

How to Dismantle Bad Elders

Titus 1:15-16

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, April 1, 2019

While we're talking about counselling and the Biblical mandates God has given us, I want to look at a book that covers the mandate God has given the church. It's the book of Titus. As you know, if you've been with us the past couple of months, Titus is a counselling book of sorts. It gives us quite a bit of counsel on how to plant a church. In fact, if you're joining us for the first time this morning, we're in the middle of a series called the "How to Plant a Church" series because that's what the book of Titus is about. It tells us how to plant a church, how to get it started and off the ground. And so, it counsels us that way.

And if you want to look in Titus 2 with me, this is kind of neat because David read this even though I didn't ask him to. But if you look in Titus 2:11-12 - this is a passage we actually haven't talked about a whole lot in the series. But it's a wonderful passage in this book and I want to talk about it with you for a moment. Titus 2:11 says, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age." Just to give you a taste of Paul's counsel here, just to give you a summary of his instructions on the church, Paul says, you can do all the things in this book. You can live out the instructions he gives you here because the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all men. You can be the kind of church God wants you to be, you can be the kind of Christian God wants you to be. You can be the kind of husband and wife and mom and dad he wants you to be because of His grace. You don't earn it, you don't pull yourself up by your own bootstraps and deserve it. You do it all by His grace.

If you've been with us the past couple of months in this series, you'll know Paul gives us some very specific counsel here with regards to the church. He gives us a lot of instruction and that can be taken the wrong way if you're not careful. Because you can take that to mean, "If I do all of this, if I follow this rule and this rule and this rule, then God will owe me something. If I do this and this and this, then I can take the credit. I can build the church on my shoulders." And Paul puts this passage in here to remind us that that's not true. The church is built on the shoulders of God, not on yours, amen? The church is built by His grace. As some say, Paul put this in the middle of the book to remind you of this. One commentator said it this way – he said there are a few passages in the New Testament which so clearly set out the power of the Gospel like this one, but the whole point of it is that Jesus changes lives and He changes the church and He does it all by His grace. The story is told of a father who took his daughter to Disneyland when she was a little girl. And afterwards, she said to him, she said, "Daddy, I finally got to go to Disneyland, but it wasn't because I'm good, it's because I'm yours." That's a great definition of grace, isn't it? Friends, you get to go to heaven not because you're good, but because you're His. You get to be part of the church, part of the body of Christ, not because you're good, but because you belong to Him. This is a gift, this is a privilege, it's an honour to be here. I hope you came to church with that mindset today.

I hope you came with that attitude that this is an honour. I hope you didn't come in and say, "Wow, these people are lucky to have me here. I could be doing so many other things right now.

I could be watching the March Madness, I could be watching hockey. I could be knitting and sewing and whatever, but instead, they get to see me here.” If you came in with that attitude, I would encourage you to go back out and come back in again. I hope you came in here saying, “Wow, I get to be here. Me, sinful old me, I get to be part of the church. This is amazing, this is incredible. It must be all of God's grace.” The church stands or falls on that mindset. It stands on the grace of God. If you get that wrong, you get everything wrong. If you misunderstand His grace, the whole Christian life will be skewed to you. You won't get anything right. You guys have put on those red coloured glasses, right? And then you look and everything is red to you. If you misunderstand the grace of God, it's like putting on the wrong colour of glasses, and everything is just wrong.

Which is important for us to remember because this morning we're coming to a passage that tells us about some men who were forgetting that. It tells us about some teachers who had gotten the grace of God wrong. And they're found at the end of Titus chapter 1, if you want to look there. They're found in the last few verses of chapter 1. And I'm not going to read it to you for the sake of time because we've already read this, but I've told you that the outline of Titus chapter 1 is very simple at the end of the day. It's an easy to follow outline because in the first paragraph, in verses 1 through 4 (and you can follow along with this), Paul talks about his leadership. He starts off by telling you about his ministry.

