

Well, let's take our Bibles and turn to Titus. If you're visiting with us, we are a church that tends to pick a book in the Bible and just work our way through that verse by verse, that's the best way to understand your Bible. So we're in a study on Titus, if you'd stand in honor of God's word, Titus 1:10-16. We're going to address the issue of false teachers, and the danger of deception in the church, a message I've called 'Don't Be Deceived'. 'Don't Be Deceived.'

Titus 1:10-16. In fact, we'll back up into verse nine, Titus 1:9, this'll get our context. Speaking of the elder, he's the kind of man holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught. That he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which ought not to be taught for the sake of dishonest gain. One of them, 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 faith, not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth. To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure. But even their mind and conscience are defiled. They profess to know God, but in their works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient and disqualified for every good work", so reads God's word, you may be seated.

You know that for almost 20 years now we've been involved in a war on terrorism. If you talk to military strategists, they pegged this war as an asymmetrical war. It's not a conventional war, it's not war as we kind of know it, with two armies somewhat equal in uniforms, who are divided by battle lines. There they are, and they duke it out until one becomes the winner. No, an asymmetrical war is a war between two parties, one is strong, one is weak. One is vastly outnumbered, and from their perspective the only way they can do some damage to the opponents who are vastly superior to them, is to embrace covert operations, misinformation, subterfuge that's the work of terrorism, and we've been in a fight with terrorism for 20 years. It's an asymmetrical war. They use assassination, suicide bombs, they infiltrate the country that they want to harm. They're behind the battle lines.

In conventional war, two armies face each other, they're across from one another. In an asymmetrical war your enemy is not across from you, your enemy is among you. Now with that in mind, as we come to Titus 1:6-10 we're going to be reminded that spiritual warfare is asymmetrical. The enemy we face uses deception, subterfuge, they're covert in the way they pursue the conflict. They're not so much across from us, they are among us, they are theological insurgents who work behind the battle lines. Who try to deceive, and destroy.

We need to bare that in mind as we come to Titus 1:10-16, and you know what, if you look at the rest of the New Testament, if you listen to Jesus, if you follow his followers you're going to see that they are constantly reminding us that spiritual warfare is asymmetrical. That the enemy is within the church, often. Jesus warned us didn't he, in Matthew 7:15, beware of false prophets who are wolves in sheep's clothing, who ravage peoples faith. Pretty strong language for the Lord Jesus. Paul warned about deceiving spirits that preach another Jesus and a different Gospel. Second Corinthians 11:2-4, the apostle Peter, in 2 Peter 2:1-3 says, "That you know what, the church is in danger of theological insurgents who secretly enter the church bringing, listen, destructive heresies."

We've quoted Peter, why not quote John, another disciple, 1 John 4:1-3 and 2 John 7 the beloved disciple of the Lord Jesus, the apostle of love no less, is the one that warns us that there's coming a day

when the man of sin will appear, when the anti-Christ, a man who will do wonders, and signs, and deceive the nations will appear. But he wants you to know while the history waits for that moment the spirit of anti-Christ has already gone out into the world, and the spirit of anti-Christ is to be seen in false teachers, heretics, theological insurgents within the church who will say that Jesus is not virgin born, Jesus is not sinless, Jesus is not deity, Jesus is not come in the flesh. And then you've got Jude, who by the way is the half brother of the Lord Jesus and in his little letter, he warns about, listen ungodly men, infiltrating the church and turning grace into a license to sin.

Just pause a moment, let that language just sit awhile in your consciousness. Ravenous wolves, destructive heresies, ungodly men coming into the church. I want you to bare that in mind because past, or present, these warnings remind the church that deception abounds. That gospel corruption exists. That false Christs are everywhere. That spiritual phoniness and subterfuge is alive and well, and so the church needs to be serious about error, and the church needs to be doctrinally discerning. I know that's not in vogue in modern evangelicalism, but it's biblical. I hope they're rooted in the text.

Paul wants to remind Titus, to remind the churches in Crete that they are in constant danger of infiltration by false teachers. Let me just pause and unpack those two things. We need to be aware this morning of the intrusion of error, and the need to be discerning, discriminating, judgemental when it comes to certain things. I hope you take error seriously, the average evangelical doesn't. The vocab of the average evangelical today is love, tolerance, acceptance and I'm all for those things when they're properly defined and applied to the right situation.

