

chapter 1, verses 10 through 16. As you're turning there, let's remember what we have most recently seen in this book of Titus. In Titus chapter 1, verses 5 through 9, Paul, writing by divine inspiration, told Titus that he is to put in order the churches that are on the island of Crete. And the first way Paul tells Titus he is to put the churches in order on the island of Crete is by the establishment of elders.

And now as we come to verses 10 through 16 of chapter 1, you see that one of the reasons things were in such disorder in these churches is because there were many false teachers in these churches. You'll notice in verse 10, We read, for there are many who are insubordinate.

And while it is indeed sad to see that there were many false teachers in the churches on the island of Crete, and while it is indeed sad to see that there are many false teachers in the church today, it should not be surprising. There have been false teachers in the church ever since the serpent in the garden. Satan in the garden was the first false teacher, and he loves to try to destroy the church. So while false teachers are sad to see in the church, they are not to be unexpected.

But as a result, how should you address them? And that brings us to our text this morning. And the text calls us to rebuke false teachers. So with this in mind, let us pray and ask God to bless the reading and the preaching of his word. Our heavenly father, we do come to your word. We praise you, we bless your name, that we get to hear the very voice of God in the reading of the holy scriptures. But that the voice of God would penetrate our hearts takes the work of your spirit. So we pray that we would not only hear the voice of God, but that by the power of your spirit, this portion of your word would penetrate our hearts. We would receive it. We would love it. We would store it up in our lives, store it up in our hearts and practice it in our lives. We pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen. Hear now the word of God, Titus chapter one, beginning in verse 10.

For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party. They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach. One of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, said, Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.

This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, not devoting themselves to Jewish myths and the commands of people who turn away from the truth, To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure. But both their minds and their consciences are defiled. They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work. Amen. Thus ends the reading of God's holy word. May he bless the proclamation of it to our lives.

Why does the Bible command you to rebuke false teachers? After all, that is exactly what the text has just called you to do. Verse 13 says, rebuke them sharply. So do you rebuke because you really just enjoy conflict? Does the Bible call you to rebuke false teachers because you have this sort of weird pleasure in calling people out in sin? Does the Bible call you to rebuke because you're supposed to think that you're better than other people and you know more than them?

Well, our text this morning explains why you rebuke false teachers. And you're given three reasons for rebuking false teachers in our text this morning. First, rebuke false teachers because they are destructive. Second, rebuke

false teachers that they may repent. And third, rebuke false teachers because they are impure. So because they are destructive, that they may repent. and because they are impure. So first, rebuke false teachers because they are destructive.

Look again at verses 10 through 12. For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party. They must be silenced. since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach. One of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, said, Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons. So in verses 10 through 12, you see that false teachers are destructive. First, he calls them insubordinate.

This means that these people are unwilling to submit to God-ordained authority, particularly the God-ordained authority of the Word of God, which is a trustworthy word, as verse 9 described it. They will not submit to the trustworthy word of God, the God-ordained authority. They are really the exact opposite at this point as the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ in Luke chapter 2 verse 51 submitted to his earthly parents. And he submitted to this God-ordained authority over him, even though he was the second person of the Trinity, God himself who had taken on flesh.

It's the same word used here of these people when it says insubordinate, only this is the one difference between the word here and the word used to describe Jesus in Luke 2.51.

In this passage, in subordinate, it has this little thing called an alpha privative on the front, or a little prefix, the letter A in English. And we do this all the time in the English language as well. You put a letter or a couple of letters on the front of a word, and it serves the purpose of making that word now mean the opposite of what it previously meant. So for example, someone goes from being submissive to being unsubmissive. Someone goes from being a theist to being an atheist. That letter or those letters put on the front of the word make it mean it's opposite. These people are being the opposite of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He was willing to submit himself, humble himself to the God-ordained authority over him, Luke 2.51. These people are being insubordinate, unsubmissive to the God-ordained authority in their lives. And why are they being so unsubmissive?