And then in the second paragraph, in verses 5 through 9, he talks about good elders. The kind of leaders you want in the church. And then in the last paragraph, in verses 10 through 16, he talks about bad leaders. The kind you don't want. So, that's the outline of the first chapter. This is what it's about. Paul's introduction; good leaders and bad leaders. Paul's ministry; good elders, the kind you want in the church and bad ones, the kind you don't want – and he ends with the bad ones.

And Paul says at the very end of the chapter that the one thing you need to know about these bad guys is that they don't understand the grace of God. They don't get what the church is all about. They've got red coloured glasses on. Everything is works, works, works to them. Everything is rules, rules, rules, commandments, commandments, commandments. They think they earned the right to be here. And they come into the church and they say, “Wow, you guys are so fortunate to have us here.” Some people think that way, don't they? They think that the church is built on their shoulders. They take all the glory for it. If they follow a bunch of rules, they can be saved.

Like many of you, I'm still new to Chilliwack. I haven't been here that long, but I've been told that there are churches here that will throw you out if you don't keep their dress code. Do you guys know what I'm talking about? If you don't wear what they want you to wear, you can't come in the building. Men have to wear a coat and tie. Women have to wear a dress and a hat. And if you were to ask them why - and I can't speak for everyone here because I don't know everyone's mentality in those types of churches. But if you were to ask some of them why, I bet some of them would say it's because they're trying to earn their way into heaven. Heaven has a dress code, so we have a dress code. Heaven says you need to wear this and this and this to get in, and so we say you have to wear this and this and this to get in. I've been told there are other churches that would tell a man, he can't have long hair and a woman, she can't wear makeup. If she has that, she can't come in. Other ones would say if you have unruly children, you have to sit outside

with them. Heaven help us there. I won't say any more about that, but I'm happy because I don't have slobber on my shoulder coming up here to preach today. I usually have a little ... Some would say if you have a past, you can't join the church, even if you've dealt with it. Even if you've repented of it and sought forgiveness. And if you ask why, they would say, "We're trying to earn God's favour." This is such a problem today. You see it everywhere. It's all over the place.

In fact, to help us think through this, in preparing for this sermon, I came across a list of some ways to tell whether you're doing this or not, to tell whether you are trying to earn your way into heaven just so you can see some perspective on this. And it said, you might be trying to do that. You might be trying to earn your way into heaven if you think God loves you more when you obey than when you don't. That's a big one, isn't it? We've all been guilty of this. You think God loves you more when you obey, when you're good, when you do the right things than when you don't. He loves you at other times too, but He really loves you then. He cares for you at other times too, but He really cares for you when you earn it.

Let me tell you something friends, God really loves you when He forgives you, amen? That's all backwards. It also said you might be trying to earn your way into heaven if you feel guilty even after God forgives you, even after you repent of your sin. Listen, when you repent of your sin, God cancels your guilt. When you ask for forgiveness, he takes it away and He moves on. But some of you won't move on because you're trying to be good enough to be saved.

One more thing this list said. It said, you might be trying to do this, you might be trying to earn your way into heaven if you have had several conversion experiences, but you still doubt your salvation. The first conversion wasn't good enough, so you have to do it again. And the second one wasn't good enough, so you have to do it again. And the third one wasn't good enough, so you have to do it again because it didn't make you sinless. It didn't make you perfect, so you have to get saved and saved and saved all over again. And we could go on and on, but the point is that this is an issue today. This works-based mentality is everywhere. It's a real danger for the church.

J. Vernon McGee, a very quotable Bible teacher once said, he said,

When I hear Christians say, "I don't do this and I don't do that, and I build my life around a set of rules," I immediately recognize that they know very little about the grace of God. They're trying to live the Christian life in their own strength when Paul says, "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." The problem is they don't understand how great their weakness is. They don't understand how much they really need God's grace.

And this is what I want to talk to you about it this morning. This morning I want to show you how great your weakness is. This morning, our passage that we have before us tells us how much we need God's help and how much we can't do this on our own. And tying it into our passage, we're going to talk about three ways to dismantle false teachers in the church. So, if you're taking notes, I'm going to tie all this into our passage. But that's our outline for today. In Titus 1:15-16, we're going to look at three ways to dismantle false teachers in the church or three ways to dismantle works-based religion.

