

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

Brian Frost

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Grace Does Good

PART

3

TITLE

Unhealthy Doctrine, Unhealthy Lives

SCRIPTURE

Titus 1:10-16



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Well, it is so good to see all of you. If you are new here with us, welcome. We are thrilled that you are here. All of us know that ingredients matter. What we don't normally think of is ingredients outside of when we're making food. All of us can sort of imagine, though, as it relates to food. Let's just say that we say, "You know what? Let's make a cake. In fact, let's make this cake. Let's not let Brian preach. Let's just make a cake here." What we would do is we'd have a big bowl, and we would add ingredients with the intent to create that. The fact is you may show up, and you say, "You know what? It says brown sugar, but I have some sand. Sand looks like brown sugar." The fact is, in time, we would all know. The reason is this. Whatever that we mix into the bowl eventually reappears, maybe in a different way or a different shape or a different form, but it always reappears in the final product that comes out of the oven.

We have no problem with thinking of this when it comes to our food. Yet, we have every problem thinking about it and considering it when it comes to our mind. You see, just as the ingredients that go into the batter that make a cake, so whatever it is that we mix into our mind, it resurfaces in some way in the way that we live our life. This is what Paul meant when he said, "The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith." Just look at that verse for a moment. He says, "I'm teaching. I have a charge for you. I have instruction that I want to give you, and my hope is this." This instruction is basically ingredients that we're going to put into a bowl. We're going to stick it into the oven.

When it comes out of the oven, what I'm praying is that the cake that comes out of your life is love, is that people would look at your life, and they would say, "That is attractive. That looks like something that I want to be like, looks like someone I want to be around." Notice what he says. It says that this kind of love, it issues from, it means it springs from, it comes out of. What he says is this instruction, it goes into our mind and into our heart. It creates a love and a consciousness and a faith that's sincere and real. What happens is a cake is sprung from that, and that cake is love. What I want to ask you to do is to consider your life. The product, the outcome of everything that you're ingesting mentally in terms of ideas, truth, doctrine, philosophies, everything that you do in your life is literally what comes out of the oven.

Think about how you treat people. Think about who you most recently voted for and why. Think about the words that you use and how you talk to people, how you view other people, how you view people who are different than you, how you view women or men, how you view children, older people, how you view people of different races or ethnicities, how you treat people. Think of this week how you dealt with the most stressful day of your week or, if you're getting older, how you're dealing with maybe suffering or aging or maybe bereavement or your money, what you do with your money. Do you save it? Do you spend it? You see, every single one of these things is the cake. It's the product of the ingredients that we've mixed into the bowl of our mind. Something is calling those shots. That's just the result. That's the byproduct of other things that have gone into the oven, into the mixing bowl that's been stirred into our life that gives us categories of how we should talk and how we should behave and how we should think and how we should treat other people.

What I want to encourage you is this. As we consider our lives today, and I know that's what you're going to do. You're going to consider your life. We all consider our lives today. What I want to ask you to do is just what God invites us to do, and that is to examine the ingredients that are currently going into your mind, the ideas, the statements that you consider true or not true, the voices that speak to you. You see, this is ultimately where Titus chapter one verses 10 through 16 goes. In fact, this week's sermon is called Unhealthy Doctrine, Unhealthy Life. What he's going to do is he's going to say, "You know what? There's certain things within the church and within our lives that needs to come out of the mixing bowl. It's not healthy, and you need to recognize what it is. Let's expose it, and let's take it out of our lives."

Next week, it's going to be the opposite. It's Healthy Doctrine, Healthy Lives. In other words, he's going to say, "Titus, this is what you teach the people. This is how we should live." There's ideas, literally, that are in accord with, that generate a certain kind of behavior, and these are the ingredients we need to teach. This is where we're going over the next two weeks. In a moment, though, I want to pray. Before I do, I recognize that many of us are terribly distracted today. Some of us, right now, are grieving, bereaved. There's been four deaths that are closely related to our church family, maybe more than that that I'm not even aware of. I know that when you come into a place like this, whether you even know who those people are or that anyone died, the fact is that every single one of us, when we walk in these doors, we sit down, and we are absolutely plagued by distraction.

