

Pure Church: Pure Doctrine

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Preacher: Jonny Grant

[0 : 00] Our reading this morning is from Titus chapter 1 and that's on page 1198 of the Red Church Bibles. That's page 1198, Titus chapter 1, beginning at verse 5.

The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town as I directed you. An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless, not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain.

Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group. They must be silenced because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach, and that's for the sake of dishonest gain.

[1 : 28] Even one of their own prophets has said, Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons. This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply so that they will be sound in the faith and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth.

To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him.

They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good. Thanks very much, Chris.

Well, keep your Bibles open in Titus. Kayla's going to pass around some pens on the back of the new sheet.

You can take notes if anybody would like to. You can just grab a pen there. This is a series that we're looking at together from Titus. And you may be wondering, I thought this morning was about a baptism.

[2 : 51] What has what we've just read got to do with baptism? Well, pay attention and you'll find out. It's all very good. We're going to be focusing this morning primarily at verses 10 through to 16 of Titus.

Thanks very much, Kayla. Well, before we look at it, let's pray and ask for God's help as we look at this together.

Our Father God, we thank you so much for your word, for the Bible. Thank you for its truth.

Thank you that we can trust it because they are words that come from you. But yet we need to understand these words and therefore we ask for the power and the help of your Holy Spirit.

Not just to give us intellectual understanding, but heart understanding. That the words that we look at would change us and transform us and bring about the kind of life that you so desire in all people.

[4 : 24] So please help us now as we read and study together. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, do you believe everything you read and are told?

Do you believe everything you read and are told? I received this email on Friday. Listen to this. I am very happy to inform you about my success in getting that money under the cooperation of a new partner from Paraguay.

Now I want you to contact my account officer with the information stated below. Arrange with him how the total sum of five million dollars will reach you safely, which I have already kept for you.

Thank you for all the past efforts and attempts to assist me in this matter. Victor. Well, I don't know any Victor. You see, not everything we read or hear is true.

So let me ask us this question. How do you know if everything that I preach on a Sunday morning is true? Maybe everything that I say is actually all lies and that I've been cleverly deceiving you with ideas and arguments.

[5 : 52] Could be true. Megan is going to be baptized later. How does Megan know that all she has been told and now believes in is true?

Perhaps Megan is just joining some weird cult and it's all a cunning plan to get some of her money. Don't tell her. Shh. You see, not everything we hear is true.

So it's of critical importance to know that what we hear and believe is what we're going to call pure doctrine. We need to know, is it true or is it false?

So we're going to look at three things to show us how important it is to have pure doctrine. Why we need pure doctrine.

How to identify pure doctrine. And what difference pure doctrine makes. So why we need it. How we can identify it. And what difference it's going to make.

[7 : 03] So the first one. Why we need pure doctrine. Well, the answer is given to us in verse 10. Let's read it there in verse 10.

The reason why we need pure doctrine. Because there are many rebellious people. Mere talkers and deceivers. Especially those of the circumcision group.

That were those from a Jewish background. They must be silenced. Because they are ruining whole households. Whole church families. By their teachings.

Or by teaching things they ought not to teach. You see, impure doctrine or false teaching is not harmless.

It's very dangerous. Their teaching, we are told in verse 11. Is ruining whole households. Literally disrupting and breaking up these small house churches.

[8 : 08] Rather than leading people to the truth. And giving them the assurance of eternal life in Christ. They are taking people away from the truth.

Which leads to an empty life. Now we all need to listen very carefully to what we hear. Just because we're in a church gathering this morning.

And just because I'm teaching this morning. Doesn't mean to say that everything you hear is true. I hope it is. But we've got to check. Because look at verse 10.

The people that are being described here in verse 10. Are those who are within the church. They haven't come from outside. They're actually in the church.

They are described as mere talkers. Hot air bags. Full of gas. Empty. Meaningless promises.

[9 : 11] That they give out to people. In fact, as we read on in verse 10. They are deceivers. They take you away from what is good and pure.

