

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Good evening church,

This evening we are going to continue our study through Titus. We are going to study the second half of chapter one.

Let's pray...

[Tit 1:10-16 NKJV] 10 For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, 11 whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain. 12 One of them, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans [are] always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." 13 This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, 14 not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth. 15 To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled. 16 They profess to know God, but in works they deny [Him], being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

Last week, we started this short letter that Paul wrote to Titus.

Titus was a Christian gentile who came to faith and was disciple by Paul – he served faithfully alongside Paul as the gospel was being preached to the different churches within the region.

Paul then appoints Titus to oversee the church in the Mediterranean island of Crete.

And because the church back then was made up of imperfect individuals – just like it is today – the church in Crete had its share of issues.

So Paul writes this letter to Titus exhorting him to correct some of the issues that were present within the church in Crete.

One of the things that we saw in our study last week was Paul providing Titus with a list of qualifications that he was supposed to use when appointing leaders within the church.

The qualifications looked at their godly character as well as their adherence to the word of God.

The lack of spiritual leadership was a big issue in Crete – and the reason it was a big issue was that as God started growing the church – as the truth started to be sown in Crete, the enemy came in and started to sow lies.

False teachers started infiltrating the different around the island of Crete and they started teaching false doctrines that were leading many believers astray.

The really sad thing is that this attack came from within the church.

You see, from the early days of the church until now – Satan discovered that the most effective way to attack the church was always from within.

Turn with me to the book of Acts 20 -

Listen to the words that Paul speaks to the elders of the church in Ephesus.

[Act 20:25-31 NKJV] 25 "And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. 26

"Therefore I testify to you this day that I [am] innocent of the blood of all [men].

27 "For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. 28

"Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 "For I know this, that after my departure

savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 "Also from

among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. 31 "Therefore watch, and remember that for three

years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

Again, these were elders that Paul was addressing – these were not nonbelievers – these guys should have known better.

But it didn't take long after he left Ephesus that some of the individuals who heard Paul spoke these words – they started deceiving the flock.

That is why Paul wrote to Timothy, who was left in charge of the church in Ephesus – and he told him to put a stop to these false teachings – many of the same false teachings that were being taught in Crete.

So let's look at our text -

[Tit 1:10-16 NKJV] 10 For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision,

I want to first draw your attention to the fact that Paul makes it clear that the issue with the false teachers was not just an isolated incident.

There are many – the problem with the false teachers was rampant in Crete.

The Greek word that Paul uses here for insubordinate – is the negative form of the word to submit.

It is a military term to describe someone who is given orders by his superior and then they fail to follow them.

So these false teachers in Crete were those who would not submit to God's authority.

And here in verse 10, Paul separates these insubordinate individuals into two groups.

Idle Talkers – these were individuals who were good at talking – people would be impressed by what they spoke but in reality their words had no content or substance behind them.

They were just full of hot air.

Another characteristic of these idle talkers was that they didn't practice what they preached. They were good at talking but not in doing.

They were good at telling other people what to do but they themselves would not do it.

The other group was the **deceivers** –

The deceivers were individuals who knew what they were teaching had been banned and forbidden by the Church leadership in Jerusalem.

These were Jadaizers – these were the ones that were telling the gentile Christians that if they really wanted to be saved, they had to adhere to the laws of Moses.

If they really wanted to be saved, they had to get to get circumcised.

They started adding works to grace.

They knew it was contrary to the gospel – but they went on teaching it anyway.

11 whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.

Paul tells Titus to train up the elders he chose to muzzle the false teachers that infiltrated the church –

They shouldn't be allowed to speak as their words were leading people astray.

Notice Paul's urgency, they must be stopped –

And the way they were infiltrating the church was by joining these small groups throughout Crete and then they would start gaining the confidence of the people and eventually they were leading the group astray.

This is the same tactic that is used today –

Someone knocks on your door on Saturday morning –

You let them in. They appear sincere – they say they also read the bible.

They amaze you by the way it appears that they understand the scriptures.

The next thing you know – they are sitting on your sofa drinking coffee.

Then after a few visits they start telling you that the only real way to understand the bible is if for you read their book.

I had a friend in college who grew up in a Christian home – he got involved with a Christian denomination that stressed works for salvation.

They began to tell him he couldn't be saved because he wasn't a part of their church and so he couldn't possibly be "doing things right."

They didn't require that he be circumcised, but they did disallow his prior baptism and said he had to be baptized by them, IN THEIR CHURCH BUILDING, according to their statutes.

He had to attend their meetings, several times a week.

He had to abide by each and every pronouncement of the organization.

He had to submit his entire life to the leadership of his local bible study group.

This is as close to the Judaizers as you can find today.

Luckily, he was able to leave before he got too involved with them.

Paul also states at the end of verse 11 that the reason that they were doing this was for the sake of dishonest gain –

Dishonest gain can either be that they were doing it for financial gain or it could also be emotional gain. They were doing it for the money or for the prestige that comes with the position of a spiritual leader.

12 One of them, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans [are] always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."

Here in verse 12, Paul is quoting a Greek prophet/poet by the name of Epimenides.

