

The Basics of Faithful Ministry

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Date: 23 April 2023

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[0 : 00] Well, as is made clear throughout the entire letter, faithful leadership in the local church is vital to not only having but maintaining a healthy congregation.

And if you think back to the earlier studies in the letter, you'll remember that Titus was temporarily left in Crete for the purpose of setting things in order so that the churches in Crete would flourish rather than dissipate and ultimately dissolve into whatever error or maybe just extinction, that by emphasizing the right things, setting things in order structurally, doctrinally, the church would continue to grow and glorify the Lord.

And the first step in the process of doing this, as we reflect back on chapter one, is to appoint elders, elders in each congregation that would faithfully lead and teach and protect the church. Titus was to seek out men of blameless character who were committed to the gospel message, who were capable of teaching it well, and willing to confront those who contradicted.

That's really the three categories that we find repeated throughout the letter. Sprinkled throughout the letter are these instructions that promote what we might call the basics of faithful ministry.

[1 : 34] And such is our text for this morning, verses 8 through 11, really laying the groundwork. It's not everything that is involved in faithfulness and ministry, but it is not less than these things for sure.

And the fact that this text has church leaders as its primary audience, we need to remember, doesn't make it okay to disregard it if you are not in some sort of church leadership or ministry vocation or whatever it may be.

And let me give you a few reasons why you need to care about pastoral instructions in the scriptures. Okay? Just three things. There's probably more, but I typically think in threes.

And so I'm going to give you three. Here's the first reason. It's in the Bible. And that's the most important reason, isn't it? It's in the Bible. And we know that all scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for us.

That's what Paul says very plainly in 2 Timothy. All scripture is given by God and is profitable. And he goes on and describes the way that it is profitable.

[2 : 41] So that if we convince ourselves that there is a portion of scripture, no matter how intriguing it may be or not, if we convince ourselves that there is a portion of scripture that is unnecessary or useless to us, we make God a liar.

And we end up rejecting the one thing that he said in the Psalms he has exalted as equal to his own name. Now, that's not to say that all scripture is equally impactful, because it's not.

Certainly, as we come to issues specifically related to the gospel of Jesus, that impacts us in a way that reading through the genealogies of the Old Testament just simply does not. But that doesn't mean that they're not profitable.

Maybe not equally impactful, but they are equally profitable for knowing God, for knowing his plan of salvation, and for knowing his desires for his people.

And this passage is really no exception to that. It may be directed to Titus and to the elders, but it is profitable for each and every one of us. Okay, so that's the first thing. Why should we care about this text?

[3 : 50] We care first because it's in the Bible. Secondly, pastoral instruction is a means by which God builds up his people.

So think about this for just a moment. The issues of this text are not detached from God's general desires for every Christian. They're inextricably linked to it, actually.

And this is logical for us, isn't it? Titus was to preach the gospel. Why? Because the people must know the gospel. Titus was to insist on godliness.

Why? Because the people must pursue godliness in their lives. So by examining God's instructions for pastoral leadership, we find a greater understanding of God's desires, actually, for us.

Because when we come and we read this passage, we say, why is it necessary for Jared to do some of the things that he does? And when we begin to answer those questions, then we can personalize it and say, oh, I need to know the gospel.

[4 : 59] Oh, I need to live in godliness. And these instructions are important for that. Thirdly, if we don't concern ourselves with the qualities and duties of pastoral leadership, we will inevitably fail at calling qualified men to fulfill the task, right?

How many churches have you been a part of or that you have heard of that in the absence of pastoral leadership and in the search for someone who will just come and care for the congregation?

Does not think about what is necessary biblically for the man that will lead, but they look for all the wrong things. And in their sincerity of heart, they appoint men who are unqualified for the work that God has tasked for pastoral leadership.

And what is the inevitable result of that? The church fails. The church fails. It fails. Leadership's important. And we need to care about these instructions for those reasons, at least.

Well, the instruction of verses 8 through 11, really, if we think about it, is a practical outworking of the qualifications of a pastor given in chapter 1. In fact, set your eyes on chapter 1 and verse 9 and look at the similarities here.

[6 : 18] Paul says that as a part of the qualifications of a pastor, he must hold firm the trustworthy word as taught, apostolic doctrine, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and then also to rebuke those who contradict it.

Okay? That's something that must be true of a man before the church calls him to fulfill the task.

And why? Because when we get to chapter 3 and we find the specific instruction for what Titus and the other elders are supposed to do, what is it that they must do?

