

Silence the Wrong Men! Reprove God's People!

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 21 November 2021

Preacher: Jim Masters

[0 : 00] Please take your Bibles and turn to the book of Titus. If you hit Philemon, Hebrews, or James, you've gone too far. 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and then Titus.

A small little book of Titus, three chapters. If you need a Bible, there's a Bible in the chair in front of you, a black Bible. Go to the back, and they renumber the New Testament and find page 167.

Page 167, Titus chapter 1. Titus chapter 1. This morning we're studying Titus 1, 10 through 16. Again, as I said, we're doing Titus.

This is gonna take us to the end of the year, and that includes Christmas, a Christmas message. Oh, Riley, thanks, man. Excuse me. That'll include the Christmas message, which I think will be perfect, because we'll do, if my memory serves me correct, 3, 1 through 7, which is perfect, verse 4, but when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us.

I mean, what's a better Christmas message than that? Right? I mean, that's perfect. I'm like, oh, that worked out good. So, and that's the 19th. I think it's December 19th. So anyways, today, though, Titus 1, 10 through 16.

[1 : 23] Titus 1, 10 through 16. I'm gonna read, and then we'll jump in. For there are many rebellious men, fluff talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision.

It is necessary to silence them because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not because of shameful gain.

One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, the cretins are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons. Verse 13. This testimony is true.

For this cause, reprove them severely that they may be sound in the faith, not paying attention to Jewish myths and commands of men, men who turn away from the truth.

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.

[2 : 23] They profess to know God, but by deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.

You see it sometimes in movies and in books. You know, it's the villain who starts that machine or that event and the people say, we need to shut this down and they're saying, oh no, it's too late, we can't, but then the hero comes to rescue everybody, she or he, they come, they save the day, right?

Because it's that hero who shuts that thing down ultimately, completely, totally. And that's what I thought of when we looked at this passage.

That's what I've been thinking of this week as we dive into chapter 1, verses 10 through 16. Shut this down. Paul was saying to Titus, stop this right now.

Or to put it another way, silence the wrong men, reprove God's people. Silence the wrong men, reprove God's people.

[3 : 43] Last week we looked at how he was supposed to choose the right men. Chapter 1, verses 5 through 9. Today he's saying, silence the wrong men, choose the right guys, silence the wrong guys, but also reprove God's people.

Another way you can say it, beware of the dangers of false teaching and false teachers. I'm reading this book called Addictions, A Banquet in the Grave, which I highly recommend to you, to anybody, to any Christian.

It will be good for you to read. It's by Edward Welch, and he says this in chapter 2 of his book, Bad Theology Always Yields Bad Fruit. That is so true.

That's exactly what the book of Titus is about. Bad theology always produces bad fruit. Beware of the dangers of false teaching.

Beware of the dangers of false teachers. I took that phrase by Welch, and I put it in a positive spin. I put it like this.

[4 : 56] Good, sound, practical theology always yields good fruit. Good, sound, practical. Don't just theologize stuff.

Don't just get knowledge through the theology. It's good, sound, practical theology. It always yields good fruit. That's a positive spin on that.

Get Christians away from these clowns whose lives undemonstrated the truth. I almost thought about making it that title. Undemonstrating the truth.

Here we're supposed to demonstrate the truth. These guys are undemonstrating the truth. They were pulling believers away from sound doctrine. And Paul's like, stop them, stop them. Titus, do this.

Not only should he choose the right men to lead God's people in godliness and holiness and sound living, demonstrating the truth, Titus was to silence false teachers and their teaching and reprove Christians.

[6 : 03] That's what he was called to do. What's the biggest reason they needed elders? Right here. Many false teachers need to be silenced. Christians need to be reprov'd.

Apparently there were quite a few demonstrating immoral attitudes, immoral actions. And it was so bad, it was devastating families as they erroneously taught with a motivation for some bling bling.

They professed to know God, but their actions spoke louder than their words. So, Paul's saying, Titus, you gotta move.

They had to be silenced because they were living up to the immoral Cretan name and he needed to call God's people to run away from these false teachers and their practices.

