

Let's take our Bibles and turn back to Titus chapter 1, verses 10 through 16. We're coming to the end of chapter one this morning in our study of Titus. We've been going through the book of Titus under the idea of doing good. It's one of the themes of Titus. We started to look at verses 10 through 16 last week, so stand in honor of God's Word as I read along. The message I've entitled Don't Be Deceived, Part Two. Here's what Paul says to Titus, "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 they ought not 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 the 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." You may be seated. I don't know if you know this, but you probably would anticipate it, counterfeiting is big business. In fact, my research tells me that counterfeiting costs the United States in terms of business 200 to \$250 billion a year. Counterfeit merchandise is directly responsible for the loss of almost three quarter of a million jobs in America. Approximately five to seven percent of the world's trade is done in counterfeit goods and merchandise.

United States companies suffer \$9 billion in trade losses due to international copyright piracy. And counterfeiting poses a threat to global health and safety. Counterfeiting is big business. But here's the point as we return to Titus 1, verses 10 through 16 this morning, counterfeiting's not just a problem in the world of commerce. Counterfeiting is a problem in the world of the church. Throughout the church and its history there have been those who have tried to sell falsehood as truth. Didn't Jesus warn his own disciples in Matthew 7, verse 15, "Beware of false prophets." In writing to the Corinthians in his second letter, Paul warns them and cautions them that there will be those who will preach another Jesus and who will preach a different gospel. So just gather those three thoughts together, false prophets, false Christs, false gospels.

In fact, in that second letter to the Corinthians, in the same chapter, Paul reminds them that the devil himself is said to be able to transform himself into an angel of light. The devil goes to church in disguise. Scary stuff. Christ and his apostles reminds us that just as there are doctrines that are true and life giving, there are doctrines that are false and soul destroying. There are doctrines that come from God and are true, and there are doctrines, doctrines of demons that come from Satan and are false. That's why we need to be discerning. That's why I Thessalonians 5:21-22 tells us to test all things, to hold fast to what is good and shun every appearance of evil. That's why I John 4, verses 1-3 tells us to test the spirits to see they are of Christ. And that's why we find passages like the one we're looking at here in Titus chapter 1 verses 10 through 16, because the Bible wants us to become discerning.

The Bible wants us to be alive and alert to the fact that there are false Christs who preach a false gospel under false pretense. So let's come back to this passage. If we're to put the text in its context, I think we made this argument last time, that verses five through nine are focused on church order. And church order is promoted by the appointment of good men, godly men, who hold fast to the truth and who are able to teach it. But in contrast to that, Paul talks about church disorder in verses 10 through 16. He talks about the subversion of whole households. He talks about those who are not sound in the faith. And so the contrast is this, church order is promoted by godly men who preach the truth. Church disorder is produced and promoted by false teachers who teach that which they ought not, who turn people away from the truth, who subvert households and destroy the gospel.

And so that's the text in its context. By the way, a good reminder, here's an example in the New Testament where we're reminded that the church often suffers more at the hands of the religious type than the irreligious type. Those who are within the church sometimes do more damage to the church than those who are outside the church. Then we started to look at the text itself, reminding ourselves, by the way, that doing good, which is the theme of Titus, requires the rejection of bad theology. But we look first of all at the contrast, not going to spend a lot of time rehashing that. You'll notice in verse 10 that we begin our section with a conjunction, for, which means it's a grammatical link to the preceding verse or the preceding verses. But let's just go to verse nine.

"The elder is to hold fast the faithful word as he has been taught. And then he himself is to be able to teach that sound doctrine. He's to exhort and convince those who contradict it." So the argument is this, the contrast is this, the godly leader teaches and holds fast to Biblical theology, confronts those who contradict it, because, for, since, there are many insubordinate, idle talkers, and deceivers who worm their way into the church to do it great harm. We saw that. That's the contrast. And we need a lot of good guys we'll call godly elders, to be appointed in the church to stop the progress of the bad guys we'll call the false teachers. That's the contrast. And then we started to look at the characteristics, the characteristics, that is the characteristics of the false teacher. Paul outlines certain characteristics of those who contradict the truth, who themselves must be contradicted by the elders, verse nine.