They must know the gospel. They must defend the gospel. They must instruct according to the gospel and to godliness and to sound doctrine. And they must rebuke those and deal with those who cause and stir up division contrary to the truth of God's word.

So this is really just a practical outworking of what should be true in the character of church leadership. And again, the passage doesn't describe everything that a pastor must be and do, but it does give us the essence of faithful ministry, to believe the gospel, preach the gospel, confront those who reject it.

And there's three basics of faithful ministry that I'd like to point out for you here in these verses as we work through it, okay? Here's the first thing. Paul says, affirm what is profitable.

[7 : 44] Affirm what is profitable. Would you look with me at verse 8? The saying is trustworthy. And I want you to insist on these things so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works.

These things are excellent and profitable for people. Now, this isn't difficult to understand, is it? It's very straightforward. It's simple. Titus was to affirm as a matter of first importance the things that are excellent and profitable.

for people. Which is the pastor's task. The pastor's task is to focus on what is good and beneficial for the people under his care.

And this concern, in contrast to the false teachers in chapter 1, is not to build a following that serves personal ambition or gain, but it is to be consumed with the care of souls in the congregation.

Do you see that? It's very simple to see. Titus, do the things that are good and profitable for the people. And of course, a sure sign of a false teacher is that their priorities are self-exalting.

[9 : 06] It's not hard to see that when you look around at maybe certain churches or certain celebrity pastors or ministers, whatever the case may be. A sure sign of false teaching is self-exalting people.

But it's also not uncommon to see pastors who are orthodox in their teaching, orthodox in their theology, at some point become consumed with self, self-consuming in their priority of ministry.

So that rather than focusing primarily on the care of the people, they use the church to build their platform. Being seduced by the false gold of ministry success and whatever it may be, it's actually quite easy to fall into that.

It's a temptation. It's a reason we pray for our pastors, right? Because it's an easy thing to fall into. It's an easy thing to desire. And without realizing it, you begin to lead and to preach and to teach and to focus on those things that serve your own ambition rather than what is profitable for the people.

And eventually these church leaders will abandon the things that are profitable in order to focus on what is profitable for them. And Paul makes it very clear here that the things that are excellent for people and why they are profitable for people are the gospel of grace.

[10 : 34] It's all founded in the gospel of grace. So first he says, Titus is to affirm the truth of the gospel. Look again at verse eight. The saying is trustworthy, he says.

Now the saying that is trustworthy is the gospel creed or hymn that we've studied in verses four through seven. So there's a flow here. That's why we read all 11 verses.

Here's the exhortation. Then he goes through this gospel creed and he says this saying, this creed, this hymn, whatever it was and however it functioned in the church, it is trustworthy. And what is it that the creed is about?

The message of God's grace. It's trustworthy. Which doesn't mean that it's merely worth considering. It is a statement that affirms its absolute truth.

The gospel is the truth of God. Preaching it must be a priority of every church leader. And it must be the central focus of everything that the church is and everything that the church does.

[11 : 42] So that pastors then in their primary responsibility is to saturate the people with the gospel, which is not the ABCs of the Christian life, as some people seem to think, but it is the A to Z of the Christian life.

It is the beginning and the end. It is everything. It is everything that is useful, not only for conversion, but as we have studied all throughout this letter, useful for sanctification, useful for glorification.

The gospel is the thing. And we must be saturated in it. Second, he says, Titus was to affirm the behaviors that naturally flow from the message of salvation.

So he says, the saying is trustworthy. The gospel is truth. This gospel of grace is the true thing. And then he immediately says, look back at verse eight. He says, and I want you to insist on these things.

Well, what is these things? Well, it includes the gospel message, but then it also includes the godly conduct that's emphasized in verses one and two. That's what begins the whole thing is godliness, holiness, Christ-likeness in the world.

[12 : 57] And these behaviors involve both actions and attitudes showing that the work of God in salvation, it penetrates the deepest recesses of our hearts. It pervades all of our being so that if we are truly saturated in the gospel of grace, we're truly saturated in the teaching of the word of God as it relates to the person and the work of Christ.

The Holy Spirit in this work of renewal pervades the deepest recesses of our hearts. It consumes our whole being so that the natural overflow of the gospel is godliness and Christ-likeness.

Do you see? Do you see? It's all connected together and it's necessary. And Paul says, preach the gospel and insist on the behaviors that accompany the gospel message that are part and parcel to the Christian life.

