

The Call To Truth In A Culture Of Deception

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Whenever God is moving and the word of God is being faithfully sown, we must never be surprised when the enemy steps in to try and sow his own seed of discord. We see this reality throughout the New Testament and we see it in our own culture today in Crete where Titus was ministering. A great work of Christ had been done within a short amount of time. Many churches had come into existence by the grace and mercy of God. People were being saved trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal savior and lord. Yet alongside that rich blessing that God was doing in Crete, the adversary sneaked in causing disorder amongst his people to destroy the work of God.

And Paul writes this section of this part of the letter to Titus because godly leadership is not just about encouraging people, namely God's people. It is also protecting God's people. See, godly leaders must be willing to confront and rebuke false teachers. Today we are going to look at a vivid contrast Paul paints between good servant leadership that's rooted in the stewardship of God's truth rightly handling the word of truth compared in contrast with those that are poor leaders that are self-seeking leaders that seek for their ultimate personal gain. And here's the sad part of reality of it is at the expense of the family of God.

So with that said, please stand out of respect for God's word as I read and you follow along in your Bible. We are now going into Titus chapter 1 beginning in verse 10. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not for filthy lucre sake. One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, "The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies." This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men that turn from the truth. Unto the pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate. This is God's word. You may be seated.

Beginning in verse 10, we're going to see the characteristics of the unqualified leader. The unqualified leader. It starts off with Paul saying, "For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision." Paul begins by outlining a threefold description of these rebels threatening the church. They are unruly. Another way of saying it, they're rebellious, disobedient to God's word, vain talkers. Their chatter has no substance whatsoever. And they are deceivers, just lies coming out from their mouths. These were not outside pagans, by the way. These were individuals who confessed to be Christians and took their place within the church assembly. And this is what they were doing. They acted as wolves in sheep's clothing.

Unruly. Let's look at that particular word. You see this word connotes they refused to submit to sound doctrine or spiritual authority or both. You see whenever they heard the word of God it never actually produced a heart of fruit. Rather it just fell to the wayside with these individuals. And whenever spiritual authority was to take place, they were rebellious against the authorities that God had placed in the assembly of God in the household of God. Then let's look at vain talkers. These are in a way individuals that are very persuasive. They know how to persuade people. They know how to manipulate people and they had careless tongues. They had no care for hurting people. Their whole thing was to be persuasive, be careless with their words, and ultimately their communication would cause spiritual harm and hurt the people of God. Next, deceivers. Here we see that this word deceive they are intentionally fooled and misguided by their own thoughts. So they are just thinking about their words and how they can deceive using their words believers. That is actually their intention and which results in bringing confusion into the family of God.

So those are the threefold characteristics of unqualified leaders, false teachers. And Paul specifically points out they are of the circumcision. These were so-called Jewish believers, Judaizers. These people demanded gentile converts convert to Judaism, their religious practices following the Mosaic law and to be circumcised. And this is the way to salvation to be perfected that somehow they were not perfected in Christ. This directly violated the definitive decision made at the Jerusalem Council which we see in the book of Acts chapter 15 which declared that the law was not to be imposed upon gentile believers. For example, Paul refused to allow his companion Titus, a gentile to be circumcised. And we see that recorded in Galatians chapter 2 from verses 1-5.

You see, the reason this is such a big deal to Paul and why he is going to be using words like rebuke them sharply is this. This is a primary issue of attacking the very heart of the gospel. You see, when anything is attacking the gospel, it must be rebuked. It must be rebuked by a godly leader. You see, because following the law to be saved versus the grace of Christ, being fully sufficient to be saved is a very attack that somehow you can go back to fulfilling the law to complete your salvation. That this is a false gospel. And so

anything that directly attacks the truth of the gospel is ultimately a false gospel and primary issue that must be dealt with.

