationship.

- Seek to share the gospel with others, those with whom you are connected. You were saved for this mission of proclamation and discipleship.
- How are your relationships with those with whom you gather and worship? Do your relationships look like the one that Paul and Titus enjoyed in Christ?
- Knowing that Paul was given the gospel to see you grow in your knowledge of the truth, how have you been pursuing Christ in your mind? If you consistently read through the Word each day, have you read through other books about God? Take time to read some great titles that will move you to worship God.

PRAYER

Ask God to give you a friend as close as Titus or Paul if you don't have one. If you do have such a friend, ask God to give you wisdom on how to encourage them to godliness. Seek God on ways to connect to lost people and opportunities to share God's Word. If you don't have a passion for reading God's Word or other edifying works, ask God to give you an ongoing passion to pursue Him with your mind.