

Set it order Sermon Series – Sermon 6 – An Expose of Exposing False Teachers – Titus 1:12-16

Intro:

1) Word Picture – Fake fruit

- a. Ever been tricked by a bowl of fake fruit?
- b. Everything look good, until the moment you reach out and touch it
 - i. You realize the truth – it's fake
 - ii. It has the shape of the real thing, but it lacks the substance
 - iii. There's color but no life – there appearance but no nourishment

2) Fake fruit is convincing at a distance – but when you get close – the truth is uncovered

- a. It looks healthy until you try to take a bite
- b. It looks impressive, but its not real
- c. That's the picture Paul paints for us in Titus 1:12-16

3) Crete was full of men who claimed to know God, who projected spirituality, who used religious language, who appeared fruitful

- a. But when you got close, when you examined their doctrine, when you uncovered their character you learned the FRUIT WAS NOT REAL
 - i. Their doctrine was corrupt, their motives were selfish, the conscience was defiled, and their profession was empty
- b. The many false teachers on Crete had:
 - i. The appearance of truth but not the substance
 - ii. The vocabulary of faith, but not the transformed life of faith
 - iii. The shape of godliness, but not the power

4) Fake fruit always fools the casual observer – but it never feeds the hungry soul

- a. That's why when dealing with false teachers Paul tells Titus:
 - i. Expose them
 - ii. Silence them
 - iii. Rebuke them
 - iv. Protect the flock from them
- b. Statement – Fake fruit looks harmless...until someone tries to live on it

5) This morning we are going to examine Titus 1:12-16, stepping back into Paul's expose of exposing false teachers, and learn what fake fruit the false teachers produced

- a. Through Paul's handling of false teachers, we gain a helpful pattern on how the church should deal with them as well
- b. A church set in order has: sound doctrine and confront false doctrine
- c. Sermon: An Expose of Exposing false teachers (Part 2)
- d. Text: Titus 1:12-16

Correct the Counterfeit – V12-14

1) In v12-14 Paul is issuing a warning to Titus about the immoral and untrustworthy character of the false teachers they were facing

- a. V10,11 – Paul pointed out WHO they are
- b. V1-4 – Paul points out HOW they are
- c. V12-14 is Paul's summary on why good leaders must confront bad theology
 - i. In calling out this group of people, Paul is giving you and I a pattern on how to handle false teachers
 - ii. Important – many church-going people know false teaching exists, they may even be able to identify it, but few are edified on how to address it
- d. In V12-14 Paul is furthering his outline on addressing false teachers

2) Recognize – V12

- a. In V12 Paul condemns the cultural corruption Crete operated in
 - i. Something I know – Where truth is cheap, falsehood thrives
 - 1. This is what we see in Crete
- b. V12 is actually a quote Paul commandeers to prove his point about the deceptive nature of the Cretan
 - i. Paul is quoting the highly esteemed 6th Century BC Cretan Poet and Philosopher Epimenides
 - ii. Wise move:
 - 1. By quoting one of their own poets, Paul effectively steers clear of any accusation of stereotyping or slandering the Cretans
 - a. Something that would have caused his words to be easily dismissed
 - 2. By using one of their own cultural authorities, he further validates his claims about their corruption
 - a. It shows that even those living a heathen lifestyle recognized how morally bankrupt the culture had become
 - b. It solidifies Paul's claim
 - i. Greeks view poets more like prophets because they often wrote about ethical truths
 - 3. This approach still allowed Paul to confront and address Epimenides
 - a. "one of their own" – he fits in the category of people he is talking about
 - b. It's a wise way Paul labels Epimenides a "false teacher"
 - c. Ironical – they are all liars (Epimenides included) yet what he says here is true
 - i. It reveals the confusion false teaching creates in a society
 - d. Statement – deception is the soil in which false teaching flourishes

