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Titus – Making Things Right

Chapter 3 - (vs. 10-11)

We're in Titus 3. As we come to this book, we're reminded of why it was written: That you might put in order those things that have been in chaos. On the island of Crete, a lot of those problems came up. We understand as well that there are those that are teaching things that are not only destructive, but it's causing divisions in households. He speaks to that in particular in chapter 1. Long story short, everything's in disarray. Paul has sent Titus to place things in order, and we begin to realize how that's done.

As you look in Titus 1:5, the directive is really given to Titus as the one who is actually going to appoint the elders. So, in Titus 1:5, "...set in order what remains and appoint elders..."

He then goes on and says in verse 11, there are certain ones that "must be silenced."

Titus 2:1, you need to "speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine."

Go back into Titus 1:11, there are those "who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain."

So, we realize that there were deceptive things being taught. We've talked about that as we've been going on.

As you look in Titus 2:15, you need to "speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you."

He's conveying that you have to be tough on this and you can't compromise on the truth. You can't allow people to continue to do what is wrong and continue to upset and cause divisions.

In Titus 3:1, he says, "Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities..."

Of course, if there's no respect for authority, there's going to be chaos. So, he comes back to the fundamentals. Of course, we believe according to Romans 13 that all authority is ordained by God. So, those who oppose that authority, as Romans 13 continues to say, really oppose God by doing that. We believe that though authority is not always right, God in His sovereignty is working through them. It's like that interesting picture of Christ going before Pilate, and He goes, "Don't you know I have the authority to do whatever I want to with you?" He says, "You

wouldn't have any authority unless it was given to you." So, the recognition that God is over this and that He is doing His perfect will.

It goes back to the passage where the question is conveyed, "WHY DID THE GENTILES RAGE, AND THE PEOPLES DEVISE FUTILE THINGS?" (Acts 4:25)

"Why are they trying to murder the Christ?" "What do they think is going to happen?"

So, you realize that man in his pomp and his pride thinks that he can control things, but obviously God is sovereign; He's doing what is right. We begin to submit to that which is authority whether it's a child in a particular household or it's a wife with a husband that may be unbelieving; that by her gentle and quiet spirit, without a word, he's won over. Then, he sees her submissive spirit. Here again, it doesn't mean that you acquiesce to anything that is wrong, but it does mean that just because this person may not be godly in his pursuits, doesn't mean that you don't look for ways to be submissive; agreeable. Oftentimes, the thought is to throw the baby out with the bathwater, "He's this kind of person. So, I'm not going to listen to him on anything." Then, you begin to cause trouble. It is that sense of authority and order that goes hand and hand.

Within the passage, there were some that were challenging both the governing body as well as the government that was laid down. In other words, they were challenging both the order and the authority. So, it is at that point in Titus 3 that we look at those particular people in verse 10. He ends the letter this way dealing with those that are factious, and he uses that particular word. The word in the Greek is "*hairesikos*" which is where we get the word "heretic." What's interesting is this is actually the only place in all of Scripture that this particular word is used. Although, the form of the word is used probably about 5 or 6 times besides this. It's also to be noted that every time a form of this word is used in the NAS, it's translated "factious man."

Let me give you an example in 1 Corinthians 11. In this passage, you'll see Paul is concerned when they're coming for the Lord's supper, and many are coming for the wrong reasons. He's dealing with people that are coming and are being just plain contentious. How do we know that? Well, he actually states that.

(1 Corinthians 11:16) "But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God."

The, if you'll drop on down, he'll use this word that we're talking about in verse 19,

"For there must also be factions among you..."

"*Airesis*", here again, is a form of "*hairesikos*." That form of the word is actually being used in the word "factious." So, what's interesting is oftentimes we think of heretic in the terms of

maybe he's proclaiming false doctrine; that would be true in that sense, but usually when it's used in Scripture, it's somebody that's divisive. More specifically, somebody that's rebelling against the body of Christ, the church itself, and the doctrine of God's word. So, it says in verse 19, "For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you."

(1 Corinthians 11:20) Therefore when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper,"

He starts off the book of Corinthians, and he says, "Some are saying 'I'm of Cephas', 'Paul.'" He says, "You're just being divisive." It is that spirit of divisiveness that he's dealing with in this passage, "upsetting whole families."

