

Title: The Necessity of Elders

Text: Titus 1:5-16

Date: June 14, 2026

Good morning, Grace Chapel. Impressed with the decorations for this week's sermon. Very excited for the decorations for Colby's sermon next week in Joel. If you guys would, we're going to be back in Titus this week, so go ahead and turn over there. I hope you have a physical Bible with you, and so it'd be a wonderful thing if you'd go ahead and turn there in that. We'll be in chapter 1:5-16 this week. Again, that's Titus 1:5-16.

Now, briefly, before we jump into that, I want a quick history lesson for you. In the 900s AD, there were these Hungarian cavalry. They were called the Magyars, and they kept coming into Germany and just destroying everything. And they'd come, and then they'd destroy everything, and then they'd leave. And then they'd come back, and they'd destroy everything, and then they'd leave. They'd come back, and they'd destroy everything, and then they'd leave. And it got really annoying. Everything's constantly in chaos and destroyed. And so, there was this guy named King Otto. He was German, he came into power, and he decided, okay, I've had enough of these Magyar cavalry guys. And so, he trained up a heavy cavalry, and that was a German army, and he established alliances with surrounding nations. He prepared well because he assumed that the Magyar cavalry were going to come back. Sure enough, they came back. In the year 955, at the Battle of Lechfeld, he absolutely destroyed the Magyars. He never came back after that.

I don't tell you that story for no reason, though. Rather, I think our text today suggests something very, very similar, where a very present threat is still facing the church, except it's not on horseback, but instead it's resting in false teaching. This doesn't just promise physical death, as this other army did, but instead it promises a much worse spiritual eternal death. That's a much worse thing. However, Paul expects Titus to prepare the church. The church will not be unprepared for this threat, but instead will have excellent elders who will confront this threat. The threat will be defeated. They won't just defend the church, but instead they'll very aggressively track down that false teaching and destroy it.

In light of this, our main idea for this morning will be this; praise God who has provided qualified elders who defeat false teaching. Again, praise God who has provided qualified elders who defeat false teaching. We're going to work through each piece of that, that we would have elders and that that would be an important thing, and then we'll work through what those elders are supposed to look like. They should be qualified and that they are intended to defeat false teaching. That all comes together in a delight in the God that we have that would see the church and understand that false teaching, false threats are going to come in, and that she needs elders. So, we rejoice in that.

These are our three points for this morning. One, the need for elders, that's going to be in verse 5, and then we'll see the character of elders in verses 6-9, and then we'll see the threat requiring elders in verses 10-16. Again, the need for elders, the character of elders, and then the threat requiring elders in verses 10-16. So, if you would, and I hope you have your Bibles in Titus at this point, go ahead and stand if you're able as we read the word of the Lord together.

This is Titus 1:5-16, "This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you - if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are faithful, not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word he has taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party. They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach. One of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, said, 'Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.' This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, not devoting themselves to Jewish myths and the commands of people who turn away from the truth. To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their minds and their consciences are defiled. They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work."

Let's go ahead and pray.

Father, thank you this morning that we're able to come together to see the very real need that we have for qualified, healthy elders in order that our church as well might be in order. I ask as we're going through this, that this would not merely be academic stuff or intellectual stuff that we would understand, oh, the church needs elders, and therefore we have elders, and that's a good thing, and move on, but instead that we would see this and that we would delight in you because of it, that you're a God who's provided in ways that we could not have possibly come up with, that we desperately need guidance and order in the church, and you've given us that very thing. And we thank you for that. Father, stir our hearts to love your word and love that you've given us teachers in order to teach us. May we join in fellowship even in stirring up men in our midst to aspire towards eldership and to be trained up in that way that all of us would be grabbing onto men and pushing them in that direction.

Father, may we not forget the gospel in us, that this right teaching, that good teaching of good doctrine leads to good works, right. But may we not forget that that good teaching is grounded in the gospel, that we believe that Christ has come and died in order that we might have life, that because we're broken sinners and horribly guilty and undeserving of grace and forgiveness, that even still you've sent your son in order that we would have life, that he would die on a cross and rise again three days later. May we not forget that. Father, as we turn to the text this morning, open our eyes, help our minds to comprehend the things that we're reading. May we not be veiled, but instead by the power of the Spirit, may we be open to your word. And may the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in your sight.