If you've been with us for the past couple of months, we've looked at several ways to identify a false teacher in Titus chapter 1, and we've looked at some ways to deal with false teaching. We talked about several things there. But now, what we're going to do is we're going to take this one step further and talk about how to dismantle these guys. Just how to unravel them. We're going to talk about how to get into their minds, get into their heads and disrupt their way of thinking. False teachers say salvation is of works. That's what they do. That's what they teach. They say, "If you really want to be a Christian, then you got to do this and this and this. And if you really want to be saved, then you got to follow this and this and this." Paul says there's some ways to dismantle that way of thinking. Paul was a Pharisee, you remember that? Paul was the ultimate legalist. He said he was beyond Phariseeism in the eyes of his father. His dad was a Pharisee. It was just in his blood. And so, he knew this through and through. And so, this is his perspective on how to undercut that wrong way of thinking.

And the first way to dismantle these guys is this, it's by looking at the wrong view of purity. The first way to dismantle a false teacher in the church is to look at their wrong view of purity. False teachers have a wrong view of purity. They have a wrong understanding of what it means to be pure or holy in the sight of God, because they think it's all about works. They think if you're dirty on the inside, the way to fix that is to wash the outside. Which is their greatest error at the end of the day. They think the Christian life is primarily about what happens on the outside of us. It's about our clothes and our hair and our jewelry. It's about our works.

So, Paul says this in verses 10 through 15 if you want to follow along with me in Titus 1:10. He says,

10 For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, 11 who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain. 12 One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." 13 And this testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith, 14 not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth. 15 To the pure, all things are pure.

Our focus is on those last words there. But in the flow of this text, Paul identifies the false teachers. He calls them out and he says they are rebellious men, empty talkers, deceivers and of the circumcision. Then he tells you what to do with them. In verse 11, he says, they must be silenced. You have to muzzle them like a dog, as the Greek word indicates. Verse 13 says to reprove them severely. Tell them why you are muzzling them. Tell them why they can't teach you anymore. Then verse 14 says, "Not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth." And verse 15 starts off with what seems to be a very strange phrase if you're just reading that in your English Bibles. You read that and go, "What's this all about?" But he says, "To the pure, all things are pure." Now, what does that have to do with the rest of this passage here?

Well, the Jews tied purity to the commandments. If you remember your Old Testament there, they tied purity or holiness to doing things in the Old Testament. I mean the false teachers really took it to extremes. I think the book of Leviticus has the word "holy" in it like 40 times. And the

idea of the book of Leviticus is as the Jews were coming out of Egypt, as they were coming out of the realm of Pharaoh, it's like God takes them out in the wilderness and He gives them a long bath. And some of them wrongly interpreted that to say that if they kept all of these rules, they would be pure. Salvation has always been a faith, it's always been a grace. But some misunderstood that to think, "If I follow all these commandments, I will be holy before God." In fact, some Jews were so passionate about this that by the time of the first century, they added extra laws to make sure they were pure enough. They added extra commandments just in case they missed a few. I mean as if they're not enough commandments in the Old Testament anyway, right?

And so, for instance, the Old Testament (just an example of this) told the Jews to wash their hands before certain events and to wash their dishes. But the rabbis added extra laws which said that you had to wash wooden dishes more than glass ones, and you had to wash your hands once before eating to get rid of defilement and a second time, to get rid of the water that touched the defilement. It gets better by the way. In other words, you had to wash the water that washed your hands. It was crazy. You had to give them a double washing. They said that the first time you washed, you had to let the water run off your wrist and evaporate. And the second time you had to immerse all the way, but the water itself could only be a small amount, half an egg shells' worth. Any more than half an egg shells' worth, and it wouldn't count. You would be unclean and have to do it all over again. And afterwards, the hand had to be lifted up to let the water evaporate. And the rabbis argued about whether you had to do it once before meal and once after or just once before. I guess it depends on whether you ate it at seafood place because they get all of those crab legs and they get all that stuff. Do you guys know? Okay. Alright. I don't know if they had crab legs. They argued about whether you had to wash your hands for each course, seven course meal. Or they argued about whether you had to immerse in a bowl or a sink or another container. They argued about who could go get the water. They argued about what you would do with it afterwards. Do you pour it in the river, or do you pour it in a stream? Can you pour it in your backyard? Do you have to bury it and utter a prayer? I mean, the whole thing was nuts.