Paul gives us instructions on how to do that. You see, they know how to make their words sound good. That's why there are many false teachers as Paul notes. Many of them are coming amongst these group of followers in these house churches and they know how to make a big impression. They know how to get many of them together. They want to cause commotion. But ultimately what Paul's going to do is okay there are many of them but let's go to their words let's see what they say because they have no spiritual substance that will edify the body of Christ. You see you can't grow spiritually on empty words. And so this is exactly what these false teachers were doing inside the church at Crete in many of the house churches.

But you see their words were dangerous, extremely dangerous. They use flood of empty words to confuse people who lacked spiritual discernment. After all, this was churches that Paul established within a short amount of time by the grace and mercy of God. New believers yet not yet able to discern good and evil. And understandably, these churches were birthed again by the grace of God. And here we are with these many false teachers in the midst. So church, we live in a world saturated with vain talkers, don't we? Between social media and podcast and YouTube platforms, we are hit with millions of words a day. And here's the scary part. How many of them actually influenced you? Empty words. We live in a scary environment where this is happening day in and day out. And some of it may sound good and deeply spiritual, but it shifts your focus away from the pure grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and places you under a yoke of human rules, which is contrary to the word of God and is empty and deceptive. And we must be a people of discernment, understanding good and evil. And how do we do this? Primarily by judging every word we hear against the faithful word of God. We must be saturating ourselves with this book. These words must be the one that influences you primarily, not the influencers of the world.

And so let's go into verse 11 where we're going to see the motive of these unqualified leaders and the damage that they do. Verse 11 says, "Whose mouths must be stopped who subvert whole houses teaching things which they ought not for filthy lucre sake." Here in this particular verse, Paul states firmly that these false teachers cannot be tolerated. You must not listen to them for even a minute. Their mouths must be stopped. Literally to stop their mouth. The analogy is to literally put a muzzle on their mouth to silence them because they can't control themselves. This is just uncontrollable empty words that are spewing and they must be muzzled. That's the expression that Paul uses here. Must be stopped through the power primarily of God's word and his spirit. Why is this important because again Paul is going to get to it. The severe damage that these empty words can produce that he himself says here that they subvert whole houses. Literally that word

subvert means to capture and overturn the fate of entire families. It's not just destroying one person. Their goal is to destroy the whole movement of God. We're dealing with a power that has come straight from Satan himself.

And Satan uses these false teachers to enter into homes namely into churches. And they tear believers away from trusting in God's sufficiency in his word and in his spirit, replacing it with self-justifying faith into religious rituals. See, Paul exposes their underlying heart motivation here. You see, their heart was for filthy lucre. Another way of putting it, they had no care for the glory of God. But they wanted to maximize glorying man. And so they were guilty of exploiting God's people, using the ministry primarily as a vehicle, using the family of God as a vehicle for their own profit and for their own enrichment. So we see this exact pattern today. Consider a modern faithful ministry sharing the gospel. And yes, there are many good ones on these platforms. But there are also many false teachers and prosperity preachers explicitly claiming to be biblical and qualified to teach. But yet, if it was up to God, they are unqualified. They are false teachers.

See, the enemy always is right there trying to exploit the spiritual ground gained using manipulation tactics to extort money from vulnerable households. You'll notice they love to attack new believers, those that have not matured in their faith yet. Paul noted this pattern of exploitation through his ministry whether it was preaching from selfish ambition in the book of Philippians or peddling the word in Corinth which peddling by the way means for personal power, financial gain or manipulation or all the above. And their tactics were to devour believers for their own personal gain. So to try to suck out as much from people as much as possible to leave them empty. It's a sad way of looking at it. But this is the way they are treating people of the household of God. They don't realize that they will one day have to be accountable to God.