Here Paul calls out the false teachers and spiritual counterfeits. Now let me just throw something your way, because it's just interesting. As I read my commentaries and did my research, I learned that the island of Crete, where Titus is ministering, to whom Paul is writing, the island of Crete had no dangerous animals on it. They had no dangerous animals roaming its hills. But there were, spiritually speaking, ravenous wolves on the island called false teachers, who were seeking to do harm to the flock of God bought by the blood of God. In fact, it's interesting, we'll come to this a little later on, we see, don't we, in verse 12, that the Cretans by nature, generally speaking, are liars, notice evil beasts, animalistic in their behavior, and lazy gluttons. And these false teachers are like the Cretans.

These false teachers are ravenous wolves, wild theological animals who want to damage the flock of God, bought by the blood of God. And so we want to know who they are. We want to be able to identify them, because remember, they come as wolves in sheep clothing. It's not like they come on a Sunday morning, or they arrive in the middle of a ministry with something around their neck like a placard saying, "I am a heretic. Watch out for me." Okay, they don't do that. They don't do that. They subvert. They subvert. They're theological insurgents that wage an asymmetrical war against the truth, and they're from the kingdom of darkness. And we started to look at the marks of these evil deceivers. And we saw first of all they were deceptive theologically. And then we'll see this morning, they are divisive ecclesialogically, and they are detestable morally. Deceptive, divisive, detestable.

I'm not going to rehash again, as I've said, what we looked at in terms of the fact that they're deceptive, because that's how they're pegged, aren't they, in verse 10. "For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision." If you were with us, you know this, if not, get the CD from last week or download it online or at KTT. You'll come to see that we saw this was some Jewish perversion of the gospel. And usually it's marked by some adherence to the laws of Moses. It makes issues of one's pedigree and genealogy. It's often marked by speculation around the fringes of theology. It's often marked by asceticism, giving up something or doing something. And so we pegged that, generally speaking, you'll find that deceivers of any stripe, even of this stripe, they're marked by a form of doctrine that teaches Jesus plus Scripture, and faith with. They'll always add to the gospel in some degree.

It's Jesus and the law of Moses. It's Scripture and the commandments of men, or some other sacred writing. It's faith in Jesus Christ, plus works, plus baptism, plus rituals, plus asceticism. So that's where we were last week. In adding to the gospel, the false teacher always subtracts from the gospel. Let's move on. Not only are they deceptive, they're divisive. This is the second mark. This is the second characteristic. False teachers are divisive. They bring disruption to the body of Christ. Their strategy is one of dividing to conquer from within. And one of the telltale signs of a spiritual imposter or someone who's a danger to the church is that not only that they will preach a false gospel, they will preach something like Jesus plus Scripture, and faith with. Alongside of that they'll typically be demonstrable characters with big personalities, strong opinions.

And you read in Act 20 verse 30 of them that they draw disciples after themselves. Write that down. Act 20 verse 30. You'll also see in Jude verse 16, as he gives you a profile of an apostate that they are divisive. But I'm going to show you it in our text. But the point is simply this, cults, false religions, usually have a human figure, a supposed prophet or pope as their rallying point. And you see that here, don't you? That's the paradigm. And we see it working itself out in our text. The threat is an inside job, and the false teacher comes in to divide and conquer. Look at verse 11. Speaking of those who are insubordinate, idle talkers, and deceivers, whose mouths must be stopped, here's what they do. "They subvert whole households, teaching things which ought not to be taught." These men, or women in some cases, inside the church, professing to know God, yet they deny him in their works and in their behavior because what they do is they split the church.

