

HANDLING TROUBLE-MAKING TEACHERS

Paul wrote the book of Titus to instruct Titus on two important issues regarding the mission field: - “The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town as I directed you.”

Last week we studied the issue of “appointing elders in every town” (1:5b). Today’s lesson will address the issue of “straightening out unfinished ministry” (1:5a).

In today’s lesson, Paul will instruct Titus on one of those unfinished ministries. It was handling teachers who were causing trouble by teaching apostate doctrines – “They are upsetting (subvert) whole families, teaching things they should not teach.” (1:11)

To counter their subversive doctrine, Titus is instructed to teach sound or healthy doctrine – “Holding fast the faithful word, which is in accordance with the teaching that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.” (1:9) - “...That they may be sound in the faith.” (1:13b)

We will study our lesson text by the following six homiletical points.

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| • Circumcision group | (1:10) | Rebellious, empty talkers, and deceivers (Judaizers) |
| • Corrupting families | (1:11) | Ruining entire families, communities |
| • Cretan profile | (1:12) | Reputation of culture |
| • Correcting behavior | (1:13) | Rebuke with sound doctrine |
| • Cosmos diabolicus | (1:14-15) | Reject truth and corrupt mind and conscience |
| • Callous soul | (1:16) | Reversionism |

We will study FOUR aspects of HANDLING TROUBLE-MAKING TEACHERS.
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1. One group of trouble-making teachers on the Island of Crete was a legalistic group known for their doctrine of circumcision.

“for there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision.” (1:10)

There were an alarming number of these legalistic teaching the apostate doctrine of circumcision (many/ polus/ nplm).

“And some men came down from Judea and began to teach the brethren, ‘unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you can not be saved.’ (Acts 15:1)

“But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are.” (Acts 15:11; Rom.1:17; 1 Cor.15:3-4; Eph.2:8-9)

Two apostate doctrines are mentioned in 1:14 – “not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth.”

Jewish myths (Titus 3:9; 1 Tim.1:3-7;4:7; 6:3-5; 2 Tim.2:16-19) – “Probably mythical stories built on OT history (genealogies) that later developed into intricate Gnostic philosophical systems (see Introduction to 1 John: Gnosticism).” (NIV, 1 Tim.1:4)

Commandments of men (Col.2:16-23; Matt.15:1-20/ the oral tradition of elders became the Mishnah around 200 AD; Matt.23/ 7 woes). Keeping them was their system of salvation and spirituality.

“Nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.” (Gal.2:16)

2. The apostate doctrines of legalism were a big problem because they were subverting entire families.

“Who must (dei / p.a.ind) be silenced (epistomizo / p.a.infin) because they are upsetting (anatrepo / p.a.ind) whole families, teaching things they should (dei / p.a.ind/ must) not teach, for sake of sordid gain.” (1:11)

Anatrepo means to overthrow, subvert, or upset. They were subverting families within the doctrinal churches with these apostate doctrines. These teachers of apostate doctrines were motivated by love of money. And their popularity was based on telling people what they wanted to hear (2 Tim.4: 3-4).

These were reversionistic believers - “who turn away from the truth.” (1:14) (1 Tim.4: 1-5)

3. To counter the apostate teachings, Paul trained and appointed elders in every town on the Island of Crete to teach sound doctrine (1:5, 9,13).

“Holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.” (1:9)

“For this cause reprove them severely that they may be sound in the faith.” (1:13)

“Who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families.” (1:11)

“In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.” (1 Tim.4: 6)

4. Sound doctrine leads to sound faith that is necessary to change the culture of the church community.

Arts, literature, music, and history reveal the source of the thinking of a culture (cosmos diabolicus or divine good). Paul understood that the gospel of Jesus Christ and sound doctrine of the word of God could change it from evil to divine thinking. Today, we are engaged in a cultural war in USA.

Church History principle: Either the culture changes the church or the church changes the culture (Acts 17 / Athenian culture). “These men (evangelical Christians) who have upset (anastatoo / a.a.ptc nplm / turn upside down) the world have come here also.” (17:6)

Cretan culture: Paul explained their culture by quoting a famous poet from Crete – “One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, ‘Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.’” (1:12 / Epimenedes / 1 of 7 wise men of Ancient world / 6BC / Graceo-Roman culture/ quotation from “A Hymn to Zeus.”