**Gods Uses Men to Save People**

Based on [Luke 10:1-9](http://biblia.com/books/esv/Lk10.1) and [Titus 1:1-9](http://biblia.com/books/esv/Tt1.1-9)

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St. Titus, Pastor and Confessor

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Today we have a selection of readings that have to do with the office of the Holy Ministry. It's because today is St. Titus day. All who are baptized and believe are saints, but when it's used as a title, it usually means the person's dead, and that they are remembered for in some consequential way building Christ's church on earth. What did Titus do that was so consequential to build the Church you are a part of today?...he had holy scripture written to him.

Titus never wrote holy scripture, but a single letter written to him by the Apostle Paul is holy scripture. And because of that we have a festival day in the church, and it's good that we do. Because in so doing we remember one very important point that seems to be lost in the "spiritual but not religious" climate of today. God uses men to build his church and save people.

God uses men to save people. Is that a hard thing for people to understand and believe today. God sends men to save people. That doesn't mean that men save people, it's still God doing the saving, but God sends men to save people. In other words, had St. Titus never become a Pastor and Confessor; and had God not sent someone else to fill his roll, there would be less people in heaven. God sends men to save people.

It's amazing how much of protestant Christianity is scandalized by this idea and yet the fact that God uses men to accomplish his purposes on earth is evident all around us. God sends parents to make people, doesn't he? In fact, the first command God gives to the human race is to "Be fruitful and multiply." God tells husband and wife to make babies, that doesn't mean that God isn't the one **making** them, he's just using human instruments who carry out his orders. God sends men to save people, it doesn't mean that God isn't the one **saving** them, he's just using human instruments who carry out his orders.

God sends men to save people. Look at the Gospel lesson. Jesus selected and sent 72 men ahead of him, to announce peace, to heal the sick, and proclaim that the kingdom of God is come near you. The kingdom of God is salvation in Jesus Christ, and Jesus hadn't even come to that house in person. Yet Jesus tells those he sent to say to those who hear and receive, "The kingdom of God has come near you." Not "It will come near you when Jesus gets here", but it is here when men sent by Jesus are saying and doing what he tells them to. Jesus says to those he sends, "Whoever hears you hears me, and whoever rejects you rejects me."

In their being sent by Jesus, to say what he tells them to say, and heal what he tells them to heal; Jesus himself is there doing it. That's the way God has always worked with his people, in the OT with Prophets and Priests; in the New Testament with Apostles and Pastors. The bible calls them Pastors, Elders, Overseers, Ministers, but they are all the same thing; because they all talk about Men whom the church has called into "the office of the holy ministry." What this office rests on is God's ***sending*** someone to minister his Word and miracles to his people, to us that means his word and sacraments.

And in his letter to Pastor Titus, Paul is instructing him just how to carry on this "sending" of men into the Ministry. You see, Paul as special as he was knew he was going to die just like everyone else, only not like everyone else. He was going to be martyred. And he didn't worry about it; "To live is Christ; to die is gain." To be a Pastor is not a luxury, it is to suffer for the faith, and Paul knew that all too well. But Paul saw Jesus face to face, and was sent by Jesus face to face. Now he's going to die, and others are going to have to take his place in suffering as a servant of the word and minister of the faith. And this new string of Pastor's is going to have to suffer without having seen Jesus and heard their Call from his physical lips. And so Paul writes this letter to Titus, as one who will take his place, and tells him how to appoint Men for the Ministry, and what they are supposed to do.

I heard a sermon a little while ago from Rick Warren, a famous mega-church pastor in California. And he said, "As a Pastor it is my Job to make sure you succeed in life and achieve your goals." I don't know where he gets this information, but it's not from the bible. Job of a life coach maybe, but nowhere does Paul or anybody in scripture say that the Ministry exists to help people achieve their personal goals. The minister is to preach the gospel, and here's the biggie, "hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught (by the apostles), so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also rebuke those who contradict it.

Teach the Word and rebuke those who contradict it. There were and still are false prophets in the midst of God's church. And it will do us no good to simply preach the truth and ignore those who preach falsely. Paul says to rebuke false teachers. If you are a bank manager and you've been told of a new counterfeit bill being circulated, how do you prepare your tellers to reject it. Do you say, "Look, here's what a legitimate $50 bill looks like." No, the point is that the counterfeit was made to look like it's real so that, once the teller is fooled it's too late. The tellers already know what a $50 dollar bill looks like. If you want them to not be fooled, you show them a fake and how to recognize it. The early church was full of false teachers and teachings. Paul tells Titus to point them out and rebuke them.

Once Paul is gone Titus has no one to turn to find out what to do. Paul had the certainty that he was doing God's will because Jesus sent him personally. Paul is saying this sending needs to continue; and the way you know how to fulfill this calling is to put your trust in sound doctrine. You don't have Jesus to talk to; and you won't have me to talk to but it doesn't matter, because you have sound doctrine. So select men who are beyond reproach, to learn sound doctrine; teach it and preach according to it.

And that's what the office of the holy ministry means to you, dear friends in Christ. It's about being assured that Christ has sent someone to see to your salvation by preaching the gospel, administering God's miraculous sacraments; and protecting you from the wolves who would speak twisted words of false doctrine. You get to hear God's word from men sent to save you in the pure preaching of it. And what is that preaching? Well it's not that Jesus died for your 401-K; or that he died so that you can reach your full potential here and now. Jesus did not die so that pastors with six-figure salaries can preach about your life goals and ambitions. Jesus did not die to preach the word that God has a plan for your life; and that your job here on earth is "**not to let negativity get in the way of your destiny.**" Have you heard that before?

God sends men to save you by the preaching of this: **that while you were and still are sinners, Christ died for you.** That God sent Jesus to be Jesus, because you failed to be Jesus. God sent his only begotten son to carry his own cross up a mountain and die on it, because the weight of that cross would have killed you forever. **And when he was lifted up on that cross, he took with him the sins of the whole world that by his sacrifice, we would be saved.**..that all who look upon that miracle of forgiveness won at the expense of the Son already have treasures in heaven, built up and won at the expense of the Son so that your cup overflows.

For you have heard true peace preached today...not that God will help you accomplish your goals before you die; but **that the only goal that needs to be accomplished to have a blessed death has already been accomplished on the cross.** Kick the bucket list; it is Finish. And in **His** resurrection **God** has promised yours, that your hope is that someday your life will be perfect, someday there will be no more tears or sorrow, because the victory circle in which you stand is drawn around Jesus Christ, who continues to wear a cross until that day we see him come again with a crown, and though you die in your flesh you will see your Redeemer. O joyous message; O happy day.