They fracture families. They divide Christians. We see that. They subvert whole households. They upset whole households. They bring fracture to the body of Christ. If you go over to chapter three verses 9 and 10, Paul picks up this theme he introduces in chapter one, he says to Titus, "But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, strivings about the law, for they are unprofitable and useless." And then he speaks about those who promote this kind of stuff, "Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped, and sinning, being self condemned." But notice how he pegs the false teacher, divisive. Divisive. Because that's one of the marks of a false teacher. They will indeed split the church, fracture families, divide Christians. Now there's a debate among commentators about what Paul means what he says they subvert whole households.

Are we talking about actual households made up of moms and dads and children, young people, the domestic understanding of that word, or as you read the end of many of Paul's letters, he often talks about the church who meets in the house of, and so it could be a reference to the fact that in the early church they didn't have a lot of property and all of that, they met in houses. There was home groups that met as churches. What's being addressed here? Well, you can imagine it could be either, easily, because the consequence is the same. It upsets the body of Christ. I liked what one of the commentators says, "If you take the domestic view..." And that's what I would lean, "they work their way into homes." And in fact, Paul talks about that in his letters to Timothy, he talks about gullible women who are deceived by false teachers and they worm their way into the home through that means, and they're defrauded and deceived.

It's interesting, in I Timothy four, verses one through six where you have again these false teacher being described, they forbid marrying, and the eating of certain foods. One wonders, one commentator presents this, that what you might have here is that given the prohibition of marriage, that has sadly led to the termination of some marriages. Some people have bought into this, they have drunk the poison. They have gone, "You know what, God forbids marriage. The spiritual state is singleness, therefore I am going to divorce my husband and I want to be at a place where God can bless me. I want to be where I

ought to have been in the first place, if I had known this from the beginning. And if that's true, you can see the argument, it has the potential of just splitting homes, upsetting households. Point taken. But this is the fruit. This is the outworking of the false teacher.

They're not only deceptive theologically, they're divisive ecclesiologically. Remember this, according to verse 10, they're insubordinate. What does that mean? Well usually when someone's insubordinate in a home, on a sports team, in an office, in a business, in a platoon of soldiers, insubordination produces division. It just brings upset in the ranks. And so that means that they don't submit to elders. They don't submit to the Biblical text. They're their own authority. They argue around the fringes of theology. They're a spiritual wrecking ball. Again, to repeat myself, false religions and Christian hybrids are usually founded by corrupt, domineering leaders who make it a test of fellowship if you're loyal to them. Watch out for that stuff. Watch out for the theology, and watch out for the demonstrable personality that wants to indeed rule the roost. I've got a Truth Matters coming out tomorrow through our radio ministry, it's called Do The Math.

And I'll just throw this your way because I heard Danny Akin, the president of Southeastern Baptist Seminary help you understand the marks of a cult and a false teacher, and he does it in mathematical terms. And I think it's very helpful. He says, "You know what, do the math on false teachers. And here's the math on false teachers. One, addition. Two, subtraction. Three multiplication. Four division." Let me explain it. What he means is this, you'll find with false teachers they'll always add to God's Word. When it comes to Scripture, there's always addition. There's a word of prophecy, there's some source of spiritual knowledge that you don't have that they have. There's some sacred writing, there's maybe church tradition. But they'll always add to God's Word. Number two, they'll always subtract from the person and work of Jesus Christ. They'll defraud the Lord Jesus of his glory.

They'll often deny his deity on the one hand, saying he's just a man, or they'll deny his humanity, saying he's God or a spiritual entity alone. They'll often subtract from his finished work. They'll deny that what Jesus did on the cross for you is enough. And so you need to be punished for your own sins in some form, or you need to pay off your sins in some form, because when he said, "It is finished," he really didn't mean that. You need to finish it. And in that sense, they not only add to God's Word, they subtract from the person and work of Jesus Christ. Here's the third thought. They multiply the requirements of salvation. This is very helpful, very memorable, so get this down. Addition to God's Word, subtraction from Jesus Christ, multiplication of requirements to salvation. It's not faith alone, it's faith and works. It's some religious ritual. They may require baptism for salvation. They may require the keeping of the law in some manner for salvation.