It's that debating and arguing over:

- 1) the authority that has been ordained
- 2) the doctrine that is being proclaimed.

Now, when we come to this, I've always felt a little bit that we're just not really dealing with the problem by what he states within the passage. In other words, it seems like something more has to be done; we're kind of left hanging.

If you look with me in Titus 3:10, "Reject a factious man..." Basically, "refuse, have nothing to do with them." "Shun" would be another word that would be used. So, the perception is that this is how you deal with it. You're sitting there with your hands in your pocket, and you go, "Ok. So, what next?" because factious people don't seem to go away just because you don't do anything. So, you're almost kind of left hanging in this. It's one of the things that I want to talk about as we go on, but let's talk about what he does say within the passage. Then, we'll talk about that sense of empty feeling within the passage.

"Reject a factious man after a first and second warning,"

So, clearly, you're coming to him. In this particular setting, the leader is coming to him, and saying, "This has got to stop." The divisiveness is really what he's talking about. He describes the individual in the passage,

(Titus 3:11) "knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned."

So, there is actually three things that he lists within the passage. "Perverted," obviously was the first one. "Sinning," which we're going, "Ok. Duh." Sinning; he's doing something wrong. What's interesting about the word sinning is it's actually describing something more. We'll talk about that as we go. So, these three things he begins to use to describe not only the character, but what's actually going on within the text. Why would somebody be factious? What's actually the problem? The word "perverted" would be best described as just plain "twisted." Some have

actually defined the word as “inside out” which means that you’ve got things all mixed up. It’s one of the fundamental problems of a person that is factious. It’s bizarre that many of the writings deal with people that are factious within the church. Here again, it may come as a great surprise to you that churches have their splits, but they do. It is because there are those that will argue against authority.

In the particular passage that we’re looking at, he’s actually going to tell us what the problem is. Now, he’s starting off with the word “twisted.” Obviously, the person has something inside out. Let me give you some examples of that.

If you’ll look with me in 1 Timothy 6. What’s interesting is in almost every case that begins to deal with people that are factious, you’re going to always have authority come into the picture. Why? Well, as you go all the way back to Samuel, rebellion is like idolatry. “What do you mean?” Well, if in fact you’re rebelling against authority, you’ve made yourself god.

(1 Timothy 6:1) “All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor...”

Now, here again, like Peter says in 1 Peter 2, you may have an unreasonable boss. A good reason to rebel, right? No. You don’t rebel. We submit to the authority because this is where God keeps you. Faith believes that God is causing things to happen, and He’s working in our lives. If we walk by faith, then we believe that God is going to take care of us. Our trust is in Him. So, we don’t have to work things out and we don’t have to make things right. We are under authority; we submit to that authority. Wherever you are, that’s where it begins. You have to learn to submit to authority.

So, he starts off by saying, “All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine will not be spoken against.”

You can almost take that right out of Titus 2. When he’s talking to the young men, he says in Titus 2:6, “Likewise urge the young men to be sensible;

(Titus 2:7) in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified,

(Titus 2:8) sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.

(Titus 2:9) Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative.”

That’s pretty straight forward within that.

If you go back to 1 Timothy 6,

(1 Timothy 6:2) “Those who have believers as their masters must not be disrespectful to them...”

Once again, what is it establishing? The authority and honor of that leadership.

He says at the end of verse 2, “Teach and preach these principles.”

Sometimes, you wonder, “Why does Pastor Gary keep teaching and preaching this?” Because He tells me to.

It says this in verse 3, “If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness,

(1 Timothy 6:4) he is conceited and understands nothing...”

Now, he then goes on to describe the arrogance this way, “... but he has a morbid interest...” Remember that word “perverted,” twisted way of thinking?

“...he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions,

(1 Timothy 6:5) and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.”

People are trying to get positions oftentimes, or maybe even to win an argument. You know people just seem to feel like they have to win the argument? I guess it makes them feel more holy, I don't know. The thing that makes it perverted is if a pastor or a leader of the church corrects you, you think, “This is the worst thing that could happen.” That's twisted thinking. It's the best thing that can happen. “Faithful are the wounds of a friend, deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.” The purpose of a pastor is to direct you in the path of righteousness. Yet, a perverted person is going to think, “This is a horrible thing.” Then they put up their defense mechanisms and they start attacking you. That's the way they deal with it. He goes on to say, “he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest...”

If you go back in 1 Timothy 1, you see where this comes into play as Paul will write Timothy, and he goes, “Ok, you do know the purpose of what we're doing here?” He uses the word “goal.” The goal of our instruction is what? Love.

(1 Timothy 1:5) “But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”

So, where are we heading?

A pastor should be pointing people to walk in love. Now, walking in love is not an easy thing to do because if you're walking in love, who are you thinking about? Not you. If you're walking in love, you're thinking of other people. Love doesn't take into account a wrong suffered. It does not seek its own. Who is it seeking? Well, Philippians 2. You have this mind in you which is also in Christ Jesus, and you're going to take on the form of a bondservant; by the way, servanthood is not a gift, it's a command. People will go, "It's not my gift to be a servant." We're not talking about gift; we're talking about a command. It's a command for you to serve and to hold others at a higher esteem than yourself. That's what we should be preaching because that's the goal of our instruction. Once again, sometimes when you're preaching the love of Christ, you're going, "Wow, that sounds really tough." That's why He says, "Take up your cross." If it was easy, He wouldn't say, "Take up your cross." He would say, "Take up your surfboard" or something, but it is the cross.

If you look in the passage here,

(1 Timothy 1:5) "But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

(1 Timothy 1:6) For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion,

(1 Timothy 1:7) wanting to be teachers..."

See, this is the problem, isn't it? Everybody wants to be a teacher.

"wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions."

I've heard people make confident assertions, and I'm going, "That's not what the passage is saying." Wow, they just pontificate as if they know that's exactly what it's saying.

Here again, the purpose of pastors and leaders within the church should be to point you to following Christ. Which means it's not always going to be what you want to hear, but it is going to be what will bring healing to you. It's actually that which is going to be the best for you. If in fact you hear that truth, and you embrace that truth, then wonderful things can happen. It's like the psalmist in Psalm 119, he goes, "When I was afflicted, had I not been afflicted I would have gone astray, but thank You. Thank You for pointing these things out."

We're going to be going through the book of Proverbs, but when you start going through that, you begin to realize, "Ok, a wise person actually likes correction." We live in a world in which saving face seems to be the number one goal of most people. I've found that to be true. They're

so afraid that they might be perceived as wrong. Well, that's perverted; it's twisted; upside-down and inside-out. It's absolutely wrong.

So, this goes on and says, "wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions."

(1 Timothy 1:8) But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully."

One of the biggest mistakes that I've seen with people in Bible studies is that they'll take an idea that they have, and then they get Scripture to follow it. This is the way they feel. Oh, this is the way you feel. I see. So, now you're going to twist the Scripture to somehow fit into your way of thinking.

"Realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers..."

It's interesting to me that in verse 9, he starts off with "lawless and rebellious" and then you go into "murder." When you think about it, it's the door that leads into all these other things. Obviously, you go through Scripture, and he begins to convey the difficulties that come by being factious. The number one point is that once you're going the wrong way, it just perverts everything. Your thinking is perverted and the very people that are trying to help you, you perceive as an enemy. "What a hostile person. He's telling me that I need to change." Well, if you think about it, that's pretty twisted thinking.

1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just..." It also says in 1 John 1 that if we say we have no sin, we're lying, and the truth is not in us.

I've oftentimes thought about Psalm 141, if you'll look at this. Come to think of it, there are a lot of great psalms. Psalm 141 starts off this way,

(Psalm 141:1) "O LORD, I call upon You; hasten to me!
Give ear to my voice when I call to You!

(Psalm 141:2) May my prayer be counted as incense before You;
The lifting up of my hands as the evening offering.

(Psalm 141:3) Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips.

(Psalm 141:4) Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, To practice deeds of wickedness
With men who do iniquity; And do not let me eat of their delicacies.

(Psalm 141:5) Let the righteous smite me in kindness and reprove me; It is oil upon the head; Do not let my head refuse it, For still my prayer is against their wicked deeds."

Does it sound like he dreads the correction of the righteous? No. That's clear thinking. Twisted thinking is "They're out to get me." Once again, the walls go up. What does that cause? I can tell you what it causes. Division. It will cause division in the church every single time because people perceive themselves as victims and it's perverted thinking, but it's that whole sense of self-protectionism rather than thinking of others and walking in love. What's the goal of our instruction? Love, right. That really begins with dying to self. If we could all think like David when he was probably at his lowest state when his only son was not only trying to kill him but had taken over the city. Then, Shimei begins to curse at him and throw things at him and spit at him, and David goes, "Leave him alone. Perhaps the Lord has sent him." You realize that God oftentimes brings criticism in your life to purify you. It's the goodness of God. Pride is a terrible thing; it will cause a lot of division.

So, as you look at Titus, "Reject a factious man after a first and second warning". (1Timothy 3:10)

Why?

Knowing that he's not adhering to the counsel of leadership, then he's twisted in his thinking.

Going all the way back to the Old Testament, we've already shared this passage, but to me, there's a stark contrast between David and Saul. If you look with me in 1 Samuel 15, you'll see the scenario where Saul was supposed to completely wipe out these people, but he decided not to. So, Samuel addresses him on this, and he says, "You didn't do what we told you to do." Then, Saul, instead of coming to God and going, "You know what, You're absolutely right. I should have never done that," he starts rationalizing and defending himself; he'll point to the people, and say, "It's their fault." In addition, he will basically say, "I did do it. I am a holy person." Right away, when people start saying stuff like that or acting like they're in the right, they probably have some problems. If you look, that's really the stark contrast between Saul and David because David had some pretty bad things that he had done. Basically, the fundamental difference between David and Saul is not that they both sinned; the fundamental difference is that David would admit. So, when David was confronted, he would cry unto God and say, "You're absolutely right," but obviously Saul would not do that.

If you look with me in 1 Samuel 15:22, "Samuel said, 'Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD...'"

Once again, who wants to obey? There's nothing cool about obeying people. "I'm not your servant." "Why should I obey church leadership?"

"Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams.

(1 Samuel 15:23) 'For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry...'

That gets pretty clear there, doesn't it?

"... Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king."

What is it talking about? It's talking about insubordination; it's talking about rebellion; it's talking about how difficult that is because it really is that which begins the divisiveness in the body of Christ. So, this is why he says you have to deal with this. Just understand that after the first and second warning, if the person continues to do this in the way of "It doesn't matter what you say, I'm going to continue doing the wrong thing anyway." He goes, "This guy's perverted. He actually thinks you're wishing harm on him." So, he says, "Shun him."

(Titus 3:11) "knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning..."

Now, because this is in the present participle continuous, it's conveying something that goes beyond just that somebody is doing something wrong. In fact, the same order of the words is actually displayed in 1 John.

If you look with me in 1 John 3, you'll see in this passage where he's dealing with this word that has more to do with a continual sense.

(1 John 3:6) "No one who abides in Him sins..."

What is he talking about?

The thought is "That means I've got to be sinless." That's not what he's talking about. He's talking about in this present participle continuous. The best way to translate it would be that it's talking about this willful continuance in it. In other words, it's you pursuing this with willful, wittingly knowledge of it being wrong. Oftentimes, it will be translated "sinning willfully." One of the best places to see it is found in Hebrews 10:26,

"For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

(Hebrews 10:27) but a terrifying expectation of judgment..."

What is it talking about? Somebody that is willfully, wittingly sinning and going towards it. It is that person that is making a habit and a pursuit of this particular sin. He says if you have Christ abiding in you, you're not thinking, "How can I sin?"; you're thinking, "How can I be free from sin?" If He's abiding in you, then there's this sense of wanting to be pure. Once again, you go back to 1 John 1:9, "I want to confess my sins." The very evidence that you have Christ in you is that you don't want to sin. So, you're not pursuing those things. In this setting, he's talking about this person that is incorrigible in correcting, has willfully turned and said, "No, I want to continue to do this." They're rejecting that which they know to be true and they're going against all sound wisdom.

It puts it in the context of Romans 2. Paul ends chapter 1 this way, "Although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them."

In other words, these are people that actually know what the right thing to do is, and they willfully do the wrong thing. They pursue and go after that.

(Romans 2:1) "Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment..."

The bizarre thing is that oftentimes people that are doing the wrong thing not only are bold and brash about doing it, but then they're very critical about people that are doing the right thing; they're pointing out faults in other people's lives. His point in chapter 2 is that they're not only judgmental, but they're stubborn and unrepentant.

(Romans 2:5) "But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself..."

Here again, in the context, he's talking about those people that are very knowledgeable in the things of the word.

If you drop on down,

(Romans 2:17) "But if you bear the name "Jew" and rely upon the Law and boast in God,

(Romans 2:18) and know His will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law,

(Romans 2:19) and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,

(Romans 2:20) a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth,

(Romans 2:21) you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself..."

They're very cognizant of what Scripture says. They continue to do the wrong thing themselves, but they also see themselves as teachers. That's like Paul when he's writing Timothy, they want to be teachers and they make confident assertions about things they don't understand.

(1 Timothy 1:7) What is he talking about? They haven't lived out this truth, but they'll tell you, "You need to" and they're very critical about it.

He says in verse 24 that because of this, the name of God is blasphemed. He'll mention this towards the end of Romans, if you'll look with me in Romans 16. In the passage, he'll give this kind of final word in verse 17,

"Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them."

The phrase "turn away from them" is like the "shun; reject the factious man."

(Romans 16:18) "For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting."

Oftentimes, the people that are doing the wrong thing are very good at flattery. They get people thinking the same way that they think. If you stack up enough people that think the way you do, obviously it will be right by the time you get the majority, right? So, this is what they do. I do think it's interesting that almost every time you're dealing with what is perceived to be a kind of heresy, it is fundamentally beginnings in descension and hindrances that you begin to see; divisiveness within the body. You're either united in the body of Christ or your divided in the body of Christ. Now, there are a number of examples of sins like in 1 Corinthians 5, where Paul begins to talk about "Ok, you see somebody continuing to do this, you need to take these stands. By so doing, ultimately, if they refuse, you need to shun them." What do we have to do with judging outside of the church? However, inside the church, we have to make these judgement calls. So, he gives that interesting perspective in 1 Corinthians 5.

Though, what he states in 1 Corinthians 3, I think is more poignant than that. If you'll turn with me this chapter, you begin to see something that I would say is ominous to me because of the fact that it's in the hands of God; God's not going to let you destroy His body. The statement is made in 1 Corinthians 3:16,

"Do you not know that you are a temple of God..."

Now, don't misread this. The "you are" in the passage is not singular, it's plural which means "you are" is dealing with the church. There is another text where it says that your body is the temple of God; that's the singular. This passage is dealing with "you are" collectively, "the temple of God;" that is to say, the church.

“Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”

(1 Corinthians 3:17) If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him...”

Are you reading that right with me?

“...for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.”

Once again, it goes back to the fundamentals that we’re to build up the body of Christ; not to tear down the body of Christ. This is going to be reiterated over and over again. The way this ends in Titus 3 is not only is the person perverted, and I would emphasize this, willfully and wittingly sinning, knowing that what he’s doing is wrong, but it ends this way,

“...being self-condemned.”

I remember reading that and thinking, “Ok, so what? He’s not going to care that he’s self-condemned,” but the passage is actually saying that because he knows the right thing; it has been clarified to him by the church, the agency of God that God has ordained in His presence, when he refuses that truth, he establishes himself now as the teacher. I don’t think people necessarily perceive the fact that when you’re debating or arguing with an elder of the church about something that they may be trying to correct you on, that they’re setting themselves up on a higher plane and they become the teacher. Well, there’s the problem with that. The problem is once you do that, now you’ve condemned yourself. What does that mean?

Well, James 3:1 is pretty clear, “Let not many of you become teachers... knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.”

In other words, you’ve just set yourself in a higher plane and placed yourself in a realm of greater judgement by virtue of establishing yourself as a greater authority. You see this fundamental principle in the book of Jude as well.

In Jude, he talks about men who revile things that they don’t understand. (Jude 1:10)

Then the same thing back in verse 8, “Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties.”

(Jude 1:10) “But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals...”

(Jude 1:11) “Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong...”

We’re not just talking about people doing things just because they’ve got money; there’s oftentimes gratification that they get paid for. For example, winning an argument or by out-debating somebody.

“Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.”

If you remember Korah coming against Moses, saying, “Who gives you the right to become number one? We’re just as holy as you are.” I can’t tell you how many times I’ve heard that in the church. Some people just get a little bit of knowledge, and they get dangerous. They think, “I know Scripture” and they quote the Scripture. In most cases, they just misuse it.

He goes on and say in verse 12, “These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves...”

Who are they thinking about? I’ve never known a person walking in the Spirit to care only for themselves; it’s impossible. If you’re walking in the Spirit, you’re walking in the love of Christ and who are you thinking about? Others; always more important than yourself. That’s the nature of the Holy Spirit that’s in you.

“... clouds without water...”

This means they’re promising things that they never produce.

“... carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted;

(Jude 1:13) wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars...”

I’ve often thought that wandering stars were planets. When you think about it, Jupiter, Saturn and all these are basically named after Greek gods. Why did they name those? The reason is that those move in the sky. If you’re looking at the sky, planets move to different places in the sky. However, the stars stay. You can make a course with a star; planets you can’t. So, it’s an interesting picture of trusting in things that are ever fluid and ever moving. It’s just like man to worship those kinds of things.

He says, “... casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.”

In other words, fundamentally, the black darkness is reserved forever for the teachers like Korah and Balaam.

In Titus 3:11, when you read “self-condemned,” you think, “That’s not a big deal. It is a big deal because he just wrote his own ticket. Once you rebel against the prodding of the Spirit of God through the authority that he establishes, you’ve written your own epitaph; things are going south.

So, all the way through, when you begin to see what’s going on in this passage, there is this sense of perversion, willful rebellion, and literally condemning themselves; because of that,

they're without excuse. It goes back to Romans 2; you know what you should be doing. You even tell other people they should be doing that. So, because you know it, you're without excuse and you've just condemned yourself. Especially, when you get into the realm of pointing fingers. People think in terms of "What's the big deal," but it's a serious thing when you consider that you're going against the will of God and His people. It is interesting that one of the writers talks about this whole self-condemning and perversion. He defines it as "wrong-headedness." So, it's a person that has in their head the wrong things and they're pursuing them. I think that is why we keep coming back to those fundamental truths. What's the goal of our instruction? What should we be doing? What should we be pursuing? You can argue and debate about a lot of different things, but once you get into that realm, you've stopped thinking in terms of "How can I get right with God and how can I please Him?"

So, "reject a factious man." It's still not doing it for me, is it you? This is an interesting point, and I just want to reiterate that this is all the church is called to do. This is a very important point because when you consider the crusades and the things the church has done down through the centuries, God has never told us to make martyrs. He has told us to be martyrs, but He has not told us to hang people or stone people. In the Old Testament, the law told them to do that, but the church is not the agency of the law; the church is the agency of grace. So, God never gives the church the latitude to mete out punishment. That's very interesting to me, and it's also interesting that I'm sitting here going, "And what else can we do," and God's going, "Nothing. That's it. Reject factious; refuse."

When you look in Acts 5 and you see Ananias and Saphira's rebelliousness in that, it's not the church that kills them; it's God. What we believe as a church is we do what God tells us to do. We'll preach the word; we'll reject a factious man, but now, we'll leave it in the hands of God. I know that some of us have that tendency to follow around and beat them with a stick; look for ways to make them feel miserable, but God says, "Hands off. I'll take it from here." You see that fundamentally in the book of Jude. He says, "Look, you need to apply all diligence in your faith." You're going, "Ok, alright. So, what do we do if there are these hidden reefs in our love feast?" He goes, "Well, first of all, they're hidden. So, not a whole lot you can do about hidden." Then, he goes on, and he says, "You keep yourself in the love of Christ."