They have turned away from the truth. So God's people must be protected from them. Remember, this short little letter from Paul to Titus, he was calling Titus to remind believers and to pick these elders our orthopraxy is an outflow of our orthodoxy or, as we said before, right thinking leads, excuse me, flows from right, excuse me, right living flows from right thinking.

[7 : 27] This is what the letter was about. This is the purpose. Redemption leads to sanctification. God saves us so that he may change us who belong to him and demonstrate his work, his grace at work in our lives to demonstrate the truth at work in our lives.

We've been redeemed from lawless deeds so that we be zealous for good deeds. Sound doctrine is the basis for sound living. And that, the church and creed, it was disorganized.

It was leaderless. It was prone to sinful behavior, prone to sinful indifference. Titus needed to appoint doctrinally and morally sound elders and insist on sound doctrine amongst the believers and godly conduct amongst the believers.

Remember, Christian conduct is always based on sound Christian doctrine. You know, it's quite striking before we jump in verses 10 through 16.

It's striking how similar this section is to 1 Timothy 1 verses 3 through 11. Lots of similarities and even chapter 4 of 1 Timothy verses 1 through 3.

[8 : 41] Apparently, these false teachers were not just in Ephesus, but they were in Crete as well. So Titus was called by Paul to come against him with Paul's authority.

It is so vital for us, it is so vital that we have a right understanding of sound Christian doctrine else we will fall into false teaching and potential sinful living displayed by a lifestyle of sin.

We here at Cottonwood Bible Church, we as a church should hold to this sound doctrine, hold to this truth, hold to the words of the faith. It's so vital.

We must cling to the gospel and all the tenets that flow out from the gospel. So, reprove Christians, but silence the wrong men.

And he has to silence them because notice first the character of these wrong men. Verse 10, verse 16, verse 10, look, he says, for there are many rebellious men.

[9 : 51] For, elders, they reprove these guys. This is why they needed to come. They contradicted the teaching as given by the apostles and Christ himself. What were they like?

They were rebellious. In other words, they refused to subordinate themselves to any kind of authority. They were unwilling to subject themselves to God's word.

Bring up disobedience. So, they refused to subordinate themselves to any kind of authority. Especially Paul.

Forget Paul. What does he know? Their talk was full of air. Fluff talk. No value, he says. Empty talkers and deceivers.

Only impressive speech and they were con men. They were good at misleading people. Deceiving people. This is who they were.

[10 : 54] These are the type of guys they were. This was their character. And notice he says in verse 10 especially those of the circumcision. Apparently they were or had been Christians and they were Jewish Christians.

Most were from this group. Not all, but most. This was their character. It depicted the kind of men they truly were. Notice he does this again at the end of this section.

Verse 16. They professed to know God but by deeds they deny. They said one thing but they did something else.

They declared publicly they knew God. But their deeds were the means by which it was truly known.

They did not know him but actually denied him. Why? Because bad theology always yields bad fruit. One writer says this, quote, moral quality of life is the determinative test of religious profession.

[12 : 07] End quote. Especially for us as Christians. We need God's grace to help us to demonstrate the truth. That God's grace will work in our hearts to change us and keep changing us.

He'll bring that up later. In chapter 2 he says. And then notice how he continues to describe these guys. They professed with their mouths but their actions spoke louder than words.

Here's their real character. Notice he says, verse 16, being detestable or abominable. Their lives caused horror.

Like a horror film. That's what it was like. And then notice he says and disobedient. Once again, remember he talked about that rebellious.

He said that in verse 10. They're disobedient. They were not subordinate to God's word which would disqualify them. That's the idea of worthless.

[13 : 08] In the end they were worthless. They were like fool's gold. Mining for that fool's gold. And there it is and yet it's worth nothing. They did not stand up to the test.

Their actions spoke louder than their words. So the actions were the test of their faithfulness. This is the character of these guys. The character of these wrong men.

So that's why Paul was telling Titus shut them down. So silence them. verse 11. Who must be silenced literally from the Greek A.

It is necessary. They must be silenced. You must shut them down Titus. Prevent them from spreading their teaching.

Paul doesn't say how to do that. He's actually going to bring that up later possibly chapter 3 9 through 11. But he's saying put an end to this.