They will add to the requirements of salvation, which for us is what, faith alone because of the grace of God alone, in Christ alone, equals eternal salvation. Amen. For by grace are we saved through faith, listen, not of yourself, not of works, lest any man should boast. The fourth thing is division, is where we're at in our thought here. They'll disrupt the harmony and fellowship of the local church. They'll make loyalty to them a test of orthodoxy. So just throwing that your way. Very, very helpful. So here's the second mark. Not only are false teachers deceptive, they're divisive. Thirdly, they're detestable. Detestable. Detestable in their manner of life, in their character, in their morality. The picture portrayed of the false teacher in terms of his character and conduct is not flattering. Paul pulls no punches describing such a person, especially verse 16.

Look at this. "They..." That is, the false teachers he's been speaking about, "They profess to know God, but in their works they deny him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified." You go, "Hold on a

minute Paul. That's a bit over the top. That's not very gracious. Seems very cruel. Detestable? Abominable? You might want to dial that back." To which Paul would go, "I don't pet wolves. And I believe most of all in the cruelty of heresy. You think that's cruel? You think that's tough? Let these guys run amok, and eternal destruction comes in their wake, so forgive me if I'm agitated. Forgive me if I'm a little on the boil here, but I believe in the cruelty of heresy and that's why I'm agitated. This is detestable. It's dangerous, and these people need to be stopped." So he gives us a kind of profile here of the false teacher.

And I'll give you some of this. When I was in the police in Northern Ireland when we would go into Antrim Road Police Station in the room where we met to be given our orders, There was always pictures and profiles of known criminals and terrorists. And we'd be told their height and their color and their look and who they hang out with and what we need to be looking out for. And Paul does that here. Although saying that, I do like the story, I just throw it in for a little bit of fun, of the little fellow who was being shown around a police station. And when he asked about the pictures on the walls, he was told that they were pictures of people the police were trying to catch, to which he replied, "Well why didn't you keep them when you took their photo?" Not a bad idea. Not a bad idea. But here's Paul's thing, this is the picture, this is the profile of the guy you want to catch, catch on doing this stuff and then kick them out of the church if they don't repent.

They're greedy and materialistic, verse 11, "Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not." Notice, here's their motive, if we can unzip the heart, you'll find this true of the false teacher, they do it for the sake of dishonest gain. They want to feather their nest. They want to fleece the flock, and they'll seek to defraud people of money and goods. They're greedy and materialistic. They're the opposite of the true elder, right, the true shepherd, who, according to I Peter five is not in love with money. Not only are they greedy and materialistic, they are more Cretan than Christian. They reflect the culture. They reflect the world more than they reflect the Word of God. Look at verse twelve. "One of them, a prophet of their own, said, 'Cretans are always liars and evil beasts and lazy gluttons.'" Now look, that's a generalization.

When he says that Cretans are always liars and evil beasts and lazy gluttons, it's a generalization. The Scots are tight. The Irish are drunks. You know, the Italians are great romantics. The Brazilians can dance. It's all generally true, but not altogether true. It's a characterization, so don't be reading into this and don't be thinking that Paul's being antisocial here, and certainly not doing a service to the gospel when he pegs the Cretans. But generally speaking, they have that reputation. And the thing is, these false teachers are more Cretan than Christian. They reflect this stuff. In fact, we just saw that, didn't we? They're for dishonest gain. They're lazy gluttons, the false teachers. They're liars. Verse 10, they're insubordinate idle talkers, deceivers. They're evil brutes. They're wild, out of control. That's what they are, they're insubordinate.

So Paul shows us that the teacher who's a false teacher, morally speaking, is greedy, materialistic, will do anything for dishonest gain, is more Cretan than Christian, and also is defiled, unbelieving in their disposition. Verse 15, "To the pure all things are pure, to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but even their mind and conscious are defiled." This is rather cryptic. At first it seems hard to understand, but actually Denny Burk in his commentary on Titus I think helps simplify it, and I think he's onto the right path here when he says, "Look, to the pure all things are pure." The pure there would be the blood bought believer of Jesus Christ, who's been cleansed, whose conscience has been cleansed, whose life has been cleansed.