But there's to be no tolerance in the church for error. I mean Paul says to Titus, "When it comes to these guys that are insubordinate, idle talkers and deceivers", what does he say, "Their mouths must be stopped, they must be rebuked sharply". There's to be no tolerance for doctrine that's deviant, doctrine that preaches another Jesus, doctrine that preaches another gospel. In fact if you go to 2 Timothy, Timothy was a peer of Titus and in the pastoral epistles, Paul addresses some similar issues, both to Timothy and to Titus.

Paul describes a heresy that's kind of gathering momentum in the church that says the resurrection is already past. That the resurrection is a spiritual thing, not a physical hope that lies in the future. Do you know how he describes that? As gangrene, it's not a very nice picture. Paul is saying, that doctrine, which is a denial of both the physical resurrection of Jesus and the physical resurrection that he promises. That's a denial of that, that's cancer to the body, that's cancer to the body, that's gangrene. You don't tolerate cancer, you cut it out, that's why he says rebuke them sharply. The word sharply in our text we'll look at it next week is the surgeons would cut it out, cut it away.

Listen, you're smart people, listen, there are doctrines that are true, and believed upon, they bring about eternal salvation. But the converse is also true, there are doctrines that are not true, there are things said about Jesus that are not true, there are views on how to be right with God that are not true and if you believe on them you can be damned, lost. Believing the wrong thing is destructive, so we need to be serious about error.

Number two, we need to be doctrinally discerning. As I said, given our culture, given the temperature in evangelical church, this isn't something that's well received where you're being called upon to make judgements about, this is good and this is bad, this is true and this is false, this is right and this is wrong. It's antithetical to our culture to think that way. We have a generation of young people who are escaping

our university campuses, who have been indoctrinated into the thought that all things are equally true, which means our young people have been given an education that fails at the most fundamental thing.

Not all things can be true. Two plus three doesn't make four, it's just not true. Not all things are true. You know that inately not to be true, and you know what, when it comes to choices in life, when it comes to life patterns and health choices, you know you've got to be discriminating. There's some foods that are really good for you, and some foods that are very fatty and indulged in, in great quantities are not good for you.

Lacking in sleep isn't good for you, sleeping long is good for you once in a while. I almost made a mistake there. Young people were going pastor, preach it, preach it. But you get my point, same in the spiritual realm, not all doctrines good, just because you hear the name of Jesus used, doesn't mean it's true.

Paul said to the Corinthians they will preach another Jesus, they will preach another gospel. Jesus commends the church at Ephesus in Revelation 2:1-6, I want to commend you, you do not bare those that are evil, and you do not accept those who say they're apostles, but are not. Just listen to that, in the New Testament time there were people in the church who said they were apostles, but they weren't.

There were people in the church who preached Jesus, but they didn't preach the true Jesus. There were people in the church that preached a gospel, but it was a false gospel, and what was true then is true now, so get serious about error, and get serious about to be discriminating, to know right from wrong, know your Bible, know the text so that you can indeed spot the error. First John 4:1-3, test the spirits. That's the apostle of love, it's not unloving to be discriminating and to know right from wrong. Test the spirits to see if they be of Christ, if they measure up to the doctrine and person of Christ and His gospel.

What do we read in 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22, just preached that at Grace Community a week or two ago at a men's conference, I took that as my text, test all things, hold fast to what is good, and shun that which has the appearance of evil. Listen folks, I'm taking a long time just to say this, error comes dressed up as truth and wolves come dressed up as sheep, and you've got to take error seriously, and you've got to be discriminating, you've got to be able to distinguish between truth and error, right and wrong, light and darkness, the primary and the secondary, the eternal and the temporary.

You know when it comes to discernment I like to tell this illustration about the first time when I was at elementary school in northern Ireland, where I heard the story of Little Red Riding Hood. You know, it would probably be banned today, not politically correct, scare children. In those days you got it, and we were told the story of Little Red Riding Hood, was going through the forest with a bag of goodies to see her grandmother, and the big bad wolf spotted her and said, "I want those goodies", and he hatched a plan. He ran ahead of her, he gobbled up granny.

Gobbled up granny. He had then dressed up as granny, sat in the bed, Little Red Riding Hood comes in to her grandmothers house, but she realizes, "Hey, I don't know this, this doesn't have the right feel", and so she looks at this person pretending to be granny and said you know what, "Oh what a deep voice you have", do you remember what the wolf said? "Well all the better to speak to you with", "And oh what big ears you have", "All the better to hear you with", and, "Oh what big eyes you have", "All the better to see you with", and, "Oh what big teeth you have", and the wolf goes, "All the better to eat you with", and he jumps out, he gobbles Little Red Riding Hood up, and he gets the bag of goodies.