And what Paul says here is very powerful to that way of thinking. If you look again in your Bibles in verse 15, this is why all of that really matters. He says, "To the pure, all things are pure." Do you see the context for that now? He says, "If you are pure on the inside, then you are pure, period. You don't have to get into all that. You don't have to add extra rules. If you're clean on the inside, then you are clean. Your hands and your dishes are just a secondary thing. They're not important because they'll take care of themselves." To those who are pure in here, they will be pure out there, right? They will be right with God.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:18 that, "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit." And this is what He means, it's in the nature of a good tree to make good fruit. It can't help it. It's in the DNA. That's just what it does. Apple trees make apples, pear trees make pears. And in a similar way, a man who is pure on the inside, if his nature has been changed, he will do pure things. You don't have to twist his arm, he'll do it. Jesus said in John 14:15 that, "If you love Me, you'll keep My commandments." And if you notice the order there, Jesus said, "If you love Me first, you will keep My commandments." He didn't say, "If you do a bunch of things and keep a bunch of commandments, then you can love Me." Obedience starts

with love. God is a father, which means He wants a relationship with you. He's not a dictator, He's not just a judge, He's not just a cruel watchmaker. So, you have to love Him. The works are a secondary thing to that.

Listen, friends, you could wash your hands from now until eternity, but it will never save you. Amen? You could wash your dishes from now until eternity, that won't save you either. True obedience comes from the heart.

It's been said you can dress up a fence post, but it won't make it pretty. And you can dress up a person, you can put a coat and tie on him, you can cut his hair, you can tell him not to wear this, not to wear that. You can tell him parent your kids this way, treat your wife this way, but it won't save him. It'll never change his heart. It'll never make him truly obedient to God because it doesn't go far enough. It doesn't touch the inside.

To say it another way, when Paul says, "To the pure, all things are pure," he means that if you're pure on the inside, it'll take care of that stuff on the outside. But you have to get the order right. You have to put things in their proper place. John Piper says it this way, he says, "Our deeds are not the basis of our salvation, they are the evidence of it. They're not the foundation, but they are the demonstration that we are saved." And notice the order there again, salvation then comes the evidence. Foundation then comes the demonstration. But you have to put the foundation first. False teachers do not put the foundation first. They put the demonstration first. They put all the external things first.

The commentator William Barclay said, "To the man with a dirty mind makes all things dirty. He can take the loveliest things and cover them with smut. But the man whose mind is pure makes all things pure and he can take the worldliest things and the most ordinary things and the most common things and cover them with clean thoughts." It's what Paul is saying here. All things are pure to the person who has become pure.

I remember when I was in Los Angeles, I met some people who came from some dirty backgrounds. They came from some very worldly places. I came from West Tennessee and I didn't know people like this. But some of our people that joined our church had come from prison. Some of them had come from gangs, some of them had come from drug and alcohol rehab. A few came out of the movie industry, which is a rough place to be. And by the time I met them, they were different. They had changed. And when you ask them why, they said it was because they got saved. God changed their heart and as a result, their lives changed. Everything was different on the inside and so it affected the outside, the way they behave, the way they talk, the way they dressed.

But I can guarantee you knowing these people and where they came from, if someone came up to them and said, "To be saved, you need to change your clothes," they would have laughed at them. They wouldn't even know - "What are you talking about?" If someone says, "To be saved, you need to wash your hands and your dishes a hundred times," they would have thought it was strange. But someone came to them and said, "Jesus died for sinners like you." They came and said, "God loves sinners. This is good news for you. God can forgive you of all the evil you've done," and they wanted that. And they believed that. And when they believed that, all the other

things followed. But that was the order. Grace comes first, works comes second. The inside changes first and the outside changes afterwards. But you've got to get the order right. You can't start with the works first.

