

7-14-24 Every Good Work (Titus)

Week 4

Text: Titus 1:10–16

Topic: Problems, Sin, False Teachers

Big Idea of the Message: Paul lays out the tasks and responsibilities of church elders.

Application Point: There are troubles and problems in the church. Sometimes we are to pray, and fast regarding them and other times we are to address them directly. There are problems in the church that must be stopped.

Since the foundation of the church, there have been certain individuals who have caused great trouble. There are some who would love nothing more than to see the church destroyed. Others want complete control and will cause great turmoil when they don't get their way. Some work against the plan of God and seek to mold the church into their own likeness. One of the greatest problems throughout church history is the rise of false prophets. Jesus knew that this would be an issue. He warned us of this in **Matthew 7:15, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."**

All these years later the troublemakers in the church are still with us. Here in **Titus 1:10-16** Paul focuses on rebuke and confrontation of those troublemakers. In the previous passage Paul instructs Titus to "**appoint elders in every city**". He also reveals to Titus that he is in Crete to "**set in order things that are lacking**". In **verses 5-9** Paul describes the qualifications of faithful ministers who serves the Savior.

Here in **verses 10-16** Paul now addresses the troublemakers who need to be stopped immediately. These types of people are still in the church today. They cannot be avoided or ignored... they must be confronted and stopped.

We need to know who and what needs to be stopped as well as how to stop them. Fortunately, the answers are found in our selected text.

I. Infiltration into the Church must be stopped.

- To "infiltrate" is to enter or gain access to (an organization, place, etc.) covertly and gradually, to acquire secret information.
- Satan does this with false prophets, teachers "well intentioned believers"; he will use these individuals to infiltrate the church and cause as much harm as possible. And they have been very successful.
- **Read Titus 1:10.**
- There was an abundance of false teachers on the island of Crete. Paul says that there were "**MANY insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers**". He was especially concerned about those of the "**Circumcision**". Here he refers to Judaizers.
- This group believed that Salvation could be earned through works, rituals and ceremonies. They offered a Jesus plus works theology. When one attempts to add to Christ they subtract from Christ.

- They taught that salvation required physical circumcision as well as adherence to Mosaic Law. Much like the Pharisees, these Judaizers were known for putting on a show of outward holiness. But inside they were corrupt and spiritually dead. Some of these individuals had infiltrated the church and worked their way into positions of influence.
- These false teachers were very personable and persuasive. They taught just enough truth to deceive the immature believer. Though they had worked their way into leadership positions in the church, Paul says that they are **"insubordinate"**.
- They would not be held accountable to anyone... even today, this is a tell-tale sign of all false teachers. BEWARE of believers who will not put themselves under authority.
- They are empty talkers. What they said impressed people, but it had no content of substance. They excelled at talking and not in doing. They could tell others what to do, but they did not do it themselves.
- What are some of the results of them infiltrating the Church?
- **Read verse 11.**
- They look to create division. What did Jesus say about a house divided against itself? It cannot stand. Any household driven by infighting will tear itself apart.

I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment 1 Corinthians 1:10

I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. Romans 16:17

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity! Psalms 133:1

- Paul tells Titus that these false teachers **"subvert whole houses"**. They were causing entire families to turn away from the truth. This caused great division in the church. Because there were many of the false teachers, their influence in the church spread like cancer.
- Why do they infiltrate? Why?
- **"...for the sake of dishonest gain."** I can't think of a more dishonest way of attaining wealth than to pervert the gospel and prey on the weak for personal gain.
- What we are seeing was not just a problem in Crete. Paul, John, Peter, Jude and Jesus all spoke of false teachers infiltrating the church. The dishonest gain doesn't just have to be monetarily, most of the time the gain is pride, power and some out of a place of desperation.
- Today, in 2024 false teachers are still infiltrating the church.

II. Deception in the Church must be stopped.

- **Read Titus 1:12.**
- **Verse 12** shows us that: deceivers must be identified. Once a false teacher has infiltrated the church and worked his way into a place of influence then he will begin his task of deceiving others.