And so, we cannot take and I cannot take a passive attitude toward false teaching. See, at the heart of it is legalism, the law. Going back to the law, you see, or false doctrine. False doctrine meaning just anything that the word of God talks about that is right and just flipping it around. Again, overturning or subverting or doing a 180 on God's promises and commands and precepts. And you see, when that happens, it disrupts, creates chaos. It changes the God of order and the very peace that he wants to give to his people and causes instead this unsettling feeling, this feeling of hopelessness. They feed on hopelessness. When people are feeling struggling, they're going through life and God is right there. And what happens? Our nature wants to get the instant gratification. Doesn't it? Doesn't want to wait. You see, that's a part of maturity. Believers, sanctification is to help you to have self-control, the fruit of the spirit. And it starts with loving God and his word and his people. And it ends with self-control. Because you see, love endures all things, believes all things, doesn't it? But you see here, we don't see any love in the heart

of these false teachers at the root of it. And so, they're going out after people for their own personal gain because they never experienced the love of God in Christ Jesus. They never did. So, they're empty. And they think that by doing what they're doing that they're somehow justifying themselves that they're somehow feeling good. It's all false. It's all false to begin with and it's severely dangerous as a consequence. Again, they're going to have to be accountable to God himself.

So here we see as parents, grandparents in this room, leaders here at Calvary Road Baptist Church, we must protect our households. Speaking to believers here, we must protect our households. You are the gatekeeper. Someone teaches and it's centered around their financial enrichment or forces you into this commandments of men where we're going to get to this cage that traps you again into the things of this world. Shut the door to it. Shut the door to it. Don't allow those things to come back. You see, he's given you liberty, brothers and sisters in Christ. You are free in Christ. You are no longer a slave to sin and to your flesh. Don't ever give in to your flesh again.

And so we're going to go to now verses 12 and 13. We're going to see where Paul now confronts this group of false teachers. He says, "One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said the Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies." And he says, "This witness is true." He's saying, "I've seen this actually displayed." Not just heard, but actually displayed. I've been with the people. I've witnessed this myself. That's what Paul's saying here. And so Paul quotes the sixth century poet whom the people regarded as a prophet. They call him a prophet. That's what we see in the text of their own culture. You see this poet pulled no punches in regards to the people in his day about his own people. He characterized them in this way in the grounds of Greek culture as habitual liars, wild and cruel, evil beasts and then lazy. That's what the slow part means, lazy glutton who cared only about satisfying their lowest physical appetites. See, Paul shockingly agrees by writing the witness is true. He isn't saying every single individual of the Cretans was a liar. But rather that this was the general reputation. That's what he means always liars. That generally speaking, their reputation is a culture that is of liars. And so the rebellious men in the church were leaning into this exact depraved culture of lies and deception and slow bellies to devour the believers for their own personal appetite. That's where their desire was to just satisfy themselves. They actually felt good. That's what it means. They felt good doing this causing destruction.

Think about a general cultural stereotype today. I just looked up to see what is the general stereotype of the West Coast, the area that we particularly live here in SoCal, Los Angeles. And these are some of the things that came up. SoCal individuals are stereotyped as laidback as tech geeks or wanting to be the next Hollywood actor. But when a culture is widely known for a specific vice like the Cretans were known for deception, it becomes a dangerous blind spot. Yes, a blind spot. The false teachers were

using the cultural norm, stereotypes of the day of lying as an acceptable tool to run their appetites. Do you see that? They capitalized on those things. They knew people were desiring these things in the world, so they just swept in and say, "Look, look, look, pay attention. You're not cultured enough. You're too much wrapped up in the scriptures. You're too wrapped up in things of God. Come on, be a little bit more open." Does that sound familiar? Isn't that the culture we live in today? We always we're called so many names, but many of the things is narrow-minded, right? Oh, you're not open to other things. So you're not you don't actually know and all these kinds of foolish banter.

