

“Christian Assurance”
Titus 1:1-3
(Preached at Trinity, January 22, 2023)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. This letter is directed to Titus, Paul's child in the faith. Paul had left him at Crete to strengthen the churches and correct false doctrine and promote Godliness in an immoral culture. One of Paul's themes here is the axiom that sound doctrine should have a positive impact upon the behavior of believers.
Crete was the largest island of the Greek islands, the fifth largest of the Mediterranean islands. It was about 160 miles long and 35 miles wide with a ridge of mountains running the length. We don't know when Paul and Titus planted the churches on Crete.
 - a. Some believe they were planted by Jewish pilgrims who were saved in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost when three thousand were saved. Some may have brought Christianity back to Crete.
Acts 2:8 NAU - "And how is it that we each hear *them* in our own language to which we were born?"
Acts 2:11 NAU - "Cretans and Arabs-- we hear them in our *own* tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God."
 - b. Regardless, these churches were immature. They didn't have the advantages we have – the completed Scriptures and historic creeds and confessions that have brought theological clarity. Titus was left to strengthen them. According to **Verse 5** most of these churches did not yet have the benefit of elders.
3. Although these were immature Christians, there would have been undeniable evidence of their conversion. The Gospel is God's redemptive purpose in Jesus Christ and bears testimony to God's transforming grace. God is bringing His chosen people to faith and the knowledge of the truth. This truth is never barren. It always produces the fruit of Godliness.
Titus 1:1 NAU - "the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness"
Titus 1:1 CSV & NIV - "the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness"
4. Godliness transcends the culture we happen to live in. The people of Crete were known for their Godlessness.
Titus 1:12 NAU - "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."
God's people were to shine the righteousness of Christ even in the midst of Godlessness, even in the midst of great danger. According to tradition, ruins of a sixth century church mark the site of the martyrdom of Titus.
5. As we move to **Verses 2-3** Paul is continuing with the salutation, but his words continue to hold great meaning. He speaks of the hope of eternal life which God promised in ages past, manifested in the Word of God and fulfilled through the person and work of Jesus Christ. The Christian hope of eternal life is a blessing of great joy.

6. Death is a constant threat to our humanity. Paul referred to it as an enemy but then declared that it was an enemy because of sin.
Because of sin we face the wrath and fiery judgment of God. But the Gospel promises us the hope of eternal life.
7. **Verse 2** gives us the good news of God's Covenant promise and God's Covenant faithfulness. We find here one of the great pillars of Christian assurance.
Assurance is built upon several important pillars.
- The inner testimony of the Holy Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are a child of God. It's the assurance of our adoption.
Romans 8:15-16 NAU - "For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,"
 - The outward objective testimony of our life. Paul states this often in the Book of Titus.
In **Verse 1** he speaks of truth which is in accordance with Godliness. The Christian believes to the saving of the soul, but this faith is never barren. He believes the essential truths of the Christian faith and these truths produce the fruit of holy living. This is the fruit of regeneration.
Titus 2:11-12 NAU - "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, ¹² instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,"
Titus 3:5 NAU - "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,"
James famously defended the importance of validating our faith by our good works.
James 2:17-18 NAU - "Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, *being* by itself. ¹⁸ But someone may *well* say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works."
 - The third pillar of our assurance is the surety of the promises of God. We believe and trust in God's promises. Our hope is based upon these promises because God cannot lie. He is true to His Word.
Titus 1:2 NAU - "in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,"
 - On top of these three graces of truth, God preserves us, and this perseverance gives us further proof that we are the children of God.
2 Timothy 1:12 NAU - "I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day."
8. Our greatest assurance is fixed upon our relationship with Christ. We are united to Him by faith. We are one with Him. We know Him intimately.
- A. The Day of Judgment will disclose that many never had this relationship with Jesus.
Matthew 7:23 NAU - "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you'"

