

**“Sound”**  
**Titus 1:10-16**  
**July 1, 2012**

Intro: Kim Philby, Guy Burgess, Donald McClean, Anthony Blunt, and John Cairncross are known as “the Cambridge Five.” These were smart kids, elite kids who studied at Cambridge University in the 1930s. Upon graduation from the prestigious university they went on to obtain key positions in the Intelligence Services of the British government [including in foreign intelligence, domestic security, and the Foreign Office]. While these men were positioned and equipped to serve their country well, there was a major problem.

During their college days, they converted to Communism and met a man named Arnold Deutsch. Deutsch was no innocent bystander roaming the halls of Cambridge University. He worked for the KGB as a Soviet intelligence officer. Deutsch recruited these five British boys, disenfranchised with their own political system, to become moles in the British government on behalf of the operations of Moscow, and they became known as the Cambridge Five, arguably the greatest spy ring the West has ever seen. These five men shared loads of damaging information that served to hurt the people of their own country.

Can you imagine the feeling of the British people when they discovered these great acts of espionage? It’s one thing when you face an enemy from the outside. It’s another when the enemy is within. Sadly, we see this in the church today. Titus 1:10-16 is going to teach us that false teachers are deceptive and dangerous, not just on the outside, but especially on the inside.

**The Point:. Be sound in the faith by recognizing and rebuking false teachers.**

Trans: I want to give us three encouragements that will help us deal with false teaching and push us toward godliness. #1....

**I. Recognize how false teachers deviate from the gospel (1:10-12)**

Paul has a “zero-tolerance” policy for any teaching that deviates from the gospel in the church. When it comes to false teachers, Paul wasn’t down for three strikes. One strike and you’re out.

- This section flows out of Paul’s instruction on appointing qualified leaders in the church. He ends the qualifications for pastors in the church by saying in verse 9: “He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.”
- That launches into verse ten where Paul continues his thought: “For there are many...” False teaching is prevalent. You don’t have to look far. Just look at the world around us, We have some of the most prestigious universities in the world who probably carry more heretical teachers than TBN (minor apologies to MIT, Harvard & Tufts but yes, I’m definitely talking about them). But it’s not just the world, it’s religious circles, and the greatest concern of the hour was Paul’s greatest concern: false teachers in the church.
- It’s one thing to hear heresy outside of the church. It’s a whole different conversation when the gangrene is spread from within.
- What are these false teachers like? Paul gives us five characteristics to help us recognize false teachers. It was true 2,000 years ago in Crete, and many of these characteristics are true of false teachers today:
  - **Insubordinate**... This was their chief offense for two reasons. Most importantly, they rejected the authoritative teaching handed down by the apostles and contained in God’s Word. They were deviating from “the faith that was once for all delivered to the saint.” They were intentionally upsetting the church.
    - Secondly, they knew better. They had been taught the faith “once for all handed down to the saints” and rebelled anyway.
    - This is not saying something accidentally. Or not articulating yourself well and coming back and saying, “I blew that. I didn’t really mean that. That wasn’t consistent with what I believe or what the Bible says.”

- **Empty Talkers...** These teachers were fluent in their speech. They could draw and crowd and impress, but for all of their talk, there was nothing profitable. These teachers could talk a good game. They were big on talk, small on substance.
- **Deceivers...** By crafty and subtle speech, they draw people away from the wise foundation of God's Word through deception. They make it their false gospel sound so much like the real gospel particularly to the untrained and theologically immature in the church. Paul saw this happen over and over again. To the church in Corinth, he wrote: **"For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough."** (2 Corinthians 11:2-4)
- **Destructive...** these teachers were coming in and upsetting whole families with their teaching
- **Greedy (Gold-diggahs if you will)...** v. 11 says, "They are after shameful gain." Rather than filling people's hearts with God's transforming truth, they wanted to fill their wallets/bank accounts. Their motives were materialistic.

So what exactly were they teaching?

