**Titus and Philemon**

**Course Description:**

The epistles of Paul to Timothy and Titus, commonly referred to as pastoral epistles, were written by an older apostle to two younger and relatively newer believers who were his spiritual children and whom he had raised up in the Christian faith. His epistle to Philemon, who was probably also Paul’s spiritual son, but an older brother and elder of a church, is sometimes referred to as a “prison letter” (written in a Roman prison). These epistles reveal heartfelt outpourings, revelation of the truth, how to discern healthy teaching, how to have a proper and godly living before the Lord, proper companionship, growth in ministry and love and care for fellow believers without discrimination, instructions and admonitions for any believer, young or old, who desires to love, follow, grow and serve the Lord Jesus Christ and become pillars in the church life. It is a one year (three semester) pastoral journey, covering 1 Timothy (Fall Semester 2022, already over), 2 Timothy (Winter Semester 2023), and Titus and Philemon (Spring Semester 2023). By the end of the Spring Semester 2023, our expectation is that every student would desire to be a Timothy, a Titus and a Philemon, seeking to live a pure and prayerful life before the Lord, not afraid to exercise the gift the Lord has given to each one, hungry to know and enjoy the word of God, and eager to share the word with others for their salvation. More than that, the example of Paul, Timothy, Titus and Philemon can inspire us not merely to focus on our own spiritual growth, but to help and raise up others in the Christian faith to become pillars who in turn can raise up or lead a church.

**Instructor:** Antipas Desai

**Time:** Saturdays 12:00 (Noon) – 1:00 PM ET

**Class Size:** No limit

**Syllabus (week by week):**

The first six weeks of the course will be devoted to the epistle to Titus which is composed of three chapters, and will follow a chapter-by-chapter approach, each chapter to be covered requiring two weeks. The last three weeks of the course will be devoted to the epistle to Philemon which is composed of one chapter, and will follow a topical approach.

Week 1: Titus, chapter 1:1-4: The promise of the hope of eternal life manifested in the preaching of the word entrusted to us, according to the commandment of our Savior God; the preciousness of spiritual children.

Week 2: Titus, chapter 1:5-16: The work of the gospel and the need for, and qualifications of, pillars to uphold the church.

Week 3: Titus, chapter 2:1-10: Do we know the church? Do we know the believers around us? What are their needs? This will guide us in our speaking and teaching.

Week 4: Titus, chapter 2:11-15: The appearance of the grace of God to us, and the powerful and efficacious function of grace in our lives.

Week 5: Titus, chapter 3:1-11: The appearance of the kindness and philanthropic love of God, to lead us, by His mercy, to be saved by the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Spirit.

Week 6: Titus, chapter 3:12-15: Learning how to appreciate and receive from other brothers and sisters, especially those with whom we may not be that much related; the striking example of Paul and Apollos.

Week 7: Philemon: If the epistles to Timothy and Titus teach us the need for, and the characteristics of, the pillars in the church life, the epistle to Philemon gives us an impressive picture of five pillars functioning together as a sweet and fruitful service team, enjoying intimate companionship in a relationship of love and restfulness, to allow room for Onesimus (representing all of us) to be saved and grow.

Week 8: Philemon: A close relationship of faith, a close relationship of receiving one another, and a close relationship of indebtedness among the pillars.

Week 9: Philemon: A close relationship of perfecting and being perfected, as seen in Onesimus and his relationship with the pillars.

**Course Objective:**

What an honor it would be if someone wrote us a letter, and that letter became memorialized throughout the ages for the whole world to read. Titus and Philemon, two individuals in the New Testament, each received a letter from the apostle Paul, their spiritual father. Each of them were leading brothers in a church, but with different functions. We may not be, or consider ourselves to be, leading brothers or sisters, but we can still aspire to be a Titus or a Philemon. In this course, we will see how Titus, like Timothy, was charged to teach the truth. How can we learn to teach others the truth in the Bible? What do we need to teach others? What is healthy teaching? Philemon’s name comes from the Greek root which denotes brotherly love or affection. He was a brother who loved the saints. How can we learn to love the saints and people? How can we learn to teach the truth in love? We may not consider ourselves to be “teachers,” but any believer is qualified to “teach” someone else who is younger in the faith. Philemon is not referred to as a teacher, but in him, we see a person who lived out what Paul, Timothy and Titus taught. The teaching became his living. May we all desire not only to teach, but to live what we teach, so we ourselves become a living teaching to those around us.

**Resources:**

Titus, the Bible

Philemon, the Bible

**Secondary Resources:**

Chu, Titus, Philemon: Portrait of a Healthy Church Life, Fellowship Journal, Volume 10, No. 3, 2011

**Structure:**

Lecture with a 10-15 minute question/discussion period

**Homework:**

Participants will be expected to invest 30 minutes each week in reading assigned verses and giving short answers to assigned questions. Group work is encouraged. Some questions may ask participants to share their thoughts in the discussion period, thus facilitating group discussion.

*The timing and content of this class has been specially considered in view of participation of saints from Africa. For those from Africa who wish to join, please register through the church in Accra or the church in Kampala. Even though this class has been designed with Africa in view, all saints from everywhere are welcome to join them. All other registration is still through this website.*