Well, in part, it's because they think they know more than everyone else. They're know-it-alls. Look at them. They are called empty talkers and deceivers. You see, they're not at a shortage of words. They do plenty of talking. The problem is their talk is empty. It's devoid of truth. It's devoid of any real value.

It may have been persuasive. It may have been crafty and cunning, as was the serpent in the garden. It may have been pleasurable to the ears. It may have made people feel good, but it was empty. It's the way Isaiah describes the idols in his book. When he describes the idols as empty wind. That's what these people's words were. They were empty wind, devoid of any real truth.

And therefore he calls them deceivers in verse 10. And this word literally means mind misleaders. It literally means mind misleaders. So is it a big deal that there are mind misleaders out there, even in the church, that even in the church there are people who mislead the minds of the people?

Is this a big deal? I mean, after all, plenty of these mind misleaders will make the people around them feel very good. They'll tell people things that they want to hear. People will be happy. In large measure, at times at least, underneath a mind misleader. So is it really that bad if their teaching is misleading, if people feel okay about it?

You might think of it in this way. Imagine you go and you're hiking in a mountainous region where you've never been before and you get to this crossroads, this fork in the path. And you're trying to compare and contrast which direction you should go. And you look one way, and the path looks pretty safe. Looks like you should be able to go down it, and it would be okay. But as you look a bit closer, you think, I actually believe this is going to end in a great cliff, and I'm likely to fall and die. And then you look the other way, and it looks a bit more treacherous, a bit more difficult, but you're persuaded that it actually would ultimately get you where you need to go. But before you make your decision, a guide comes along, and this guide tells you, just follow me. I know which way to go. Look how nice this path is. Look how wide it is. Look how easily you can traverse it. And look at that other way. It's rough. It's difficult. It's going to be hard. Don't go that way, please follow me.

And in the end, you do follow this guide, and then you do fall off that cliff, because it does end as you expected, and you die. Well, that image for your physical body I think captures something of what these misleaders do for your soul, for your mind. It might have a lot of pleasantness to it, it might have a lot of immediate ease to it, but it will end spiritually the same sort of way that that other illustration ended physically. It ends in death.

And so these things are important. And this sort of false teaching, he says, applies specifically in this context to the circumcision party, verse 10. Now the Circumcision Party, these were just a group of people who were what we would call legalists.

What they believed is that you were accepted by God in some measure by your law-keeping. That in some measure, that is what enabled you to be declared righteous in the sight of God. Now this idea that you are accepted in the sight of God by your law-keeping is anti-Christian. Christ kept the law for you in your place so that you would be declared righteous in the sight of God. Now, as a Christian, yes, you strive to keep God's law, but not so that you can earn a spot in heaven or save yourself. You strive to keep God's law because you love Jesus Christ. The Spirit says that these false teachers, in verse 11, must be silenced. That might sound harsh to you, but do you realize what verse 11 says they are doing?

They're destructive, aren't they? They are upsetting whole families by what they teach. You see, these false teachings have real life consequences. Entire families are being destroyed because of the false teaching under which they are living. False teaching destroys families. And while much of the false teaching today at some level might be different than this particular false teaching, the result of destroying families hasn't changed, has it? Think about the biggest false teachings out there today.

What is the result of them? The destruction of the family. Again, it may not always be legalism as it was here. It may be in other forms today, but the end result is the same. What do you see with the promotion of the LGBT community, for example? That type of false teaching, which is in the churches, in lots of churches.

This false idea of tolerance that you never ever speak of sin. What's the result? Are families more united or are they destroyed? They are destroyed. So while it may manifest itself differently, the point that is being made at this point is that false teaching destroys and upsets families.

These people, for example, may have spoken of grace and mercy and forgiveness, but because of their legalistic attitudes, Grace and mercy and forgiveness were not really present in their lives. That would have been the result in their context. Sure, we'll use the word grace. Sure, we'll use the word mercy. Kind of like the book of Galatians.