There's going to be probably no less than 50 things that you're tempted to think about when I'm talking that are apart from anything that I'm saying. That's just reality, but I promise you, on the authority of God's word, that what we're about to read is critically important to our lives. What I want to do is I want to pray first for what's on our heart and what's on our mind. Then, just for 30 minutes, we're going to just give that to the Lord and say, "Even though I'm suffering in that, even though I'm hurting in that, I give that to you. I trust it to you for a half hour. I'm going to come away, and I'm going to go into the text, and I'm going to learn something from you." Then, we're going to walk out of this room. We're going to say, "Now, with that we understand from God's word, how now do we live as it relates to the other things that have currently distracted us?" Let me pray for us. Okay?

Father in heaven, we look to you in faith. We pray for the Catones and the Carmens and the Lovettes and the Dingles and maybe others in our church family who are bereaved, who are hurting. We pray for each of these families or for those that are grieving the terrible loss of someone they love so deeply. We ask, God, that you would minister to them in ways that only you can. We pray that you would provide and protect, that you would help them to navigate that mixture of happy celebrations of memories and yet the harsh sorrow of loss and that you would help them through that. I thank you, Father, for the gospel tells us that there's hope in Jesus Christ for all who trust you. In this case, in each of these four, every one of them were trusting in Jesus Christ as their Savior. We thank you that each of these are now with you, and they're whole. Yet, their families are hurting, and so we ask for your grace in their lives.

For those in this room and in our church family who are grieving for friends and loved ones, we pray, Father, that you would be big and strong. We come to you. We're troubled, and so we run to you, the one strong tower. We run to you, the name of the Lord, who is holy and righteous and just and who is sovereign, omnipotent, who's merciful and kind and generous, who saves, who protects. We believe this is true. You've done it in our life. Everything that plagues our mind, that distracts us, Lord, we ask would you carry that for a moment so that we could focus on your word. Would you speak through weakness and through distraction in each of our lives? We pray all of this in Christ's name. Amen.

In your Bibles, I would love for you to turn with me to Titus chapter one. We're going to be reading verses 10 through verse 16. Titus is really a manual on good works. It's a manual of what comes out of the oven, of good works, of godliness, of those fruits that people look at and go, "Wow. That's really attractive." In fact, I just want to show you that this is true. You heard a sermon last week when I was gone on verses five through verse nine that talks about the fact that the leaders within the church, they should be marked by good works. Then, what you find in chapter two verse seven, he says, "Look, Titus, show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works." Then, in chapter two verse 11, he says, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people and training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives."

Verse 14 says that, "Jesus gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works." You get into chapter three verse one, and he says, "Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, and to be ready for every good work." Chapter three verse eight, "The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works." In chapter three verse 14, "Let our people learn to devote themselves to good works." What do you think is on Paul's heart? He cares about good works. He wants the church to demonstrate the credibility that God comes, and he moves within us, and it generates something within us, power within us to live a different kind of life that's marked by godliness.

Two weeks ago, I showed you the message, the pattern in the New Testament. You find it in chapter one verses one and two. What is the pattern towards godliness in our life? This is what it is. It starts with grace, and then moves to faith, knowledge, identity, and godliness. Let me just work through these really quickly. Everything in Christianity, if it's Christian, it's always overflow. God comes to us first. We don't come to him first. God's grace is like light that comes through, and it touches us. He's created you, and he's created me in his image so that when that grace lights up our life, it reflects in a million different colors or good works. We have to believe in the grace that came in the person of Jesus Christ. That's faith in him.

Then, once we have a relationship with him through faith in Jesus Christ, he says, “I want you to grow in your knowledge of the truth.” Now we’re studying the Bible, scripture, understanding more about who he is and who we are. What that does is it gives us a picture of identity. It’s what identity is. It’s knowing who we are. Here’s the amazing thing about the Bible. The Bible tells us that God created us so that everything that we do is only a natural outflow of what’s within us. You know why you think the way you think? It’s because those thoughts are within your heart. You know why you talk the way you talk? It’s because those words are within your heart. That’s just the reality.

All of us, we live in accord with our identity. This is what the gospel says. It says that God comes to us if we believe, and then we continue to grow in knowledge. What does that mean? It means that we put the right ingredients in the bowl. We begin to learn who we are and who God is. Now, all of a sudden, we live in accord with our new identity in Christ, and that creates good works. There’s a problem. You see, in the book of Titus, what we’re told us that Paul, as he was leaving the island of Crete, he left Titus behind, but then he later wrote him a letter. That’s the letter that we have in our hand. What he did was this. He writes Titus, and he reminds him to appoint godly leaders and to protect the church from a clear and present danger. That danger is false teachers. Let’s read it together.