And right. And lead you down a dodgy path. In fact, when we dig a little bit deeper. We discover that they're actually in it.

For a very selfish motive. Look at the very end of verse 11. They teach things they ought not to teach. And that for the sake of dishonest gain.

They're out to make a quick buck. Or get a bit of money out of you. For those who will listen to their deceptive teaching. I think we've all seen them on television.

Or perhaps even witnessed or heard them ourselves. Give to Jesus right now. Sow a seed of 100 euro. Give it to this ministry. Or give it to this pastor.

[10 : 12] And the Lord is going to return many, many blessings upon you. Perhaps even through your giving. They will promise you healing of cancer.

And healing of all kinds of things. Just if you do these simple things. All out to make a quick buck from their deceptive teaching.

Now I think we're beginning to understand how important it is for Megan and for all of us. To know that what we listen to and what we believe is actually true.

That's why in this letter to Titus. Who is telling us that there must be leaders who will teach pure doctrine.

Look at verse 9. Titus. He's been sent to these churches. And he's told there in verse 9. That he must hold firmly. To the trustworthy message.

[11 : 12] As it has been taught. So that he can encourage others by sound or pure doctrine. And refute those who oppose it. In fact, verse 11 tells us he must silence those who are teaching wrong things.

He must stop them from spreading their harmful teaching. Or verse 13. The end of verse 13. He is to rebuke them sharply. So that they will be sound in the faith.

Confront them and correct them. So that they will teach and believe what is pure. So all of a sudden it's become quite an urgent matter, hasn't it?

Why do we need pure doctrine? Well, because it's going to protect us from going astray. And to protect us from harmful and dangerous teachings.

So that's the first part. The second part is this. How can we actually identify pure doctrine?

[12:21] It's well for you, Johnny, to be saying, Listen to my teaching. I'm telling you what's true. Well, how do you know if I'm telling you is... How do you know what I'm saying is true?

And that the person over there is saying something false. I could be a false teacher. How are you going to know? Well, there are three simple tests to apply to identify pure doctrine.

The first one is this. We need to check out the source of the message. Look at how these false teachers are described. Again, look at verse 10.

The first phrase he uses there are they are rebellious people. Well, what does that mean? To be rebellious. Well, they are those...

Look at the end of verse 14. The last little phrase there. They are those who reject the truth. They rebel against the authority of truth.

[13:25] They do not submit to the truth. But where does this truth come from that they are rejecting? Where's the source of this truth?

How can we actually check it out? Well, look at chapter 1, verse 2. Right at the very beginning, he set this out so that we are absolutely clear as to the source of the truth.

He talks about this truth. He explains it like this, verse 2. A faith and knowledge which is resting on the hope of eternal life which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time.

So this truth comes from God. And at his appointed season, he brought his word to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God, our Saviour.

You see, the source of this truth originates not with a person, but if we keep going back, it originates with God and his spoken word to us.

[14:37] So the way Titus was to know if this doctrine was pure or impure was to check it against the source, the truth of God's word.

And we have this same word written down for us now. We're reading part of this word right now, this letter of Titus, so we can do our own checking. So, how does Megan know what she has been taught is true?

Well, listen to her own story. These are her own words which are written in that little flyer. Listen to these words.

Megan says, I began regularly attending a church as a young child. Thankfully, this was a Bible-believing church. And the Lord began using my experiences at Sunday school to teach me about himself.

Well, how did she know if that was true? Well, I received a Bible of my own and began reading it. The Lord was teaching and leading me through my time spent with an aunt and uncle who were both Christians.

[15:48] How do we know they were saying the truth? Well, during one summer spent with them when I was 12, my aunt had been taking time to read through the scriptures with me.

Megan was simply learning the truth from the source. And what about this notion of being baptized? Where did that come from? Well, again, listen to what Megan says.

As I read through scripture, it became clear that baptism is a sign of salvation and it's something all believers are called to do.

Everything that Megan believes and follows is from the source of God's word. It's not my word. It's not anybody else's word. It's the truth of God's word.