- c. What did Paul want them to recognize?
 - i. The Cretans are always:
 - ii. Liar – comes from the root verb – to speak a falsehood
 - 1. This characterization comes from the fact that the Cretans lied about the claims of Zeus’ burial spot
 - 2. Philip Towner – “The Cretans acquired this title because they had long boasted that the tomb of Zeus was on the Island of Crete
 - 3. Clearly a lie – Zeus was supposed to be immortal
 - a. Yet they still held to this claim
 - 4. What this assertion tells us – at the heart of Paul’s concern here was their religious falsehoods
 - a. Yes they lived in an overall culture of deceit, but the core issue was their religious deceit
 - b. Paul was confronting that
 - i. Why?
 - 1. Worldview
 - ii. One’s religion orients their whole way of life and eternal destination
 - 5. So notorious was Cretan falsehood that the ancient world coined the phrase “To Cretanize” to ridicule someone as a liar
 - iii. Evil Beasts – lit. wild savage, a dangerous animal
 - 1. Goes with the imagery of V11 and muzzling their mouth
 - 2. The people operated out of a “beast like” impulse
 - a. They were driven by sensual desires
 - b. They lacked self-control
 - i. Opposite of V7,8
 - 3. Their passions and appetites controlled them
 - 4. Similar to wild animals – they lived without regard for others
 - a. Opposite of V8
 - 5. Wild animals are driven by 3 things
 - a. Food, sex, territory
 - iv. Slow Bellies – lazy and self-indulgent
 - 1. Lit. lazy + stomach
 - 2. This was a Greek insult meaning you lived for food, pleasure, and ease
 - a. Today’s world – freeloader
 - 3. Here’s why this title matters – a lazy, self-indulgent society easily becomes a spiritually indifferent society
 - a. All sorts of falsehoods arise

3) Rebuke – V13

- a. In addressing a church culture who was lax and hesitant to deal with doctrinal crisis – Paul gives a firm yet pastoral imperative
 - i. Rebuke them sharply
- b. Rebuke – to prove with conviction, to correct, bring to light
 - i. Not a mild suggestion – a strong call to confront error
- c. Sharply – a compound adverb meaning “to cut” with precision
 - i. Lit. to cut cleanly
 - ii. Medical term denoting:
 - 1. Amputation
 - 2. Cutting away infected tissue
 - 3. Cleaning out a wound to prevent death
- d. As a surgeon cuts away the disease or decay with haste, so good leaders cut out false teaching and teachers
- e. Notice the goal in this procedure – “That they may be sound in the faith”
 - i. It wasn’t a hack job, it wasn’t messy, it wasn’t uncalculated
 - ii. This was a rebuke done with precision and healing in mind
 - iii. “The surgeon of the soul only cuts to achieve a cure.” – J Mac
 - iv. Heb. 4:12
- f. Paul’s emphasis here is to confront false teachers who are infecting the congregation
- g. Statement – the church and its leaders must not shy away from hard conversations when sound doctrine and congregational health is on the line
- h. A crooked culture demands:
 - i. Clear, Biblical teaching
 - ii. Firm, Biblical convictions
 - iii. Courageous, Biblical leadership
- i. Truth – Biblical love does involve Biblical rebuke at times
 - i. 1 Cor. 13:6
- j. Fact – sound doctrine produces sound Christians

4) Refrain – V14

- a. In V14 Paul is calling for the consistent commitment to hold to sound doctrine
 - i. V14 rests in the context of V13 – “sound in the faith”
 - ii. In other words – Part of being sound in the faith is not giving heed to certain teachings
- b. Don’t give heed – Don’t let your mind attend to this
 - i. Don’t pay attention to these errors
 - ii. Don’t get yourself occupied with
 - iii. Interesting – verb may have been a nautical term for sailors who needed to pay close attention to navigation
 - 1. What Paul infers by this word is – stop steering your attention to these errors
 - iv. Present tense – continually do this
 - v. Sentence – if you hand around the pig pen long enough, you’ll end up smelling like a hog
- c. Paul is calling for a refraining here
- d. Essentially – Paul is saying – Don’t keep listening to or entertaining these falsehoods
 - i. Don’t let them influence your thinking
- e. What specifically did Paul have in mind in this context?
 - i. Jewish fables – Jewish myths, legends, and stories rooted in Jewish tradition taught as truth
 - 1. These fables included:
 - a. Stories about angels that were not Scriptural
 - b. Mystical interpretation of genealogies – 1 Tim. 1:4
 - c. Moralized stories rather than Scriptural truths
 - ii. Commandment of men
 - 1. Legalism:
 - a. elevates human rule above divine revelation
 - b. does not produce holiness, it suffocates the Gospel
 - 2. fence laws
 - 3. rabbinical traditions
 - 4. ceremonial regulations
 - 5. Jesus often rebuked this – Mark 7:7, Matt. 15:9
 - iii. Turn from the truth
 - 1. Turn – to turn away, to mislead, to desert, to reject
 - 2. Paul’s equation here – Myths + man-made rules = abandoning the truth
 - 3. This is a category of teaching which turns people from what is right
 - 4. Remember – there are “many” (v10)