We pray all of this in Jesus' name and in the power of the Holy Spirit, amen.

You may have a seat.

And so, we begin this morning in verse 5. Why in the world did Paul leave Titus in Crete? There we go. Paul leaves Titus in Crete. I shortened too many words. Why would Paul leave Titus in Crete? I think this is a very purposeful leaving. Not that Paul ran out of town, and he ran out of room on his boat, right? He's not, ah, we've got to leave somebody. I guess we'll leave Titus. But instead, this is a very intentional leaving Titus in Crete for a particular reason. He has a particular task that he's going to leave Titus for. And that I don't think is merely for the church in Crete, but instead is for churches presently as well. If that's true, then it's supremely necessary that we would understand the task that Paul has left for Titus and the basis by which he just prescribes it.

So, as we look at verse 5, it says this, *"This is why I left you in Crete."* I think that's interesting because it sounds something like this; if I were having a conversation with my dad, we're working out in the backyard, he'd say, this is why I, and then he's going to tell me something, want you to put on gloves. That's not a complete thought. This is why I want you to put on gloves. So, tell me why. *"This is why I left you in Crete."* Tell me why. In both of those, we anticipate something else to follow. And so, this can't be the extent of the thought. I think oftentimes when we see something like that, we reflect on the thing before. But Paul's doing something different here where it's pointing to the thing to come. *"This is why I left you in Crete."* And he's going to give us the reason in just a second.

The request is made, and then only then is the basis for the request given. So then flowing out of the beginning, Paul frames his request like this; This is why I want you, *"this is why I left you in Crete."* This is why I deserted you in Crete. And then we ask the question, why? And his response is, *"so that you might put what remained into order."* Paul deserted Titus in this little tiny island called Crete with the intention that he would take what was there and that he would put it into order. And how in the world is Titus to do that? Paul makes it very clear. I want you to go take what remains, put it into order by, namely by establishing elders, appointing elders in every town as I directed you. And so, Titus has been left here in order to take what remains and place it in order, which is to establish elders. And so, it's interesting that Paul, when he thinks order in the church, his mind immediately goes, elders. That's the first step, elders. If we want order in the church, elders. That's what Paul does here with Titus. He says, I want you to go make order, and so I want you to go appoint elders.

Friends, Paul lays out very clearly here that it is an excellent orderly thing for the church in Crete, and in our church, to have elders, to appoint elders that would guide our church, that would bring order to our church. But I think it's almost comical in this section that Paul drops off Titus. He says, good luck, and then he runs away. Why in the world would Paul not just stay and do the job himself? If Paul's so convinced that having elders is such an important task that he would leave Titus to appoint elders for an entire island, then why in the world wouldn't he just do it himself? I mean, think about this. Paul could have picked better elders than anyone, right? So why didn't he? Think of our church. Paul could probably run in, go, you, you, you, you, elder, elder, elder, elder. I can't say that fast. Elder, elder, elder, elder, and run out of the

room. No, that's not how we can do this thing. I think that the key here seems to boil down to time. It takes time to do this elder appointing thing. And so, this isn't something that somebody could just run through the room and say, elder, elder, elder, and be good. But instead, it's something that requires a thought-out evaluation of a man's life.

And so, Paul leaves Titus in Crete because identifying and training elders takes time. We'll see more in just a moment pertaining to all the different things that the elder is supposed to be, supposed to be, all of his qualifications, all of his character. But we must not leave behind this fact that Paul left Titus in Crete so that he would establish order by appointing elders. That's the need that there would be order brought. Paul leaves Titus in Crete so that he would establish order by establishing elders. I think this clearly has major implications for our church as well. The church in Crete isn't an odd church. It's not an oddity of a church. This situation was so dire that Paul had to drop Titus off for this special mission of appointing elders. That's not what's going on. This is a standard thing that in order for the church to have order, it needs elders. Paul commands Titus in this way for a particular purpose that is woven into this very book. As we look at the book of Titus, this elder's thing is not a random side thought, but instead it's very integral to the whole point. This is not something that just pertains to believers in Crete, but also to believers in West Liberty, Ohio as well.

We talked a few weeks ago about how the intro to Titus acts as an overture to the whole book. We can go back to verse 1. *"Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ."* Why is he writing this letter? *"For the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth."* Why would he want to appoint elders? *"For the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth."* We want those same things in our church, do we not? We want our believers to be brought up, to be trained *"for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth."* In this, there seem to be two pieces of application even.