Their eyes have been opened, and they have come to see that all things are pure. Everything God created is good and should be received with thanksgiving. If you go to I Timothy 4:1-5, the false teacher says, "No, some things are corrupt and defiling. Marriage is one of those. Certain foods is another one of those things." But to the pure all things are pure. Paul says, "No. That which God has created is pure, to be received with thanksgiving." So to the pure, all things are pure. But to the false teacher, whose mind and conscience is defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure. They don't evaluate things correctly when it comes to God's creation. And so they see marriage, which God says is pure, as defiling. They see certain foods as God says is pure, as defiling. And so the point is this, they're greedy, materialistic, they're more Cretan than Christian, and they are defiled and unbelieving in their conscience and conduct.

And then you go to verse 16 and they're just abominable and unfit for every good work. They profess to know God, but in their works they deny him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work. You see, anything they touch gets defiled, because the way God works is from the inside out. And your heart, and your disposition, determines the quality of what you do. Who you are determines what you do, and what is produced by what you do. Out of the heart the issues of life flow. And so they are disqualified for every good work because they're rotten on the inside and so even their good works are bad works. Here's the bottom line. They profess to know God, but their beliefs and behavior betray that fact. Their teaching and testimony doesn't lead to godliness, like Paul's did in verses one through three. Ironically, they obey human commandments and disobey God's commandments, verse 13.

They find impurity everywhere and in many things that God calls good. And they themselves are abominable in character. That's their fruit. And remember, you'll know them by their fruit. I quoted earlier Matthew 7:15, but if you go on from verse 16 to 20, Jesus said, "Hey, beware of false prophets. They will appear in sheep's clothing, but they're ravenous wolves. You'll know them by their fruit. Just as a good tree produces good fruit, a bad tree produces bad fruit. And the true prophets will produce good fruit, the bad prophets will not produce good fruit." And that's what we're seeing here. Their words are deceptive, their lives are a fraud. So as we leave this thought, I just want you to see that Paul is arguing for this, creed and conduct go together. Belief and behavior are important things and must be wedded. Words and works go together. Profession and possession go together. They talk Jesus language.

They reference the Bible selectively. You'll find them in the church. But their creed and conduct are not the same as ours. Their belief and behavior not the same as ours. Their words and works not the same as ours. Those two things need to go together. That's why, by the way, the emphasis in verses five through nine is on character, what the man is, because what the man is affects what the man does. And what the man does is affected by his heart. I think somewhere I read about an office complex that housed both a church office and a doctor's office. Under the one roof there was a doctor of theology and a doctor of medicine. So when someone called the front desk or the switchboard or the receptionist, they would often ask, "Could I speak to the doctor?" And the receptionist would often have to clarify, "Do you want to talk to the doctor who preaches, or do you want to talk to the doctor who practices?"

Well those two things go together in the Christian world. What the pastor preaches, he must practice. Creed and conduct, belief and behavior, words and works. But the false teacher no, they profess to know God, but in their works and in their words, they deny him, being abominable. Okay, let's move on for the last few minutes to the what I call the confrontation. The confrontation. We've looked at the contrast between good elders and false teachers, and the reason we need good elders is because there is false teachers. We've looked at the characteristics, deceptive, divisive, detestable. The confrontation.

These people need to be confronted. I mean, look at verse 11, "Their mouths must be stopped." Look at verse 13, "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."

Again, we're getting back to this thought. Paul's all worked up, and rightly so, because of the cruelty of heresy. In fact, I don't have time to develop this, but write these down and look at them yourself. In II Timothy 2:17, Paul likens heresy and false teaching to cancer, to gangrene, to an infectious disease. It spreads with deadly affect. In Colossians 2:8, he talks about false teachers and the danger they pose in, listen, robbing God's people of the true understanding of Christ. Stealing, robbing, it's a crime. False doctrine isn't just a cancer, it's a crime. And it's interesting, in Jude three, where we're told to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, because that's a letter all about apostasy, the language there is military language, contending, fighting. I just want you to grasp that.