You see when a person comes to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ we fundamentally belong to a new kingdom brothers and sisters right we belong to a new kingdom. This world doesn't have the authority anymore as it used to. Instead, we carry the old culture still in our specific upbringings. Many of us grew up in the culture in different aspects which by the way developed unique temptations. But we live right here in the greater Los Angeles area, a culture that highly values not only the things that I mentioned, but superficial appearances, materialism. You got to have the latest gadget. You got to have the latest appliance, the latest car, this thing, and that thing. And here's the one that really struck with me. We live in a culture that redefines truth. The truth. We live in a culture that redefines the truth. And this is the dangerous part where we're going to go to the text. You see, we must be alert. We must be alert to our local cultural blind spots. They creep in deceptively, don't they? You don't even have to focus on it. It just comes in waves. So many waves. And we got to be careful that none of it controls us in our minds and our hearts and our actions. We are called to step out of the cultural mold and continue to allow the grace of God to transform the character that is namely of Christ likeness. Just as he transformed us from the very beginning in our salvation. See, he is our Lord and Savior, but he is again that word Lord. That changes who we trust in, who we put our trust in, in his authority, in his words primarily. We hear the authority in his words, in his commands. And I mentioned that in our last week's sermon, how important it is as Jesus said that if you love me, keep my commandments and we don't follow the commands of this world any longer. We don't prioritize the things of this world, but we prioritize what the Lord Jesus tells us. And I told you in that sermon, ultimately we want his presence. Amen. We want his presence in our life. Not other things in our life, in this world to take that place. His presence is the most important thing. We are to treasure him more than anything else in this world.

And so let's look at now verse 14. And we're going to see how to deal with these false teachers, these unqualified leaders. And we're going to see it done through severe rebuke. He says, "Wherefore rebuke them sharply that they may be sound in the faith, not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men that turn from the truth." You see, because the danger was so immense, Paul tells Titus to rebuke them sharply. Reprove them severely. Another way of putting it. See, this confrontation was not to be subtle. Not

polite or vague trying to be indirect about it. No, it was meant to be direct and firm because the destruction of God's people had to end. The confusion could not last any longer. Remember, whole houses, they were on their destructive mission plan. However, notice the beautiful gospel heart behind all of this. Look at the command that the ultimate goal of this sharp rebuke was that they may be sound in the faith. You see the gospel message here, the gospel heart that the main objective was not merely to isolate them and rebuke them, and to protect the flock, but to get to the heart of the rebellious man. To get to the heart of the rebellious man. Sound familiar to Matthew 18:15-17? To go to them and want restoration. That's what it means. You see, ultimate restoration is to be sound in the faith. What you believe in, what you know about God's word. They wanted them to be sound in the faith. And as a pastor, that's what I have to always think about. Not the immediate issue at hand. Absolutely, it's important. But I look beyond that as is instructed here to look for restoration because at the end of the day, the gospel must have the final say. The gospel must have the final say. Not my words, but the gospel. That's the only way that this really can work well. And it creates an opportunity instead of a problem. An opportunity and not just a problem to affect a restorative U-turn. That word repent is the word that will be used in this context to be sound in the faith rather meant complete ignoring of Jewish fables. He says this is how you can bring them back because they are believing in something that they shouldn't be believing in. Jewish fables. Let's just take that word fables. It means something fanciful, unscriptural, myths, genealogies, and ultimately fiction. It's not true. It's not true. And then he says, "And the commandments of men here is that you add human rules to God's grace." And ultimately that is what turns people away from the truth. As Paul says, we need to turn them away from the lies back to truth. Away from the lies, back to the truth. And so I am constantly thinking when I am dealing with the situation here, I must bring the word of God into context. This is the very thing that bridges me and that person or me and the church. This is the very thing that brings people to the truth. Not something personal, not a vendetta of mine, but I want them to come back to this because this is what is going to keep us on a firm foundation.

And so it takes careful thought, much prayer that what the words that come out of my mouth is coming out from the fruit of the spirit. And if you're here today and you are in a vulnerable place, primarily in the areas of being deceived, here's my words to you. Ignore them. Ignore them. Just stop it. Rebuke ones cut it out. Ignore it. Stop listening to it. And watch what God does. He wants your full heart, not a partial heart, not a half-hearted heart. You see how it's consistent with the gospel. You must believe it is finished.