[14 : 19] Shut this down. Why? Because they were overturning whole families. Verse 11. Because they were upsetting whole families teaching things they should not.

The idea of overturning is destroyed ruining upsetting these whole families.

Stop them because whole families are being overturned destroyed or ruined. Entire households are being swept away by these clowns.

Oh that's another I had another good point. They're swept away by these clowns because these guys were teaching things they should not.

Well like what? What were they teaching? Paul doesn't tell us. He doesn't say what they were teaching but if these guys taught similar points and similar things as those who taught in Ephesus it's quite possible that maybe they were prohibiting marriage.

[15 : 26] and calling people not to eat certain foods that's from 1 Timothy chapter 4 verses 1 through 3 that's what they were doing. That seems to be the case.

So they taught asceticism. They were prohibiting marriage. They were definitely rebelling against anything that Paul would teach them. Maybe some of those aspects of what they were teaching against just as we go into chapter 2 verses 1 through 10 think of the opposite of what Paul is going to command the people here.

What about us today? I happened to get articles from Nine Marks and there was an article by Jonathan Lehman about holding to sound doctrine.

I went, oh, what do you know? It's kind of ironic, you know? There's this concept today called deconstructing American evangelicalism.

This guy, he says this, quote, believing that white theology is normative and other theologies are contextual continues to perpetuate the racist lie that white Christianity is the center of the faith and is the standard of others' religious legitimacy.

[16 : 50] Decolonizing theology is also decolonizing epistemology. In other words, Jonathan Lehman says this, this guy is saying, white theology by presenting itself as the norm for a Christian theology effectively marginalizes the voices of women and minorities.

Worse, our doctrines uphold white male power and participates in the oppression of women and minorities. That's what's infiltrating in the churches today.

This is nonsense. This is asinine, ridiculous teaching that's hitting churches thinking that as we go into chapter 2, that's just white theology.

This is biblical theology. This is what Paul says. And so what do I do with that? I'm half Hispanic. This is what's hitting our churches so that people cave into bad theology.

No longer holding the sound biblical doctrine. Other things hitting our churches. Cheap grace. Ask Jesus into your heart and then you can go live however you want to live.

[18 : 10] Legalism. Your works add or they take away from your salvation. A lack of God's sovereignty and salvation. The list goes on.

This is what we're dealing with today within our own churches in the 21st century. And notice what Paul says about these guys. The end of verse 11, for the sake of sword of gain, because of sword of gain, what was their motivation?

This gain? What was their motivation? Money. Money. Which was totally disgraceful. Shameful. Because of disgraceful gain.

They want to do this because of shameful gain. They want it for money. They want to take advantage of people. Taking advantage of people to fill one's pocketbook nice and thick is downright demonic.

like those of the prosperity gospel. Joel Osteen, Joyce Myers, Benny Hinn, Stephen Furtick, T.D. Jakes, and the list goes on.

[19 : 20] And I named them on purpose. Because those people, if you listen to them, they're nothing but a bunch of hooligans. They teach a prosperity gospel and they should be shut down.

Silence them. Have nothing to do with that. It has nothing to do with the gospel what those guys teach. And it's not about being paid even.

That's not the point. It's not about being paid or not being paid. It's about these people were getting it by teaching error. They were blowing off Christ. They were blowing off Paul.

They were blowing off the apostles. And this is how vital it was. It's so significant about having sound theology, good sound theology which leads to good fruit.

Notice he brings up the character of Cretans in verse 12. Verse 12 he says, one of themselves, a prophet of their own said Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons.

[20 : 27] Now one of their own, the prophet, is not because Paul thought they were real prophets. He used the word from a Cretan perspective and he quotes from Epimenides of Crete, the 6th to the 5th centuries B.C.

Cretans were really bad. As a matter of fact, if you wanted to be a good liar, they would say, hey, play the Cretan. You want to be a good liar? Play the Cretan. That's what they would tell people.

So if you were a good liar, you were like, man, you're such a cool Cretan. Wow. You're a good liar. That's how they were known. Wild animals. They were brutes.

