

*10 For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, 11 who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain. 12 One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." 13 This testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith, 14 not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth. 15 To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. 16 They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed. Titus 1:10-16*

We have been considering for the last few weeks Paul's instructions to Titus. Paul was wanting the young church to be lead by men of godly character, men who were *holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching* (the teaching of Paul, the other apostles and the Lord Himself), *so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. Titus 1:9* These men were to be grounded in the sound teaching so they know the right way and are able to straiten out those who were missing the mark. Jude in his letter was encouraging his readers, *the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ.*

*Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints. Jude 1:3*

At this early point in church history there were *rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers* vying for control, power, and influence, *teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain.* Paul equates them to the Cretans (that is in fact what they were), *liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.* These false leaders Paul says are defiled, (polluted, contaminated, soiled, stained), *their minds and their consciences are defiled, they are impure, unclean.* The Lord said to Isaiah, *"Come now, and let us reason together, Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be (white) like wool. Is 1:18* The problem these false teachers is that they claim to know God but they aren't cleansed, they are not made holy by *the sanctifying work of the Spirit.* They claim to know God but they are not being cleansed, *They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed. Titus 1:16*

So how is this all relevant to us today. The early church had these corrupt teachers, teachers that were leading believers astray. Since they were unclean themselves, they weren't able to lead others in ways of righteousness. Today the church seems to be at a very dangerous place, the sanctified bride of Christ is polluted in many ways. The words of Christ ring out, *when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth? Luke 18:8* It seems what the world needs today is revival, a fresh work of the Spirit of God. But if there is to be revival it must begin with Him sanctifying the church. If God is going to come, as He did in the past, to restore and purify the world outside the church He must first restore and purify the the church itself. Peter wrote,

*For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? AND IF IT IS WITH DIFFICULTY THAT THE RIGHTEOUS IS SAVED, WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE GODLESS MAN AND THE SINNER? 1 Pet 4:17,18*

*Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all*

*slander, like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, 3if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord. 1 Pet 2:1,2*

For the church to be revived we must embrace the Truth, the Word of God, we must *long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it we may grow in respect to salvation*. We must allow God to develop His character in our lives. Our problem today is much the same as that of the early church, there is a zeal for God but it is not conformed to the true Word of God. For Paul and the rest of the early church some of the greatest difficulties were with Jewish believers, *those of the circumcision*. This wasn't a new development. The book of Judges states, *In those days there was no king in Israel; every man (every Jewish man) did what was right in his own eyes. Judges 17:6* Even then, just after Moses and Joshua, the Jewish people were *rebellious, empty talkers and deceivers*. We must remember God hadn't chosen the Jewish nation because of their exemplary character but in the face of their lack of character. This gives us all hope for our own imperfect Christian walks. Paul in the book of Romans says this of his Jewish brothers,

*For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. Rom 10:2,3*

Earlier, in the book of Romans, Paul explains that some Gentiles, not knowing what the Law says about morality live by it's moral code instinctively. *For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, Rom 2:14,15* But we must understand that the early church was coming into being in a Gentile world, a world that lacked objective moral absolutes. God gave His Law to the Jews, He made them a nation. The rest of the world didn't have that, they were not God's chosen race and didn't have a God informed world view. They were not the people the Messiah was to come from.

The Greeks were graced by great philosophers. They explain truth with their mind but didn't have God's revelation as the Jews did. They developed an advanced society but it wasn't based on eternal Truth, that which cannot be shaken., They had visions of utopia, a perfect society, heaven on earth. Their moral existence wasn't based on eternal truth. This is similar in all Gentile societies, they had moral standards but lack the power of the Spirit to change the heart of man. Without an absolute standard, a perfect deity, a transcendent all knowing, all powerful God, man is left to his own devices, his own standards. Natural men end up as the Jews in the book of Judges, *every man did what was right in his own eyes*. Men believe lies, myths and fables, *Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth. There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death. Prov 14:12* And this is not just Gentiles and Jews, this comes into the church. This is why Paul wants Timothy to appoint those who understand sound doctrine and are able to teach.

This has happened in our day. Moral relativism had entered the church, the belief that knowledge, truth, and morality exist in relation to culture, society, or historical context, and are not absolute. This opens doctrine to flexibility in the application of moral laws according to circumstances, in contrast to absolute truth. Paul writes of God's standards,

*Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 1 Cor 6:9*

*8We know that the law is good when used correctly. 9For the law was not intended for people who do what is right. It is for people who are lawless and rebellious, who are ungodly and sinful, who consider nothing sacred and defile what is holy, who kill their father or mother or commit other murders. 10The law is for people who are sexually immoral, or who practice homosexuality, or are slave traders, liars, promise breakers, or who do anything else that contradicts the wholesome teaching 11that comes from the glorious Good News entrusted to me by our blessed God. 1 Tim 1:8-11*

Though Christians are not saved by keeping a moral standard as Paul wrote here the Law is necessary show what is right and true for moral behavior, *or who do anything else that contradicts the wholesome teaching that comes from the glorious Good News*. There are lawless and rebellious people who deny that which is true. This matters when these false teachers come into the church. In the mid-eighteen hundreds, Darwin with evolution, Wellhausen argued that the Bible is not be taken literally, it is not true, a collection of ancient fables. This meant it is not true but a collection of myths and fables that teach us truths as parables. A modern example of the type of belief is Jordan Peterson who has had a great impact on the relativistic youth of today but doesn't believe in the Messiah.

Men who have found themselves free from the moorings of biblical truth have come up with system, world views, that influence the hearts of men but are not in line with truth, Marxism and socialism, both deny God and His revealed truth. They attempt to give men heaven on earth but their systems over the last 200 years have produced nothing but destruction, ruin, misery and death. Why this is important is that these systems have presented themselves to the church as wolves in sheep's clothing. Jesus told us, *Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. Matt 7:15* I must mention now the social gospel.

*The Social Gospel Movement was a religious movement that arose during the second half of the nineteenth century. Ministers, especially ones belonging to the Protestant branch of Christianity, began to tie salvation and good works together. They argued that people must emulate the life of Jesus Christ.*

Social Gospel sounds good, it is based on the Christian doctrine of helping less fortunate people—the weak, sickly, and oppressed, but it has resulted in Christian churches being closely affiliated with godless socialism, a utopian view of bringing heaven to earth while denying the eternal kingdom of God. Today it goes by the name social justice and it is an issue in both mainline and evangelical churches and also the Roman Church (you hear it in the statements of the current Pope).

*social justice movement endangers Christians with “an onslaught of dangerous and false teachings that threaten the gospel, misrepresent Scripture, and lead people away from the grace of God in Jesus Christ. John MacArthur and a dozen other Christian leaders statement*

Today, we must be careful not to be lead astray by false teachers.