Verse 10, he says, “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 commandments 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.”

Now, that’s supposed to sound an alarm with our heart. Over and over and over through the book, he says that we might be devoted to good works, do good works, be committed to good works. All of a sudden, he says that there are certain people who are unfit for any good work. We’re supposed to look at that and say, “There’s a rattlesnake in the daycare. Something’s not right here.” What he does in this little section is, by God’s grace, he simply exposes false teachers within the church. In their context, it was a real setting. I mean, these people were really there, and he’s really saying, “It’s these people right here.” He’s training them and teaching them what to look for, but I want you to see that this is a matter of grace. God doesn’t have to tell us when there are counterfeits, but he does. He gives us enough wisdom so that we have the ability to recognize them.

One of the oddest things about a text like this and to teach a text like this is the only way that I can ask you to be obedient is to also ask you to wonder if I'm a false teacher. You're not supposed to be able to listen to a sermon on false teachers and what you're supposed to look for and not ask the question, "Is that one of them?" When you go to a life group, you're supposed to ask the question, "Is that one of them?" I want to encourage you to be kind and gracious but also be faithful. You should be faithful. You should be faithful just as I am trying to be faithful. What is true about a false teacher? First thing is this. God's grace exposes the behavior of false teachers. That's where he begins in verse 10, 11, and 12, the behavior of false teachers.

Now, keep this in mind. I'm not going to talk necessarily about social commentary voices, but you have to understand that even though this is directed primarily toward teachers within the church, in other words, people who stand up and say, "Thus saith the Lord," you have to recognize that it also applies to any professor, any author, any entertainer, any talk show host, any athlete, any journalist that you read, that you listen to, anybody who's speaking truth, who's filling your mixing bowl, the mind, your mind with ideas, with doctrines, with philosophies. You need to ask the question, and it's these questions, "Is this the behavior that I see within their own life?" Within the church, though, he zooms in, so that's where I'm going to focus our time.

The first thing we know about false teachers and their behavior is they're insubordinate. That's what he says. Now, the word subordinate literally means to line up under. We normally think of it in terms of the military. If you look at this picture, you see a bunch of soldiers who have freewill. They have strength, and yet they're all lined up. If they wanted to, they could get out of line. If they wanted to, they could walk away. They have the ability to walk away, and yet they choose not to. Why? Because they are lined up under something. Now, you can't see what they're lined up under. It's because it's invisible, and it happens to be authority. There's a recognized authority that says, "Get in line," and, all of a sudden, all of these people who have the ability to not get in line, they get in line. They're subordinate.

What he says here is the false teachers are insubordinate. You see, one of the truest things that I can tell you today is that you live in God's world. I know you have a house, and you got stuff. You say, "This is mine, and this is mine." You know what? No, it's not. It's all the Lord's. It's his world. We woke up. We live in his world. He gives instructions on how to live in his world. You know what? Those words that he gives us, they're not just cool words. They're essential words. They're not just a word. It's the word. It's the word of God, but here's the deal with false teachers. False teachers, they refuse to line up under that word. No, what they do is they stand over it. God says, "You know, what I want you to know is that they claim that I sent them, but I didn't send them."

Jeremiah 23:32 says, "I am against those who lead my people astray by their lies and their recklessness when I did not send them." You see, one of the truths that you see frequently when it comes to false teachers, and you see this a lot of times in particular when they have worldwide ministries, which means that they're typically on TV, is that they claim at some point in time to have some special or unique anointing from God, some special revelation from God, some special knowledge that's not found in the Bible, but God gave it to them specifically.

What that allows them to do is to answer only to themselves. There's no accountability. They're insubordinate to God's word. They're also insubordinate to man's accountability that would seek to take God's word and say, "Wait a minute, but this is what it says." They simply say, "I know what it says, but God gave me a different word. He gave me another word that supplements this word."

That's a sign of a false teacher. God says, "I didn't send them." The second thing we know about false teachers is they're empty talkers, he says. Empty talkers, it's an interesting word. The idea here is this. Their sermons or their books or their sentences or their words, they're kind of like flavored air. They're tasty. It's smooth. It's persuasive. Yet, they lack the density of truth. Romans 16:18, Paul writes of false teachers. He says, "By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naïve." What Paul says in Romans is where he goes next in Titus. He says the third characteristic of a false teacher's behavior is they're deceivers, literally, soul deceivers or mind deceivers. What they do is they seduce. How they typically seduce is through plausibility.