Whatever he has begun in you, it will be completed the day of the Lord Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:6. We must rest in ultimately the Lord Jesus Christ. Deceitful people and their target of personal gain means you will become the object of their attack. Know this. Any deception, any lie, their means to their end is just to destroy you. Just to destroy you. Paul tells Titus that he needs to make sure when he recruits qualified elders, they must be

spiritual warriors. If you go back to the text that I preached from last week, all those areas is dealing with character. Dealing with character, dealing with spiritual matters that are for good. And you see these individuals had nothing good in them in their words, in their intentions, in their actions. None of it was good. And it's a battle, isn't it? The church is a battlefield. It is a battleground. I will never come in here thinking that, oh, everyone is good. That deception is very easy to take. But I will never allow that happen as long as God's grace shows me that again and again and again. Because yes, as much as I want to just keep you encouraged, I must protect God's people from deception. That's me spending much time in prayer and in his word. And I thank you as this church family that allows me to do that. I'm in a place where I can do that. I can spend hours in this word. I can spend hours in praying for you and for myself that God's presence will be felt here and that ultimately his truth will be the very center of your life because if you don't feel fulfilled here it is if you don't feel fulfilled in his truth and his presence something will leave room for lies and God show me that in this particular text God and I pray this God, fill me with the words and your spirit that they may feel so full like the Lord Jesus said that your cup runneth over. Your cup runneth over. I use this illustration. I brought a cup and I showed the young people and I poured water as a picture of grace. And the idea is that you're full to the top and you still have enough overflowing. And that's the idea of the Lord Jesus Christ. If you don't feel full, something is going to fill that gap. And I want to make God's word be the very thing that fills you up and his presence fill you up. And then when you go out, it's like, I don't need anything else. I don't need anything else. What is this? Has no control over me. But if you feel that tug, it's because there's some empty part that's needs to be filled. That's dangerous, isn't it? It is very dangerous and that's my prayer all the time. God just I want to be filled up and I want to overflow in my preaching and in my teaching and in my prayers and in my words and fellowship everything that I do. God just help me to be over filled with your presence and your word because you are enough. Say that to yourself. Christ is all enough. His grace is all sufficient. His mercy is new every morning. Do you come from that cup being overfilled? That's how important it is. That's how important it is.

Because you see, if I must endure personal attacks coming from Satan and have people lie about me or you, you say, I need to defend truth. At the end of the day, I must defend truth and see if are you living on truth? Because if you're being attacked right now and Satan gets a hold of you or someone's lies got a hold of you, it's because you're not holding on to the truth. Don't give in. Don't give in to the lies. Don't give in to the deception. Don't be vulnerable to false teachers. Just stop it. Close your ears to it. Ignore it. Turn away to the truth. Turn away to the truth.

Paul warns the church in Ephesus and he speaks directly to elders in Acts 20 to watch out for false teachers. It is going to happen. And that's the emphasis he puts in Acts 20 to the Ephesian elders. Just prepare yourself. Just be ready. Be ready. Ready in prayer, in giving

God's word. Don't be surprised. Another way of putting it. So when I see attacks, I'm not going to be surprised, but rather I'm going to spend time not worrying about the surprise, but spending time. Okay, I want to be ready for that brother or sister. And I want to just share how good it is to be close to Christ. How good it is. You just need him. You just need him. He's right. We don't live for victory. You live from victory. We are sitting together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2:6. Know that brothers and sisters in Christ. See, true Christian love is not passive. What I'm speaking right now is I want to speak to you out of love with truth. And love is never passive, is it? Real love is always active, is always voluntary. Because that's the picture of Christ, isn't it? Christ was actively looking at us. Christ voluntarily stepped down from his heavenly throne and to be an infant child. He volunteered himself. And that's the picture of a pastor. I want to actively be engaged in what you're going through. And that's why I've been this past month asking ministry leaders, let's meet up. I don't want to wait for surprise attacks. And people I open it up. You have any things going on in your life, come and talk with me. Whether you're a ministry leader or you are church member, come to me. This is my responsibility and I'm going to make sure I love you like Christ loves you. I want to love you like Christ loves you. That's my greatest privilege and my greatest honor to show you how much Christ loves you. Why are you feeling the way you are? Don't. You don't need to. Christ is all that you need. And so I'm not to be passive when danger approaches. True shepherds protect the sheep. When I am to correct someone in the church or when we receive corrections ourselves, meaning me, the goal must always be restoration. Always. It's Matthew 18:15-17. Standing firm on biblical truth so that we may all be sound in the faith. We must completely tune out the fables and the human commandments, the speculations that distract us from Christ. Ultimately, whatever distracts you from Christ, I will rebuke that. I will rebuke the spirit behind that.

