

Theme: If the church is to grow in grace and peace it is imperative that false teachers and false teaching are recognized, confronted, and corrected.

Background: The church will always need strong leaders because it will always face serious challenges – from without and within.

Introduction: How do we handle theological controversies? By presenting careful, thorough, biblical answers. Warnings about false teaching/teachers permeate the New Testament. (Matthew 7:15; Acts 20:29, 30; 2 Peter 2:1-3)

I. The Purveyors of False Teaching

A. The Circumcision Party: the Gospel plus...

1. Special rites/practices
2. Special diet
3. Special knowledge

B. Unbelievers (16)

1. Professing to know God – but denying Him by their works
2. Deceivers (Liars?) (v. 10)

II. The Content of False Teaching

A. The commands of men/people (v. 14)

1. Human opinions, not the scriptures
2. Devoted to Jewish myths (v. 14) – Many similarities with 1 Timothy 1:4-10

B. Faith and...?

1. Faith accepts no additions
 - a. Anything you add to the work of Christ diminishes it
 - b. We don't add anything to faith to make it real or genuine
2. We have nothing to add! – We are given righteousness by grace through faith (Philippians 3:9; Romans 3:21)
3. This is the "good news" of the gospel

C. External purity? (v.15) – "To the pure all things are pure"

NOTE: Pure things are so easily spoiled/defiled (Mark 7:15)

III. The Effects of False Teaching

A. Damaging the Church

1. Wrecking "households"
 - a. Members sitting in judgment toward each other?
 - b. Fruit of "Faith and" is always:
 - 1.) arrogance
 - 2.) intolerance
 - 3.) bitterness
 4. judgmentalism
2. "As a man thinks, so he is." (Proverbs 23:7)

B. Displaying an ungodly character

1. Their reputation:
 - a. Insubordinate
 - b. Empty talkers (1 Timothy 1:6)
 - c. Deception
2. They are by definition:

- a. Cretans
 - 1.) Liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons
 - 2.) Attributed to Epimenides 6th Century
 - 3.) Proverbial liars who alter the language; Cretan = liar

NOTE: Paul was not condoning wicked ethnic stereotypes! It applies to the false teachers – not all citizens of Crete.

- 3. Unfit for service
 - a. Detestable – term used to describe God's attitude toward idolatry
 - b. Disobedient – to God's revealed Word
 - c. Unfit for good works (any at all)

NOTE: There was nothing that wasn't tainted with greed, pride, ungodly desire, arrogance. Spread over everything they touched.

APPLICATION: What will be said about our culture in a hundred years?

IV. The Correction for False Teaching

- A. They must be silenced
 - 1. Silenced (v. 11)
 - a. Through sound teaching
 - b. Through discipline
 - 2. Rebuked (v. 13)

NOTE: That they might be restored to the sound doctrine/faith!

- B. Godly teachers/leaders/pastors
 - 1. Train and equip
 - 2. Don't lower the standards just to fill up the number

V. Passing the Test – Paul provides the guidelines for protection. Examine:

- A. Man's ideas or God's revealed Word? (Origin)
- B. Exalting Christ or me in my strength and power? (Essence) – Is the result inward transformation or outward performance?
- C. Do I see a transformed life or a lifeless creed? (End) – Faith and life match!

APPLICATION: What maxim will be used to describe us?

- 1. A righteous people, a humble people, a loving people – Proclaiming a righteousness not of works, but in Christ alone!
- 2. Christians have peace with God and with one another.
- 3. They were faithful servants – lovers of good – instruments of peace.