

“Refuting Those Who Contradict”  
Titus 1:9-16  
(Preached at Trinity, February 5, 2023)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **Verse 5** Paul described the mission of Titus:  
**Titus 1:5 NAU** - "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you,"
  - A. Paul left Titus in Crete to set in order the things lacking in the churches. The churches were struggling with doctrinal certainty. There were false teachers undermining the faith of many.
  - B. Their immediate need was elders or pastors who would preach and teach sound doctrine with clarity and boldness.
2. In **Verses 6-8** Paul proceeded to list the qualifications for these elders. They are consistent with the qualifications Paul wrote to Timothy in his first epistle. Of these qualifications, the gift of teaching was essential.
  - A. Paul reminded Timothy of his high calling;  
**2 Timothy 4:2 NAU** - "preach the word"
  - B. He charged Titus:  
**Titus 2:1 NAU** - "But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine."
3. This is the chief purpose of the pastoral ministry. In his letter to the Church of Ephesus Paul described the outcome of good pastoral teaching.  
**Ephesians 4:13-15 NAU** - "until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. <sup>14</sup> As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; <sup>15</sup> but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ,"
4. Pastors have a dual duty.
  - A. They must exhort Christians in sound doctrine.  
The word for “sound” is ὑγιαίνω from which we get our word hygiene. It describes the state of being healthy. Sound doctrine builds up and strengthens the church. It promotes godliness.  
**1 Timothy 6:3 NAU** - "If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness,"
  - B. Pastors must also be prepared to refute those who contradict the truth.  
The pastors of the church must stand as sentries, guarding the church against the continual onslaught of teaching that is inconsistent with sound doctrine.

- C. Paul taught this dual duty consistently—teaching truth and refuting error.  
**Titus 1:9 NAU** - "holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict."  
**Titus 2:15 NAU** - "These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you."  
 “with all authority” – When the pastor reprovess error he doesn’t need to be apologetic. He is operating within the bounds of his calling. It is his jurisdiction.
5. We must hold fast, stand firm in guarding against any attack upon the essential doctrines of the Christian faith. We must never waver on the nature of the Trinity, the nature of Christ, justification by faith alone, the substitutionary atonement, etc.  
 But there are also endless more subtle attacks.  
 There seems to be endless questions questioning the doctrines and practices of the church. Who is qualified to preach? Can women preach or fill the office of pastor? What about our worship? Does our music matter? Why not rock music in worship? Why not skits or drama? Does the Bible have anything to say about marriage, about human sexuality?
6. Christianity is a historic faith founded upon a body of doctrine. We read of the early church that they found unity in doctrine.  
**Acts 2:42 NAU** - "They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."
7. Paul stressed this body of doctrine.  
**1 Timothy 6:3-4 NAU** - "If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, <sup>4</sup> he is conceited *and* understands nothing"  
**2 Timothy 2:2 NAU** - "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."  
**Galatians 1:6-8 NAU** - "I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; <sup>7</sup> which is *really* not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. <sup>8</sup> But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!"
8. This doesn’t mean there is perfect unity and harmony of doctrine across the entire spectrum of Christianity. For example, there are those who baptize babies and those who insist that only those professing faith in Christ should be baptized. They can’t both be right. This doesn’t mean this isn’t an important doctrine. It is extremely important. We must stand dogmatically for the truth even though it may mean we will need to contend with well-meaning brothers who are teaching a contrary position. And we must be able to distinguish the essential doctrines of Biblical Christianity with those doctrines that are not of the essence of orthodoxy.
- A. Not all false teaching falls at the level of heretical teaching. Heresy is defined as any doctrine that departs from orthodoxy, from the essential doctrines of the Christian faith.

- B. Pastors must continually correct improper thinking and false conclusions about the interpretation of a text. It seldom is a matter of heresy and should be dealt with gently and patiently with love.  
**2 Thessalonians 3:14-15 NAU** - "If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame. <sup>15</sup> Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother."  
**1 Corinthians 4:14 NAU** - "I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children."
9. What do we do when we face individuals who are teaching another doctrine, a doctrine contrary to historical Biblical Christianity, heretical doctrine? Paul is saying that pastors must be equipped to refute them—to expose their false teaching.  
**Titus 1:9 NAU** - "holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict."
- A. This would be a perpetual problem as long as the Church continues, as long as time endures.
- B. Elders will always be needed to care for and protect the church.  
 Paul commanded Titus:  
**Titus 1:5 NAU** - "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you,"
10. **Verse 10** – Apparently, there were large numbers of false teachers throughout Crete. Paul says: "for there are many rebellious men." Paul described them in various ways:
- A. They were "rebellious men." They were in rebellion against the Word of God, and thus they were against God. You cannot oppose the Word of God without being in opposition against God. All false doctrine is an assault upon the character of God.
- B. They were "empty talkers and deceivers." Their words had no value for the church. Instead of edifying the church, they weakened the church. Instead of teaching truth, they were spewing lies.
- C. They were largely from the Jewish community. They were those who professed to follow Christ, while at the same time demanding obedience to the Law in order to gain approval from God. Some were teaching that in order to be saved you had to follow Christ AND be circumcised and maintain the Mosaic Law.  
 Paul corrected the Judaizers in Galatia:  
**Galatians 2:16 NAU** - "nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified."