And we must do that. Why? Because they're excellent and profitable for people, he says. But what is it that makes them excellent and profitable? Why is it that the gospel and these behaviors are profitable?

Well, he tells us here. The purpose of insisting on these things in verse eight, keeping them before the people, is that in having the wonders of God's grace constantly in mind, believers will be concerned with displaying the kind of goodness and righteousness that shows that they have been grasped by the transformative power of God's spirit.

[14 : 31] Do you see that there? Just set your eyes. I know it's distracting this morning. Just set your eyes with me, please, on verse eight. The saying is trustworthy. I want you to insist on these things. Why?

Why? So that those who have believed in God may be careful, concerned, intent on devoting themselves to good works.

Bill Mount says, this provides yet another illustration of the dominant theme in Titus, that right theology and right practice are inextricably bound together.

An understanding of the full plan of salvation leads believers necessarily into a daily living out of their commitment to the Lord.

That's the theme of the whole book. Preach the gospel, Titus. And if you see that the behaviors have gone awry in the church, it's probably because the gospel isn't being emphasized in the right way.

[15:36] And by the way, watch out for the false teachers that are teaching something contrary to the gospel. And here's how you'll know they're doing that. It's gonna show up in their behavior. All of these things are linked together. But the order of this process cannot be lost in our understanding.

Too many people start with the good works and then they hope that their efforts will curry enough favor with God that he will find them acceptable.

That's where we get this backwards sometimes. We think that God will find me acceptable so long as I do the good works. But what Paul describes here, the order of it is the exact opposite.

You can do your best and you can try your hardest, but it will never be enough to atone for your sin. It will never be enough to bring you into a right relationship with God.

It can't because you can't. This is why Jesus comes. This is why God sends his son.

[16:38] Through his death on the cross, Jesus, who is the sinless son of God, takes the wrath of God set against sinners.

His sacrifice was a perfect atonement for sin. And it is granted eternal life and forgiveness to all who will believe and follow Christ alone.

The good works in these verses are not our efforts to earn God's favor. They are the product of knowing that in Christ, we already have God's favor.

That's the significance of the order. That's the significance of our witness so that in the way that we live our lives, we don't presume as if we are earning something from God.

We do it as an act of worship to God. And what is all of that based on? The gospel of his grace. We have to begin there. Titus was to insist on these things because this is how God's spirit does his work of regeneration and renewal.

[17:47] Notice what he says in verse A. So that all those who believe in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works.

This is a work of the spirit that he does in those who believe. These things are profitable because as we preach the gospel to ourselves day by day, God's grace remains our motivation and source for good works.

Okay, so that's the first thing. We'll move on. He is to affirm what is profitable and what's profitable, the gospel and its accompanying behaviors. Secondly, avoid what's worthless. Avoid what is worthless.

Verse nine, but avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, quarrels about the law. Why? For they are unprofitable and worthless.

So just as important as affirming what is good, a faithful pastor must recognize and avoid those things that are worthless for the church. In fact, knowing what things to avoid, meaning to shun or to turn away from, is critical to being able to focus on the gospel and its implications in life and ministry.

[19:05] You can't have one without the other, which is a reminder that there's always going to be distractions in our life. Always. There's always going to be things that pull us away from the basics of the truth of God, that pull us away from basic godliness and Christlikeness, and it's imperative that we avoid getting caught up in unprofitable speculations.

That's the genealogies. Arguments about tradition. That's quarrels about the law. And contentious battles over issues that are secondary to core biblical doctrine.

That's the dissensions, the strifes. This warning is common in the pastoral epistles. Think of 1 Timothy 1. He tells Timothy, charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith.

1 Timothy 4. Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather, train yourself for godliness. 2 Timothy 2.23. Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies.

You know that they breed what? Quarrels. Worthless ones. Foolish ones. Now, we must acknowledge here that this is not a call for us to avoid controversy.

[20 : 37] It is a call for us to avoid a certain kind of controversy. Because the fact is, not only for a pastor, but for any Christian, we must be willing to engage, engage in certain controversial issues as they relate to gospel fidelity and defending the word of God.

And to avoid controversy at all costs would necessitate failing to affirm what's good and what's profitable for the people.

The particular issues at work in Crete had to do with myths and traditions and speculations derived from Judaism. We see that in chapter one. You can go back and read that later.

But the primary reason given for avoiding such things is that they are unprofitable. They're worthless. They're not helpful.

They're not edifying. They're not actually doing anything good for the people or for the church. Are they intriguing? Maybe. Are they fun to argue and debate?

