

# Final Greetings

By Joel Wood

**Bible Text:** Titus 3:12-15

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Titus 3:12 through 15, I will read and preach from the Modern English Version. And hear our text for today. "[\[Titus 3:12-15\]](#) *When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, be diligent to come to me in Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. Diligently send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey. See that they lack nothing. And let our people also learn to continue doing good works to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unproductive. All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.*"

And that is how Paul ends his letter to this young pastor Titus, pastor of First Reformed Presbyterian Church on the Isle of Crete. Paul ends his letter by showing some basic concerns for God's people, ultimately desiring God's grace for all. These greetings at the ends of the epistles, they're unique. We might easily skip over them. Okay, it's like, you know, it's like Facebook for that generation, right? These people say "hi" and here's a couple pictures and a smiley face and we'll just kinda move on and know that okay, ya'll loved each other, everybody wants to say "hi" and hug everybody else and let's get on to the next epistle where we can learn some good doctrine. But many times we can see in these final greetings what's really resonating in the heart of the writer. And here we see Paul's economic concern for the church wrapped up with the ultimate concern for God's grace to be present in all. These last few verses are almost like a miniature Romans 10. Verses 13 to 15 of that chapter we read, "[\[Romans 10:13\]](#) *For, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'*" That's the basic declaration of the gospel: call on the name of the Lord and be saved. That's what we want to say, that's how we want people to respond. And then Paul goes on to explain how that happens and he does so by a series of questions. "[\[Romans 10:14-15\]](#) *How then show they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring good news of good things!'*" Paul here is laying out in practical terms in Titus 3 the answer to those questions that he laid out in Romans 10. How does he expect the ministry of the gospel to carry on in Crete?

Well, firstly, we see Paul's concern for provision of ministers by... pardon me-- provision of ministers for the people of God. Provision of ministers for the people of God. "[\[Titus 3:12\]](#) *When I send Artemas and Tychicus to you, be diligent to come to me in Nicopolis.*" We've not heard of Artemas but we- we read in Acts 20, "[\[Acts 20:4\]](#) *Accompanying him to Asia were Sopater of Berea, and Aristarchus and Secundus of Thessalonica, Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.*" Second Timothy, we read that Paul had "[\[2 Timothy 4:12\]](#) *sent Tychicus to Ephesus.*" Paul wanted Titus to visit him, to winter with him. To make this personal you might ask who would you want to winter with. You'd say, "I'd just like the winter somewhere." But who would you like to winter with you? This is the

affection that Paul has for these young men whom he has been training and shepherding in the ministry. He had a very strong affection for them, he wanted to see them when ever he could, and here he wanted a season with Titus, perhaps to hear first hand how the ministry was going in Crete, how he had applied the things that would be arriving in this letter. Yet he did not desire personal encouragement at the expense of the ministry of the church. The church needs pastors. Paul the great apostle knew this. Titus was green, he was young, he was new. But Paul knew that Crete needed his shepherding presence there and Paul did not want Titus to leave for Nicopolis until Artemas or Tychicus arrived. He did not want the church there to be without pastoral ministry. Paul was concerned about the provision of ministers for the people of God.

He goes on, "[\[Titus 3:13\]](#) Diligently send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey. See that they lack nothing." And here we see, secondly, Paul's concern for provision for ministers by the people of God. Provision for ministers by the people of God. Again, we have two men here, one of whom we have not heard of. One we have, we've heard of Apollos. In Acts 18 we read, "[\[Acts 18:24\]](#) Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, born in Alexandria, who was an eloquent man and powerful in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus." Apollos was good. He was a good preacher. He was excellent enough at what he did that we read in 1 Corinthians 5 that there was near schism. "I follow Paul on this." "I follow Apollos." "What Paul failed to see here..." "What P--Apollos doesn't get..." "How can you be reformed and not be all about Paul?" "How can you be reformed and not see Apollos is all there is?" There is nothing new under the sun. Titus is told to diligently send Zenas the lawyer, perhaps an Old Testament scholar who worked in the Jewish community. Apollos was also strongly engaged with the Jewish community, but he was told to diligently send Zenas and Apollos on their journey. Send diligently. What does-- what does Paul mean by that? Perhaps you've seen kids try to do something diligently or they try to do something hard and they get that look on their face that they think, "if I just make a look like I'm trying really hard, then it'll happen." Paul wasn't calling Titus to send them off: "I'm- I'm SENDING you!" You know, "BON VOYAGE!" You know, REALLY HARD. I think of our adopted grandpa Merle who would tell LJ when they were getting ready to do something together that clearly Merle would be doing 99.44 percent of the work, he'd tell LJ, "you grunt, I'll lift." No, diligently is tied to the second sentence there. How do they send these men off into ministry diligently? By seeing that they lack nothing.