A sad example of this was on November 18th, 1978. 900 people committed suicide in the jungles of Guyana South America at the command of their spiritual leader, Jim Jones. Some of you remember that story. It was all over the news at the time. In fact, reporters called them the "Kool-Aid Cult" because they drank Kool-Aid laced with cyanide. That's how they all died. But the sad thing about it is right before they died, eye witnesses said that the people looked cheerful and happy. They thought the village was some type of utopia until they stayed for a couple of days and they realized that was all a deception. These people were miserable. They hated it.

But the eyewitnesses said the change in these people was all on the outside. It was all external. They cleaned the village, but they didn't clean their hearts. They washed their hands, but they didn't wash the inside. And when they got to know Him, they saw how enslaved they were. It's what false teachers do. They only wash the outside of us. They only clean the body. They can't clean the soul.

Which brings us to another way to dismantle false teachers. The first way is to look at their wrong view of purity. They see purity as something solely on the outside, as an external thing. In Jerusalem, they had a saying (when we visited Jerusalem), it has to do with the smells and the bells. Jerusalem sounds like bells and it smells like incense. The whole city is caught up in works-based religion. That's the idea here. God says it needs to be something so much more involved.

Bringing us to a second way to dismantle false teachers, and that is by looking at the wrong view of defilement. Since they have a wrong view of purity, false teachers naturally have a wrong view of defilement. They have a wrong view of sin. They put their religion in the wrong place. They put it all on the outside and therefore, they put their sin in the wrong place. They think their sin and their defilement is all on the outside and it's not. If you read in verses 13 through 15 (backtracking here just a little bit) - in verse 13, Paul says,

13 For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith, 14 not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth. 15 To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.

If you noticed, after telling us not to pay attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men, Paul jumps right into the issue of purity and to the issue of cleanness because that's why the Jews kept the commandments. They did it to be pure. And then he goes right into the issue of defilement because that's another reason they kept the commandments, to avoid being defiled. To avoid being unclean in the sight of God.

Jews were terrified at being unclean. They were terrified of defilement. It was such a big deal that certain groups like the Pharisees named themselves after this. The word "Pharisee" in Hebrew meant "separate ones" because Pharisees wanted to separate themselves from all

defilement. They wanted to distance themselves from anything unclean, so they stayed away from unclean food. In fact, even before the Pharisees, there were stories of Jews that went into exile into Babylon and starved to death because they refused to eat anything made by the Babylonians. Instead of being unclean, they would rather die of starvation. And they stayed away from unclean places. There were certain areas the Pharisees wouldn't go. So for instance, the land of Samaria, you guys have probably heard this – Galilee. There are three provinces in Israel, Galilee in the north, Samaria in the middle, Judea in the south. And for a Pharisee to go from Judea to Galilee, he would not walk through Samaria because he thought they were unclean people. He would take a two or three-day trip and make it six days, just to go around. There were certain people they wouldn't talk to, unclean people.

And what Paul says here is another thing that's earth shattering for a Pharisee. Paul says, “If you don't believe, you are defiled, period. No matter where you go, no matter who you avoid, no matter what you don't eat.” He doesn't say what you have to believe there. It's left open-ended. But this is usually said in reference to the Gospel, to the fact that Jesus died on the cross for your sins. Paul says, “If you don't believe that, then it doesn't matter what you do with your food, you are dirty on the inside.” Again, you see that it's identifying here, “You are to those who are defiled.” Not, “Those who do defiling things, they are defiled.” It is their identity. You take your sins with you wherever you go. You don't do unclean things, you are unclean. You don't just sin, you are a sinner. Does that make sense? You guys get that? So, you can go from here to Timbuktu, but when you get to Timbuktu, you will be a sinner there.

