

Titus 1:10–16

Why It's Important that Elders Be Able to Stop the Mouths of Unauthorized Teachers in the Church

Thursday, September 7, 2023 • Titus 1:10–16

Questions from the Scripture text: What quantity of insubordinate church members are there in Crete (v10)? What two types are there? Especially from what group? What must be done to them (v11)? Why—whom do they subvert? What do they teach? Whom are they hoping to advance? What had even Cretans said about Cretans (v12)? Who agrees with this assessment (v13)? What must Titus do, then? Unto what end? What fables mustn't they heed (v14)? What commandments mustn't they obey? When someone turns to these, from what do they turn away? What is pure to whom (v15)? To whom is nothing pure at all? Why—what is defiled? What might someone in this condition profess (v16)? How do they deny God? What are they in their character? With what result in their behavior?

Why is it so important to have sound teachers as elders? Titus 1:10–16 looks forward to the second serial reading of in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these seven verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **elders must be sound teachers in order to overcome theological error that arises within a congregation.**

Stopping the mouths of those who talk contradictory theology. In v9, we learned that elders must have been teachable, so that they would know how to teach and be committed to teaching—especially “those who contradict.” Now, we learn that there are many of these “insubordinate” (v10) contradictors, and that they harm not only themselves but entire households (v11). Sometimes, they are just “talking theology,” but they really don't know what they are talking about (“idle talkers,” v10). Other times, they are intentionally trying to turn people away from the sound teaching of the church (“deceivers,” v10). In both cases, their mouths are dangerous, and must be stopped (v11).

Advancing Christ or self? Regardless of what such people might say, they are not seeking to advance the cause of Christ. (If they really were serving Christ, they would follow His order in the church and stop their own mouths!). The phrase at the end of v11 just takes the components from the end of v7 and splits them into separate words. They are unashamed to spread their doctrinal ideas because it seems to advance them in some way.

One reason that sound doctrine is so needful: combating remaining sin. True doctrine teaches how to walk as one who has his entire life in the Lord Jesus. This is the only hope for combatting sin. And the Cretans had plenty of sin to combat (v12)! So the elder needs to use “sound doctrine” (v9) to “convict those who contradict” (v9). Attempting to use the ceremonial law apart from fulfillment in Christ turned it into mere fables that can't do anything against sin (v14a, cf. “circumcision” in v10, cp. Gal 6:13–16). And the “commandments of men” (v14b) can't do anything against sin either.

The apostle wrote to Timothy that such commands (1Tim 4:3) are actually “doctrines of demons” (1Tim 4:1). “Do not touch” and “do not taste” turns a man away from the truth (end of v14). Rather than looking for spiritual life for combatting sin in the heart, such a man thinks that his rules will guard him from sin. But this is folly. Sanctification in behavior can only come from the regenerate, consecrated heart (v15). Food and drink are not impure in themselves (cf. 1Tim 4:4). However, there is no such thing as food or drink that an unbeliever can “safely” consume. The filth of sin is coming out of his heart, not from his dish or cup (v16). Even professing believers are susceptible to this (v16a)!

O, dear believer, what we need is Christ! Therefore, if Christ says that what we need is sound doctrine, by which He works in us, then what we need is sound doctrine! And, if Christ says that He gives this sound doctrine by His duly ordained elders in the church, then what we need is duly ordained elders in the church! And if he warns that no one else should speak doctrine that contradicts them, then let no one speak doctrine that contradicts them! Let us not trust our own ideas, or our own rules. Such thinking surely comes from the flesh and the devil and will do us no good.

What are examples of manmade rules that people think have spiritual value? Where can you find the teaching of your church, in order to know what not to contradict? Whom are you trusting when you function this way in the church?

Sample prayer: Lord, forgive us for when we are subordinate, contradicting the sound doctrine of the Scripture in the mouths of the teachers that You have given us. Forgive for when we speak idly of doctrinal matters, or invent rules that we think will have power against sin. Grant that we would humbly rest upon Christ alone as all of our spiritual hope, following His order for His own church, we ask through His Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP1 “How Blessed the Man” or TPH172 “Speak, O Lord”

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Titus chapter 1 verses 10 through 16. For there are many insubordinate, both idol talkers and deceivers. Especially those are the circumcision. His mouths must be stopped. Who subvert whole households teaching things as they ought not. For the sake of dishonest gain. One of them, a profit of their own said cretans are always liars.

Evil beasts lazy buttons. This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply that they may be sound in the faith. Not giving heed to jewish fables and Commandments of men. Who turned from the truth. To the pure, all things are pure. But to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure.

But even their mind and conscience are defiled. They profess to know god but in works, they deny him. Being abominable disobedient. And disqualified. For every good work. So for the reading of gods inspired and there inherent word,

The. Older than Is as a ministry, that's necessary because The lord has appointed particular teachers of particular character. In order to Preserve particular doctrine and their particular fruit. The elders are the ones that The lord has. Appointed and whom he not only redeems, but works in them, the graces that we have seen especially And verses 5 through 9.