I heard that at elementary school, and I remember all the girls in their pigtails were screaming, "Ahhh", and I'm sitting there, forgive me, I'm going, "She deserved it". That was my first thought, "She deserved it", because I'm telling you how dumb is this girl, I mean, the ears, the eyes, the teeth, the nose, come on! It is a wolf in grandmothers dress. Now heres the point, the joke is on us. I don't know about you, but I think it's a fact, look out on the average evangelical church, and the average evangelical and they are as naïve as Little Red Riding Hood.

They can't bring themselves to condemn anything, they're not willing to make doctrinal distinctives, they're not willing to die on certain hills. We're bending, to every wind of doctrine, there's no discernment in the church, and that was an issue then, and it's an issue now. So let's come to our text, a little bit of a long introduction, but it's such a vital subject, so important because in our text, we're going to look at it this morning and next Sunday morning, Paul is writing to Titus and he says, "Hey, I want you to be alert to the fact", listen verse 10, and he doesn't say a few, he says there are many, many rebellious insubordinates in the church who don't submit to the authority of God's word, the gospel or Godly leadership.

They're idle talkers, they spew, they bloviate nonsense, such as Jewish fables in verse 14 and the commandments of men rather than the Word of God. They are deceivers, just again, lets get real to the situation that the church is always in danger of being deceived. Don't forget that the devil, according to 2 Corinthians 11, can transform himself into an angel of light. Do you realize the devil goes to church? Do you realize the devil can be dressed up as a minister or a priest, as he spews false doctrine, and lies, and robs Christ of his glory and adds many things to the salvation of grace alone, and faith alone, and Jesus alone?

Paul is alerting Titus to that fact. Now let me put it in it's context, best thing to do is just simply, and generally draw contrast between verses five through nine and verses 10 through 16. Here's the meaning of our text in the context. Verses five through nine we looked at those, Paul says to Titus, "Hey I want you to stay in Crete," that's an island in the Mediterranean, "I want you to stay there, and I want you to set in order the things that are lacking." And here's one of those things, appoint elders in every city. And these elders need to be godly men, their homes need to be in good shape, their marriages need to be good, their children need to be faithful, these men are not self-willed, quick tempered, given to wine, violent, greedy for money.

They're hospitable, and then in verse nine, holding fast the faithful Word as it has been taught, that they may be able by sound doctrine to exhort and convince. So verses five to nine, keep with me, verses five to nine, Paul teaches church order. And church order is brought about by godly men preaching sound doctrine. But then you've got this contrast. He moves from church order where godly men, faithful men preach the gospel, to church disorder, as un-godly men who profess to know God, but don't know Him, who teach that which ought not to be taught, who don't preach sound doctrine, and they spread the vision and deception in the church.

So that's where we're at. And it is a reminder by the way, that the greater danger facing the church throughout it's history has been false Christians, and false teachers within the church. They've done more damage than secular, pagan, governments, and persecutors outside the church. Just read church history, and you'll find, we've got some folks with us here this morning, part of our congregation who either are from, or their families are from eastern Europe, from Romania, Poland and Russia, and their families survived persecution. Even thrived in persecution. You know what, when the iron curtain fell down, the eastern European pastors would often communicate to the western European pastors, "Pray

for us, freedom could be dangerous for us. Material wealth could be dangerous for us, now the false disciple can come back into the church because he doesn't have to pay a price."

So study church history, and you'll find that the church has not so much been threatened by forces without, as forces within. Not the secularist, but the false teacher, not the persecutor, but the false disciple, and we've got to be careful, because we see secularism rising in the United States, a new day is dawning that's rather frightening. Maybe we're entering an era where it's going to cost us more to be a follower of Jesus Christ, I don't wish that, but we will embrace it.

If that's both the will and providence of God, and we'll need to stand strong and know what our hill is to die on. But while we're guarding the front door of the church against this rise of secularism, be careful that false teachers are not slipping in the back door who can destroy the church far, far quicker. And that's what Titus is being warned about. Oh yeah, outside the church was the Roman government, and governmental censorship and pressure, societal pressure to conform. And that's a danger, so guard the front door, but guard the back door from those who profess to know God, but are not true followers of Jesus Christ, who are abominable, disobedient and disqualified for every good work.

