

Minor Festivals: Titus, Pastor and Confessor, January 26

“As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you.” (2 Corinthians 8:23)

Who was Titus? We first learn about him from the apostle Paul. At the beginning of Paul’s public ministry, he spent about one year in the city of Antioch in Syria. He proclaimed the Good News of the forgiveness of sins and eternal life purchased with the holy, precious blood that Jesus shed on the cross, and guaranteed to sinners through his glorious resurrection from the dead. Through Paul’s preaching, the Holy Spirit led Titus to believe in Jesus Christ as his Savior. Unlike many of those early Christians, Titus was not a Jew by birth, but was a Greek who had not submitted to the Jewish Old Testament rite of circumcision. Now a prophet named Agabus came to Antioch and foretold a terrible famine. The Christians there decided to gather an offering and send it to Jerusalem to help the poverty-stricken believers there. Paul and Titus were chosen to carry this offering.

When they arrived, some Jewish Christians realized Titus was not circumcised and started teaching that faith in Jesus Christ was not enough for salvation. In addition to faith, a Christian had to fulfill the Old Testament ceremonial laws, including circumcision. However, Titus refused to listen to their false teaching, and the apostles backed him up. Why? Because demanding circumcision, or anything else in addition to faith in the Savior, Jesus Christ, destroys his saving work and takes away the certainty of our salvation. Faith in Jesus Christ alone saves. Period. Demanding anything in addition to faith in Jesus Christ makes salvation impossible. Why? Because sinners cannot do anything perfectly and so we would completely mess up any added demands. Titus stood up for and preserved the truth that it is by grace we are saved, through faith, and this not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that nobody can boast.

Titus continued to be a great preserver of the Truth. Ten years later we find him with Paul in Ephesus. There, Paul received word about a bunch of problems in the church in Corinth. So what did Paul do? Two times he sent Titus there to help straighten things out. And you know what? Titus’ mission was a success.

We are only one generation away from losing the Truth of God’s Word. Each generation has to carry out its sacred duty of telling the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD. Paul knew that two thousand years ago. That’s why on their travels he left Titus on the Island of Crete when he moved on to Asia Minor. Titus had to insure that after they were gone, the truth of God’s Word would not be. He appointed pastors in every town. When his work in Crete was done, he met Paul in Greece. Paul was arrested a second time, and Titus stuck by his side as Paul was imprisoned in Rome. From there Titus went on a missionary journey in Dalmatia, in northwestern Greece. That’s the last we hear of Titus’s work.

By all your saints still striving, For all your saints at rest, Your holy name, O Jesus, Forevermore be blessed.
You rose, our King victorious, That they might wear the crown And ever shine in splendor Reflected from your throne.

All praise for faithful pastors, Who preached and taught your Word, For Titus your confessor, True servant of his Lord.
Lord, help your pastors nourish The souls within their care, So that your Church may flourish And all your blessings share.

After sharing this devotion with your family, take the time to read Galatians 2:1-10.

Pastor Zuberbier