Now, the word plausibility, it simply means, at least this is a working man's definition, is to be close enough to the real thing that other people assume it's the real thing. If you look at this picture, there's wolves, but if it's an actual wolf and walked in, everybody would run away. What do wolves have to do? Wolves have to disguise themselves. It's the same thing with false teachers. See, let me ask you this question. Do you think that I'm 20 years old or do you think that I'm 50 years old? Now, you look at me, and you go, "Well, I mean, good luck with 20. That ship has passed," and it has. You know what? I'm not 50 either. I'm 45. Yet, 50 is plausible. It's believable. This is what false teachers do. They bend the mind by making the truth sound just enough like what the church would agree with. They use words like grace. They use words like gospel. They might even use words like Jesus. Yet, they provide and promote a gospel that has nothing to do with what we read in the Bible. They're deceivers.

Then, all of a sudden, Paul kind of gets personal. I honestly asked all week long, "Why did he write the next sentence?" He goes in, and he goes, "You know what? One of your own prophets, one of your own poets, one of your own writers," we believe it was a man who lived 600 years before this, a philosopher in Crete, he says, "You know, Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons." He actually quotes one of their own. I don't know if it was etched in some rock somewhere, and all the Cretans walked by, "That's our famous poet talking about us." What's amazing is Paul, what he says next. He goes, "You know what? This testimony is absolutely true. It's true. They are." Now, why is that amazing? This is why it's amazing to me. Paul writes a letter to Titus. Titus probably takes this letter to the churches and says, "Hey, guess what. You remember our buddy Paul? Well, he wrote us a letter. Let me read it to you." He starts reading. All of a sudden, he goes, "You know what? Cretans, they're always liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons."

Now, Titus is not a Cretan, but all of the audience is. All of a sudden, he says, "Paul says that's true. You are." Why would he do this? Why would he include everybody? He's talking about false teachers, so why would he veer off immediately and actually throw everybody under the bus? I think this is why.

Isn't it true that in every single thing that I've talked to you so far, pride, insubordination, deceit, and laziness, could that be said in any form of any one of us? It could. Couldn't it? In fact, all of us. Have you ever lied? Have you ever been deceptive? Have you ever been insubordinate? Have you ever rebelled against something? Have you ever had a lazy day in your life? Of course you have. I mean, we buy couches with built in coolers so that we don't have to get up. We're a lazy people. We are. I mean, somebody was on a couch one day.

Think about this for a second. Somebody was on a couch, and they said, "You know what? I am just so tired of holding this heavy remote. Let's make a TV we can talk to, a smart TV." We are lazy people. Why would he say this then? I think this is why. Even though these characteristics can be seen in all of our lives because we're all fallen, we are all sinful, we all make mistakes, we can all have lazy days, but here's the deal. When a true believer, when the light of God's grace shines into a true believer, a true believer repents, but a false teacher will not. A false teacher will defy the very light that would lead to repentance. I believe that's what he's saying. God's grace, first of all, it exposes the behavior of false teachers. If there's anything that I would encourage you to remember, I think that word subordinate to me is a really important because it basically says, "Yes, I know God said, however."

Well, the second thing we see here is that God's grace exposes the motives of false teachers. That's a hard thing for us to be able to identify. For us to be able to look at somebody else and judge someone on the basis of their motives, that's hard because we can't see their heart. This one requires that we use a lot of grace and understanding and patience before we label somebody. What he says is this. In verse 11, he says, "They teach for," that's a motive, the word for. This is why they're teaching, for shameful gain, things that ought not to be taught. Now, the fact is we normally think of money when we think about shameful gain. I think that's absolutely one of the things that he is talking about, but there may be at least the second one as well.

Let's talk about the gain of money. 2 Peter chapter two verse three says, "In their greed they will exploit you with false words." One of the things that's true about humanity is this. We get passionate about things. Another thing that's true about humanity in a economy like America is that people can become very, very wise to identify that there is an enormous amount of cash to be made when people are passionate about something. We'll buy something that we care about whether it's a TV or whether it's ice cream or whether it's something related to our love for the Lord. False teachers are going to look at this opportunity. They're going to say, "You know what? There's a possibility for us to make a killing here. We can sell holy water. We can claim apostolic authority. If you'll send me a gift, monetarily, I will pray a prayer of blessing over you and your children." People say stuff like this.