Of this chapter one of which is that they are not men, Of shameful gain. It was Translated greedy for money. But it is the word for shame and the word for gain and the word for gain. Doesn't just mean money. And it is the Uh, the same idea. The elder must not be.

What at the end of verse 11, these other men are And so the the lord has appointed particular men to be the teachers in his church and when somebody else Makes himself the teacher in the church. They are as verse 10 calls them in subordinate. Um, Which means, for instance, Yeah, in a lunch conversation.

On the lord's day among the Um, the adolescents or the adult, essence of the church. Um, You know, someone taking a theological position other than Or opposite two. What's in the westminster standards? The theology that i preach and teach from the bible because it's what the bible teaches. And the elders of the church including myself all had to take vows Uh, to teach only according to those things.

Last, we be those who teach false doctrine and And lead the church in error. Um, lead the church to Not actually no god. As we find out by the end of this passage. So

there's Um, it's pretty high stakes, isn't it? If what's at stake is whether you have a church where God is actually known in the life of christ is actually in the people or You have a church with various ideas of men and a profession to know god and maybe people sincerely believe that they do have knowledge of god.

Um, But their conduct makes it clear that there's no life for righteousness of christ. Counted for them or in them. Um, i was born out by how they lived. And so, The lord has particular teachers. And they're teaching is. The intentional or well fought out. And, Uh, true. And With.

Um, But with good intentions. So, The the insubordinate they end up. Speaking idle talk and deception. Look at verse 10 4. There are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers. And the theological error. The theological errors that get spoken in the church. Get spoken two ways. One idle talk.

Somebody who is not. Well, trained does not know his bible. He. Yeah, this does not necessarily mean and been to seminary. Um, But he is not. Uh, well read. In. Those who understand the bible? Well, he doesn't know how the whole thing fits together. Etc, and he's, you just Spouts opinions.

It's a enjoyable pastime together to To make this theological opinion and that theological opinion, idle talk. But it'll talk subverts people. Because, and Someone who is? Uh, skilled in the word of god. Speaking to somebody else who is not skilled and in the word of god, it might end up being just idle talk for the first one.

But the other one's like oh yeah, that sounds right. And they get led into a false idea and untruth. Theological entry. Then there are others who Uh, are actually trying to bring. People to their position over again, just What the scriptures actually teach as the lord jesus is. Appointed elders, are teaching them.

And so, whether it's the older talker or the deceiver and he puts up to the deceiver, especially those the circumcision. Say, we're always trying to bring People to, to their view, you can read, for instance, the entire book of Galatians and

And how the, Apostle talks about them and Galatians chapter 5 at the end of the book, always trying to bring them over. Um, So the elders job is not just to teach in the right way. Uh, you see the The other part of his job in verse 11, who is Mal's must be Stopped.

Those who teach idly need to be told. Stop your idle theological talk. Your theologically spiritually morally harming, the body of christ. Their mouths must be stopped. And end up subverting whole households. Uh, teaching things that they ought not. And this is, especially in the case of the deceiver. Uh, but also in the case of the idle talker, Uh, they are not ashamed to advance themselves.

They want to look clever, they want to look curious. They want to have influence on others. Uh, maybe they want to seem like an independent spirit, and they think that anybody who just believes what the Church teaches from the bible is a sheep or whatever it is. Uh, they see they think it advances them in some way.

To be these theological talkers. Um, But we are not to be advancing ourselves, we are to be serving in advancing the cause of christ. The christ you give us a spirit the christ to, by his spirit, gave us the bible. The christ, he has appointed elders in his church and part of Their qualification for elder is that they hold fast to the word as they were taught.

Uh, those are just heard in verse 9. And so there's it's either advancing self or advancing christ and it's helpful for us in this context to remember that, that's always true. In any situation, you can either. Be hoping to advance yourself. Whether it's financially or influencer and the praise and steam of others or whatever.

You can either hope to advance self or hope to serve christ. You cannot do both. You cannot do things for the glory of christ. While desiring that you would be glorified in the process. That is not how Glorifying christ works and so it's good for us to remember that.

Because we usually find out not on the front end. When we still think we're doing it for the glory of christ. But on the back end, When we feel really, Hurt or wounded or disappointed that people didn't notice how awesome we were. And then we realize, oh, I was advancing my own glory.

That was for shameful game. Well, we need And the lord has appointed for his church, those who are exercised, those who have skill and recognizing such things about themselves and are not Seeking for themselves to be advanced. By their teaching. One of the reasons why the Right. Teaching is so important because the right teaching.

Is the means by which the lord jesus gives you himself. The lord, jesus gives himself to his people. And we need him. Because what we are needs to be overcome It's not just cretins. Who in their original nature are always liars. Evil beasts, and lazy gluttons. What a dreadful mistake we would make to be from another time or another place and read verse 12 and say oh man, yeah they really needed those elders in Crete.

And think that, that means my comparison, we didn't know he's describing this inflation, the sinful nature and the cretans belongs to all the children of Adam apart from christ. And this is why we must have the right doctrine. It tells us who god is who we are. What we are like and how we got that way.