[21 : 48] Perhaps. Are they helpful? Not at all. They're not. And loved ones, this is what we must do if we're going to discern whether or not any given issue is worth our engagement.

We must determine, is this profitable or is this worthless? And you don't have to go very far to find illustrations for this.

Just yesterday, I was sitting on the couch flipping through YouTube. And in a five-minute flipping through YouTube, there's two different videos that fit this description perfectly. One was a sermon from a church I'm not familiar with, maybe a Calvary Chapel or something like that somewhere.

I can't remember exactly where it was. And the sermon was steeped in speculation relating to the book of Revelation. And the title of the sermon was about Russia invading the rest of the world.

It's just, it's unhelpful speculation. It's unhelpful. That's not helping anyone. That's hurting the cause of Christ. That's not helping it.

[22 : 56] I'll go a little bit further. Here's another video. It's a girl who has determined a secret code in the genealogies of the book of Genesis. And in discerning all the meanings of the names, if you put them in just the right order and you say just the right words and then you spin around three times and blow up in the air, all of a sudden, you have this mystical knowledge.

And that's really what, look, this stuff is everywhere. It's everywhere. Sometimes it's subtle. Which is why Paul has to warn even Titus and just remind him, don't get caught up in this stuff, Titus.

Don't get caught up in the foolishness. Don't get caught up in the speculation and the arguments over things that are just dumb and unhelpful, which any of us can be guilty of doing.

If it means standing firm on the word of God, defending the gospel of grace through Jesus alone, urging believers to live in godliness, then it's profitable and we must enter the fray.

We must. But if it's needless speculation about the nature and timing of Christ's return, then it's unhelpful. If it involves traditions and commands of men or matters of conscience that spur disunity, we must avoid it.

[24 : 17] If it leads to foolish argumentation or quibbling over non-essential issues, we must refuse to be carried away by it. If we're to be a faithful church, we must be wise about what is profitable and what is worthless and ultimately dishonoring to the Lord.

we remember, as is a common statement, the main things are the plain things and the plain things are the main things in the scripture. We need to remember that. Don't consume yourself with pet doctrines or act as if every point of disagreement is necessary to express because it's not.

Not only will you exasperate the people around you, you'll lose the profitability of the gospel because you're not avoiding the things that really must be avoided.

Third and finally, address those who cause division. Affirm what's profitable. Avoid what's worthless. Address those who cause division.

Verse 10, as for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him. Knowing that such a person is warped, sinful, sinful.

[25 : 41] He is self-condemned. This is the hardest part of the whole thing, isn't it? If you're just a normal person that doesn't particularly enjoy confrontation. There are those weird people out there, maybe you're one of them that enjoy just to fight all the time.

For most of us, this is the difficult one. You can handle preaching the truth, affirming what's right. It's not very hard for you to avoid contentious matters.

But when it comes to actually actively addressing error, it's much more difficult for us to do, isn't it? And in this final portion, Paul presents an inevitable situation and the only proper response to it.

The situation involves an individual actively causing division in the church, specifically by affirming doctrines and behaviors that are contrary to the trustworthy word.

This isn't division of personality necessarily. This is not simple things that are really inconsequential in the big picture of the health of the church. These are things that are actively dividing the church in relation to the gospel and the behaviors that flow from it that he's just discussed.

[26 : 55] And the only proper response to such a situation is to follow the biblical process of church discipline. Because it's not enough for a pastor to affirm the truth and avoid distractions.

It is basic to faithful ministry that a pastor leads the church in the critical practice of discipline when it's necessary. Because a church cannot be healthy and fruitful while tolerating individuals who trouble the people with false doctrine and sin.

Such a person must be confronted and they must be confronted for their own good. They must be confronted for the health of the church and they must be confronted for the witness of God's people to the world which in the beginning of this chapter in those first two verses is the central issue.

Is our witness to the world. I'll save a fuller discussion for church discipline for another day. You'll be grateful for that. But let me just touch on it as we consider Paul's instruction here.

There's two categories that we think of when it comes to church discipline. You don't have to remember these words but it will be helpful for you to remember the category. First is formative discipline.

[28 : 11] We would call it formative discipline. You are under formative discipline right now. It is that daily process whereby through the word, through prayer, through discipling, God shapes us and he molds us and he chisels us and he builds us up into the Christians that he would have us to be.

He makes us more and more like the person of Christ. It's not corrective in nature necessarily. It's just constantly we're learning and we're growing and we're maturing. It's formative discipline. If you remove certain elements what we might would call the ordinary means of grace even.