I got to grab onto a copy of our Constitution earlier this week and was reading through that and it's interesting in our section to have elders, we have a clear desire to have elders. I'm going to read this little section from the Constitution that says this; if you're a member of Grace Chapel, you've agreed to this. We believe that Jesus Christ alone is head of the church. And that he governs his church through his elders, who are designated by him as shepherds, overseers, and stewards, and to whom Christ commands submission. These are endowed by his Spirit with gifts and graces needed to accomplish their work. It is the duty of the church to seek and discover among its members those to whom Christ the Lord has imparted the necessary gifts and qualifications for this ministry. And after congregational selection and biblical examination by the elders, to set them apart to this ministry by united prayer.

And so, two pieces of application here. First is here, that we would have elders here. I think it's a marvelous thing that our church desires to have elders, that we desire to have order. It's a good thing. So how grateful should we be that we do not float around as a remnant in chaos, but instead that we serve a God of order who has intentionally said, you guys can have elders in order that you might have order as well. In order that you may know him better. That's an incredible God that would desire that we would know him better and so he'd give us elders.

Friends, I don't want you to miss this either though, about halfway through the paragraph of our Constitution, there are these words; it is the duty of the church to seek and discover. That's a task that we have as members of Grace Chapel, that we have agreed to seek and discover elders in our midst. So, I challenge you towards those things. Elders are a marvelous thing and the body's not left without a task. So, a few examples for each group of people in the room; wives is your husband a man that you'd say, I think my husband should be an elder. I think he should be striving towards that. That's an honorable task, push him towards it.

Children, does your dad stack up against the qualifications that we're going to talk about in just a moment? I think it would mean the world to him if you'd say, hey dad, I think you should think about being an elder. I think that you kind of line up with those things and say, you should think about that. Your dad would be overjoyed if you do that. Men, this is an honorable task, desire it. Desire to be in this role in order that the church might be ordered.

And finally, whole church, this is a task that we agree as members that we'll pray for in united prayer. That's the last two words of that paragraph. To set them apart to this ministry by united prayer. May our united prayer not fall off the moment that they are put into position. May we continue to pray for them. We ought to be praying for the elders regularly. This elder task is not an easy task devoid of problems, drama, and thinking. But instead, it is a very difficult task. So, I want to push us here to encourage qualified men to be elders and pray for the elders that we have. That's the first part of application there.

The second piece, there. So, we have the application here. Let's also look at the application there. That as a church who prioritizes elders, we're not just a church that desires that we would have elders, but also a church that desires that other churches would have elders. That they would be brought into order. May all churches move from disorder to order. And that's not even a ridiculous idea biblically. That we would be concerned for the sake of other churches in their order. We can consider who Titus is. We could go back to Timothy and see, okay, this seems to be a younger elder, but maybe he's like a local pastor. Titus seems to be a little bit different of a kind of person.

And so, we're going to walk through each of those references that's on the screen right now. Consider Galatians 2:1, *"Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me."* That's Paul writing, and they're on the way to the Jerusalem council where they're fighting over actually the very false teaching that we're going to see in just a moment. But so, Titus is on his way to Jerusalem. Okay, let's go to 2 Corinthians 7. This is verses 5 & 6, *"For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn - fighting without and fear within. But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus."* So, Paul is writing to the Corinthians and says, we were very comforted by God, who sent Titus to us in Macedonia.

So, Titus has been to Jerusalem. Titus has been to Macedonia. We could go to the next chapter in 2 Corinthians. This is chapter 8:16 & 17, *"But thanks be to God, who put into the heart of Titus the same earnest care I have for you. For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest he is going to you of his own accord."* So he went to Jerusalem, he went to Macedonia, and now he's going to Corinth.

Let's keep going, 2 Timothy 4:10, Titus has gone to Dalmatia. I don't even know where Dalmatia is, but now Titus has gone to Jerusalem, Macedonia, Corinth, and now he's going to Dalmatia. Or here in Titus, we could go to chapter 3, look at verse 12. It says, *"When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there."* So, Titus sees, or Paul sees that Titus should go to Nicopolis. So now he's been to Jerusalem, Macedonia, Corinth, Dalmatia, and now Paul's saying, hey, come to Nicopolis. And here in verse 5, *"This is why I left you in Crete."* So, Titus is spending reasonable amounts of time in, that's six places. And what's his job? To establish order by establishing elders.