They were lazy gluttons. As a matter of fact, Cretans would applaud anyone who benefited themselves through any means necessary. If you benefit yourself through any means necessary, a Cretan would be like, good job, all right, I'm gonna go.

You took advantage of people. All right. They didn't care how it was done. So Cretans were known for their evil ways.

[21 : 32] This is why Christians should be different. Christians, we should demonstrate the truth. Which is why Paul goes into this part, so reprove believers.

Look at verse 13. This testimony is true for this cause. Reprove them severely. Now, so here's a question. Maybe you've thought of this.

Who does them refer to? When he says them, is he talking about the false teachers? Is it the false teachers to reprove?

Or Cretan believers who needed to be steered away from these false teachers? I think it's the latter. I think he's talking to Cretan believers. I don't think he's talking to reprove severely the false teachers.

I don't think he's saying that. And it could be wrong. And you could be wrong if you think otherwise. You have every right to be wrong. But this would be how Titus would encourage them in sound doctrine.

[22 : 40] And there's reasons why I think this, and you'll see, because how would they be sound in the faith? How would they not listen to these men? He brings it up in verse 13 and 14. But notice he says, reprove believers.

Why does he say to do this? Why? Because this testimony was true. Verse 13, this testimony is true for this cause. In other words, for this reason.

What's he saying? This is true. Credits are really like this. Paul was not making some racial, ethnic, white supremacy slur.

He was a Jew. He wasn't white. He was probably dark-skinned. But this testimony is true. These people truly acted like this, which gave all the more reason for God's people to demonstrate the truth through godly living.

Oh, was that a bad point? I thought it was a good point. Reprove believers. Why? Because their testimony is true.

[23 : 47] And notice he says, reprove believers so that the twofold purpose. Look at verse 13. This testimony is true for this cause. Reprove them severely. First, that they may be sound in the faith.

Reprove believers so that twofold purpose. First, reprove severely God's people after reproving the false teachers so that God's people may be sound or correct in the faith. That they may hold to the teaching of the Christian faith as given by Paul, as given by the apostles, as given by Christ himself.

And as they held the sound doctrine, there'd be sound living. Titus, reprove the believers that they may be sound in the faith.

Reprove them to stay faithful to the truth, to the faith, so that they would not end up living up to the Cretan standard of living. Call them back.

Notice the second purpose. verse 14. Not paying attention to Jewish myths and commands of men. Not paying attention or not giving heed to Jewish myths or legends and man-made commands.

[25 : 19] This should ring, bring to your minds what Paul said to Timothy in 1 Timothy 1, verse 3. 3 and 4. These Jewish myths, genealogies, this nonsense, foolish talk.

You're just talking about these things that don't mean anything. The commands of men who are possibly teaching them to be ascetic, don't eat certain foods, don't get married.

These myths and commands of men were contrary to the truth, contrary to the faith. Notice he says, commands of men who turn away from the truth. These guys are turning away from the truth.

Don't listen to them. Call the Christians, reprove them to stay faithful to the truth and not paying attention to give heed to this stuff. Don't listen to these guys.

They're turning away from the truth. These men have turned away, rejected, repudiated, repudiated the truth as taught by Paul, as taught by the apostles, as taught by Christ himself.

[26 : 29] What does he mean here by the end of verse 14 away from the truth? He means the content of Christianity. That is the absolute truth.

And the core of the Christian doctrine is the gospel. God is just. We've rebelled against him. We're sinners. We should be condemned. Jesus died and rose.

He's the God man. Repent and believe. That's the gospel. That's what's most essential. That is the heart of everything that we do, at least we should do as a church.

Are you here and not a Christian? Are you here and have not followed Jesus? Are you here, you have not become a disciple of the Lord Jesus? You should repent. You should trust Christ. That is the heart of Christianity.

It's not being a nice person. I have a conversation with somebody that says, you know, I do good things to good people. Well, isn't that Christianity? I said, that's an ethic of Christianity, but that's not the heart of Christianity. The heart of Christianity is a death and resurrection of Jesus.

[27 : 27] That's the heart of Christianity. And you trusting in him, he'll save you. That's the gospel. Are you here and do you need the gospel?