11. **Titus 1:11 NAU** - "who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not *teach* for the sake of sordid gain."
- A. They were motivated by selfish, personal gain. By greed. The word refers to shameful, disgraceful, gain.
1. The leaders of the church, but especially office bearers, must not be greedy, covetous – what we would call “money hungry.”  
Pastors: **1 Timothy 3:3 NAU** - "free from the love of money."  
**Titus 1:7 NAU** - "not fond of sordid gain"  
**1 Peter 5:2 NAU** - "shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of God*; and not for sordid gain"  
Deacons: **1 Timothy 3:8 NAU** - "not fond of sordid gain,"
  2. These Cretan false teachers had an eye on using their position in the church for personal gain. They were motivated by selfishness and pride—by personal advancement.
  3. False teachers are most often man pleasers. Paul warned:  
**2 Timothy 4:3 NAU** - "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,"  
There are always those who are willing to tickle ears.
- B. All false doctrine is error. Paedobaptists are teaching false doctrine but they are sincerely seeking the truth. They have simply arrived at wrong conclusions. This is greatly different from the false teachers Paul is referring to. They were not motivated by a love of sound doctrine. Paul says they were upsetting whole families with their false teaching.
- C. Paul used a popular saying of his day to describe them.  
**Titus 1:12 NAU** - "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."  
The source of Paul’s words in **Verse 12** is not certain. Most attribute it to the ancient writings of Epimenides, a philosopher-poet from the 6-7<sup>th</sup> century BC. The people of Crete had elevated him to an almost godlike character. He was certainly not a Biblical prophet, but in this case, Paul affirms his appraisal, especially regarding these false teachers – “This testimony is true.”  
These Cretan teachers taught nothing but lies.
12. There was only one way to deal with them. This remains true today. They must be sternly corrected and silenced.  
**Titus 1:13 NAU** - "For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith," Paul uses the same word in **Verse 9**  
**Titus 1:11 NAU** - "who must be silenced"
- A. Paul uses a verb that literally refers to the use of a muzzle or bridle. They must not be allowed to continue their deceptions.
  - B. Freedom of speech is not a right within the church of Christ. No one has the right to speak false doctrine or words that discourage and weaken the church. No one has the right to engage in idle gossip. In fact, as Christians we must learn to bridle the tongue.  
**James 1:26 NAU** - "If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his *own* heart, this man's religion is worthless."

- C. Confronting false teaching is hard work. Opposition is always difficult. No pastor desires conflict. Unity in the church is a sweet savor. But we must never sacrifice truth for the sake of harmony. Peace without truth is not peace.
1. Sowers of false doctrine must always be opposed – although they will often try to hide behind the cloak of unity, or love. They may sound very confident and convincing.  
**1 Timothy 1:7 NAU** - "even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions."
  2. Pastors must always labor to expose false doctrine. They must "Preach the Word" as they keep a watchful eye over the flock.
    - a. It demands careful study and careful attention to the hearts of men.  
**Titus 1:9 NAU** - "holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict."
    - b. Robert Yarbrough writes: "Pastors who neglect their calling to ambitious study and effective instruction may be creating their own enemies by their malpractice."<sup>1</sup>

#### Conclusion:

1. This remains most instructive for our church. As we consider the seven distinctives that define and guide our church, the second is Sound Doctrine. We must always be willing to contend for the truth.  
 What is your heart regarding the doctrines of the Bible. Many professing Christians today don't really care. They don't see it as having an impact upon their life. Doctrine is of infinite importance and every Christian must defend it.
2. Jude expressed it so well:  
**Jude 1:3 NAU** - "Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints."
3. These are the truths upon which the church was built, truths we share with a common bond, truths we contend for.  
 Matthew Henry: "It is the faith, *once, once for all, delivered to the saints*, to which nothing can be added, from which nothing may be detracted, in which nothing more nor less should be altered. Here let us abide; here we are safe; if we stir a step further, we are in danger of being either entangled or seduced."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Robert W. Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, ed. D. A. Carson, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; London: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2018), 399.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2460.