But in the end, you better not cross me because the way of salvation is by works, not by grace. And so there's no real forgiveness. There's no real love. And it destroys families because you know what happens in families? whether church families or literal families, there's going to be difficulties and there are going to be conflicts. And if no mercy and grace can be shown, destruction will be the result. And that's what was happening in these contexts. And so he says of them in verse 12 that they're liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons, and they know it. This is their own poet.

J. Gresham Machen in the early 1900s, and I may have shared this once from the pulpit, but it always strikes me, J. Gresham Machen in the early 1900s, he's in Germany, and he's studying under men who, and if you don't know J. Gresham Machen, he's a theologian, believed in the Bible as a word of God and so forth, very, very faithful man of God. And so he's in Germany in the early 1900s, and he's studying underneath these liberal theologians. I'm talking about theological liberalism.

And these were men who would, for example, deny the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, core doctrines of the Christian faith. These professors under whom he was studying would have denied these things. And so what struck him so much, though, was this. While he was studying underneath all these people, they seemed pretty nice. Actually seemed to have relatively morally upright lives. And this was hard for him. Because he's thinking, you deny the very foundations of the morality that I uphold, and yet you seem like a pretty decent guy.

And then about 10 years later, there was this thing, you may have heard of it, called World War I. And Machen basically said, it was there that I saw the real results of their teaching. And so it doesn't always happen overnight. You may not always see the sort of wickednesses that result from false teaching two days after you've heard a sermon or 10 years even after you've heard something or somebody, your friend maybe is sitting under this thing and you know it's wrong and they seem pretty okay for three, four, five, six, but it's going to bear its fruit and the fruit is going to be As a man thinks, so is he," says Proverbs 23, 17. But where do you see false teaching today in perhaps your own life?

Well, you should always be appropriately serious about reflecting on whoever is preaching in this pulpit, whether it's me or Hunter or someone else. you should have an appropriate sense of, is that the word of God? You should be a Berean, you should search the scriptures. Because we are fallen sinners and we are liable to err. And in a kind

way, I would suggest, you should talk to us if you see something in our preaching that is out of accord with your understanding of the scriptures.

But also, you can see it in other ways in life. Sure, sometimes false teaching happens in a very direct, heretical way. Somebody comes to your door and they don't believe Jesus is God. You meet somebody at the pool and you find out they don't believe that the Trinity is biblical. Okay, that's heretical. Sometimes it's that obvious.

But a lot of times it's perhaps through their lives. Somebody would preach at least a lot of true doctrine, but they will live such a life that it's not as though you're trying to be picky. It says their whole life is an abomination, completely contradicts everything that they teach. Well, that in a way is promoting falseness, and that is a level of false teaching, false teaching through the life. But then also, and perhaps most susceptibly, False teachers deceive by what they don't say. So, they refuse to preach the whole counsel of God. They will never, for example, preach on the doctrine of hell. They will never preach on the place of the law in the Christian life to frame your way of life. Why not? Because some of those doctrines don't sit well. They can rub people a little bit the wrong way. so they choose not to teach them.

So listen not only to what is said, but what is not said. But secondly, rebuke false teachers that they may repent, verses 13 and 14. We read here, this testimony is true, therefore rebuke them sharply that they may be sound in the faith, not devoting themselves to Jewish myths and the commands of people who turn away from the truth. So the goal of rebuking here is not so that you win an argument. It's that they may repent. The text says, rebuke them sharply that they may be sound in the faith.

You always rebuke with the hope that those whom you are rebuking would be sound in the faith. This word sound here is sometimes used in the context of physical health. So you go to see a doctor. and they help put you in good health physically by giving you medicine. And so when you're rebuking someone, it's so that they would be put in good health spiritually. This rebuking is never to be done in vindictiveness or hatred. This rebuking is a labor of love that is often exercised in tears.

What did Jesus say when he looked at the people of Jerusalem who were rebelling against him? He said this. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it, how often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings? And you would not." And then in 2 Timothy chapter 2, listen to what Paul, by divine inspiration, says.

The Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome, but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance, leading to a knowledge of the truth. And they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will. So you see, this rebuke that is in view in Titus 1, 10 through 16 is to come from a place of love for God and love for the person straying. You lovingly call them to repentance even through tears. Psalm 126, those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy. You might know someone in your life and their doctrine is heretical and their lives are an abomination.

And what you are to do is to not give up on them. You are to, with hope that God can grant them repentance, call them to repentance. Do not give up on the person or people that you might be called to call to repentance, to rebuke. Don't give up on them.

For this reason, what if God gave up on you when your doctrine began to err? What would your life be like if God began to give up on you when you began to stray or when you begin to stray? And so if this is the way God has treated you, do not rebuke. because you despise the person or you think there's no hope for them and you're angry with them, rebuke them because you love God and you love them and you believe that repentance is indeed possible. So two questions very practically for you to consider whenever you have to rebuke, particularly someone who's teaching false doctrine, but in general, when you have to rebuke, here's a question to ask yourself.

Am I rebuking this person out of love or out of hatred? It's almost like Jonah. If you ever had to rebuke like Jonah, do you secretly just hope God won't show them mercy? That was Jonah's attitude. And then secondly, when you rebuke, genuinely strive to believe that repentance is possible. Because it is. Because God is the one who grants repentance. Thirdly, rebuke false teachers because they are impure. that you should rebuke them because they are destructive, you should rebuke them that they may repent, and thirdly, rebuke false teachers because they are impure, verses 15 through 16.

To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure. But both their minds and their consciences are defiled. They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work. Well, in these verses, the spirit contrasts purity with impurity. And what makes something pure or impure? Well, these false teachers are suggesting that what makes something pure and impure is merely external. That if you don't eat these foods and you do eat these foods, you can be pure.

What they particularly had in view here has something to do with the Jewish purity laws surrounding food. And we gather that when you consider the whole context. He's dealing with those who are especially of the circumcision party. verse 10. And he says of these people that they are upholding Jewish myths in verse 14 and commands of men or commands of people in verse 14. So the reference here is to the pure and impure foods of the Jewish purity laws.

So they're saying if you just abstain from that and you eat that you can be pure. Today it would be akin to something like this. If you want to be pure, just homeschool your children. If you want to be pure, just don't go to the movie theater. If you want to be pure, just don't celebrate Christmas. If you want to be pure, just, you want your children to be pure, just give them a purity ring.

Now all of these things I've just listed are permissible for the Christian to do or not to do. It takes discernment and judgment. However, none of these things that I've just listed are thus saith the Lord from God. And they cannot make a person pure or impure in and of themselves. Why not? Because purity is never ultimately to be located in mere external things. Purity is located in the human heart. That's also where impurity is located. Listen to the words of Jesus Christ.

There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him. But the things that come out of a person are what defile him. Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him since it enters not his heart but his stomach and is expelled? Thus he declared all foods clean. And he said, what comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness, all these evil things come from within and they defile a person.

You see, if the evil was merely out there somewhere, you know who would have been evil? I hope he's your best friend, Jesus Christ. Because you know what kind of world Jesus lived in? A sin-cursed and fallen world. He would have been a sinner like you if the evil was merely out there. But because evil really rises up from the heart, Jesus was pure even in a sinful world because Jesus is sinless. So purity and impurity are a matter of the heart.

Everything these false teachers do is impure. There's not a single pure thing that these false teachers were doing. Yeah, they abstained from this food and they made sure to only eat that food, but they were still impure. And why is that? Well, look what the word says. Verse 16, they are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work. Why are they unfit for any good work? Because their hearts were impure in every work that they did. No matter how it appeared externally, they were impure. Although they profess to know God, they do not please God because their hearts are impure.

So what then is the solution? What do these people need? Well, they need a pure heart. And with a pure heart, they could truly begin to live a pure life. But where can they get a pure heart? It only comes from Jesus Christ. The only place one can find a pure heart is in the Lord Jesus Christ. You see, these false teachers have this sort of an attitude.