Do you need Christ? Come, he'll save you. He'll forgive you. Hold to the faith. Hold to the truth. Reprove believers to do this.

And then notice what he does here in verse 15. He presents a contrast which is important because you find out what these guys are really like and what Christians are really like. A contrast between pure versus impure.

To the pure, all things are pure. In other words, to God's people who were called to purity, all things were pure. And he's not speaking about ceremonial purity. He's not talking about that. He's talking about moral cleansing, religious type cleansing.

Remember, Christ redeems his people and purifies them for himself so they be zealous for good deeds. Chapter 2, verse 14, who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for himself of people for his own possession, zealous for good deeds.

[28 : 40] We live lives of purity. To the pure, all things are pure. We live lives of purity. He brought this up because the false teachers repudiated anything that was true purity.

Notice he says, verse 15 again, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure. It was the opposite for them.

There's no purity. Nothing was pure. Why? He says, notice they're defiled and unbelieving, but why? Their mind and their conscience were defiled. That's why they're defiled.

That's why they're unbelieving. But both their mind and their conscience are defiled.

They're defiled. They're impure. It's corrupt. And they're unbelieving. They did not truly believe in the gospel, in Christ.

[29 : 44] It's who they were in their mind, their way of thinking, their conscience, their moral compass, their moral self-consciousness.

It was also impure. They couldn't distinguish between good and evil because it begins here. It begins here inside from the mind and from the conscience.

Notice the mind. From the mind comes the conscience. From the mind comes how I live. Right thinking produces right living. They're impure because they're defiled and unbelieving.

And the reason why they're undefiled and unbelieving is because their mind and their conscience is defiled and unbelieving. It starts from the heart. And that's why Paul brings this up.

He's going to bring this up later. We need the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit so that our minds become pure and our consciences become pure and our lives demonstrate the truth zealous for good deeds.

[30 : 53] He brings it up in chapter 3. I read a few moments ago when the kindness of God or Savior chapter 3 verse 4 and love for mankind appeared he saved us not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness but according to his mercy how?

By the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit whom he poured out upon his rich people through Jesus Christ our Savior. That's how. You need a mind change.

You need a heart change. So you can see things as pure. You can see things as godly and you can live out purity and you can live out godliness.

That's what he's trying to say. So not only should he choose the right men to lead God's people and godliness and holiness and sound Christian living those who demonstrate the truth but Titus was to silence these false teachers and their teaching and reproof Christians calling us to hold to the faith.

as we go more into Titus chapter 2 over the next few weeks you'll see how sound doctrine shows itself in sound Christian living or good sound practical theology always yields good fruit.

[32 : 28] Bad theology always yields bad fruit. Would you pray with me? Would you pray our father we thank you that this did not come from ourselves it's not because we were smarter it's not because we had more money it's not because we had better IQs but it's because of your grace we pray help us as your people by your grace to hold to this grace by your grace to hold to the truth for many years you've protected us for many years you've kept us from false teaching continue that we pray help us to stay faithful may your people these members this congregation may they increase in knowledge not for the sake of knowledge but may they increase in knowledge that it may show itself in them demonstrating your truth work in them work in us that we may hold tenaciously to the truth and thank you that when we fail your grace is sufficient your grace is there and we're reminded of your love and your compassion and how you wash us and you cleanse us it's by your grace and when we sin we go to your grace it's all your grace we're so thankful may we remember that this week as we consider thanksgiving we would be thankful for your grace and thankful you've been faithful all these years to keep us as a church faithful to the truth

Father we pray that over our dead bodies false teaching will come into this church that we have such grace and yet tenaciously and firmly with kindness hold to the truth work in us we pray and as we do each week I want to encourage you just take a few moments a few moments of silence where you can fill your mind with truth fill your mind with gospel promises fill your mind with the words of the faith fill your mind with Christ Christ you've been shown Christ from the word through the preaching of the word our hearts confess

Christ Jesus you are Lord so take this time these few moments like a minute minute and a half to fill your mind with the truth and then we'll sing a couple songs we'll pray just a few moments between you and the Lord take this time now would you do that please you Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[38 : 10] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.