- B. Jesus taught figuratively of the relationship of the Shepherd to His sheep.
John 10:27-28 NAU - "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand."
 Richard Phillips writes: "When Jesus spoke of his assurance of our salvation, he put it in the context of a personal relationship: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27). He indicates that our assurance of salvation, based on God's promises and plan, will flourish only in a cultivated communion with him as our Savior and Lord and by our feeding as Christ's sheep on the rich bread that is the Word of God."¹
9. **Verses 2-3** speak of the pillar of God's promises. He is the God who cannot lie who has spoken infallible truths in His Word. Truths that must be trusted.
- I. Paul speaks of the "hope of eternal life" promised by God in ages past.
- A. What is Christian hope?
1. Hope for the Christian is based upon a future expectation – our surety. It is the one, true, absolute hope. It is a bold confidence. Christian hope is based on absolutes, certainties, unfulfilling promises.
 2. Christian hope is a tangible reality. We have the blessed promises of God concerning our future. Much of our redemption is still future but we have absolute confidence and our assurance is strengthened regarding it.
 3. In other words, although our salvation has not yet been brought to completion, we rest in confident expectation.
Philippians 1:6 NAU - "*For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*"
Philippians 3:13-14 NAU - "Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing *I do*: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."
- B. This great confidence rests upon our trust upon the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit has been given as our pledge or guarantee.
2 Corinthians 1:20-22 NAU - "For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us. ²¹ Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, ²² who also sealed us and gave *us* the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge."
Ephesians 1:13-14 NAU - "having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory."

¹ Daniel M. Doriani and Richard D. Phillips, *2 Timothy & Titus*, ed. Richard D. Phillips, Philip Graham Ryken, and Daniel M. Doriani, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2020), 144.

1. This life is full of uncertainties. Everything you own could disappear tomorrow. Your plans can be crushed, friends and family can disappear, health can fail. But our hope is not in this world. Our hope is built on the sure foundation of Christ.
2. The Philippian jailer asked the question of eternal significance. "What must I do to be saved."
 - a. Paul's response was immediate.
Acts 16:31 NAU - "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved"
 - b. Paul then entered into his house and opened up the Scriptures to him. The jailer's faith was built upon the sure promises of God.
Acts 16:32 NAU - "And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house."
3. Your confidence can only be based upon belief in God's promise of eternal life through the Gospel of Christ.
Do you know Him? Not do you know of Him or about Him. Do you know Christ?
Is your hope built on Christ?
My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly trust in Jesus' Name.

II. What is the effect of this abounding hope upon our lives?

- A. It increases our faith
 1. Paul expressed this in **Verse 1**. It was a key aspect of his apostolic calling.
Titus 1:1 NAU - "Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God"
 2. Paul continually preached and taught the knowledge of the truth.
Titus 1:3 NAU - "*even* His word, in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior,"
 3. God gives us His promise and we set our hope upon it *with expectation*.
- B. God's promises are infallible – "He cannot lie."
 1. It is because the gospel is true; it is because God cannot lie; it is because God has purposed to accomplish his work of salvation that the believer can have assurance. Our faith rests upon our confidence in the promises of God and we hope with expectation.
 2. With an eye upon eternity we press on with confidence.
If your hope is in this world and this world is your reward you will be continually disappointed. You'll live in continual fear—the fear of loss of those things you love and the fear of being powerless to stop it.
 3. As we go through the trials of this life our blessed hope comforts us and keeps us pressing on in faith.
The Christian can have confidence in death because of our hope of heaven

- C. Hope also creates patience
1. By faith we believe God's promises to be true. Hope, on the other hand is the contemplation of the promises. Hope causes us to wait patiently for what God has promised.
 2. If your hope is beyond this world you patiently await the consummation.
Romans 8:24-25 NAU - "For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he *already* sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it." ὑπομονή - Patience
 3. Christian patience implies perseverance. We are pressing towards the object of our hope.
- D. Hope keeps Christ at the center of our lives.
1. This is of the essence of the Christian life. We have met Christ and have found Him most glorious.
 2. Your blessed hope should cause you to strive to honor the One who is the Savior of your soul
1 John 3:2-3 NAU - "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."
 3. It should cause you to walk with your head up looking towards Christ.
Colossians 3:1-4 NAU - "Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. ³ For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory."

Conclusion:

1. The Christian can live in confidence. This is our assurance. God has given us precious promises and He cannot lie.
2. Both faith and hope are based on the unseen.
Hebrews 11:1 NAU - "Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."
Romans 8:24-25 NAU - "For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he *already* sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it."
3. We trust in the unseen, and yet God's promises are vivid. We see them clearly and believe.