FINAL WORDS: REAL LETTER, REAL PEOPLE, REAL LIFE

Sunday, September 16, 2018 -- Titus series -- Msg 28 -- Pastor Andrew Coleman

Titus 3:12-14 (pew Bible page: 1,062) English Standard Version (ESV)

8 The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people. 9 But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. 10 As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, 11 knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

12 When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. 13 Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing. 14 And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful.

15 All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith.

Grace be with you all.

CONTEXT/REVIEW:

The Apostle Paul has left Missionary Titus on the island of Crete to straighten out wayward churches.

The churches had problematic <u>leaders</u>, <u>doctrine</u> and <u>behavior</u>.

The Cretan churches had <u>spiritually corrupt leaders</u> who were enemies of the Lord, His Word and His church. In pursuit of their own gain, they had brought great confusion to the churches. Titus was given the task of straightening this out.

1) True Leaders and True Churches must <u>turn away from wasteful distractions</u> from the Gospel.

9 But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless.

2) True Leaders and True Churches must <u>reject divisive individuals</u> who are bent on creating division in the church.

10 As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, 11 knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

KEY OBSERVATIONS and APPLICATION: vs 12-14

- 1) These are <u>REAL LETTERS</u> from and to <u>REAL PEOPLE</u> in <u>REAL PLACES</u> about <u>REAL ISSUES</u>.
 - To be clear, the Bible is <u>NON-FICTION</u>.
 - Biographical, geographical, spiritual, moral and theological realities are present.
 - God's Word was <u>divinely revealed</u> through <u>human experiences</u>.
 - God's Word is as <u>real</u> and <u>relevant</u> today as it was when it was first given.
 - All of <u>Scripture</u> applies to all of <u>life</u> for all <u>people</u>.

12 When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. **13** Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing. **14** And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful.

KEY OBSERVATIONS and APPLICATION: vs 12-14 continued

Real People: Artemas, Tychicus, Zenas, Apollos

Real Places: Crete, Nicopolis — likely a city in western Greece founded by Caesar Augustus.

Real Times: reality of winter mentioned

2) Paul goes from condemning false leaders to commending faithful leaders.

vs 12 — Paul tells Titus that either Artemas or Tychicus are coming to relieve him.

- Artemas: we know nothing about him—only that he was apparently up for this kind of task.
- Tychicus: is mentioned several times in the New Testament very favorably

Acts 20:4 he is on the missionary journey with Paul from Corinth to Asia Minor

Colossians 4:7 delivered Paul's letter to the church at Colossae

2 Timothy 4:12 he replaced Timothy at Ephesus

Ephesians 6:21 he goes back to Ephesus for Paul

21 Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know about me and what I am doing.

vs 13 — Paul tells Titus to take care of Zenas and Apollos as they pass through.

These were probably the guys hand delivering this very letter to Titus.

- Zenas the Lawyer: ?? only know he had Paul's trust; a Roman litigator? Jewish expert on Mosaic law?
- Apollos: is mentioned several times in the New Testament

he was a faithful Jewish preacher who was 'mighty in the Scriptures' and teaching the baptism of John until Priscilla and Aquila explained the way of God more accurately Acts 28:24-27 1 Corinthians 1:11-12 indicates he was a faithful, powerful leader/teacher

We too must <u>identify</u>, <u>embrace</u> and <u>support</u> faithful, godly leaders.

- some who stay to lead us ('pastor-elders')
- some who go to lead others ('missionaries')

3) Christians must learn to commit themselves to live productive lives of caring for others.

14 And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful.

our people = the church, church members, true Christians
learn = it is not automatic; it must be taught; it must be learned.
to devote themselves = 'of the will'; go against how you feel by discipline and commitment.
good works = faith and love in action; right living; self-sacrifice for others-- CHRIST-LIKENESS.

KEY QUESTIONS: Do you put God's REAL and RELEVANT Word into your <u>daily practice</u> (good works)? Are you committed to <u>following God's leaders</u> and <u>serving God's people</u>?