He says they do it for shameful gain, things that should never be said. This is a possibility that you find within our culture. You turn on the television this morning, and you can hear this on numerous stations. It's a remarkable thing that, in spite of how much the Bible talks about this, it is not going to go away.

Now, it said earlier we need to be wise. This is why we need to be wise, because there's a line that's very difficult to be able to see, maybe impossible to be able to be seen. You see, 1 Timothy chapter five, this same Paul, he writes Timothy. You know what he says there? He says it's a fitting thing for pastors who feed and lead the church to actually be paid by the church, for it to be their job. He says that in 1 Timothy chapter five. You can see the tension point here of you have some people who have a job.

By the way, this is true at Providence. We have 11 pastors, and every single one of them has a salary that they don't get to determine. This is true. You could look, and you say, "I see all these greedy people," and yet the Bible also says that this is a fitting thing. It's a right thing, really is a tension point. In fact, one of my sons years ago was asking me just about life calling and what God might lead him to do in terms of occupation. He goes, "Look, I know the whole thing's about Jesus," meaning life. It's all about Jesus. He goes, "But I don't know if God's called me to be a pastor or to work in business, but it's still all about Jesus someway." I said, "How are you going to make that call?" He says, "Well, here's the problem that I have with it."

He said, "I would be a pastor, but I really want to have nice things." I said, "Why don't you flesh that out?" I said, we're in our house, "Do you not think we have nice things? Is that what you're saying?" He goes, "No, that's not what I mean." He goes, "This is what I mean." He goes, "The fact is if I get the same amount of salary inside the church and outside the church, and I save for 20 years in order to buy the vehicle that I want, if I'm inside the church, I might face scrutiny, but if I'm outside the church, I would never face scrutiny. I might even face celebration." Now, this is a really important thing and a really good thing for any kid to be able to understand because what it means is to follow Jesus is there is a cross you must carry. One road, all roads, they all have a cross you got to carry.

I would encourage you is that if there's ever a connection between somebody drawing a salary and them preaching the gospel, don't immediately call them a heretic or a false teacher. I think the second gain, though, that may be true is a gain of fame. In our Bible reading plan this week, we read in Luke chapter 11 verse 43 where it says, "Woe to you, Pharisees. For you love the best seat in the synagogues." You know this is true. The fact is when I read this passage, I think about the fact that you have been generous to me and to my family. I also think of the fact is that there's a better chance that you are probably going to remember my name than I'm going to remember yours. There is a risk-reward when it comes to being a pastor because people know you.

I believe this is what he's saying, simply this. If the epicenter of the glory of a person's ministry goes to the teacher and not to Jesus, something is terribly amiss. It's all about Jesus. Be careful when you're judging someone's motives. Yet, the Bible is very clear to say you'll know a false teacher, and you'll know it primarily, I believe is this, is that false teachers quit teaching when the money dries up. In other words, when the fish stop biting, they quit fishing or they change bait. God's grace exposes the behavior and the motives. The third thing he does is God's grace exposes the doctrine of false teachers.

Now, I love what Paul does here because everyone in the church knew exactly. If anyone in the church was uncertain as to who the false teachers were, he just calls them right out.

He goes, “By the way, I’m talking about the Jews or of the circumcision party.” Now, this is not a party that you go to. If you’re wondering who that is, circumcision was a mark in the Old Testament of God’s covenant people, the Jewish people. What happened was this. Once Jesus rose from the dead, many of these Jews, they looked at Jesus Christ, and they recognized that his sacrifice was pretty remarkable, and they needed to believe in that sacrifice. Yet, they had a hard time separating themselves from the law, from the rituals, the ceremonies, even the circumcision that was required to be in God’s people in the Old Testament. They said, “You know what? You heard a gospel that says it was Jesus only, but we’re here to tell you this. It’s Jesus plus your obedience to the Old Testament law, all the rituals, all the ceremonies, all the sacrifices. It’s Jesus plus.”