Who the lord jesus is, and what he does for sinners. Like we are. And so the theology of the bible is the only solution. For us, not being. Liars. Evil, beasts and lazy gluttons. What he's saying here? And, He's quoting a man named epimedes from like 400 years earlier.

What are you saying here is our need for the lord, jesus, and his life, and righteousness in us is so obvious that even the pagans can see it.

Therefore, Rebuke them. Sharply not all the cretins although they do need to be rebuked too. But the idle talkers and deceivers the insubordinate. They need to be rebuked. Sharply. Because they're harming the lord jesus's church. Because whether it's jewish, fables, A lot of. Yeah. There's some For instance, the economic teaching that is just General equity of the civil law, and that's fine.

Um, but then there's There's other teaching in that line which finds all kinds of support for creating Uh, creating laws. That isn't actually there or Trying to use a civil law that belongs to a body politic that the lord has destroyed or a ceremonial law. Belongs to. An age of the church is superseded, when the priesthood changed from the sons of Aaron to the Melchizedekian priested of the lord jesus.

And they they try to come up with rules. That will produce gobliness, but they can't produce gobliness and it's not actually Uh, wisdom, remember the parallel back from first? Timothy chapter 4.

Where he says the spirit expressly says that in latter times, some will depart from the faith giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons. Speaking lies in hypocrisy having their own conscience seared with a hot iron Forbidding to marry commanding to abstain from foods. It's got created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

For every creature of god is good, and nothing is to be refused. If it is received with thanksgiving for it, is sanctified by the word of god and prayer. And so the thing that makes the difference is not inventing more rules from men. Men actually have to be changed into believers who know the truth.

And that's how they end up using god's good creation in a good way. You cannot take an evil man and add rules. And end up with good use of god's creation.

Especially since often the rules are creation, the created thing is bad. I know the solution to my sin.

I'll stop using all that bad stuff that god made. No, that's a doctor of demons. That's what Adam sounds like when he falls and says the woman that you gave me if i had just abstained from Being married. And so, They're not to give heed to jewish fables and commandments of men.

Whenever you. Whenever you come up with your own commandments and think that those are the things that are going to produce godliness, you are turning from the truth. Verse 14. And then he gives the same principle. In verse 15 that we just read out of first, Timothy 4 to the pure, all things are pure.

In other words, it's the spiritual condition of the heart. That gives the wisdom to recognize, what is good the wisdom to use it in a good way. To the pure, all things are pure. But to those who are defiled and unbelieving, Nothing is pure. Even their mind and conscience are defiled.

So you can have your great big long list of what you shouldn't eat and what you shouldn't drink. Etc. But if you got an unbeliever doing the eating and drinking, he's going to eat and sin and drinking sin, and it doesn't matter what he eats or drinks. And so, He's making the point that if the mind and conscience are defiled Then there's no amount of rules.

That can make a righteousness. And so right teaching. Of the scriptures through which the lord jesus gives faith in himself. And works out his life in us. Sanctifies us makes us holy in our mind and our heart, and our conscience. That is how godliness is produced in. In the lord's people.

And so, when you have these insubordinate, not Christ, appointed, theological talkers, And, They speak their own ideas. Commandments of men. They speak their own ideas instead of what the bible actually teaches. You end up with the people who are hoping in men and their ideas, instead of a people who are living by faith, in the lord jesus, and having the life and godliness of jesus worked out in them.

And at the end of the day,

It's okay. Sleptic of it. At the end of the day. When someone, It doesn't matter how much someone Professes to know, God. I know jesus, i'm a good christian. I've been a christian forever. Many years Etc. Etc. If they don't have the life and righteousness of the lord jesus being worked out in them, you can be sure.

That they are not joined to jesus by faith. The profess to know God, but in works, they Deny him. Why? Because they're still in themselves. And so there are abominable disobedient. And disqualified for every good work. Good works. Can only be done. By those who have been. Saved by grace through faith.

And the lord jesus christ and that not of themselves. Until there are new creatures in christ jesus. They cannot walk. In good works that god has prepared beforehand. For them. And so the the teaching ministry of the elders, including the stopping of the mounds. Of the unappointed uneducated unorthodox.

Is vitally important. For the genuine knowledge of christ, the genuine knowledge of god. In the church. Pray for your elders and See to it, that you Stick to the doctrine that you have been taught. Doesn't mean you can never talk about theology. It just means that the style of talking is one.

Which holds to what you've been taught and doesn't propose new ideas. Let's pray. Father, we thank you and praise you. For how continually we find. That your word is. Exactly suited to everything we need. It does not surprise us. Lord. But it, continually delights us. That you in love and wisdom have given us such a word we pray.

That you would help us to follow. This portion of your word, That we would hold to. Your word your truth as we have been taught. And that we would not be idle talkers or deceivers. We do pray for Our elders. That they too would. Would do the same and would stop the mounds.

Of those who don't. Have mercy on your church. So that when we profess to know God, It may be shown by our. Behavior. By our works. That we do know you because it is your life that is in us. We ask it in christ's name, amen.