If you're following me, we've got three things we want to say, only going to cover one and a half this morning and pick this up next week. What I call the contrast, the characteristics and the confrontation. Let me outline that, what do I mean?

We're going to see verse 10 is contrasted with verse nine, and we'll draw something from that and then, we'll begin to look at and finish it next week, Paul outlines a profile of a false teacher. Some big ticket items you and I can look for on false teachers and teaching. And then we'll look at the confrontation where Titus is told the church cannot tolerate false gospels and false teachers. Their mouths are to be shut, and they are to be rebuked severely.

Let's look at the contrast. Now before I jump in there, let me back up quickly, remember our theme is 'doing good'? That's the theme of Titus. We're going to get into passages here pretty soon where the idea of doing good comes through, and you and I want to live a life of gospel impact where we bless people, we love people, we bring comfort where there is despair, we bring help where there is harm, all of that. But we're trying to build this argument throughout the letter, what are the marks of doing good. In verses 1-4, doing good is the product of the work of the word and verses 5 through 9 doing good is tied to good leaders, leaders leading us, and us following them, and what we're going to learn in verses 10 through 16 is doing good requires rejecting bad theology.

If you're going to make an impact for Jesus Christ you'd better have a right theology, a right orthodoxy that feeds your right practice of that doctrine. But here's the contrast, verse 10. For, notice how it begins, look at your Bible, verse 10. For, that's a conjunction. What does a conjunction do? Well a conjunction joins the preceding verse with the verse that we're about to look at, so there's a grammatical link between verse nine and verse 10, and I want you to see it.

Verse nine is this, the elder is to be the kind of man who holds fast to the faithful Word. He's got theological convictions. He's been taught that, and he himself is able to teach that which he will do. And he will both, look at verse nine, exhort, convince those who contradict. For, here's the argument, for there are many insubordinate idle talkers and deceivers. So here's the contrast. Why do we need good

elders? Why do we need pastors who are mature in life, who have got a track record of discipleship and faithfulness in their family, in their marriage, who are men of theological acumen?

Who know their Bibles, who are not frightened to preach doctrine, their messages aren't all peppy and psychological, and positive. No, they're men who get into the weeds of Gods Word. Why do we need those men? Because, for, there are a ton of false teachers, who do the opposite, who are the opposite, they're not godly. They're motivated by greed and materialism, they're corrupt and defiled in their heart, they're abominable, that's very strong language, abominable, disobedient, disqualified for every good work.

I want you to see my first thought, the contrast. The contrast is this, good men teaching sound doctrine. Appoint them in every city. Why? Because there are many in the churches in Crete who do the opposite, and we've got to confront them. That's striking. It reminds us of the quote we mentioned a week or so ago from John Calvin, who said, "Every faithful pastor, every good church leader has two voices", I'll let them speak. "A pastor ought to have two voices, one for gathering the sheep and another for warding off and driving away wolves and thieves. The scriptures supplies him with the means of doing both."

I hear a lot today, and I've talked to my pastor peers, and everybody, you know what, I don't really preach doctrine, and I try to stay positive. Here's the issue, if all you're going to do is feed the flock, and you're not going to warn them about false doctrine, you're not going to show them what it looks like, and you're not going to call out false teachers, because Paul does in his letter to Timothy, he names a couple of them and here he tells us the issues the group of the circumcision, he identified a Jewish perversion of the gospel. He's calling it out. So Paul didn't do what many of my peers are doing because you can't just feed the flock, and you can't just keep it positive.

You've got to warn, you've got to call your church to discrimination because if all you do is feed the flock, and you don't warn them about wolves, all you're doing is fattening the flock for slaughter, and young people, and young families especially, who have not been grounded in truth, they become prey for predators, theological predators, who are pursuing an asymmetrical war against the church.

They will destroy the church from the inside. They will do what the government, and the secular culture can't do. Isn't that why Vance Havner, the old southern Baptist preacher said, "The church has always had more trouble from termites on the inside, than from woodpeckers on the outside". We need to embrace that, in fact let me remind you quickly of the marks of a true elder. He points, the true elder points, what I mean by ... he leads, he governs, he's an overseer, he exercises spiritual oversight, he anticipates what the church needs, he sets before the church a path, a direction the church needs to follow. So elders point, they lead, they oversee.