Any other message is man-made. It's empty. And it cannot be trusted. So we check the source. The second check is this. Check out the heart of the message.

[16:47] We're told what was central to their teaching. Look at verse 13. We'll pick it up just into verse 13.

It says, Therefore, rebuke them sharply so that they will be sound in the faith and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth.

So this is a bit confusing. They were teaching Jewish myths and man-made commands. Well, what's a Jewish myth and what's a man-made command? Well, you know what? I don't know because it actually doesn't tell us precisely what it is. But we are given a hint. So if you turn back a few pages to 1 Timothy. So keep your finger in Titus and go back and you'll see 2 Timothy. Go back another page. 1 Timothy. And we want to go to 1 Timothy chapter 1. [17:46] 1 Timothy chapter 1 and verse 3. So Paul, the same author, is writing similar things to Timothy.

Chapter 1 verse 3. So he says to Timothy, As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false or impure doctrines any longer, nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies.

These endless genealogies were kind of like being able to tie yourself into a particular line and if you could tie yourself to a particular people group or a line, well then that would make you better than other people.

These promote controversies rather than God's work which is by faith. You see, God's work here is the work of salvation.

It's the offer of eternal life which is received, as we see in verse 4, by faith. In other words, the way to receive new and eternal life is by faith in what Jesus has done.

[19:03] But these false teachers were teaching a myth. They were saying that salvation could be achieved by following man-made commands, by identifying yourself with these endless genealogies, saying that you belong to a certain people group or a list of people and if you were kind of in that bunch, then you were okay.

This is impure doctrine. And there are many similar impure doctrines that get floated around today to say this is how you can be right with God.

Let me tell you one. There's a myth today that the act of baptism will save you. That if you are baptised, sprinkled or dunked as an infant or as an adult, that somehow that very act is going to make you right before God.

Well, the Bible is very clear to say that baptism will not save you. No work or effort on our part will save us. It's a myth. It's empty.

It's hollow. It's not true. It's only God who can make us right. Go back to Titus with me and look at Titus chapter 3 verse 4 and we'll see that it is simply through what God has done for us.

[20:32] Not through any myth or not through any man-made commands. Titus chapter 3 verse 4 Listen to how Megan puts it.

Again, this is taken directly from her words. We talked about how all people have sinned and fallen short of God's glory and are in need of Jesus Christ, the perfect Saviour.

I learned of Christ's work on the cross and how he lived a sinless life, was crucified and rose again. He suffered the punishment that we deserve so that those who believe are saved from death and separation from God and given the gift of eternal life with the Lord.

Upon hearing the message of the Gospel, I became convicted of my own weakness and need for Christ. I turned to him asking for forgiveness of my sins and trusted in Jesus Christ.

The heart of the message is all about a person, Jesus Christ. If we are hearing other things, then it's only going to lead us astray. So that's the second test.

[21:58] Check out the heart of the message. The third test is this. Check out the effect of the message. Because the proof is if this message is true, it will be seen in the transformation of a person's life.

If the message is true, it will be seen in the transformation of a person's life. Look how these false teachers are described in verse 16 of chapter 1.

Look carefully. Chapter 1, verse 16. They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient, and unfit for doing anything good.

You see, anybody can say, oh, I believe. I can stand before you right now and say, I believe in God. I have the truth. Listen to me. Well, the real test is not only to listen to their words and to check it out with Scripture and to check it out with what it's actually saying, but we must also look at the life of the people.

[23:18] Look what it says in verse 16. They claim to know God, but their actions deny him. So someone who claims to have the truth, but then their life is marked by a quick temper or by lies and

greed or drunkenness, well, it's evidence that they are teaching or believing a false message.

On the other hand, if we believe what is true, then our life will be marked by all kinds of good things. Hospitality, a self-controlled life, upright, holy, and disciplined.

So, if you want to know if what Megan believes is true, look at her life. Listen to how Megan speaks to other people. Is it gentle or is it harsh? Watch how Megan behaves in public. Is she other-centered or is she self-centered?