It's not in vogue today to speak like this. It's not in vogue for leaders in the church to act like this today. But, like cancer, false doctrine is to be cut away as soon as possible. Like criminal activity, it must be stopped. Like war, the enemy must be identified and neutralized. So there's three things here about the confrontation, quickly. What's involved in rebuking, or thwarting false doctrine and false teachers? Repeat, rebuke, remove. What do I mean by repeat? Well, one of the best ways to deal with error is to passionately preach the truth. Now while we want to be cognizant of the marks of a false teacher, while we want to have a profile about his conduct, we don't want to focus there. That's not our focus. Our focus is on the truth. That's why, in verse 9, we're told that, you know what, elders must hold fast to the faithful word, as has been taught them, that he may be able to teach.

So the elder is a man who has been taught sound doctrine, and the elder is a man who promotes, through his own teaching, sound doctrine. And he will speak with two voices. He will exhort and he will contradict. Remember what Calvin said, "He's got two voices, he will gather the sheep and he will scatter the wolves." So I just want you to see, given the connection, remember this conjunction, if we're dealing with false teaching, one of the best ways to deal with it is to have a body of men in the church we call elders, who are able to teach sound doctrine, who promote the Word of God, knowing the truth, being conversant with orthodoxy will help you gain a nose for error. If you go to the pastoral epistles, I and II Timothy and Titus, which deal with heresy and false teaching, nevertheless, the overall tenor is what? Study the Scriptures and be a workman that need not be ashamed.

Preach the Word of God in season and out of season, even if people don't endure sound doctrine. The emphasis is on the truth and the promotion of the truth by a body of godly men. And you know what, that makes sense, doesn't it? Best way to fight disease is promote health. Now don't just treat the disease, promote health. And one of the best ways to deal with error is promote truth. Preach it, practice it, value it. You know, there's a great Reformed theologian called James Buchanan who wrote a masterpiece on the doctrine of justification, and in it he says this, "It has been my firm conviction that the only effective refutation of error is the establishment of truth. Truth is one, error is multiformed. And truth, once firmly established, overthrows all the errors that either have been or may yet be opposed to it. He who exposes and expels an error does well, but it will always return in another form unless the truth has been lodged in the heart as to shut it out forever."

Point is, you know, error just keeps multiplying and multiplying. There's one version of it and another version of it. There's one addition of it and another addition of it. You could be chasing your tail forever, trying to expose and understand every error. He says the better way to go is just become so conversant with the truth that you'll spot the error. Isn't that the story that comes out of the life of Ruth Bell

Graham, Billy Graham's wife? Her daughter Anne Graham Lotz tells it in her commentary on John about her mother being at a dinner in London, big high society dinner. Royalty was there, high society was there, and she describes her mother being there in a just beautiful straight black dress with pearl necklace, unintimidated by all the high society that was there. And as the night unfolded, she got in conversation with a man who was sitting right beside her and learned that the man was from Scotland Yard, which is the British version of the FBI.

And what she learned was he was over at the department dealing with counterfeits and fraudulent money and checks and all of that. And she talked to him about this and how he must have spent a lot of time studying counterfeit money and signatures and all of that, to which he said, "Mrs. Graham, I spent all my time studying the genuine thing. That way when I saw a counterfeit, I could immediately detect it." What's the best bulwark against false teaching and teachers? Know the truth, and have a body of elders, along with other men who just preach the truth, live streaming it all the time into the life of the body of Christ. Second thing, rebuke. Not only repeat truth, teach truth, rebuke. Rebuke the false teacher, you do that, but when you identify the presence of the wolf in the flock you go and rebuke. You shut them down and you shut them up.