Number two, elders preach. They feed the flock the Word of God, they preach the whole counsel of God, they preach the word in season and out of season and they give the people not what they want, they give the people what they need.

Number three, they pursue. They love people, and they love God's people especially. Every shepherd is found among the flock, caring for the wounded flock, looking out for the sheep that is going astray. Remember Jesus told us about the eastern shepherd, that if he had a 100 sheep and one went astray, he'd leave the 99 and go and find the one. See that's the heart of the shepherd, he cares for the flock, he pursues the flock, he knows them by name.

The elder points, preaches, pursues. Fourthly, he prays. Any good elder, any good pastor, any good church leader will pray over his people. He will pray for them, their families, their struggles, their temptations, their challenges, the decisions they're about to make. He will visit them in hospital, and pray over them there.

Remember back in the Old Testament they had a high priest, wore a breast plate, and there were 12 stones on it, one for each of the 12 tribes of Israel, which means as he went into the presence of God, he went with the names of the tribes upon his heart. Any good elder will do that, but finally, he protects, he protects, he will fight the wolf, he will not stand for false doctrine, he will not allow it to be spoken, he will shut it up. He will rebuke it sharply, he will have two voices, he will gather the sheep said Calvin, and he will scatter the wolf.

What does that mean today? How do we apply this? I like what John Stott says, John Stott and his company and Titus says this, "When false teachers increase, the most appropriate long term strategy is to multiply the number of true teachers who are equipped to rebuke and rebut error." So that's the big lesson in this contrast, that's the big lesson between verses nine and ten, it's wedged in there. Why do we appoint good elders who know sound doctrine, because there are many insubordinate, rebellious, false teachers who deceive.

What's the churches best, bulwark defense against false doctrine? One of the best ways to defend themselves is to make sure that their pastors and elders are theologians, they're Bible specialists, they know the Word of God, they've got a militant spirit where necessary, they're loving most of the time, but even they express their love with the militancy against that which is harmful to the life of the church. So what does that mean? That means this, the church needs a body of men in leadership who understand the cruelty of heresy, the cruelty of heresy. Heresy damns people, the devil blinds the minds of those who believe not less they believe the glorious gospel. He blinds them with false teachers, and with religions, apart from Christianity, or even false Christianity.

What we need is men who know that love rejoices in the truth, men who rebuke rather than engage falsehood, men who are theologically trained, men who know that the gospel needs rescuing every generation. And men who belong to the church militant, who are not frightened of controversy. They're not controversialists, they don't get up every day wondering who am I going to fight with today, but they're not frightened of controversy. When they see the church in danger they will come to its rescue. That's what we need. Isn't that what Gresham Machen did, as he watched liberalism eat the heart out of American Presbyterianism. He saw the great Princeton theological seminary go sour. Theologically he stood against it. He wrote a famous book called, *Fundamentalism Versus Liberalism*. And in a message in 1932 in London, he talked about the need to engage controversy.

Because he was in the middle of controversy. He would ultimately leave and establish Westminster seminary both on the east and on the west, and Philadelphia and here in Escondido. He says this about controversy, "Men tell us that our preaching should be positive, not negative. That we can preach the truth without attacking error". But if we follow that advice we shall have to close our Bible and desert it's teaching. The New Testament is polemical, almost from beginning to end. Polemical means you're in controversy in conversation with someone you disagree with.

His point is this, if you're telling me like so many tell us in evangelicalism today, you know what, you want to avoid controversy, don't be picking theological fights. Be positive, be positive. The great Gresham Machen said, "That's impossible, it's impossible to do that and be a New Testament leader."

Read Corinthians, Paul writes one of the central chapters about the physical resurrection of Jesus, which is the precursor to our physical resurrection at the end of history, because there were those who were denying the resurrection, and that's why he poses this question, "If Christ be not risen, here's the problem with that. We're still in our sin, we've got no hope in the presence of death", so on and so forth.

Go to Colossians, it was some kind of gnostic, Jewish perversion of the gospel taking root there, it was based on human philosophy and genealogies and controversies and Paul says this, "Let no man cheat you out of Christ". The word cheat there is a very strong Greek word, means to rob. He says, "Hey, if you keep listening to this stuff they're going to rob you of the true Jesus". Read Galatians, Paul shocked the Judaiser that told the Galatians, "It's Jesus and Moses, it's faith and the law, you need to be circumcised, you need to be a partial Jew to be a complete Christian". The cross isn't enough, Jesus isn't enough, it's Moses and Jesus, it's the law and grace, it's merit and faith, and Paul says, "I'm shocked that you're so soon removed from the gospel, to another gospel".