I need heart, spiritual heart surgery, and I'm gonna perform the surgery myself. And that would never work physically and it will never work spiritually. You could not give yourself, even if you were a surgeon, you would never give yourself your own heart surgery because you would die. And spiritually, you cannot give yourself the surgery your heart needs. You need the Lord Jesus Christ to give you a divine purity, a pure perfect purity that only can come from him. You will never make your heart pure by your own efforts.

Listen to what the hymn writer says. Not the labors of my hands can fulfill thy law's demands. Could my zeal no respite know? Could my tears forever flow? All for sin could not atone. Thou must save and thou alone. Nothing in my hand I bring. Simply to thy cross I cling. Naked come to thee for dress. Helpless look to thee for grace. Foul I to the fountain fly. Wash me, Savior, or I die. Earlier this week, I was reading about the conversion of John Bunyan, and it's fascinating to hear how the Lord worked on his life.

There was a season where he was underneath great agony of conscience, and he would confess his sins and confess his sins, but he never knew peace. And then he said it dawned on him one day, as if God had spoken to his very soul, and he heard or thought these words, your righteousness is in heaven. And that hit him like a ton of bricks, because he realized his righteousness was never going to be found in himself, but his righteousness was ascended and seated at the right hand of God the Father for him. The Lord Jesus Christ was his righteousness. And it was this reality that so penetrated his heart that he began to live a life that was more pure, sincerely pure, seeking godliness from a heart that had been changed by the glorious gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Where is your

righteousness this morning? Is your righteousness found in yourself? You will look there and you will not obtain it. Jesus Christ must be your righteousness.

He is the one who ever lives to make intercession for his people. Paraphrasing one of the Puritans, your justification on earth depends every moment on Christ's intercession for you in heaven. Your justification on earth depends every moment on Christ's intercession for you in heaven. And how long will he intercede for you? he ever lives to make intercession for us. That is your delight. That is your joy. That is your hope.

And only when Christ has granted you that we could say imputed purity, will you begin to live a life for his glory. And so you see, this is the third reason that you are to rebuke false teachers. You rebuke them because they are impure. You want them to be pure. You want them to be washed. You want them to be immersed underneath the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ, that they might be made new creations in Christ Jesus. And so you rebuke them.

Well, today we have seen that you rebuke false teachers for the three reasons, because they are destructive, so that they may repent, and because they are impure. And this text, undoubtedly, so obviously in the context, is specifically dealing with false teachers and specifically dealing with extreme cases. And we want to acknowledge that. We can't just take this and sort of plop it on every situation. That would be an appropriate use of the text. At the same time, there are principles here for all of us to consider. How am I rebuking? What is my heart behind my rebuke? What are my intentions? What are my desires? Let us rebuke, but rebuke in a way that's actually godly, not with malicious intent or hatred.

Let us pray. Almighty God, we thank you for our ever-living intercession of Jesus Christ. God, we thank you and praise you that we have a righteousness that cannot be stripped from us, a righteousness that cannot be broken or taken or in any way removed. A righteousness that can neither increase nor decrease, for it is perfect righteousness, and it is immutable righteousness. It is the righteousness of Christ imputed to us that cannot change. Not only will it not change, it indeed cannot change. Oh God, we thank you that we get to be pure. Oh God, I pray that everyone in this room who knows Jesus would really know that they are pure in the sight of God.

And I know, Father, that that's a hard thing for the saint to believe about, him or herself, but Lord God, it's the truth of the scriptures, and I pray that we would embrace it. We'd embrace it because it's true, and because unlike those false teachings which lead to destruction, it leads to building up, it leads to righteousness of life, it leads to increased holiness. It is good for us to embrace these truths, and I pray that we would. And Lord God, as perhaps one or many of us struggle this week with these things, Grant us the grace to believe it afresh. Oh Lord God, we need your help. Help us in the name of Jesus, amen.