5) Takeaway

- a. Beware of unsound doctrine which distracts from Scriptural truth
 - i. Today we face:
 - 1. Sensational prophetic claims
 - 2. Over spiritualization of dreams, visions, and words
 - 3. Moralism
 - 4. Prosperity preaching
 - a. Financial
 - b. Avoiding biblical terms to soften truth
- b. V12-14 is a call for discernment
 - i. Believers must:
 - 1. Filter teaching/teachers
 - 2. Verify with Scripture
 - 3. Avoid entertaining spiritual error
 - 4. Reject bible-ish teach without biblical authority

Cleanse the Contaminated – V15,16

1) In V15,16 Paul gives two divinely-inspired evaluations that should be applied to false teachers

- a. V15 – assess their inner life
- b. V16 – assess their outer life

2) Paul points out – false teachers lack Biblical purity – V15

- a. “[V15] is something of proverb, a pithy saying, a maxim.” – D. Akin
- b. What Paul addresses in V15 is legalistic teaching burdening the people of God
 - i. False teachers say – follow our rules and have purity
 - ii. Truth says – purity is internal 1st
- c. We could say V15 brings the conversation back to the heart, conscience, and inner corruption
 - i. False teachers were teaching that outer purity was the real means to righteousness
- d. Truth – real, Biblically sound-doctrine on purity teaches that it starts on the inside 1st
 - i. Listen to how Jesus, in His earthly ministry, addresses this – Mark 7:14-23
 - ii. Fact – outward purity starts with inner purity
- e. Why is the influence of such false teachers so dangerous?
 - i. V15b
 - ii. They are defiled and unbelieving – do anything they do is considered defiled, including their teaching
 - iii. Defiled – to stain, to smear with mud or filth
 - 1. Irony – these false teachers teach outer purity but are inwardly filthy
 - 2. Their teachings don’t result in purity

3) Paul points out – false teachers lie in their profession

- a. They say they know God, but their works deny Him
- b. Clarity – it may not mean they live horrible lives
 - i. Rather – their works refer to their trust in their works, wisdom, and ways over the grace of the Gospel of Jesus
 - ii. Their outward attempts of righteousness reveal they don’t really know God
 - iii. Ex – I’m saved because I’m – baptized, a church member, good person, I’ve done...
 - iv. If they really knew God, they would trust only in Jesus

4) Notice the terms Paul used to describe these teachers

- a. Abominable – that which is abominable to God
 - i. These people have no place in heaven – Rev. 21:27
- b. Disobedient – denotes an unwillingness to be persuaded by truth
 - i. There's a confidence in their wrongdoing
 - ii. They have a closed mind to God's truth
- c. Reprobate – lit. not + approved
 - i. They don't stand the test
 - ii. Word used to speak of testing metals – Isa. 1:22
 - iii. A reprobate mind is a mind where God is rejected and therefore rejected by God
 - 1. Rom. 1:28-32

Major Applications**1) These verses teach us that believers must be shaped by Scripture not by culture or error**

- a. Our world celebrates:
 - i. Subjectivity
 - ii. Despises authority
 - iii. Mocks holiness
 - iv. Exalts self-indulgence
- b. That type of atmosphere lets false teaching thrive
 - i. Believers are to:
 - 1. Anchor our identity in Biblical truth
 - 2. Cultivate real holiness
 - 3. Discern the array of teaching with Scripture
 - 4. Refuse to build off trends, preferences, and even tradition over God's Word

2) Genuine faith produces genuine fruit

- a. False teachers love to talk theology but live in rebellion
- b. Quote Scripture, but live contradictory
- c. Preach purity, but live defiled
- d. This text addresses:
 - i. Hypocritical Christianity
 - ii. Hollow religion
 - iii. Emotional profession without repentance
 - iv. Doctrinal talk without transformation