Well, I have watched and I have listened and I'm sure many of you have done exactly the same. And I can say there is no doubt that what Megan believes is true because her life shows it.

[24 : 44] It's a transformed life. So, three very simple tests to identify pure doctrine. Check the source, check out the heart, and check out the effect of the message.

The last thing that we're going to look at is simply this. It's all great, pure doctrine, wonderful, but what difference is it actually going to make to my life? Well, it does this to us.

It makes us pure before God. Look at verse 15. We haven't forgotten 15, so here we are. Let's read it. To the pure, all things are pure.

But to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. You see, to be pure in this context is to be forgiven of all of our sin, to be washed of all our guilt and cleansed from all of our shame.

Those who have heard pure doctrine, those who have heard the trustworthy message about Jesus Christ and have trusted in him, are now treated by God as if you are pure.

[25 : 55] As God now looks at Megan, he sees a pure life because he sees Christ in her. You see, pure doctrine, the truth about Jesus, is like a hot shower after you've been working in a muddy garden.

It cleans you. And what this truth about God's word as we trust in Jesus, it cleans us not just on the outside, it cleans us deep inside, a real deep inside cleansing.

And baptism, as we'll see in just a minute, is a picture of that. The water that's there, well, that isn't going to make Megan pure or anybody else pure.

The water isn't going to deal with her guilt or her shame. It's trust in Jesus Christ. going down into the water is saying that Jesus has died for my sin.

He's taken the blame for all the wrong things that I've done. Coming up out of the water, and we always make sure this happens, otherwise it would be disastrous, is to say, yes, this is a new life that Megan now has through her trust in Jesus.

[27 : 10] This is what makes us pure in God's sight. to be treated by God as he treats his own son.

Incredible. That's what this teaching will do for us. But it's much more than that. Look at the rest of verse 15. To the pure, all things are pure.

It's telling us that we now live a completely different way. We now see that all that God has given to us is something pure and beautiful. The relationships that we have and enjoy, our families, our work, our interests, are no longer used and abused in an impure way to try and get out of them things for ourselves.

Instead, they've now become pure to us. Something beautiful. They are gifts that we receive from God with thanksgiving, and they are gifts to be enjoyed and celebrated.

Everything becomes pure to those who have been made pure. Our whole life is radically changed. But, look at verse 15.

[28 : 26] To those who are corrupted, to those who have been believing an impure doctrine or following corrupt teaching, and do not believe nothing is pure.

In fact, their minds and consciences have been corrupted. Every good gift that God has given to us is just simply ruined and destroyed because we're just looking to it and we try and take from it something that only God can give us, which is a pure life.

impure doctrine will ruin you and destroy you. Pure doctrine, the teaching about Jesus Christ, makes all the difference.

It makes you pure, treated as pure, and lets you live a life of purity. So, let me ask this question in closing.

What are we listening to? What are we hearing? What are we actually believing in and trusting in?

[29 : 42] Because only pure doctrine, the trustworthy message of Jesus Christ, will save you and change your life.

that's what Megan has done. Trusted in the pure doctrine, the trustworthy message of Jesus Christ, her life has been saved and her life is being changed.

That's not only true of Megan, it can be true for every one of us as well. What do we listen to and what do we believe in?

let's pray together. Father, thank you that you have given us your word, the truth.

We thank you that it is not a cold word, but it is a truth about your son, the Lord Jesus, who has done so much for us. thank you for the story, for the testimony of Megan.

[30 : 55] Thank you for the work that you've done in her life. We pray that you would go on changing her to be more like you every day, always trusting in the Saviour, Jesus Christ.

And we pray for us all that in all times and all occasions we would listen carefully to what we believe, that we would trust you in all circumstances, and that we would know a life being changed day by day.

We pray that you will help us for the rest of our time together as we share over tea and coffee and chat, that it would be an encouragement to us all. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. Well, we're going to sing this song which has been chosen by Megan. Immediately after the song, just remain seated where you are.