See, Titus seems to be a sort of missionary moving from place to place with a particular task. And here we get a glimpse into what that task is. Paul leaves his missionary pal Titus to stay in Crete in order to take what remained and place it in order, namely by establishing elders. So how must that also shape how we think through missions? Missions is evidently not something that should be in any way devoid of the church, but instead something that is primarily focused on the church. Ephesians 3:10 notes that *"through the church the manifold wisdom of God might be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places,"* through the church. So, missions, according to the example here in Titus and Ephesians, seems to be God's means by his spirit to go across borders to complete the missionary task for the furthering of God's glory by worship in the church in places where it is not.

May this show and how we as Grace Chapel approach missions as well. May we not go do good, helpful, great humanitarian things and call it missionary work? I think those are wonderful things that Christians can and should be doing. That does not make them part of the missionary task. Instead, in our sending and in our supporting, we ought to be obsessed with the furthering of the church herself. That the glory of God might be made more fully known and worshiped appropriately. We'll move on from there.

I'm going to point to the qualifications or the character of elders. This is in verses 6-9. Elders are a must for the church. We just saw that in verse 5. And one of the primary differences between the church that is in complete disorder and the church that is in complete order is the having or not having of elders. And so, then the natural question that arises is who can even be an elder? That's great that we ought to have elders. But what is that? And children, this is the part where you listen up and you see if your dad lines up with these things and then you go tell him. So, who can even be an elder? Paul anticipates that question and he answers it very appropriately.

So, if you have your Bibles with you and like I said, I hope you do. You can see this break even in verses 6 & 7. At the beginning of verse 6, *"If anyone is above reproach."* So, we're talking about elders. And *"if anyone is above reproach,"* that's how he starts for 6. Let's look at verse 7, *"For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach."* Paul, we already knew both of those things. We already knew that we were talking about elders or overseers. You already said that they have to be above reproach. Why in the world would Paul organize his list in this way? And it seems intentional in order that he would cause a natural break, a listing, breaking this into two sections that are both categorized as sections above reproach.

And so, the first one that we'll discuss pertains to his character with regard to his family. In the second section of being above reproach has to do particularly with the elder's character. As we begin with the family side of things, take a look again at verse 6. *"If anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are faithful, not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination."* Hopefully you see even there the two clear sections that the elder would be the husband of one wife and that his children, that he would have faithful children. So, I want to take just a moment to look at both of those things. What do each of those mean? What does it mean for a man to be a husband of one wife? There are a few common ideas here. I'm going to briefly hit on two of them.

So, the first one that I want to bring up I'm going to call the marriage required view. So, if you're taking notes, this is the marriage required view. And this really doesn't appear to be that crazy of a suggestion. We can look at the text and say the husband of one wife. Boom, done, got it. That's what it says, right? *"If anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife,"* done. The argument here is that's what Paul said. Every elder ought to be a husband of one wife. And I'd wholeheartedly agree with the sentiment that the elder who is married ought to be the husband of one wife. But nowhere in the text does Paul say every elder must be a husband of one wife. He's instead saying that the elder who is a husband must be one of one wife. You see the difference there. There's an assumption being built into the claim that every elder must be a husband of one wife. This view takes an unnecessary jump in what Paul's saying. But if we reject that, then what in the world is Paul saying? What else could he possibly mean?

In line with the rest of the requirements that we're going to see in just a second, this seems to be something less of a particular situation and more of a type of character that this man must be. That he would not be a man who would juggle multiple women and he wouldn't be a man who's hooked on pornography, and he wouldn't be so consumed with women that aren't his wife as a married man that other women and as a single man, any women. This presents a different view. I'm going to call it the upright character view. The view suggests that Paul's point here is not that a man must be married, but instead that if a man is married, he must be married to one woman. If a man is not married, he's not married to any woman. So, he's not to be consumed with lust in any way.