Now, let's go to verse 15. Paul's now going to go into the condition of the inward man. He says here, "Unto the pure, all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure. But even their mind and conscience is defiled." This verse has often been deeply misunderstood. False teachers twist this claim in this verse that if you're spiritually pure, you can engage in moral sin because all things are pure. That's what they say. And that must be rebuked sharply. This is a gross error. And Paul is not speaking about issues for you to compromise with sin. Paul is saying that for a believer who is inwardly cleansed by the grace of God, external things that may seem to be clean, Paul is addressing here, food in particular, that was another thing that the Judaizers said that you got to eat clean food. But whether you choose to eat meat that is unclean to them or clean here, it makes no difference. No difference to your standing before God. Jesus says, "It's not what comes into your mouth that defiles you, but what comes out of your mouth that defiles you." No special diet, external ritual can save you, make you more pure, make you more holy. Because what Paul is addressing here is not what you eat, not

what comes in, but the mind and the conscience. He takes special note here of how important what comes into your ears, into your heart, into your actions, those false teachers and their words and how it affects your mind and your conscience that their goal is to corrupt you. Then you'll know how to be more discerning, right? God cares about what you think. God cares about what's settled in your heart. And they, the false teachers, have an error placing external changes more important than inward changes. Think of it this way. If you want to eat meat, you can eat whatever diet you want as long as it doesn't cause a lot of problems. But if your heart is not right with God, eating a healthy diet will not cleanse your soul. No external amount of changes is going to fix the inward issue. As Jesus again clearly taught in Matthew 15, it's not what goes into a man's mouth that defiles him, but the evil things that comes out of his heart. Issue is the heart. And you can't change your own heart. Ezekiel says, "But what God does, he must take away the heart of the stone and put a heart of flesh." Only God can do that. He is the great physician. Only he can do that. But you must see yourself as one that needs a physician. And you we constantly need to go to him, don't we? Because he's the only one that can ultimately restore us as well as believers. You see, even if I said the right things according to God's word and the spirit of God moves, if the heart does not want to be changed, I cannot change that person's heart. I have to know that myself. Yes, my responsibility is to preach faithfully and to tell and explain, execute the word of God carefully, but it's up to you and God. Just as I am accountable to God with what comes out of my mouth, you are also accountable to God with what comes out of your mouth. True Christianity is an inside out reality, not an outside in reality. You cannot clean up a corrupted mind and a defiled conscience by forcing yourself into a rigid man-made religious regulation. Real transformation only happens when our minds are renewed by the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ alone. So examine your walk today. Are you focusing heavily on looking clean on the outside, doing a bunch of religious performance while harboring a defiled heart, a heart that is resentful, that is hateful to the things of God and his people? Check and examine your heart.

