**Don’t Be a Cretan**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Titus 1:10-16**

**Wednesday Evening**

**November 16, 2022**

**Titus 1:10-16**

10 For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, 11 whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.

12 One of them, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." 13 This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, 14 not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth.

15 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. 16 They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

**10** **For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision,**

Saints, the false teachers Paul and Titus faced were those who insist on circumcision for salvation—the Judaizers.

These were Jews who taught that the Gentiles had to obey all the Jewish laws, rules, and rituals before they could become Christians.

This regulation confused new Christians and caused problems in many churches where Paul had preached the Good News.

Paul wrote letters to several churches to help them understand that Gentile believers did not have to become Jews first in order to be Christians—God accepts anyone who comes to him in faith.

**Romans 1:17**

“or in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

**Galatians 3:2-7**

2 This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?

4 Have you suffered so many things in vain--if indeed it was in vain? 5 Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?—

6 just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." 7 Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.

Saints, although the Jerusalem council had dealt with this issue, devout Jews who refused to believe in Jesus still were trying to cause problems in the Christian churches.

The ruling of the Jerusalem council may have been honored by those within the churches, but these outsiders did not recognize the apostles as having any authority.Here Paul identified three characteristics of this brand of false teachers:

**1. They rebel against right teaching, flouting the authority of Paul and Titus.**

**2. They engage in useless talk, speaking lots of words and saying nothing.**

**3. They deceive people because they do not have the truth.**

**11 whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.**

Saints, these false teachers must be silenced; the Greek word literally means “to muzzle.” Their wrong teaching was ruining people’s faith—whole families had been affected, causing confusion in the church.

**1 Timothy 6:3-5**

3 If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, 4 he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions,

5 useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.

Saints, these teachers taught not the trustworthy message of the gospel but their own ideas. Their goal was not to glorify the Lord and build his church but to make money.

Naturally it was hoped that these people would respond to the truth and be united with the true body of believers.

**12 One of them, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."**

Saints, Paul quoted a line from a poem by Epimenides, a poet and philosopher who had lived in Crete 600 years earlier. Paul called him a prophet because other ancient writers (notably Aristotle and Cicero) did so, and because his own countrymen gave him that title.

Paul was not saying he was a prophet in the biblical sense. The quotation reveals basic character flaws in the Cretans. They were liars, cruel animals (referring to unrestrained brutality and lives out of control), and lazy gluttons.

The reputation of the Cretans was so bad that the verb form of their name (kretizo) was used by the Greeks to indicate lying. Paul applied this familiar phrase to the false teachers.

**Philippians 3:17-21**

17 Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. 18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things.

20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

**13 This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith,**

Saints, the Cretans could hardly argue with one of their own honored prophets, so neither did Paul. Having been in Crete, Paul knew from firsthand experience the type of people with whom Titus was dealing.

Paul’s recommended remedy was to rebuke the wavering believers sternly, then, if possible, to restore them to strength in the faith. A forceful, direct response early would prevent utter chaos in the church later.

If the first believers were to develop unhealthy spiritual lives, they would carry their “disease” into the ongoing life of the church. Better to deal with the problem right away than to let it build up.

But even here, the goal demanded that even the least hopeful candidates for the church be given the opportunity to come to faith.

**2 Timothy 4:1-5**

1 I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:

2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;

4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. 5 But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

**14 not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth.**

Saints, apparently, the false teaching centered on two errors: first, Jewish myths (probably some useless speculations on the Old Testament, see also 1 Timothy 1:4).

**1 Timothy 1:3-6**

3 As I urged you when I went into Macedonia--remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, 4 nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.

5 Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, 6 from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk,

Saints, Titus may well have been facing various shades of syncretism, in which diluted Judaism was being blended with various forms of paganism to yield a deadly brand of godless religion.

Second, these human commands most likely focused on rules and rituals, especially Jewish laws regarding what was clean and unclean as is evident from Paul’s teachings.

Titus faced the lethal combination of religion and falsehood. Such mixtures have always presented a challenge to God’s people. Today the spirit of our times applauds those who create their own personal religion.

Self-made rules and guidelines that come from human teaching and not God should never be the basis for Christian thought.

**15 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.**

Saints, phrases like this one, everything is pure to those whose hearts are pure, must be understood in both immediate and wide contexts.

Paul was not teaching moral relativism (“As long as I can call myself pure, whatever I choose to do is therefore pure”),

but he was speaking against superficial, external legalism. Dietary restrictions or food laws presented a form of religion that people thought provided spiritual substance, but which proved to be empty of real spiritual help.

Those who believe sound doctrine and live their faith do not need to worry about rules and rituals regarding what is clean or unclean.

Saints, no stronger denunciation could be made to these false teachers who taught the need for following rules and rituals in order to be clean and pure.

Because of their inner corruption, nothing is pure—nothing they do, say, give, or teach could be pure because their minds and consciences were defiled. Echoing Jesus’ teaching.

**Mark 7:15-19**

15 There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. 16 If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!" 17 When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable.

18 So He said to them, "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, 19 because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?"

**Luke 11:39-41**

39 But the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees make the outside of the cup and dish clean, but your inward part is full of greed and wickedness. 40 Foolish ones! Did not He who made the outside make the inside also? 41 But rather give alms of such things as you have; then indeed all things are clean to you.

Saints, Paul explained that a person who is pure on the inside cannot be corrupted by outside influences; but a person who is corrupt on the inside corrupts everything around him. There can be no purity for such a person.

**16 They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.**

Saints, the “corrupt and unbelieving” false teachers claimed to know God, but their actions revealed their true nature. No matter what rules they claimed to follow, they denied God by the way they lived.

The false teachers professed knowledge of God and, with their Jewish background, may have been well versed in the Old Testament. But they based their faith on works, not on the Lord Jesus Christ, thus they denied the God they claimed to know.

Paul employed strong words because the sin of these false teachers deserved strong condemnation. Paul called them despicable, revealing his disgust at their sin and hypocrisy; disobedient,

because they acted against the God they claimed to know; worthless for doing anything good, because people who live in rebellion against God cannot do any works that please him.

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**