

Mon., Dec. 19, 2011

Dr. Sharon Taylor, Donald G. Miller Librarian and Director of the Clifford E. Barbour Library

Scripture

Titus 1:1-16

¹Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that is in accordance with godliness, ²in the hope of eternal life that God, who never lies, promised before the ages began - ³in due time he revealed his word through the proclamation with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Saviour,

⁴To Titus, my loyal child in the faith we share:

Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Saviour.

⁵I left you behind in Crete for this reason, that you should put in order what remained to be done, and should appoint elders in every town, as I directed you: ⁶someone who is blameless, married only once, whose children are believers, not accused of debauchery and not rebellious. ⁷For a bishop, as God's steward, must be blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or addicted to wine or violent or greedy for gain; ⁸but he must be hospitable, a lover of goodness, prudent, upright, devout, and self-controlled. ⁹He must have a firm grasp of the word that is trustworthy in accordance with the teaching, so that he may be able both to preach with sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict it.

¹⁰There are also many rebellious people, idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision; ¹¹they must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for sordid gain what it is not right to teach. ¹²It was one of them, their very own prophet, who said, "Cretans are always liars, vicious brutes, lazy gluttons." ¹³That testimony is true. For this reason rebuke them sharply, so that they may become sound in the faith, ¹⁴not paying attention to Jewish myths or to commandments of those who reject the truth. ¹⁵To the pure all things are pure, but to the corrupt and unbelieving nothing is pure. Their very minds and consciences are corrupted. ¹⁶They profess to know God, but they deny him by their actions. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.

Devotional

Paul, in these first verses in the letter to Titus, reminds his readers of his mission, a mission that lies at the very heart and core of the gospel message. It was the Advent message writ large. God, in God's providence has adopted a people and has gifted them with knowledge of the truth. This truth leads to a life of godliness and ultimately to life eternal. Before the foundation of the earth, God has been at work revealing this truth in a message that, like God's very nature, is sure, steadfast, and unfailing. To make certain that we recognize and understand this word, God revealed it in human flesh in the person of the only begotten Son. Jesus came, not as an after -thought or as a Plan B, but as the first, best, long-awaited gift of God.

Prayer

Lord, we are fast approaching Christmas and the time of year when gifts become foremost in our hearts and minds. Thank you for this reminder that You have been working out the gift of our salvation since the beginning of time that we might be your people, full of grace and peace. In the name of your most precious gift to us, the Word made flesh, our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen