

A Duty to Protect

Titus 1:10-16

July 14th, 2019

Big idea: Because of the danger of false teachers, solid elders must be appointed and false teachers must be silenced.

Intro –

There are certain jobs that we expect people who are in them to take seriously their obligation to protect people.

Recently read about a tragic incident in Wisconsin where two young kids almost drowned in two separate incidents at a pool. Sadly, there were lifeguards on duty but several witnesses said they dropped the ball, weren't paying attention, and didn't seem ready to take action when needed.

I'm sure rescuing drowning kids is not their favorite part of the job. They probably enjoy being outside at the pool with their friends, getting a tan, looking cool to the younger kids with their sunglasses and whistles. But their job is to protect swimmers.

Likewise, an armed school resource officer is on trial in Florida for negligence after failing to take action when a shooter opened fire.

Directly following the instructions to Titus on appointing elders, Paul explains why it is needed.

Yes, they are to shepherd, teach, pray, and care for people.

But they are also to protect. It might not be the fun part of the role, but it is crucial.

1. A scathing ***description*** (1:10-12, 15-16)
 - a. Just like Paul overloaded Titus with character qualifications for an elder in vv. 5-9, so he in this passage piles scathing words upon scathing words in his warning.
 - i. We can respond in one of two ways:
 1. The language is strong, Paul must be intolerant and unaccepting.
 2. The language is strong, the error and potential damage that it can cause must have been very serious.
 - ii. Errant teaching is to be corrected with patience and gentleness
 1. **2 Timothy 4:2** preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.
 2. **2 Timothy 2:24-26** The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, ²⁵ with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, ²⁶ and they may come to their senses *and escape* from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.
 - a. Even those that are ensared by the devil, held captive by him to do his will are to be gently corrected.
 3. **2 Corinthians 13:10** For this reason I am writing these things while absent, so that when present I *need* not use severity, in accordance with the authority which the Lord gave me for building up and not for tearing down.
 - iii. So why does Paul use such strong language in Titus?
 1. More serious error requires a more serious response.

- a. Still with patience, still with a desire that the person be “sound in the faith” rather than merely driven off.
- 2. We need to have different categories of error that lead to different intensities of response.
 - a. Die for, divide for, debate for, decide for
 - i. “Die for” are truths that are core to the gospel and God’s nature, to knowingly deny these is to place yourself outside the faith
 - ii. “Divide for” are truths that are significant and would make it difficult to co-exist in the same church body
 - 1. Denominations have typically arisen over these issues.
 - iii. “Debate for” are truths that we can have hearty debate within the same church body and unless someone tries to make it a first order issue, we can debate and disagree but happily still fellowship together
 - iv. “Decide for” are truths that are practically opinions either because scripture says so little about them or they are relatively unimportant
 - 1. Ex: When did Paul write the book of Titus?
 - 2. It’s at this level that acceptance is a virtue and legalism is a real danger.
 - b. There is no place in scripture that spells out what we are to put in each category!
 - i. The difference is the in the clarity of scripture on the issues and the significance of the issue to the gospel.
 - ii. But if we respond to a “debate for” issue by silencing and reproofing them severely we will destroy people and destroy churches.
 - iii. However, if we respond to a “die for” issue by saying, “hey, let’s just agree to disagree. Don’t rock the boat. Don’t divide over doctrine.”
 - 1. That essentially makes this passage in Titus meaningless.
 - 2. Titus 1:10-16 means *something*. It is targeting *something*.
 - 3. The severity of the language tells me that this is a first order issue, a “die for” issue.
 - 4. There should be a proportionate response to the seriousness of the error.
 - 5. **Titus 3:9-10** ⁹ But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. ¹⁰ Reject a factious man after a first and second warning,
 - iv. Spurgeon: “Don’t go about the world with your fists doubled up for fighting, carrying a theological revolver in the leg of your trousers. Be prepared to fight... but wear a scabbard; there is no sense in waving your weapon about to provoke conflict.”

b. Rebellious, empty talkers, deceivers (vv. 10-11)

i. Rebellious

1. In contrast to the elders who are not to be self-willed but self-controlled and holding fast to the faithful word in accordance with the teaching (vv. 7-9), these refuse to place themselves under authority, either human or divine.

ii. Empty talkers

1. Their talking is idle, empty but perhaps appealing
2. **2 Timothy 4:3-4** For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, ⁴ and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

iii. Deceivers

1. **2 Timothy 3:13** But evil men and impostors will proceed *from bad* to worse, deceiving and being deceived.
2. **Jeremiah 14:14** Then the LORD said to me, "The prophets are prophesying falsehood in My name. I have neither sent them nor commanded them nor spoken to them; they are prophesying to you a false vision, divination, futility and the deception of their own minds.
3. **Jeremiah 23:21** "I did not send *these* prophets, But they ran. I did not speak to them, But they prophesied.

iv. Those of the circumcision

1. Ancient records showed a large number of Jewish people living on Crete
2. There were Jews from Crete in Acts 2 that heard the gospel in their own language (Acts 2:11)
3. But this is referring to the Judaizers, who wanted to combine faith in Jesus with mandatory adherence to the OT law for salvation.
 - a. It was a "Jesus plus" or a "grace plus" model of salvation.
 - i. That's why v 14 talks about their myths and commandments of men.
 - b. That makes this a first order, "die for" issue.
 - c. That explains why they are upsetting whole families

v. Upsetting whole families by teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain

1. Meaning, for money or other material wealth
2. The very thing that elders were not to be motivated by in v 7.
3. Today that is a common concern by those inside and outside the church
 - a. We see stories of televangelists and their \$50 million private jets.
 - b. Recently an Instagram account called preachers n'sneakers has been drawing attention to the expensive fashion habits of fashionable preachers, showing their \$1,000 shoes or \$800 Versace shirts

- c. Supported even by their own self-description (v. 12)
 - i. Paul quotes Epimenides, a 6th-5th century BC poet from Crete who was held in honor by the people, considered one of the great ancient Greek poets and philosophers.
 - ii. Probably a somewhat well-known line.
 - iii. Such a common view of the people of Crete that the Greek word “kretizo” meant “to lie.”
 - 1. Can you imagine if Idaho became so known for dishonesty that all over the US people started using “Idahoing” as a verb for lying?
 - iv. His point appears to be that this behavior is common in the culture at Crete and can influence the church as well. Watch out for it!
 - d. They are defiled and unbelieving (v. 15)
 - i. Skipping over the response in vv 13-14 for now, he picks back up with more strong words of description.
 - ii. “to the pure all things are pure”
 - 1. May be referring to food and dietary restrictions
 - 2. **Luke 11:37-41** Now when He had spoken, a Pharisee asked Him to have lunch with him; and He went in, and reclined *at the table*.³⁸ When the Pharisee saw it, he was surprised that He had not first ceremonially washed before the meal.³⁹ But the Lord said to him, “Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the platter; but inside of you, you are full of robbery and wickedness.⁴⁰ “You foolish ones, did not He who made the outside make the inside also?⁴¹ “But give that which is within as charity, and then all things are clean for you.
 - 3. If someone has been made pure by Christ, eating something without following the ceremonial code won’t make them impure.
 - iii. But for these he is referring to, not outer cleansing by observing various rules and traditions of men will make them pure internally.
 - 1. Going to church, being baptized, praying before meals, fasting, eating a vegetarian diet, going to temples, giving lots of money, serving at the food pantry – none of those things will make a person “pure.”
 - 2. **Titus 2:13-14** looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,¹⁴ who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.
 - e. They are detestable, disobedient, and worthless for any good deed (v. 16)
 - i. “detestable” – Greek dictionary described it as “someone considered extremely bad”
 - ii. “disobedient” – can’t be persuaded to obey some authority, in this case the authority of God’s Word.
 - 1. Their authority is their experience or their desires
 - iii. Worthless for any good deed – one of the themes of Titus that right beliefs and right deeds go together.
2. A severe **response** (1:13-14)
- a. Reprove them severely (v. 13)
 - i. Correct them severely or rigorously

- ii. So that they may be sound in the faith
 - 1. This is the purpose of reproving them – that they may be sound in the faith. The purpose is not to drive them away but to bring them to a place of soundness.
 - 2. While there is life there is hope (Dever)
 - 3. The hope for change comes about through rebuke
- iii. Remember this is connected with the need to appoint elders who are characterized by the attributes listed (not self-willed, not pugnacious, not quick-tempered, self-controlled, just, etc.) but also holding fast to the word
 - 1. You can see why those character qualities and grasp on the Word become critically important.
 - 2. I think this also shows the benefit of a plurality of elders model
- b. Don't pay attention to their teaching (v. 14)
 - i. The purpose of reproving them severely is so that they (the influencers who are reprovved) would stop paying attention to these things.
 - ii. Part of the response is to not pay attention to them either.
 - 1. There are myths that need to be ignored
 - 2. There are "commandments of men" that go beyond scripture.
- c. The most important part of the response is what he told Titus in 1:5-9 –
 - i. Appoint men of character who are sound in the word and can teach the people so they aren't susceptible to the error.
- d. We must not value the appearance of peace at all costs.
 - i. To go back to the lifeguards, imagine a lifeguard that says, "I don't really want to blow my whistle and rush into the pool because it might scare the other kids."



1

1. A scathing *description* (1:10-12, 15-16)

2 **Timothy 4:2** preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

2

1. A scathing *description* (1:10-12, 15-16)

2 **Timothy 2:24-26** The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, ²⁵ with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, ²⁶ and they may come to their senses *and* escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

3

1. A scathing *description* (1:10-12, 15-16)

2 **Corinthians 13:10** For this reason I am writing these things while absent, so that when present I *need* not use severity, in accordance with the authority which the Lord gave me for building up and not for tearing down.

4

1. A scathing *description* (1:10-12, 15-16)

Titus 3:9-10 But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. ¹⁰ Reject a factious man after a first and second warning,

5

1. A scathing *description* (1:10-12, 15-16)

2 Timothy 4:3-4 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, ⁴ and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

6

1. A scathing *description* (1:10-12, 15-16)

2 Timothy 3:13 But evil men and impostors will proceed *from bad* to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

7

1. A scathing *description* (1:10-12, 15-16)

Jeremiah 14:14 Then the LORD said to me, "The prophets are prophesying falsehood in My name. I have neither sent them nor commanded them nor spoken to them; they are prophesying to you a false vision, divination, futility and the deception of their own minds.

Jeremiah 23:21 "I did not send *these* prophets, But they ran. I did not speak to them, But they prophesied.

8

1. A scathing *description* (1:10-12, 15-16)

Titus 2:13-14 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

9

2. A severe *response* (1:13-14)

10