

**Life Group Notes**

**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2023**

**Speaker:** Scott Taylor

**Title:** Titus: God's Book

**Passage:** Titus 1:9-2:1

In these verses we saw the importance of being firmly rooted in sound doctrine, which is in turn developed by being rooted in God's book.

V 9 – Paul is looking for sound doctrine in the churches. Sound meaning clean and doctrine meaning a body of teaching. So Paul is looking for elders to pass on the healthy teaching that he himself has taught when he was with them. This is for instruction and rebuke. The doctrine he is calling to be passed on is the trustworthy message he has been taught. Paul was uniquely placed as he met the risen ascended Jesus, he knew people who walked with Jesus and he was an expert in Jewish law from the Old Testament. The Spirit took all these things and enabled him to write down a body of teaching that conveys the teachings of Jesus into a church context, helping us to live as Christ did. This sound doctrine is to keep the church safe from teaching or ideas that can harm the church family by taking people away from. It also protects us from ourselves. We have access to books, podcasts, online teaching, social media – we are taught that we get to define our own truth, and so we can end up defining our own doctrine, our own body of teaching. This may or may not line up with what the whole counsel of scripture says and so we come to church to sit under, as best we understand it, sound doctrine.

V 10-11 – False teaching is what is happening in Crete, Paul says that it must be silenced, why, because they are upsetting families and teaching for shameful gain. He says these people are insubordinate, empty talkers, deceivers. He is going to go in to say they are detestable, disobedient and unfit for any good work. This is in direct contrast to the qualities that Titus was to be looking for when appointing elders. The circumcision party are likely teaching that people need to be circumcised and need to adhere to food laws amongst other things. Effectively, they are saying yes it's Jesus but to be truly in you also need this and we can provide it at a price! The bible says believe with your heart and confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord, then you will be saved! It's not Jesus plus – it's Him and Him alone. Then we do everything else in line with his love for us and our love for Him.

V12-14 – Paul goes on to quote a Cretan prophet who has said that Cretans are a certain way. This was not a surprise to anyone and Paul is able to say, I know this can be a true saying. Because he knows them he says rebuke them harshly. We obviously don't correct everyone harshly! It's always best to know someone before you try to correct them so you can do so in love and in line with how they'll best receive it. It's also good to think about the rebuke we will bring – is it based in the teachings of the bible or on our preferences. Let's rebuke around the biblical things not around our preferences. And let's rebuke so it draws people back to the sound doctrine as we understand it rather than because we want to be right.

V15-16 – here Paul says to the pure all things are pure – true purity is Jesus and so when we are saved he brings us into his purity. Food laws, circumcision all those things have been fulfilled in Jesus. He is after our heart felt turning to him – not our outward signs of devotion which can so easily become religious. (Luke 11:37-41) You let Jesus in and accept him, then your conscience and your mind are renewed, they are no longer defiled. But if you don't follow Jesus then you remain impure even if you try your hardest to keep to all the rules. To become more like Jesus we need to have our hearts and minds and consciences changed not our behaviours.

2 V1 – Finally Paul addresses Titus directly and says that he too is to teach sound doctrine. We need God's book so we know what God has to say on stuff – whether we think we agree with Him or not. Increasingly what God's book says is different to what the culture says – if we don't know his book we'll go with the world, but if we know his book we can work out how to connect with our world and let them see a different perspective. One not of judgement but of true love. Not one of constraint but of true freedom.

**Suggested Questions:**

1. What did you hear on Sunday that has stayed with you this week, whether in the preach, the worship or something else.
2. Discuss as a group how you would explain why you have the bible as your plumbline for your life to unbelieving friends.
3. Why is it important that we as a church are built on the foundations of the bible?
4. Who is in an RFC3? What books of the bible are you currently working through?