Let's now go to verse 16 as I close here. We're going to see the paradox of false profession. Paul says, "They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." Paul concludes this matter with a devastating diagnostic statement. These false teachers spoke a beautiful, wonderful, sounds wonderful and good language. But yet when they profess that they know God, their actions, their deeds completely shout the exact opposite. In works, they deny him. This is the glaring paradox exposing their true spiritual state. Paul uses three severe words to describe them. First, abominable. Their self-serving hypocrisy was detestable in the sight of a holy God. Just picture when they were doing all these things, God literally just turning away. That's the scariest thing that you have no longer God's blessing and he turns away from you and you're left to yourself. These people are

abominable. They left to themselves. Disobedient. They actively resisted bowing to the actual authority of God's truth. So the idea is they can put on an exterior. Yeah. They're agreeing with you, not in their head. But deep down they're like, "Nope, they know how to put a good face." Disobedient. That's what he says about these false teachers. Disobeying. Defying God's authority of his word. And then lastly, reprobate. This is a very strong word, severe word just like the other two. It literally means worthless. When it came to producing any good deeds, they were completely useless. It literally means complete. Their performance, all this is performance. Performance before man could not change their fallen hearts. Proving that faith without works is dead. Their faith results in death. Scary, isn't it? You see, you can give off a good image here on Sundays by putting on your Sunday best. Yet in your home, out in your community, at work, or your school, your reputation is thoroughly dishonest, bad image, not truly displaying Christlikeness. You may say you agree with what the Bible says but your life denies it in the everyday life. See the ultimate validation brethren of knowing God internally is that his grace pours out of us externally remember that cup overflowing it does ultimately affects the external in this way as 1 John 2:3 puts it by this we know that we have come to know him if we keep his commandments. And so we take an honest assessment using the words of scripture with a sober look at our own lives. Do our Monday through Saturday actions match what you profess? Let it never be said of us here at Calvary Road Baptist Church that we are people who claim to know God by using all the right Bible language but live completely dishonest, self-serving, selfish ways of life outside of these four walls. This passage serves as an urgent reminder that actions ultimately reveals the condition of the heart. You can never say I never meant to do that. No, you meant it because whatever is produced externally was started in the heart. So we end here with the stark reality of contrasting qualified godly leaders and unqualified poor leaders. And what are we supposed to grasp here? I love what John Calvin says. He says this to summarize these passages. Faith alone saves but the faith that saves is not alone. Let me repeat that. Faith alone saves but the faith that saves is not alone. I want to end with these two things. Call for this church. Number one, protect the doctrine that was once settled in your heart and your home. Be anchored so deeply in the word of God that when a vain talker or a false teacher crosses your path, your spiritual discernment is on alert and you instantly recognize it and you instantly ignore it. Turn away from empty words of this world and hold fast to the faithful word of the word of God. Second, examine your profession. Yes, your profession this morning. Do not satisfy yourself with simply knowing the right words or showing up for external services. Let yourself surrender your own mind and your own conscience on a frequent basis to Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:5 says this, "Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Paul reminds believers to reject worldly, ungodly ways of thinking and to actively bring your mind into submission and obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. Filter everything through his words.

Let us be a people whose faith is vividly alive, producing true good works that honor our savior and lord Jesus Christ in our homes, in our communities, in our workplaces, and schools. Let us be a people of God truly. Amen.

Let's pray. Father, I pray that you would form in us these things that you want us to be living according to your instructions, namely your word. Help us, Father, to be a body of believers that has greater and greater spiritual discernment for that which is true versus lies, to that which is good versus evil. And that we will be a people that would display the gospel both with proclamation as well as through our lives in our actions. Father, and I do lift up to you those that are unbelievers in the midst in this room this morning or hears from the words of my mouth. Father, you know, Lord, that they're not truly satisfied with the things of this world, and you're bringing it to their attention over and over again by the spirit of God that they're empty. They're void of all things that brings them peace, that brings them true love, and brings them your presence. Help them to sense that this morning that they cannot live another day without you and that the only way that they can come to you is through our mediator, the only savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who reconciled us to you. Father, we thank you for the work of Christ done on the cross, paying for all of our sins on that cross. We thank you that while we're yet sinners, Christ died for us. Help them, Father, to turn away from themselves to Christ this morning. And we'll thank you, Father, for all the good things you do here. All the good things that you do this week. In Jesus precious name. Amen.