This view also seems consistent with 1 Corinthians 7. Consider verses 8 & 9 of 1 Corinthians 7. It says this, *"To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single, as I am. But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion."* So, Paul outright states that it is a better thing to not marry in order that they would find themselves more useful for ministry. So why on earth would he then turn around in Titus and say, only the people who, according to 1 Corinthians 7, only the people who cannot, I'm quoting 1 Corinthians 7, only the people who cannot exercise self-control should be elders. That doesn't make any sense. And so, it seems instead that this is a type of character that Paul is gunning for. Paul's not arguing for a particular marital status, whether single or married. But instead, he's arguing for the character of the man, which then comes up in the second part, that his children would be faithful.

So, let's continue on. Immediately following the requirement pertaining to his marriage, he turns also to his children. For the elder who's married with kids, his children ought to be *"children who are faithful, not*

open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination." You'll notice your Bible likely says his *"children are believers."* Getting at the idea that the elder ought to have trained up his family in such a way that they would believe. And this seems to pair well with what comes in verse 9, right? We can look at verse 9. *"He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it."* And so, if we want an elder who can do that, that's evidenced then by his children being believers, because he's clearly taught them well. That's a benefit of that view.

However, I want to suggest that the reading would be, I guess I want to push for the reading that I had just a moment ago. That this text instead is suggesting his children must be faithful. Immediately following faithful, we're then given an explanation of what that means, that they would *"not be open to debauchery or insubordination,"* but instead they'd be faithful. And if we follow Paul's argument and what is to come, especially if we're endorsing this about character primarily, we'll see later in verse 10 that *"there are many who are insubordinate."* And so just as the other view kind of grabs at a later thing and says, see, this does the same thing. That an elder who has children ought to have children who, whether believers or unbelievers, that they would be subordinate to him. That they would not rise up against him, but instead that he would be able to have children who submit to him in order that when he comes to the church, the church too must submit to him. That there wouldn't be these false teachers rising up and causing problems, but instead that they would submit to him.

I also think if we're taking this passage as believing children, then it seems we make an assault on younger elders. Poor Pastor Colby is going to have baby Charlotte in two months and thus will be disqualified for ministry because she has not yet professed faith in Christ. That seems to be a problem. And so instead, if we render this as faithful children, not pertaining to the type of kid it is, but instead the character of Colby, then it seems a little bit different that he'd be a father who would be the type of man that would train up faithful children. And so, then the question becomes, will Colby be a faithful, a good father to his daughter and push her in the right direction? Yes. I was hoping for more of a response. Will Colby be a good father to Charlotte? Yes, he will. So, then Colby does not disqualify himself for ministry. Yikes. All right.

After Paul makes it through those two qualifications, then he gives us that goofy, goofy repeated information, right? Indicating that his list will now continue, but now into the second part of the information. And so, beginning in verse 7, I'm going to go back there. *"He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain."* And why must he not be those things? Because that's exactly what his opponents are. They're horrible. The false teachers are arrogant and quick-tempered and drunkards and violent and greedy for gain. And we can see examples of this in the text even, just as I was talking about last week where Paul's writing things. He's not writing random thoughts, but instead he's weaving this book together. We see this in biblical writing that there's an overarching point being drawn out in the text.

And so, we can look at verse 11. This is about the false teachers. *"They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not teach."* So, the false teachers are teaching for shameful gain. The elders are supposed to be people who are not consumed with greed

at all in order that they would not be given over to preaching and teaching for selfish gain. They wouldn't do that for popularity, and they wouldn't do that for money because that's exactly what the false teachers are doing. And then we can continue on in verse 8. *"He must be hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined."* That's a totally different kind of man.

And so, I encourage you to consider this list that these each are things that we could dive into for an entire sermon and have a great time together. But instead, I want you to quickly see the need for each of these. The problem is that there are false teachers who are falsely teaching false things. And we desperately need elders who will not succumb to the same temptations. It's a good thing for an elder to be noticeably different. Instead of being after shameful gain like the opposition, the elders to be hospitable. May he give everything of himself away. He'd give away his time and he'd give away his money and he'd let random people sleep in his house. That's what I'm doing right now. And so, there are many ways that this hospitality of the elder shines through. And it's very different from these false teachers. And so, as we consider elders, we're looking for people who live in an odd to the world way that they'd live in a godly manner.