If you move certain elements it's going to stunt that growth. We need the formative discipline. We need preaching. You need it. Not necessarily for me. You need it. You just need it.

You need good preaching. You need discipleship. You need people around you. Iron sharpening iron. You can't live in isolation. It will stunt your growth. You need the formative discipline.

You need the ordinances. You need to witness baptism as we witnessed it last week to be reminded of the gospel. You need communion. You need to prioritize of every Sunday in the month that first Sunday must be your priority because that's the day when we gather around the table.

[29 : 23] It's formative. It's helpful to us. It's profitable for us. So that's part of it. That's not what Paul's dealing with here though. Here he's dealing with corrective discipline. And corrective discipline which is the formal process of confronting a person in error or in sin.

To modern sensibilities comes across as harsh and unkind. We're not conditioned by our culture to think that this is an appropriate thing. But the Bible's not unclear about this.

It's not unclear about it at all. And as a church we need to be careful to observe it and to remember it. Three things I want to point out to you about it that not only are true about it in this text but are true about it throughout the New Testament.

I'll make them simple for you. The first thing I want you to see the people that are to be disciplined. The people that are to be disciplined. Verse 10 As for a person who stirs up division.

A specific type of person is mentioned here. Not only holds aberrant beliefs but is deliberately troubling the congregation regarding those beliefs.

[30 : 34] That's significant to what Paul's addressing and to why he's urging this type of discipline. These people are pot stirrers. You know what I mean by that? They throw things out there just because they like to see the conflict that ensues as a result of it.

They're pot stirrers by nature. Their actions cripple the church. It leads people away from the gospel. It leads them away from holiness. And it's not just that they hold diverse views on secondary issues.

As described in chapter 1 they're insubordinate to the truth. They insist on worthless and harmful ideas. They upset entire families through their errant doctrine.

They prove themselves in verse 11 to be warped and sinful and their behavior condemns them before God and before the church. And Paul says you cannot tolerate this.

You cannot just let this go. You must deal with this in the church. Titus chapter 1 in verse 16 they profess to know God but they deny him by their works.

[31 : 41] not just the way that they live in the world but the way that they live in the church. They profess God. They profess Christ but they do not display Christ.

They are detestable Paul says. They're disobedient. They're unfit for any good work. That's strong language. So Paul's not dealing with he's not saying just nitpick people to death.

He's not saying scrutinize one another's lives and find every possible thing that you can find that's wrong with everybody in the church and if they don't listen to your opinion about it you better bring them before the church and get them out of here.

That's not what Paul's saying. He's addressing a specific type of person. We need to remember that. Two. The process of discipline. How does this process actually work?

After warning him verse 10 once and then twice have nothing more to do with him. Jesus is the one that gives these parameters. Matthew 18 If your brother sins against you go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.

[32 : 49] That's the first step. If he listens to you you've gained your brother. And what a wonderful thing that would be. Isn't that the intention of all of this? We see error in somebody whether it's doctrinal error or whether it's a particular sin and we say hey let's grab coffee this week or maybe we meet together on a different thing and you just you kind of gently spur them along and just say hey I noticed this thing or you said this the other day I think you really need to think about this I think you're in error I think you're in sin and I think nine times out of ten that's what the Lord uses to restore someone right?

That's the first step. Jesus says that's what you do and then he says though he said but if you won't listen they're unrepentant go back but this time take one or two others with you so that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.

Now why is that all about? It is not only for accountability it's to make sure that I'm not just nitpicking somebody to death right? Because that could be the case. There's a protection here right?

That there's just not somebody that's just cantankerous that's just giving everybody a hard time. So now you go with probably leaders in the church at this point you go with with a couple of others it establishes the witness there is record but then it lets the offending person know okay there's a seriousness to this because it's not just Jared who has a problem with what I'm doing there's actually significant people that I respect in the church that are actually they actually think the same thing I need to think about this something the Lord uses right?

But then Jesus says what if he doesn't listen? What if he still is unrepentant? He says we continue on in Matthew 18 if he refuses to listen to them tell it to the church.

[34 : 36] This is the point at where Paul is in his instructions to Titus you bring it to the congregation now why would you do that? Because it lets the offending party know this is serious and the whole congregation then is to woo that person persuade them in whatever way possible to repent believe alter course turn from their error and what if they don't listen to the church?