The reason that he is quoting Epimenides is to show the Cretans that one of their own has accused them of behaving like - well Cretans –

They can't get mad at Paul for saying that they are always liars, evil beasts and lazy gluttons – Paul is simply quoting a Cretan.

You see, the inhabitants of Crete –they were suffering from a character problem.

The culture of Crete had degraded morally that people were acting like animals.

That is why it was important for Titus to appoint elders among them because if he left the Cretans to themselves, chaos and error would dominate the church.

Now, this is not the only time that Paul quotes Epimenides – turn to Acts 17,

Here we have Paul speaking to the Athenians on Mars Hill.

[Act 17:22-28 NKJV] 22 Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; 23 "for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: 24 "God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. 25 "Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. 26 "And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of

the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, 27 "so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28 **"for in Him we live and move and have our being,** as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.'

The phrase "for in Him we live and move and have our being – that was a quote from Epimenides written 700 years before.

And the reason that Paul quotes him is not because Paul agreed with everything Epimenides wrote – the reason he is quoting him is to show the Athenians that one of their own had questions about the "Unknown God"

And therefore he uses his quote to reveal to them the identity of the "Unknown God"

13 **This testimony is true.** Therefore **rebuke them sharply,** that they may be sound in the faith,

This testimony is true – refers to the words written by Epimenides regarding the Cretans -

Because the Cretans were a rough bunch – Paul wants to make sure that Titus as well as the elders that he appoints – that they are going to be firm with them –

So Paul commands Titus to rebuke them sharply.

What does Paul mean by rebuke?

He is telling Titus to correct them – that was one of the qualification for the elders that he had given Titus.

[Tit 1:9 NKJV] 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.

It is not a matter of judging them – it is so that they can turn from their sin.

Listen to what Jesus said in the gospel of Matthew -

[Mat 18:15 NKJV] 15 "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

Paul to church in Ephesus says the following -

[Eph 5:11 NKJV] 11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose [them].

To the church in Laodicea – the lukewarm church, Jesus says the following

[Rev 3:19 NKJV] 19 "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

The ultimate goal of the rebuke/correction was so the Cretans may be sound in the faith –

We all need correcting from time to time.

It's not hard to become "unhealthy" in our faith.

How do we know the correct method to rebuke a brother or a sister???

Godly wisdom requires that we learn what the best method is when it comes to confronting or "correcting" each other.

Jude writes,

[Jude 1:22-23 NKJV] 22 And on some have compassion, making a distinction; 23 but others save with fear, pulling [them] out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.

I take this to mean that we need to use different means in different situations.

Some people only need a little hint, a gentle nudge, and they're back on track.

Others may need a 2x4 across the head to wake them up.

The goal is to have a "healthy faith".

14 not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth.

There were plenty of ancient Jewish writings that were being incorporated into the teachings of some of these false teachers –they may have sounded interesting – however, they were not inspired by God.

They were doing the same thing with commandments of men – they emphasized rules and traditions instead of the word of God.

This was especially true for those that were pushing legalism.

Church, Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for taking rules that men wrote and holding them at the same level as things from God.

Mark 7:5

[Mar 7:5-9 NKJV] 5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?" 6 He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with [their] lips, But their heart is far from Me. 7 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching [as] doctrines the commandments of men.' 8 "For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men--the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do." 9 He said to them, "[All too] well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.

We need to be careful that we do not allow our traditions to trump the word of God.

15 To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.

This verse describes legalism.

The false teachers were in to all kinds of rules and regulations about what was clean and unclean.

By coming in contact with something defiled or unclean – you would become defiled and unfit for worship.

But Paul reminds Titus and the others who would read this letter that purity is not an issue of externals.

You see, our relationship with Jesus Christ abolished these kinds of religious rituals.

As Jesus said, it's not what goes in to a man that defiles him, but what comes out.

If the heart is right with God, then issues of external form are not the focus.

If the heart is right, then all the actions and words that flow from it will be right as well.

But if the heart is corrupt, then it doesn't matter that a person has all their ceremonial ducks in a row – it is unacceptable to God.

God looks at and sees the heart.

16 They **profess to know God, but in works they **deny** [Him], being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.**

These false teachers – especially the legalistic Judaizers claimed they had the inside track on the knowledge of God, but a close inspection of their lives would reveal that they lived very far from what would be called genuine godliness.

In private, when they thought no one was listening, their speech was corrupt.

The thoughts and fantasies of their wicked hearts were abominable.

They violated the moral law of God at every corner.

And though they claimed to be doing a good work, they were in fact disqualified from speaking for the Lord.

Their confession of faith in Jesus Christ is denied by their conduct in His church –

I want to finish with this tonight,

I had you make a note of the verbs **profess and deny** –

The reason is that Jesus uses the same Greek words in Matt 10,

[Mat 10:32-33 NKJV] 32 "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. 33 "But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

We usually think of this in terms of what a person says about Jesus with their words, but Paul is saying that we can “deny” Jesus by our deeds.

Church, our lives ought to match what we believe.

This doesn't mean we are perfect – it simply means that we continue to make progress.

Let's pray...