Listen to those words. You guys are listening to another gospel. That's not the gospel you're listening to. What about Thessalonians? He was dealing with a prophetic fanaticism where people had been taught that they were in the day of the Lord and they were in a panic, and they were disengaging from life. They were becoming impractical as Christians. Just take that charge by Gresham Machen. Read your New Testament afresh, every letter deals with some theological controversy. And if you as a pastor buy into this notion today or a church leader, you know what, I don't deal with controversy. I don't say anything bad about other religions, I don't make judgements about peoples faith choices, that's nonsense, it's not New Testament.

But let me say, this by way of qualification, and move on. While I believe an elder or church leader ought not to be afraid of controversy, he doesn't need to go looking at necessarily or create it. But when he spots men who are teaching mans commandments in the place of Gods Word, when he spots someone teaching Jesus and something else, when he sees someone say its faith and your works, or its relationship with God and rituals of the church, then the dander on the back of his neck stands up, and he says, "No, and I'm gonna have to shut your mouth on that one. I'm going to have to rebuke you sharply." He won't run from that, but he won't love it either, that's my qualification. The elder is unafraid of controversy, but he's not a man who loves it. If you go to 2 Timothy 2:23-26, Paul says to Timothy, "You know what, the elder ought to be gentle, and patient, not angry when dealing with those who oppose the gospel, lest they have a chance to repent".

You read here in Titus 1:7, the bishop is to be blameless, the steward of God not self-willed, not quick tempered, not violent. So I'm just reminding myself and reminding others while we're up for controversy, while we're willing to die on certain doctrines. We're going to be forced into that by the actions of others. We're going to be forced by the cruelty of heresy, we're going to be forced by the threat of a certain doctrine posing danger to the life and health of the church. We're going to be forced by a love of Jesus, and his glory above our popularity and peace in the church.

But we have to be careful about lovelessness when we're dealing with controversy. You can become arrogant, you can be more a son of thunder than a son of God. Remember Jesus told James and John off, they were in controversy but instead of dealing in a Christian manner, what do they go, "Lord you know, you should call fire down, lets bomb the living daylights out of them", and Jesus said, "Did you guys know what spirit you're of?" He's not criticizing them for being discerning, he's not criticizing them for distinguishing between truth and error, and right and wrong, it's just the attitudes wrong guys.

Remember Jesus in his letter to the church at Ephesus in Revelation 2:1-7, "Hey, I love the fact that you don't bear those who are evil. I love the fact that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans which I hate", says Jesus. "I love the fact that you say there are apostles who are not apostles, and you tell them to get out of here, I love all of that, but I've got this against you. You've left your first love, you're not very loving, you're good at discernment, you're good at doctrinal precision, but that's lacking in love both for God and man because those two things go together."

I just want to challenge myself and remind you that we are to be discerning, that we are to create a bullwork between error and truth by picking men who know their Bibles and have got a militant spirit, and they are willing to call out the wolves in sheep's clothing. But, we've also got to tether that to grace, and love, and patience. I don't know about you, have you ever noticed these medicines they're now selling on the TV, you know I'm not sure that the side effects aren't worse than the disease. I mean have you ever listened to these? I've got a list going on in my head at the moment.

I don't want to make fun of people who are suffering but, bear me for a moment. You get this pill or this medicine, and after telling you what it's going to do to alleviate your skin problem, or your heart problem or whatever, they'll go on at the bottom of the screen, and they'll just say it very quickly, so they're hoping you miss it. But you know what, some side effects might be nausea, diarrhea, headaches, your hair might fallout, your body might give off an odor that would make a skunk embarrassed, if you're a woman you might grow a mustache, and in some cases the medicine might kill you. It said that on some of them, in some cases there has been known deaths. Thank you!

I'm just kind of concluding, are the side effects worse than the disease, and I just want to make sure that, while we want to be discerning and doctrinally precise and willing to stand for Jesus with a certain militancy, lets make sure that our discernment doesn't fall into lovelessness, and bitterness, and coldness for others, because then the side effects are worse than the disease, and that's damaging to the body of Christ too.