- It seems these men were clinging to certain practices or even twisting aspects of Judaism and trying to add them to the gospel. We get this from our passage where Paul says, "especially of the circumcision party"
- Verse 14 says they "devoting themselves to Jewish myths (possibly a reference to \_\_\_ the genealogies of the OT), and that they devoted themselves "to the commands of people who turn away from the truth." We only need to turn back to the gospels to see the righteous indignation and rebuke of those who taught the commandments of men while setting aside the commands of God.
- But let's not miss that Paul describes them as the "circumcision party." They could have perpetuated the same false teaching as those found in Galatia who said, "Jesus is really not enough. You need to keep these ceremonial laws and be circumcised in order to really be accepted and approved by God." When we add anything or take anything away from the gospel, we've lost the gospel!

Syncretism

- God always had harsh words and consequences for his people when they practiced syncretism. Explain. (e.g., Golden calf. Galatians.) This is why throughout the Scripture we find God prohibiting intermarriage, not between ethnicities, but between people of different religious devotion. As a pastoral note, if you are unmarried, the clear command and expectation of Scripture is that you would one day marry someone who shares the same faith commitment to Christ.
  - These men were undercutting and denying the sufficiency of the work of Christ in the gospel.
  - In essence, "These men came along and said, 'If you really want to be a Christian, if you really want to be holy, if you really want to be what God intends you to be, then you need to believe these myths, and you need to obey these commands, even though God didn't command them in the Scripture.'" (Duncan)
    - Today, you need to keep this set of religious rules, regulations, sacraments, in order to be accepted by God.
    - [The sacramental theology of Catholicism adds to the gospel. Many protestants add to the gospel, and many others take away from the gospel as well.]
  - There are so many false teachers in the "church" today. Most of the preachers (men and women) preach what is known as the health and wealth gospel, which is no gospel at all. It goes something like this... Have enough faith.. Sow your seed and God will give it back hundred fold. Sow a dime, reap a thousand. Sow a hundred dollars, reap a million. All of this while this tv evangelists fly off in their private jets and roll away in their Beamers and Rolls Royce. ---
- In verse 12 Paul says, " You should not be surprised by the actions of these deceptive, deceitful, destructive false teachers." Why? Paul says that this is the kind of immoral culture that has been present in Crete for generations. Check v. 12: "As one of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, said..."
- Most biblical scholars believe Paul is quoting Epimenides, a 6<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. who was a famed Cretan poet, prophet and religious reformer.
- As a side note, let me say, we have to know the culture to engage the culture. Sometimes it's difficult to prioritize keeping up with the news and being well read. Just last week in NOLA, I got to hang out with one of my best childhood friends... We should use every method to teach biblical truth to combat false teaching.

So, #1, Recognize how false teachers deviate from the gospel of Jesus Christ. #2...

## II. Rebuke false teachers for the advance of the gospel (1:11, 13-14).

Paul's description leaves us with no room to doubt that these false teachers present a danger to the church that cannot be ignored. Thus, he issues a two-fold action that should take place in light of the rampant distortion of the cross of Christ.

### Two-fold Action

#### *They must be silenced.*

- *Silenced* - "to close the mouth by means of a muzzle or gag"
- How do we do this?
  - Refuse to let them speak in the church.
  - Refute their teaching through sound biblical teaching and apologetics.

#### *They must be rebuked.*

- There is a time to be patient, put your arm around someone and softly bring correction to their lives. There are other times when we need to be blunt and speak with clear conviction and urgency. Paul says, "Rebuke them sharply." Now, is this done in a mean-spirited way? This all seems so harsh, so in your face.

**Pic:** This might scare some of you. What if you're in a Community Group (& we hope you are!) this week and you say something that is not consistent with biblical truth and you inadvertently give some false teaching. The false teaching police is not going to sound the alarm, get up in your grill (that would be your face), cry wolf, and rebuke you in front of everyone.