Jesus says let them be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector let them be to you as an unbeliever so that if we understand church membership the right way the way we're supposed to view that in the Bible it's not that the church declares that a person is a Christian or not a Christian that's not the authority we have that authority belongs to Christ and to Christ alone but in so far as a person makes a credible profession of faith and their life matches that profession the church says you are one of us we welcome you to the table of the Lord we welcome you in baptism we rejoice with you we will enter in this covenant relationship together church discipline then is the congregation itself looking at a person and saying we hear your profession but we can no longer in good conscience hold your profession as credible you're unrepentant you're in error you're denying the gospel therefore it will be necessary unless you repent for us to dismiss you from our fellowship not to cut them off completely so that you never see them again and you're hateful towards them no it's to just treat them that now you're an unbeliever you can't come to the table now this is for believers it's not for you to lead in the church it's not for you to teach in the church you're welcome to attend but you gotta stop with what you're doing that's the thing

Jesus is setting forth here and this is the process that Paul is instructing Titus to follow after warning them twice allowing ample time for repentance give them over to the discipline of the congregation and at that point they are to be dismissed from the church and their influence is to be removed and the elders of the church are to take the lead in this but according to Jesus it is finally the

congregation's responsibility to excommunicate someone from the fellowship that is to treat them as an unbeliever it's not my job to determine who belongs and who doesn't it's our job to do that we do that together it's our responsibility taking ownership of our own congregation okay that was longer than I anticipated so first we have the people to be disciplined we have the process of corrective discipline thirdly we have the purpose of it what is the what's the whole purpose of all of this we go back to verse 10 after warning him once and then twice what's that all about why not just say hey you're you're a reprobate you can't come here anymore the process was established by Jesus and carried out by the apostles to protect the church teach the church and then to turn the sinner from the error to the grace of God it's this process is not about judgment it's not about condemnation Christ is judge it's about restoring someone you love and striving for the purity of God's people because sin and error must be confronted but its purpose is to see the individual restored to grace and to carry out such a practice with the spirit of pride or vengeance is to sin against God and it is to risk destroying one for whom Christ died so the church must take it serious but they must also have the right intention and spirit or you shouldn't do it Galatians 6 and verse 1 brothers if anyone is caught in any transgression you who are spiritual should restore him in the spirit of gentleness humbly keeping watch of yourself lest you too are tempted to Timothy 2 and the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone able to teach patiently enduring evil so that this discipline process is a long process in many occasions patiently enduring evil correcting his opponents with gentleness

God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil after being captured by him to do his will that's the intention to restore them not to condemn them so error cannot be ignored divisive people must not be tolerated and a faithful minister in a faithful church will deal with the problems as they come now we'll finish this way why is any of this important any of this stuff in verses 8-11 even really in the chapter itself why do we care so much this isn't the edifying types of or encouraging types of text that just we leave the service and we just feel so good we learn today about what it takes to point out and enter into controversy in the church when it's necessary right that's not the kind of service that when you call your parents later today and they say how was church today you say oh man it was just you wouldn't believe how awesome it was so what's really the point of all of this the foundation of all of this the purpose of all of it the reason we care is because of the preservation and the proclamation of the true gospel if we do not care to affirm what's profitable avoid what's worthless and contend with those who would reject it we will lose the gospel we may not lose our church we may grow we may become richer as a congregation we may have more successful ministries but we'll lose the gospel we won't be healthy we won't glorify

[40 : 59] God that's the point of all of this how can we glorify God as his people well we need certain things set in order we need certain structures we need faithful leaders we need the gospel to saturate everything that we do we need to avoid the things that would distract us from that we need to contend with those who would come in and divide the church as it relates to heretical doctrine and to sinful practices why?

because we want to declare and display the message of salvation for the glory of God that's what this is ultimately about it's not just having structure for structure's sake it's about glorifying God it's about faithfulness to the truth it's about giving the gospel and displaying the gospel so that God might actually bless us and use us for his glory in this life that's what this is about that's why we care that's why we don't skip it that's why we have member meetings so that we can further progress in this caring about these things caring about the things of God and of the church and though this text may have been aimed particularly at Titus and the elders it's certainly profitable for all of us to consider there's all kinds of implications here for the congregation not the least of which is the command to believe share and defend the gospel and to live as a gospel light in the world and if our church is going to do these things it will be necessary to guard against those who reject the truth abound in unrepentant sin and stir up worthless controversy these things are fundamental to what it means to be a faithful minister they're fundamental to what it means to be a faithful healthy

God glorifying church and we need them to be