All right, for a few moments we're just going to make a start on what I call the characteristics. The characteristics, because Paul identifies for Titus that this group that he wants him to be wary of, verse 10, are especially those of the circumcision. We'll come back to that. But he's kind of identifying them. He's actually telling us roughly the group that we're dealing with, and then he kind of describes aspects of them, what motivates them, verse 11, they're motivated by dishonest gain. Their hearts are defiled, and impure, and unbelieving, verse 15. They are abominable in their nature and character, disobedient, disqualified from every good work.

What are their actions? Well they subvert whole households by the things they teach, verse 11. They are insubordinate idle talkers, deceivers. You get a bunch of characteristics here about this category of false teachers. So I've divided it up for you and we'll make a start, and this will hep you. If you're taking notes, there's three things that mark them, three characteristics, they are deceptive theologically, they don't have the gospel, they're deviant when it comes to the gospel. Number two they are divisive ecclesialogically, they divide the church, they don't unite the church, they divide the church, they draw disciples after themselves, and they are detestable morally. When you pull the curtain back, and you look into their lives they are greedy, materialistic, they are self-centered, self-willed, they are detestable, abominable says Paul.

Kind of strong language isn't it? Here's the one I'm going to concentrate on for five minutes. Deceptive, that's their first characteristic, they are deceptive. Verse 10, for there are many insubordinate, that

means rebellious, won't submit to authority, idle talkers, they kind of pontificate and bloviate on nonsense like Jewish fables and genealogies, peripheral things around the fringes of Christianity, and they are deceivers. That tells you their intent. They're out to deceive, they're out to rob you of Christ, they're out to subvert the gospel, they're out to harm the church. So they are deceptive and to some degree they're deceived themselves, aren't they verse 16, they profess to know God but they deny Him. How much they're aware of that I don't know. So to some degree they're deceived themselves and their actions are deceptive.

Now, we're not fully sure who they are, a big clue is they're of the circumcision. That's language out of the book of Galatians. The Judaiser who followed Paul and his missionary journey. Wherever he preached the gospel, they came in behind him to try and subvert the church and they would teach, "Hey, you know what Paul's right, Jesus. Paul's right faith in Jesus saves, Paul's right that Jesus death on our behalf was substitutionary and atoning, yeah, Paul's right, Jesus was raised from the dead, but Paul's not right in this, he's ignoring Moses, he's not requiring you to be circumcised he's not adding works to you're faith, he's not adding merit to your grace, he's not adding Moses to Jesus, so Paul's wrong, we're right", and some bought into that and Paul has to write to the Galatians and say, "That's not the gospel my friend, it's Jesus alone, he's enough, he's the fullness of God in bodily form, He made one sacrifice for sin forever, He said on the cross it is finished, Jesus is enough, and it's faith alone that trusts Him for eternal salvation, it's not faith and works or less, you could boast in what you've done and God will lose the glory and part of your salvation would be partly due to you."

That's a false gospel. So some of that's going on. If you go into Colossians and Ephesians and 1 Timothy, you're going to see there's an element of perverse Judaism that focuses on aestheticism what you eat, what you don't eat, you don't marry, you do marry, it's about worshiping angels, it's about spiritual mediators and all kinds of stuffs going on and it's about who you are by birth, not what you are by new birth, it's genealogies, and Jewish myths and fables.

Now, that's enough to tell you this. This is my big point. This falsehood, this deception was a Jewish perversion of the gospel, that was marked by law keeping and legalism. It was marked by pedigree, aesthetics, speculation. So as we wrap up this morning I want you to see that whatever this perversion, and version was fully, what's clear is that they've added man's commandments to God's commandments, they've added something to the Bible as an extra source of tradition and authority. They talk about genealogies and law keeping and rituals. They've added human merit and religious rituals and actions to faith alone and grace alone, but by implication Jesus isn't enough.

In it's worst version, it's Moses and Jesus. It's always someone or something more than Jesus. Listen to me this morning, this is the big take away. A deceptive gospel will always have these three marks to it. Always, whatever name, label or religion it is. It's always Jesus plus. They'll always add someone or something to Jesus in the act of salvation. It's always scripture and. It's the Bible and the book of Mormon. It's the Bible and catholic tradition, so on and so forth. It's always grace and faith with. It's faith with good works. It's grace and human merit.

