

## The Ministry of Confrontation Titus 1:10-16

### Introduction:

- 1) Do you think of yourself as a spiritual “she-bear” who is called by God to protect her cubs; a “spiritual physician” who must diagnose doctrinal cancer and remove it from the body to insure its health and life; a “spiritual detective” who through careful investigation must detect spiritual evidence of a spiritual crime already in progress?
- 2) The Bible is filled with concern about false teaching and its danger to the people of God. Limiting our survey to the New Testament we find strong words and warnings from Jesus and Paul, Peter, John and Jude.

**Jesus:** Matthew 7:15: “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.”; Mark 13:22-23; “For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand.”

**Paul:** Acts 20:29-30: “For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.”; 2 Cor. 11:2-4: “For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who come preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted – you may well put up with it!”; 1 Tim. 4:1-3: “Now 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, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.”; 2 Tim. 3:1-9: “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! For of this sort oare those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.”

**Peter:** 2 Peter 2:1-3: “But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive

heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.”

**John: 1 John 2:18-23:** “Little children, it is the last hours; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us. But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.”; **1 John 4:1-3:** Beloved do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.”; **2 John 7:** “For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.”

**Jude: Jude 3-4:** “Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.”; **Jude 17-19:** But you, beloved remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their won ungodly lusts. These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.”

- 3) God has called us as ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ to a ministry of reconciliation. He has also called us to a ministry of rebuke. He has called us to a ministry of comfort. He has also called us to a ministry of confrontation. Here in Titus 1:10-16 the focus is on rebuke and confrontation. Joined at the hip to Paul’s discussion of the faithful minister who should be set free to serve our Savior (1:5-9), Paul now addresses those who need to be stopped in their tracks and whose mouths need to be muzzled. He describes them as the divisive, the deceived, and the defiled, and he teaches us we cannot ignore them, we must confront them.

I. We must confront the divisive. 1:10-11

Verses 10-16 are intimately connected with verses 5-9, especially verse 9 by the first word in v. 10, the word “for.” We are to exhort and convict (*NIV*, “refute”)...For there are many ... who subvert (*NIV*, “ruining”) whole

households (entire families). These false teachers no doubt are personable and persuasive, attractive and ambitious. What they teach has just enough truth to deceive the immature, and it comes with enough cleverness to fool the gullible. However, if you will conduct a closer and more careful analysis, you will find just beneath the surface the malignant disease of their deadly doctrine. What does a true and genuine inspection reveal?

- 1) They are destitute in how they talk. 1:10
  - There are many not a few and no doubt they had risen to some degree of preeminence in the churches.
  - They are described as insubordinate (*NIV*, “rebellious”) and idle-talkers. Insubordinate speaks of their attitude. Idle talkers addresses their actions. These men were a law unto themselves, claiming a direct pipeline to God. They are not and would not be held accountable to anyone, a tell-tale sign of all false teachers. This rebellious, ego-centric spirit produces what Paul calls idle-words, literally “useless” or empty words. They are “cotton candy preacher,” a lot of show but no substance.
- 2) They are dangerous in what they think. 1:10-11
  - Deceivers, both of themselves and, especially here, of others. They are spiritual seducers, disguising their personal ambition and theological agenda in the trapping of religious piety and prosperity.
  - In the situation at Crete the peddlers of “theological pornography” were Judaizers who offered a Jesus plus theology which is always a minus Jesus theology. Add to Christ and you subtract from Christ. This is the spiritual mathematics of these masters of deception. Corrupted in their own thinking they corrupt the thinking of others and “subvert and bring to ruin entire families.” Like a fast spreading cancer they do not infect one but many. This is how effective they can be.
  - Propagators of a “man-centered message” and a “what I can do gospel” they deflect our focus from Christ and His adoration to ourselves and our accomplishments. The beauty and greatness of Jesus is at best ignored, and at worst denied.
- 3) They are dishonest in why they teach. 1:11
  - Paul pulls no punches as he goes on the offensive in the ministry of confrontation. These men must be muzzled, stopped, shut-up. Confront them with the truth of the gospel. That is our primary weapon. Confront them with the real results of their activity: they ruin whole households. Confront them with their motive for ministry: “the sake of dishonest gain. These type of persons are nothing less than “ministerial mercenaries!” They are hired guns, ministers motivated by money. False teachers love money, crave money and talk about money. As 1 Tim. 6:4-5 says they “suppose that godliness is a means of gain.” This is the theology of a Creflo Dollar, founder and pastor of World Changers Church in Atlanta,

Ga. who says, “you’re a fool for Christ so you might as well be a rich fool” (The Riches of God,” *Atlanta Journal/Constitution*, 8-23-97).

- Of course we ourselves must be careful not to be seduced more subtly by this mindset. We must ever be on guard against an “entitlement mentality” that expects, solicits, and even manipulates the favor of others. Unfortunately, this happens all too often.

Transition:

In the ministry of confrontation, we must confront the divisive.

II. We must confront the deceived. 1:12-14

Paul’s words are strong and to the point. They are also strategic and difficult to refute. The spiritual danger is acute, and so he must be direct in his expose’ of these religious charlatans, these spiritual imposters.