It is the responsibility of the church to point out wrong. It is the responsibility of the church to take stands. It is the responsibility of the church to warn because the church is wanting to protect this individual; wanting to save them. As Galatians 6 would say that our desire is for restoration. It's hard for people to perceive that the pastor doesn't have another agenda. I think a lot of people do have a lot of agendas when they correct you. I think it's one of the reasons why, for the most part, your correction is taken out of the hands of the congregation.

When you see your brother in sin, you need to talk to him, but it's not your job to necessarily set them straight. That's why it ultimately brings it to the leadership of the church.

You who are spiritual are thinking in terms of restoration. (Galatians 6:1) A person who is thinking and walking in the Spirit is thinking, "How are we going to please God in this? How are we going to obey God in this? How are we going to heal this thing?" Now, it has to be God first; it can't be the person first. If in fact that person was placed first, you end up compromising. Ultimately, you end up hurting that person because what God wants for that person is far better than what you could want; it's far better than what that person could want you to want for them. They come in with their thoughts of "If you're really a good pastor, you're going to tell me these things; you're going to make me feel good about my rebelliousness." It's not going to happen, but a pastor is thinking in terms of "We're rooting for you here." We're not trying to make you feel miserable; we're not trying to hurt you. Quite frankly, a lot of times, the right thing is going to be difficult; it's going to hurt. I guess that's why they call it "suffering for righteousness", right? The pastor will not tell you to do this unless it's best for you. I would say, if you don't trust the pastor, find a church that you do. God has so ordained the leadership that they would shepherd the flock; reprove, rebuke, exhort.

Once again, if I could just remind you in Titus 2 if you look at the end there in verse 15,

"These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you."

It's for the benefit of the body. Let me say this, the pastor is not just thinking about you. First of all, he's thinking about God and he's also thinking about your life in the realm of others. In other words, how is this going to affect others? Are you going to be a stumbling block by continuing in this? Once again, the perception is that when somebody is doing something wrong, they become so introverted that everything becomes perverted and the only thing they can think about is "What about me?" So, their whole world just revolves around them. The pastor is going to tell you, "First, we're going to think about God. Then, we're going to think about others. Then, we're going to think about you." Do you remember that little chorus? "*What a wonderful way to spell joy! Jesus and Others then You?*" It's a simple chorus, but it's exactly what God is telling us to do in this realm. There's going to be times when you're going to have to take stands. You're going to have to understand who's supposed to take these stands, and that person is going to have to understand where his boundaries lie. There have been many times that I said, "Lord, I've done everything you told me to do" and I can just hear His voice saying, "Let it go." Then you step back. It's not my job to punish. I don't want it. I mean, there have been times in the past where I felt like I wanted it, but I don't want it anymore. I'm grateful to God for taking it out of my hands because He will do it better. God is rescuing this person. He knows the heart. I don't know the heart. I don't know what's going on. I can only do what He tells me to do. So, we obey Him in this.

If somebody doesn't do this, then things go in disarray. That's one of the things that the book of Titus is conveying to us that "You're going to have to do this Titus." I know there were times in Timothy's life where he said, "I don't want to do that." I mean, you could just imagine Timothy, here's this little half-breed, part Jew, part Gentile, in this world of wealthy people and dignitaries in Ephesus. He's in this church and he's got to correct some people. I can just imagine that some of them are very intimidating. The reason I can imagine that is:

- 1) Paul continues to remind him not to be timid about this.
- 2) He's having to take something for his stomach.

Scripture is putting it in the context of correcting. So, we know what the problem is, but you have to do it.

Once again, I remember when I first started off in the ministry. Sadly, there were times I would say that I actually looked for a fight. However, as you grow more mature, you realize "I'm not here to fight and there's no winning in that. We are here to rescue." We're trying to help people. I love that passage in the psalms, let me think of it like anointing when somebody gets after me.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for Your word and just the direction that You give us in the church; what we should be doing, how disorder comes, and how it's alleviated. Help us to walk in truth and help us to walk in Your Spirit. May we always be thinking in terms of "rescue" because that's the Spirit of Your Son, but may we never compromise in this rescue. For we know that compromise will never rescue anyone. We give You thanks in Jesus' name. Amen.