Let me be very, very clear. This is literally the genesis of nearly all heresies in the world, and it’s simply this: Jesus plus something else. I suppose you can have a heresy that says we don’t need Jesus at all. That would obviously be untrue, but where it gets plausible within the church is it’s Jesus plus. Some of us without even knowing we were treading on this kind of ground, we said something like this, “I knew they got saved because they cried when they prayed.” Now, what have we done? It’s Jesus plus emotional sign, Jesus plus endurance of faith, Jesus plus sincerity, Jesus plus works. No, it’s not Jesus plus. If it’s Jesus plus anything, it is no gospel at all. That’s what Galatians chapter one says. He says, “Look, guys. I’m astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel, not that there is another one, but even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one preached to you, let him be accursed.”

Now, let me tell you what he just said. He says, “Guys, look. Jesus Christ himself appeared to me and gave me the gospel, and I gave it to you. I didn’t get the gospel from reflection. If I go in some cave somewhere, and I reflect a little bit longer, and I come back to you, and I preach a different gospel,” he says, “let me be accursed.” Not only that, he says, “If an angel happens to show up,” which would be a pretty compelling emotional experience. Wouldn’t it? “If that angel utters to you a gospel other than that we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, period, let him be accursed.” What’s he saying here? This is so important. He’s saying that the gospel is the plumb line of all truth claims, and the gospel is the plumb line of every teacher’s authority. This is what I mean by that.

A teacher’s authority does make the gospel true. A teacher aligning with the gospel gives him authority. If you find somebody in this world, and they stand up and say, “I have a special revelation, a special anointing. Therefore, I can now give you and deliver to you a gospel on the basis of my authority,” run.

If, however, someone stands up, and he says, “It is the gospel of Jesus Christ alone that delivers us from sin. It’s his sacrifice alone and our belief and faith in him alone,” then, all of a sudden, that person now has authority to continue to teach you. He goes on, and he uses this little illustration. It’s really, really powerful. He says, “To the pure, all things are pure.” Now, what’s he saying here? It’s simply saying this. He’s saying that the gospel comes to us, and Jesus wanted to make us pure so we could have a relationship with him.

Jesus came. He lived without sin. He died on a cross for our sin. He was buried. Then, he rose from the dead. He says, “If you’ll believe in me, all of your defiling sin will be forgiven of you, and my righteousness will be given to you.” Isn’t that good news? That’s what the gospel means, good news. That’s good news. Now, here’s the deal. Anytime somebody seeks to revise the gospel, what they’re actually doing is rejecting the gospel and making Jesus himself a liar. You see, it’s by grace that you’ve been saved through faith. God comes to us, and this is what he says to us. He says, “I graciously accept you now, and now follow me.” Do you know what false teachers do? They simply change the sequence. They say, “Follow God, and then he will accept you.” You can’t. He always initiates. If it is not overflow, it is not Christian. You see, this revision is rejection because it makes Jesus a liar. Jesus says, “It is finished,” when he was on the cross. Literally, your debt has been paid in full.

When he comes to us, and he says, “Look, to the pure, all things are pure,” what is he saying? He’s saying, “Once you trust Jesus Christ, your heart has been made pure. Now, for you can rest in me.” But then he says to the defiled and to the unbelieving, those who are not trusting in Jesus Christ, what does he say? He says, “All things remain impure.” What does that mean? It means that they can not rest. They have to keep working. One of the saddest things is this. As they seek to keep working, any attempt to add to Jesus’ work he says is a denial of God himself, which is why he finishes. He says, “These people are detestable and disobedient and unfit for any good work.” Now, don’t miss what he’s saying here, friends. What is he saying? He’s saying that you can trust in Jesus Christ alone and be forgiven of all of your sin. Anyone who would seek to manipulate that good news you don’t have to listen to anymore.

Before we sing, let me give you a few applications. The first is what I just said. Let’s place our trust in Jesus. I beg of you, those of you who are considering Christ, do not miss the treasure in the field. Do not reject the genuine because there are counterfeits. Jesus died to save you. He rose from the dead. He conquered our greatest enemy. He is worthy of your worship. I urge you to trust him today. Second is let’s grow discerning in what is false. The threat is real even today. Peter said, “There will be false teachers among you.” Do you know what that means? Providence too. We should be on guard. We should listen. We should be looking out for plausibility. Now, instead of naming some, I thought maybe I should just put a bunch of pictures of people that I know that are false teachers so that you can recognize and say, “Okay. I’m not going to listen to them anymore.” The problem is they just change so fast.