1) Who they are is clear. 1:12-13

- A careful study of any teacher will bring to light his true colors. We simply have to take the time, listen carefully and weigh what we hear on the scales of God’s perfect Word. This alone and this always must be our standard of measurement. Paul calls to the witness stand one of Crete’s heroes from the past, one of their own prophets, the 6<sup>th</sup> century poet, priest and prophet Epimenides. His words are not positive or flavored with sugar. They are cutting and they are condemning.
- “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.” Petersons paraphrase is “they are liars from the womb, barking dogs, lazy bellies.”  
Always liars – the inhabitants of Crete were so characterized by lying that “to Cretanize meant to lie.” In our modern context we might say “ministerially speaking!” You cannot believe or trust such teachers. They lie to themselves and they will lie to you.  
Evil beast – wild animals, persons who live on the sensual plane, controlled by their appetites and passions, their lust and desires. As evil beast they tear apart and rip to shreds without thought, reason or concern for the welfare of others. They are an idol to themselves.  
Lazy gluttons – Self-indulgent, over-fed, no self-discipline or control, they feed and feast at the expense of others.
- To these words coming from one of their own Paul simply adds, “This testimony is true.” In reading this do not miss Paul’s application. It is not to every Creton, but to these false prophets propagating spiritual perversion both in what they teach and in how they live.

2) What they believe must be confronted. 1:13-14

Paul's solution to this situation is both to the point but it is also pastoral. There is a wonderful balance in how we engage the ministry of confrontation.

Rebuke (pre. imp) them sharply. Addressing the Church which has been lax and hesitant to deal with this crisis, Paul is firm in his instructions. Rebuke (reprove, correct, convict [same word as in v.9]) and do so sharply. As a surgeon cuts away diseased and infectious tissue that threatens the health of the body, you must cut away this toxic teaching.

- What is our goal in performing this spiritual surgery? It is pastoral. It is redemptive. It is so that those who are deceived and deceiving others may be sound in faith. Sound is *hygiainosin*. We cut to cure. We operate to liberate those trapped in the quicksand of spiritual bondage and malnutrition. We confront, but we confront in love. We love them enough to point out their error and with the hope of their recovery to spiritual health and vitality.
- Paul readily saw the gangrene of Jewish fables (myths) and commandments of men (man-made rules) that turn from the truth. Religious speculations that go either beyond or against Scripture, and rules and regulations that add works to grace, are man-centered rather than Christ-centered, are humanistic rather than Christocentric. Paul says we must confront and denounce them for the lies that they are.
- Note they "turn from the truth." Once they knew it, now they deny it. Once they live it. Now they leave it. This only makes them all the more dangerous.

III. We must confront the defiled. 1:15-16

Again we are reminded: belief and behavior go together. Sound doctrine and good works are twin companions. False teaching contaminates. It defiles whatever it touches. Just as a single drop of ink can defile and render undrinkable a pure glass of water, false teaching, just a drop, can pervert and destroy the pure gospel of grace and mercy of Jesus Christ.

Transition:

Why must we confront the defiled?

1) They lack purity (the inside). 1:15

- "To the pure all things are pure" is something of a proverb, a pithy saying, a maxim. It is a test of moral character and echoes the words of Jesus in Mark 7:15-23: "There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!"... Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, "because it does not

enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated... “What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, “thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. “All these evil things come from within and defile a man.”

- In contrast to the pure, to those who are 1) defiled (W.A.R.) and 2) unbelieving nothing is pure: but even their mind (how they think) and their conscience (their moral judgment) are defiled, polluted. Their whole inner self is corrupted. Intellectually and morally they are defiled, every aspect of who they are infected with the disease of sin. Here is a concise description of what we called the doctrine of Total Depravity.
- John MacArthur notes, “ when a person is pure in heart and mind, his perspectives on all things are pure, and that inner purity produces outer purity” (p.65). Tragically the opposite is also true. When a person is corrupt and impure in heart and mind, his perspective on all things are corrupt and impure, and that inner impurity produces outer impurity.
- 2) They lie in their profession (the outside). 1:16
  - The mind and the conscience are connected to a vital organ in the body: the tongue. How you think will give way to how you speak. Lie to yourself, and you will lie to others. Lie to yourself, and you will lie about God.
  - They profess (pre. tense) to know, but in their works they deny Him. Trusting in their own works, their own wisdom, their own righteousness, they by their lives deny the God they confess they know. By their man-centered, humanistic message that focuses on what they can do, they make an idol of themselves. In the process they deny the truth of Scripture, question the sinfulness and inability of man to save himself, cheapen the cross, slight the Holy Spirit, and construct their own false system of salvation.
  - Bringing to light and exposing the real underlying belief system of such persons, Paul concludes with a ringing trio of condemnation and judgment.
    - a) They are detestable – abominable (God’s attitude toward idolatry).
    - b) They are disobedient - rebellious, insubordinate, their way and agenda take precedent over God’s.
    - c) They are disqualified – unfit, worthless, rejected for any good work. They are proven to be spurious, a fake, a counterfeit, not the real and genuine article after all. Put to the test, they fail.

#### Conclusion:

- The ministry of confrontation is not easy, but it is essential. When the integrity of the gospel is at stake we cannot run and hide. We must run and fight. Armed

with truth, motivated by love, and clothed with a pure life, we can engage the enemy and rescue the captive, recognizing as Jude teaches us, “we are to pull them out of the fire, all the while hating the garments defiled by the flesh” (Jude 23).

- Truth matters. Truth is important. Jesus said, “you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).