Paul continues many of those themes in the rest of the letter as well. Notice that the elder must be self-controlled. That's in verse 8. The elder must be a self-controlled one. You can see on the slide there each of those other times that this is going to come up in chapter 2. We can run through each of those. If we look at verse 2, old men should be self-controlled. In verse 5, young women should be self-controlled. In verse 6, young men should be self-controlled. In verse 12, we can look at verse 11. The grace of God has appeared. And so, then in verse 12, the grace of God has appeared in order that you might be able to live a self-controlled life. The elder ought to be living in such a way that is very clearly impacted by good teaching of good doctrine. That Christ has come and the elder lives differently and therefore he should be an elder. And so I returned to a similar place earlier, if this elder task is a task that you desire, women, if it's something that you see your husband may be doing, children, if it's something that you say, hey, dad, you should do this, he must be a man who has been intensely impacted by good teaching of good doctrine. That comes out in his character.

The final piece of these characteristics of an elder is wrapped up in verse 9. That *"he must hold fast to the word."* What Paul made clear in his actions previously, he now also makes explicit. Let's read verse 9. *"He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it."* The elder must be fascinated with the word of God. He must love it. He must hold fast to it. He does not let it go because he loves it and that's where he finds life. And he does this so that he may be able to give instruction and sound doctrine and also rebuke those who contradict the word. I hope you see that every part of this man is consumed by the word of God. How does this affect any of us at all? What if I have, you may be sitting there, what if I have no intention of ever being an elder? My husband is surely not qualified of being an elder. What am I supposed to do with this? For the members of Grace Chapel, we get to experience tremendous joy because we have elders like this.

We have elders who are in love with the word of God. They love it. You can go have a conversation with them and that will be something that very quickly comes up in conversation because they love the word,

and they desire that others too would understand it and love it. Thanks be to God, the one who has given us elders who adore him in order that we would be shepherded towards him. It's a wonderful thing that the church has been given elders. Our need for elders is not merely theoretical.

So, as we turn to verses 10-16, we see this very same thing. Let's read verses 10-16. It says this, *"For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party. They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not teach. One of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, said, 'Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.' This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, not devoting themselves to Jewish myths and the commands of people who turn away from the truth. To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their minds and their consciences are defiled. They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, and unfit for any good work."* And we see Paul's connection here. This is being right now preached in one sermon because it's one thought from Paul.

He completes his requirements for an elder in verse 9, and then he opens verse 10 with *"For."* *"For."* And so, he's not saying, hey, this is what an elder should be, and then break separate thought. Also, there's false teaching. But instead, it's very intimately connected. The elders in statement and requirements are not things that Paul just came up with in order that his friends would be put into these positions. But instead, he's listing very specific requirements in order to combat very awful teaching. And so, this isn't a theoretical thing, but instead, it's something that Paul's saying. These people must be this exact thing in order that they could fight off this exact thing.

Just to go back to the story from earlier, this kind of new calvary, this heavy calvary, must be this exact type of thing in order that they could fight off this exact kind of threat. We're facing false teaching. We require good elders, good, qualified elders. There are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers. And these are those who are especially of the circumcision party, those who especially try to cling to the law. Later, then, Paul notes that the goal would be that they would not devote themselves to Jewish myths and the commands of those who turn away from the truth. How excellent, then, that Titus would be the one that would deal with this.

We spoke earlier of the facts that Paul took Titus with them in Galatians 2. We learn about that to the Jerusalem Council, where there's this fight over, okay, do I have to be circumcised in order to be able to be saved? Do I have to abide by the law for salvation? The solution there is absolutely not, because there's nothing that you can do by your own works in order to merit salvation. That's why we read Romans 7 & 8 earlier. To go back to Galatians 3:10, *"For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, 'Curse it be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the law, and do them.'"* And so, that's great if you want to cling to the law, but you have a serious problem because you cannot possibly fulfill the whole thing.

We could go to Romans 8. I'm going to turn there, actually, because I want to read more than I have written down. And so, I'm going to start in verse 6. Romans 8:6 says this, *"For to set the mind on the flesh is*

death.” To cling to the law and say, that’s it, in order to achieve salvation, I have to fulfill the law. That is death, is what Paul says in Romans 8:6. Keep going. *“But to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law,”* because it can’t do the whole thing, *“indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”* Verse 9, *“You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.”* I’m going to stop there. There were many rising up in the church who desired that everyone follow the entire Jewish law in order to achieve salvation. That leads to death. There is no hope for people who do this to themselves. They condemn themselves to hell. They place themselves in eternity apart from God because they desire to work to earn his satisfaction in order to be with Him.