There's just too many of them. Instead of putting pictures up, I want to show you just a litmus test of what you need to look for. False teachers, they always go in four directions. First of all, there's a foreign authority. If you do not need a Bible to track with a teacher, find a new teacher. There's always a foreign salvation. If the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is not declared as the only means to God, I encourage you to find a new teacher. Third, there is always a foreign savior. If Jesus Christ is not the essential source not only for salvation but for life change and growth, he says, "I am the vine. Connect to me. You can bear much fruit." If he is not essential, if you only need the power of positive thoughts, then find a new teacher.

Fourth, there's always a foreign appeal. 2 Peter chapter two verse 18 says that, "They entice by sensual passions of the flesh." What does that mean? It means if there is a man or woman who is a teacher, and they can not, solely on the basis of the love of God seen in the cross of Jesus Christ, compel you towards the trustworthy love of Jesus himself but instead need to appeal that you might get a beach house out of it, then find a new teacher. Third application, let's silence false teaching. We need to silence it. When we find it, we need to silence it. Now, be very careful here. Okay? Be careful even who you call a heretic. That's a big word. Somebody who is wrong may not be a wolf. Two months ago, I stood up here and accidentally said 12 commandments instead of 10, and not a single one of you said anything to me. Three services, no one said anything.

I get home, and one of my sons says, "Hey, great job adding two commandments to God's law." I'm like, "What are you talking about?" He said, "You said 12." I went back, and it says 12. I was wrong. Maybe you're just gracious to me. You hopefully knew. Just be careful. Not everyone who is wrong, we're all fallible. We're all flawed. Sometimes I mess up. What it simply means is this. We would go in love and ask, "Okay. He didn't actually mean that." Also not every teaching is equally dangerous. You see, some teaching we die over. Some, we simply disagree over. We can worship next to each other even though we don't necessarily agree with the same thing. He says when it's doctrine that we're supposed to die over, he says that they must be silenced. This not Jack Bauer dropping down and choking somebody out.

That's not what he's talking about here. He's talking about using the scriptures to come with careful patience and instruction to be able to say, "Let's look at what the Bible says." Here's the deal. If they do not repent, if I were to say, "No, there is 12. I just made up another two," then what? Then revoke their right to teach. If it's not at a church, what that means is turn off the TV, put down their book. Be vigilant with your mind. The last thing is let's be faithful teachers. You may get through all this, and you go, "Yeah, just got to be careful." One thing we want to make sure we also say is, "Hey, don't be a wolf." If you are teaching, you need to be really careful what you say. James chapter three verse one, it says, "Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly."

Now, earlier in the service, we already asked you. We asked you to consider, “Hey, would you teach some of the children?” Some of you are like, “No, not doing that now.” I want to encourage you to continue to think and to pray about that. This is why. Several years ago, right before I became the senior pastor, one of my sons, he comes to me, and he goes, “Dad, let me ask you something. Are you considered a teacher?” I said, “Well, yes.” He goes, “Well, is it true that the Bible says that you’re going to be judged more strictly?” I said, “Well, it is.” He goes, “Well, then why in the world would you want to do this?” He’s always sincere. I said, “Well, I believe that God wants me to do this.” He put his head down, and he put his back up. He goes, “So let me get this straight. God tells you to do something. If you obey him, you’re going to be treated more strictly than somebody else.” I said, “Well, yeah. Yes, that’s true.”

I said, “But here’s the good news.” I said, “If I stay close, he says in his word if I stay close to him, if I have people praying, then who’s going to help me?” He goes, “I tell you what. You stay close, and I’ll pray for you.” Now, listen. Teach the Bible. We have a treasure of greater value. We have to share it. You stay close, and we’ll pray for you. Let’s pray together. Father in heaven, we thank you for your great love for us. We pray that you would help us to consider the things that are in the mixing bowl of our mind and what they’re doing to the way that we’re living our life. I pray, Father, that as we think and as we now respond to who you are and what you’ve made available to us, we want to do that with affection. We want to do that with zeal. We want to do that with sincerity.

As we sing to you and as we give out of resources that you’ve already given to us, the great prayer of our life is the epicenter is all of these resources and all of the glory will go to Jesus Christ alone and that his name would be made known to the ends of the earth. In fact, even for the teams now who are in the Czech Republic or East Asia or Peru from Providence and our many partners, our many families, many individuals who have left Providence to go around the world, these resources are going to help them be there to share the gospel. We pray for your blessing over their life. God, we love you. We sing to you now with a full heart. We pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.



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