Listen to me, get yourself a nose for heresy, when you hear Jesus plus, when you hear something beyond the Bible, when you hear something other than simple faith in Jesus Christ as a means of salvation, run, run, run, because that's the false teacher, that's the heart of heresy. It takes you beyond the thought that salvation is faith in Jesus Christ as revealed in scripture alone It's Jesus and faith plus baptism, keeping the law, special revelation beyond the Bible, some religious right, some diet, some act of sacrifice, that's the human reflex. We want to know we've contributed something to our salvation.

But you know what? The only thing we've contributed to our salvation is the sin that made it necessary. That's the only thing we've contributed. If we're going to be saved, it's God's grace alone, it's mercy alone, Titus 3:5 it's not by works which we have done but by his mercy he saves us. It's Ephesians 2:8-9, For by grace are you saved by the means of putting your faith in Jesus Christ, not of works lest any man should boast. You don't contribute, you just contribute the reason Jesus had to die, and yet God hasn't abandoned us. Jesus didn't come into the world to condemn the world but that the world through Him might be saved. What a wonderful God, what a glorious savior, what a loving act.

Don't corrupt it, don't complicate it, don't allow anybody to muddy the waters. It's not Jesus plus, it's Jesus alone, it's not the Bible and, it's the scriptures alone, it's not grace and faith with, it's faith alone. Isn't that what the reaffirmation was about? What was Luther and Calvin's beef with the medieval church and the corrupt popes and the doctrines of the catholic church? It was this, it was what they added to the gospel. They had the gospel in many ways. That Jesus was the virgin born son of God, fully God, fully man, died on the cross for our sins. Rose again from the dead and is now in heaven that's catholic theology Trinitarian, christologically true.

But the problem with the Catholic church was what they added to that. They added Mary, and the pope, and the treasury, and merits of the saints to Jesus. They added purgatory to heaven and hell. They added the confessional box of confession to a priest, to the great high priest and the throne of grace. They added good works to faith, and by adding all of that they subtracted from the gospel. The gospel they had was corrupted by that and so their former said, "No, Sola Fide, faith alone. No, Sola Christus, Christ alone. No, Sola Gratia, grace alone, No, Sola Scriptura, the Bible alone. No, Soli Deo Gloria, for the glory of God alone. We don't contribute anything but the sin that made it necessary.

And they called the church to reform but the church didn't listen and a schism took place, and you and I today as evangelical protestants are the heirs of that reformation. And today we should be doing the same thing our forefathers did, and Paul did, and Jesus did, and Peter did, and John did. We've got to guard the gospel, because there's people that want to add to it, which means subtracting from it, they want to corrupt it.

Back in the time of the reformation, they fought over one word alone. I'll finish with this story regarding DL Moody, the great evangelist who was in controversy with a train conductor, and they decided they weren't on the same page, and the thing that decided them wasn't one word it was two letters, but it's the same argument. Moody and him had talked for about half an hour on how a man could be made right with God and how he could get to heaven with assurance and Moody said after 30 minutes, "You know", he said, "After 30 minutes you and I are divided by two letters in the alphabet".

The man looked at him and said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well, if I've listened to you and understood you correctly, you have a religion that could be described as 'do'. Do this, do that, don't do this, don't do that and God will merit you salvation. It's faith and works. It's Jesus and you." He says, "My religion is a religion of done. Jesus did it, Jesus accomplished it. I have no other argument, I need no other play, it is enough that Jesus died and Jesus died for me. Yours is do, mine is done, there's two letters that separate us, N and E, but that's the distance between heaven and hell, truth and error".

My friend there are two categories of religions today, there are those that believe in divine accomplishment, what God did in Jesus Christ, apart from us but for us, and there are those religions that believe in human achievement. That we help God, that Jesus isn't enough, that his death on our behalf didn't satisfy the holiness of God.

Lets pray, "Father we thank you for our time in the word this morning. We pray that we would listen, that we would heed this warning, to some degree the barbarians are at the door. The secular culture is rising up against the church in America and it's certainly been the case across history. But Lord, help us to be careful of the back door, help us remember that this war is asymmetrical, that the enemy is not across from us, the enemy is among us, subverting the gospel, teaching falsehood, deceiving the saints, transforming themselves into angels of light.

Preaching another Jesus, preaching another gospel, pretending they're apostles, when they're not. So Lord help us to be discerning, help us not to be as naïve as Little Red Riding Hood, help us to be able to identify the characteristics of a false teacher and we start today by realizing anybody that advocates Jesus plus, scripture and, faith with, is false, and destructive, abominable, damnable, dangerous. For we ask and pray it all in Jesus name, amen."