- One of the Cretan's own prophets had proclaimed that "**Cretans are always liars, evil beasts and lazy gluttons.**" They were controlled by their own passions and desires. They were self-indulgent with no self-discipline or control.
- It is not difficult for us to identify false prophets in our day either. Simply look at them under the magnifying glass that is the Word of God! If they do not cling to the Truth of the Word...if they do not preach the Whole Counsel of God.... then they are not genuine.
- These false teachers that Titus dealt with were carnal and worldly. Notice Paul's adjectives, "**always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.**"
- This shows the importance of studying God's Word for yourself. If you do not have a solid biblical foundation in your life, then it will be easy for you to be carried away with strange doctrines from false prophets.
- So, what do we do when there are obvious deceivers in the church?
- **Read verses 13-14.** Deceivers **MUST** be confronted.
- Paul tells Titus exactly how to handle these deceivers. He says, "**rebuke them sharply**". Not only are they to be rebuked in a stern manner... they are to be corrected by the Word of God. Remember the instruction given to the elder back in **verse 9**; "**holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.**"
- We mentioned earlier that false doctrine is like a cancer that spreads in the church. When possible, a surgeon will take a sharp scalpel and cut away the diseased tissue that affects the body. In the same manner, spiritual surgery can only be performed with the sharp sword that is God's Word.
- The goal in confronting the deceiver is to stop the danger to the church. It is to prevent cancer from spreading. But another desired result is that those who are deceived "**may be sound in the faith**". This is redemptive work.
- Many of these people once knew the truth but had turned away from it. Paul indicates in this verse that we are to love others enough to point out their errors with the hope that they will recover.

III. **Corruption in the Church must be stopped.**

- This world is filled with corrupt political leaders and corrupt business leaders. Many people have fallen prey to corruption, greed and selfish behavior. Unfortunately, corruption seems to be at an all-time high in the church.
- Many deceivers have infiltrated the church and are constantly spreading corruption. Because of this, there have been many scandals in the church in recent years. These people bring shame and reproach on the name of Christ.
- When you examine the actions of these troublemakers it is clear that they do not know Christ, much less represent him. Paul says that they "**profess to know God but in (their) works they deny Him, are abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work**".
- They were "**abominable**", which means detestable, disgusting. "**Disobedient**" means they cannot and will not be persuaded. Their minds have been made up and they will not face the truth.

- They were not able to pass the test, God will not use them because they have been proven unfit for His usage.
- Paul says that they live wicked lives... **“To all the pure all things are pure, but to those who are undefiled and unbelieving nothing is pure...”**
- Inner purity produces outer purity. Likewise, the opposite is true, inner corruption produces corrupt works.
- These individuals say one thing and do another. They were walking contradictions. In many ways they are like the Pharisees. Jesus said that the Pharisees were like whitewashed tombs.
- Not only do they live wicked lives, but they also have evil minds.
- How a man thinks, affects what he does. Paul says (of the false prophets) that **“even their mind...”** This means... their thoughts, their desires, their purposes are **“defiled.”** He also says that their **“conscience are defiled”**. This means that their morality, discernment and judgment is defiled. Their idea of right and wrong does not come from God. Rather it comes from within their own corrupt minds. Because of their evil minds and their wicked lives, their theology cannot be trusted.
- They live wicked lives; they have evil minds, and we see in **verse 16....they tell dangerous lies. Read verse 16.**
- Their lives and actions deny the Christ that they profess to know. These false prophets lie to themselves and as a result they lie to others. Paul says that they profess to know Christ, but in their works, they deny Him. They trust in their own works, they trust in their own wisdom, they trust in their own righteousness. (Don't we see this today? Individuals trusting their own works/ways, their own wisdom and righteousness?)
- The Judaizers taught that if you observed all the ceremonies... kept all the traditions... fulfilled all the commandments of men... then you would purify yourself.
- They taught that you could clean the inside by what you do on the outside. The Bible says you must clean the inside by coming to Christ and letting Him clean the inside and that takes care of the outside.
- And in the church today is a crowd that believes that they can observe all the ceremonies, follow all the rituals, keep all the traditions, fulfill the commands of men and make it to Heaven.
- These are dangerous lies that are being propagated in the church as we speak.
- As was the case in Crete, THESE LIES MUST BE STOPPED! These people must be silenced because they do great harm in the church and to the cause of Christ.
- It is imperative that we can identify false teachers. We must know what to look for and how to respond when we encounter them. God has a plan for His church and there are things that He will not tolerate.
- Just as Jesus cast that den of thieves out of the Temple... just as Paul rebuked many False Prophets...just as Titus set things in order in the Church at Crete, there are some problems in the church today that must be stopped.

Conclusion

Through God's Word we find how to do this God's way. You may say, "none of this describes our church!". I agree, and I am glad it doesn't. But we need to know what to watch for and what to prevent. May we look to God to protect us as we move forward for Him!

We MUST be on the lookout for those that seek to infiltrate our church for deceptive and corrupt reasons.

We MUST have leadership in place, setting things in proper order and setting things back in proper order that may be lacking.

We MUST be prayed up and walking unified to the Lord with togetherness.

We MUST make sure that we are true followers of Jesus Christ.

We MUST be intentional about believing what God says about us...we are Loved and Accepted.