Many like that will come in our church. They are to be rebuked by the elders in hope that they may be sound in the faith, not devoting themselves to Jewish myths and the commands of people who turn away from the truth. And yet, for many of those people, both their minds and their consciences are defiled. They cannot possibly understand because the Spirit has not made it able for them to. They cannot understand. Consider 2 Corinthians 4:3 & 4, *“And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the God of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”* Friends, those who refuse sound doctrine for the sake of pursuing good works are perishing. Do not follow them. They do not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.

Titus 1:16 puts it at the very end of our paragraph, *“They are detestable, disobedient, and unfit for any good work.”* Do not associate yourself with that person. *“They are detestable, disobedient, and unfit for any good work.”* They will not find salvation by trying to obey the law. Because as Romans 8:6 says, that is death. To primarily concern ourselves with the law leads to death. We could keep reading in Galatians 3 where it says that instead we have great life because we are not in the law. We are continuing on in Galatians 3 where Christ has become that curse for us in order that the righteous should live by faith in Him. We do not need to concern ourselves with the law and we ought not follow the one who does. Because *“they are detestable, disobedient, and unfit for any good work.”*

So, a few application points from that. May we pray for these people, these people who concern themselves with the law. That they would not wander about pleasuring themselves with their own self-righteousness forever. But instead that they would see the gospel that we preach as one that is true and filled with hope. Actually, I will challenge you right now. I think many of you have pens because I can hear some clicking. And so, I encourage you to write down the name of somebody who is one of those people who is placing their salvation and their ability to follow the law that they more primarily concern themselves with being good, with being right, with being perfect before God. And they are placing themselves in death. Pray for that person.

Second, may we absolutely not participate in this deception. Friends believe the gospel that you are a horrible guilty sinner left to yourself. When Mike comes up earlier, we pray through confession together that is not an empty time where somebody is just up here talking again. But instead, we are sinners who sin. Confess your sins. Yet God himself has paid the price for that sin. Do not indulge yourself in false

gospel that promises other things but delight in the gospel that is true. And maybe that means to go as far as to actually preaching the gospel to yourself. That you practice sharing the gospel by yourself. And just work through it. Just to remind yourself of the things that you believe that are true and hopeful and promising good. And not resting in your own self-righteousness but instead in Christ's blood. You have not graduated from the blood of Jesus and onto your own good works.

Third, praise God because we have elders who are faithful in their delight in the word. They love, they are satisfied in Christ. That is a wonderful gift that we have been given. We have elders who can teach sound doctrine. We have elders who live lives that have been clearly affected by sound teaching. We have elders who delight in Christ. What an incredible gift that the Lord has given us in that. Know that we are blessed by excellent elders and men, desire to be among that group. Titus 1:5-16 provides the basis for which we ought to praise God for his provision of elders. Those are to be qualified men who bring order to the church and fight off false teaching. So may we as a church continue to support, pray for, and raise up elders who hold fast to the word. Again, praise God who has provided qualified elders who defeat false teaching.

This is Titus 1:15-16. Looking forward to many of you continuing to study this text and asking questions of it yourself. Continue to pray that the Lord would make clear truth in the text to your heart by the power of the Spirit.

Let's pray together.

Father, thank you for your word that we might be encouraged by elders that we have that meet these qualifications. That we have many who are faithful to their wives and have faithful children and elders who are hospitable and lovers of good and self-controlled and upright and holy and disciplined. That is an awesome thing. So may we not forget that but rather delight in the fact that we have men who meet these characteristics and are willing to teach that the same sound teaching of sound doctrine that they've received that they then would also invest in us. Father, that's an awesome thing. Thank you for your provision for the church.

Father, I pray again for many who place their hope in the law that they would see the faultiness in that and that they would no longer try to make themselves right before you by following law but instead that they would understand that they must place their hope in Christ alone. There's nothing that they can do in order to achieve salvation. Father, I think of many who fall in that camp. I'd ask that you do a work in their hearts. Father, continue to allow this text to come to mind throughout this week. And may we rejoice because we have elders who care well for us. May we encourage them. Father, thank you for your word and your sending of your son that the church might be established and yet now brought to order as well.

I pray all of this in Jesus' name and in the power of the Spirit, amen.

Available online at: <https://gracechapelwl.org>