Serious problems need to be handled with seriousness. This type of spiritual deception and must be handled with swift urgency, but at the same time the purpose is one motivated by love. This two-fold action of silencing and rebuking false teachers (and those influenced by them) is motivated by love with a two-fold purpose. T

### Two-fold Purpose

#### **Protect the Flock! (see Wittmer)**

- We don't have a word to give you beyond what God has given...
- Our job is to be subordinate (to line up under) to the word of God. We are to keep in step with the faith once for all delivered to the saints. & we must contend for it! This is what Jude says: "**Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.**" (Jude 1:3 ESV)
- We protect the pulpit. We listen. We listen to one another. If anything erroneous is taught at RHC, we will come back and clarify. We will give false teachers the bizzoot (in Jesus' name).
- Furthermore, our pastors will be theologically trained and proficient (doesn't mean everyone has to have an M.Div or Ph.D. in theology)
- One final way we do this is by seeking to teach the truth week in and week out. We try to see doctrinal and cultural dangers and speak a clear word on what the Bible says about those issues whether it be the idols materialism, sex, pluralism, you fill in the blank.

Fathers, protect your families. Fathers and mothers, protect your children. Friends, protect your friends when they get entangled in false teaching. In doing so, you will follow the example of Jesus.

- Pic: Watch out for the leaven of the Pharisees (Mt. 16:5; Luke 12). We rebuke false teachers and silence false teaching to protect the flock. The second purpose is to...

#### **Bring all to Sound Faith!**

- Listen, we don't rebuke and correct and teach to divide, but to unify. We are not trying to turn people away from the church; we are trying to teach people the faith once for all delivered to the saints so that they might be sound in the faith.
- Look at verse 13 again: "Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith."
- This is the goal! This is the goal, even for those who intentionally deceive the church. We want to bring everyone to the place where they are sound in the faith.

- The word sound here refers to that which is healthy.
- There is one message here at RHC. The work of Christ is enough. The grace of Christ is enough.
- Get this right, and we'll start nailing our third encouragement.

### III. Reveal a transformed heart by living a transformed life (1:15-16).

You say, "That sounds deep." The Word is deep. **Verse 15:** "To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their minds and consciences are defiled."

- **This pithy saying reads like a proverb.** John MacArthur helps explain it. He says, "When a person is pure in heart and mind, his perspectives on all things are pure, and that inner purity produces outer purity" (p.65). Tragically the opposite is also true. When a person is corrupt and impure in heart and mind, his perspective on all things are corrupt and impure, and that inner impurity produces outer impurity.
- Pursue purity. Notice that the word pure is used three times in verse 15. We should pursue purity from a pure heart, a heart changed by the grace of God. When we live a godly and pure life, we reflect the grace we have received and we honor the God who saved us.
- How can we keep our way pure? Simple. Live according to this Word. Our problem is that we often don't want and choose not to live according to God's Word. Thus, we are in constant need of grace. Through prayer and depending on the Spirit to be at work in us giving us his strength to live each day for God.
- Result... **"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God." (Matthew 5:8)**
- Eschatological ring, yes. but more than that.... See God daily... clearly...
- "But to the defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure." Paul is referring to defiled in the moral and religious sense.

What's this have to do with false teaching and sound doctrine?

- Sound doctrine is how we come to a knowledge of the truth which transforms our heart. Sound doctrine is what pushes us forward to live a transformed life.
- True belief brings true transformation. A transformed heart leads to a transformed life. (This happens from the inside-out.)
- The true reception of sound doctrine will lead to a changed life.
- Consider from a salvific angle and sanctifying angle.
  - Which God are you believing in? The God who would never allow you to suffer or lose your job, or be poor? That God does not exist! That is gospel of the health and wealth variety, which is no gospel at all!

Many people say they're in. Many people profess to know God, profess to be a Christian, when in reality, they are not. There are many false professors in the church.

- The irony is that they professed to know God, have a path of obedience, lead to fruitful living...but Paul says these people were detestable, disobedient, and unfit for any good work.
- Once again we see the connection between good doctrine and good deeds. They profess to know God. They think they are good with the Almighty. They assume that everything is cool between them and their Maker, but there was a serious problem. They did not really know God and their lives proved it!

#### Conclusion:

- How many would profess to know God.... ?? Matthew 7...
- **"And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." (John 17:3)**
- There is a world of difference, an eternity of difference between knowing about God or thinking you know God and actually knowing God.
- D. White Story... I met with a friend earlier this week... (I don't have an answer..."