Thirdly, we find Paul's concern for the provision of God's people for themselves and others. Provision of God's people for themselves and others. "[\[Titus 3:14\]](#) And let our people also learn to continue doing good works to meet urgent"-- or necessary-- "needs, that they may not be unproductive." There's a twofold meaning here. If I get up and say, "I'm gonna preach on good works," you'd probably have one presumption of what I'm gonna be talking about in that hour. Here Paul is speaking of works of faithfulness, those words that the Lord has called us to. For some maybe being pastors like Artemas or Tychicus, for others may be being missionaries or evangelists like Zenas us or Apollos. For still others it may be that work Paul mentions at the end of verse 13, making sure that those engaged in ministry lack nothing. As Paul said in Galatians 6:6, "[\[Galatians 6:6\]](#) Let him who is taught in the word share all good things with him who teaches." And in First Timothy 5:18, "[\[1 Timothy 5:18\]](#) For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle the ox that treads out the grain,' and, 'The laborer is worthy of his reward.'" Paul wants God's people to work good so they can do good works. He knows that there is an economic connection between the good works that God has called His people to do and the work that they are called to do. Whether that be a cup of cold water or sharing the faith with a questioning friend, this is a comprehensive statement about good works. There are needs that are going to come up and God's people need to be productive so that they can meet those needs. And he wants them to stay productive so that they are not unproductive. Young people, remember this: it's much more difficult to do what you shouldn't be doing if you're busy doing what you should be doing. We learn this, don't we, in the story of David and Bathsheba. Had David been doing what he should've been doing he wouldn't have had

time or actually even been in the place to do what he shouldn't have been doing. This holds true in all spheres and levels of life and industry and career but all the more when it comes to matters of sin and good works. Do what you have been created and redeemed to do and stay busy about it. Keep doing what God has called you to do and do not engage yourself in what you should not be doing. This is-- this is Paul's heart here, a productivity that is not just economic or financial but also is spiritual. A spiritual productivity that ties together all of those matters of industry and commerce and labor, that there is a reason they should be doing it.

And lastly, verse 15, "[\[Titus 3:15\]](#) *All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.*" I think we can-- we can take this in the broadest sense. When I read that second sentence there, "*Greet those who love us in the faith,*" I remember one time I pastored a church where I was friends with the previous pastor (one of the previous pastors) who was not some of the people's favorite pastor, we can say it that way. And whenever I'd see him I'd say, "Is there anybody you want me to greet for you?" And he'd say, "You know who you need to greet for me." I don't think that's what Paul is saying here. I don't think Paul's saying, "Greet the people who like me and try not to frustrate the people that don't like me." No, Paul is constantly fostering affection and faith in those to whom he writes and ministers. We saw it in 1 Thessalonians as we cracked that open today. He is on an ongoing quest to build a warmth of gospel-centered relationship with all people who are in Christ. What are YOU, dear saints, what are YOU actively doing now to encourage those around you in the faith? How do you reflect this apostolic affection in your relationships in the church? Is the church warmer after your interaction with it or before your interaction with it? Do you bring a warm heart or a cold shoulder to the gospel community? See, in these closing couple of sentences: "*All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.*" Brothers and sisters, may that be us. May know one be able to look at Trinity and say, "Well, I don't fit in with that group. I better not sit on that side of the fellowship hall. I guess I'm not accepted by that crowd." May we have a pervading affection amongst God's ministers and people, even as Paul was so concerned for the church on Crete and for Titus and for all who were there. So Paul ends this letter with these greetings that we could easily skip over and say, "Well okay, everybody's saying 'hi' to each other, okay, like a, you know, like a family get together, everybody's kinda saying 'bye' and I'll just go ahead and slip out." As Paul wraps up his letter, he shows these basic concerns: provision of ministers for the people of God, provision for ministers by the people of God, provision of God's people for themselves and others, and this pervading affection amongst all of God's people. Let's not skip over these sections of the epistles, let's learn what the Spirit has for us and, most of all in this, that we be growing in our love and our care and our concern for one another in this place. That we be zealous for good works that help nurture and provide for one another.

Stand with me as we pray.