Look at verse 11, "Whose mouths must be stopped." And verse 13, "They must be rebuked sharply." That's an interesting phrase, mouths must be stopped. The Greek is, to put something in the mouth. And it came to be, to describe bridles and muzzles. You could translate it, muzzle them. Muzzle them. You know, when I was growing up in the neighborhood I grew up in just outside Belfast, at one point among all the young guys there was a rage about owning a Pitbull Terrier. And they were terrifying little dogs. Even the best behaved would still bite your head off. And typically looking cool and intimidating, the young men in the area I grew up in would go around with jeans cut just to to top of their Dr. Marten boots and they'd be wearing their Wrangler jackets, and on the end of their leash would be this Pitbull with his muzzle on, kind of, "Touch me, and I'll let the dog loose."

And that's kind of the image here. It's striking. Again, it's this idea that these false teachers, theologically speaking, are wild beasts, like the Cretans. You got to muzzle them or they'll eat you for lunch, spiritually. Second idea, rebuke them sharply. Means to cut. Just as a surgeon's knife cuts away malignant growth, so the words and rebuke of a faithful pastor or Biblical theologian will remove the harm caused by false teaching within the body of Christ. So we need to be open to rebuking. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, deceitful are the kisses of an enemy. It's a loving thing to rebuke someone, to wound them, for their sake, the sake of the gospel, the glory of God. And there's two purposes, as you can see in verse 11. It's to silence what ought not to be taught. But in verse 13, it's with the hope that perhaps they would repent and be made sound in faith once again, not giving heed to Jewish fables and the commandments of men.

The rebuke, in some cases where unrepentance is absent, is to be sharp and tough. But in other cases, the rebuke is not intended to be humiliating or drive a person away. It's to bring them back to the faith. But that often doesn't work, which brings us to the last thought, remove. Remove. The goal is restoration if possible, verse 13. But if not, if they continue in the error of their ways and they remain unrepentant, then expulsion is necessary. It's not explicit in our text, it would be implicit, but it is explicit later on in the letter. In chapter three verse nine to ten, we read it earlier, "But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, striving about the law." See, we're dealing with these men who are of the group of the circumcision, who spread Jewish fables. It's the same group being addressed.

"But avoid them." And notice this, "because they're unprofitable and useless. Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self condemned." So if you'll tie that to verse 13, "Rebuke them sharply that they may be sound in the faith." That's the hope, restoration. But you know what, there will be some recalcitrant characters who are bad to the core, who show no signs, or wish to be redeemed. And once they've been rebuked, and rebuked, once, twice, they remain unrepentant, Paul says, "You know what you do with them. You turf them out. You reject them." This is similar language, isn't it, to the discipline issue of Matthew 18. After warning them, you follow the basic pattern of church discipline. And you know what, we must be willing to do that.

We won't rush to that, but there's always a desire to see if someone can be brought to the truth, or brought back to the truth. But you know what, if they are set in their ways, unrepentant, remember, it's a cancer. What do you do with cancer? You remove it. You remove it as soon as you can, before it spreads and kills. What do you do with infectious diseases? You isolate them. What do you do with deserters in the army? You incarcerate them, because bad apples spoil the barrel. The unrepentant sinner must be removed from the church. As we close, we live in a world of spiritual knock offs, counterfeits. The devil is the master of counterfeit. He offers things in the place of God. He offers sex in the place of intimacy. He offers shallow laughs in the place of deep joy. He offers distractions in the place of purpose. He offers death in the place of life. And he offers empty philosophies in the place of truth.

That's the world we live in. We need to know the truth so we can see the counterfeit. And we need, indeed, to repeat the truth, to oppose the false. And we need to rebuke and remove those who are unrepentant regarding the truth. Lord, we thank you for this Word. We want to have a ministry of reconciliation. But Lord, there is a ministry of rebuke, that we want to have a ministry of comfort, but there is a ministry of confrontation. Help Kindred to always strike that balance. Help us to be a loving, gracious, affirming congregation. That's our baseline. That's our default. But we're not gullible either. And there are those who will come under the grace of God and use it as a license for sin. And there are wolves who will come in sheep's clothing. Help us to be willing to rebuke and remove when necessary, for your glory, for our good, for the preservation of the one true gospel, the only hope of civilization. And we ask it all in Jesus name. Amen.