The word for “defiled” here, it's an interesting word in Greek – *miano*. It means “to stain” or “to pollute” something. In some manuscripts, it meant to die with another colour. Because that's what sin does to you, that's what unbelief does. It dyes you with a colour God did not intend for you. It stains you, it pollutes you. If you look in verse 15 it says, in the mind, or the mental side of you, what you think, is defiled. And in the conscience or the moral side, what you do is defiled. Sin stains everything. It covers all parts of your life. And until you deal with that, Paul says, nothing else matters. Until you deal with your sin problem, you are unclean through and through. To go back to the words of Jesus for a moment, Jesus said in Matthew 23:25-26 talking to some Pharisees, He said,

25 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. 26 You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside maybe clean too.”

I don't know about you guys, but I have little children at home, so I drink out of all kinds of crazy cups - sippy cups, flowery cups, balloon cups, but I always check the inside first, right? If something's floating in there, we're going to pour it out and we're going to put something else in it. Don't want floating stuff in my drink. In a similar way, Jesus says, God does that with us. This is what he's telling the Pharisees. “You need to check the insight first.” If it's got floating junk in there, it's unclean, right? It doesn't matter if there's balloons on the outside. Matthew 23:27, Jesus said, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.”

That's a powerful statement because dead men's bones were considered to be unclean by the Jews. They avoided them at all cost. Jews would never walk through a graveyard or a cemetery for fear of defiling themselves by touching dead men's bones. And what Jesus says here is, "If you don't believe in Me, if you reject Me, then you have dead men's bones inside of you. You're like a walking graveyard," He says. "You're like a whitewashed tomb." I've seen some beautiful tombs in my day, but I've never wanted to look inside of one. That's what Jesus says here.

I mentioned to you a moment ago that it's a mark of false teachers that they focus on the external, on the outside of you. But it's also a mark of false teachers that they're powerless because they produce nothing but death on the inside. They produce nothing but defilement. You look at some of the false teachers that are real popular nowadays and look at the lives of their people, and I guarantee you they're enslaved to sin. They're not living holy lives. The teachers themselves aren't living holy lives because it's powerless to take care of that. You can whitewash a tomb, but it's still going to be a tomb. And that's what they do.

If you've been following the news lately, you'll know there's been some major scandals in the Christian world in the last couple of years. Some of them among leaders. And it's for this reason, religion alone can't save anybody. Good works can't do it even if you're a leader and involved at that level. If you don't take care of your sin problem, you will fall.

Let's put it like this, lighting candles and burning incense never saved anybody. Never! It doesn't have the power. It can't do it. Same goes for repeating prayers and speaking in tongues and uttering prophecies. Not to be too controversial here, but no one has ever been saved by speaking in tongues, ever. In all of human history, it's never happened. Counting beads and saying the rosary, facing Mecca and praying five times a day, fasting, penance, pilgrimages, giving money to charity - none of that stuff can save a man. Because it can't take away his uncleanness with God. It can't take away his defilement. Friends, you have a sin problem. That's your problem.

Your problem is not in what you eat, your problem is not in where you go, your problem is in what's inside of you, in your heart. And until you deal with that, you are lost and defiled and unclean before God, period. No matter how much money you give away.

I mentioned Jim Jones to you a moment ago and the tragedy in South America. But another false teacher that was popular years ago was a man named David Koresh. Some of you guys remember David Koresh. He told his followers that he was the messiah who had unlocked the seven seals of revelation and he had come back to prepare his people for the battle of Armageddon. So, they went to a compound in Waco, Texas, and they began studying the Bible and stockpiling weapons for the big day, the final battle. Which went fine until the FBI heard about it and they got into a standoff and the compound burned down killing 76 people.

But what the FBI found when they got into the compound shocked everybody, because they said sexual sin was everywhere. It was ramping with adultery. David Koresh had numerous wives and mistresses. He had all kinds of kids out of wedlock because he took his defilement with him into the compound. He took his sin there. That's a mark of a false teacher. Listen, friends, if a man can't take care of his own sins before God, then he is a false teacher. If he tells you to be holy,

but he can't be holy himself, that's false, right? False teachers don't have the power to deal with their sin problem.

And that brings us to one more way to dismantle these guys and this way of thinking. Just to review these other ones here. First, Paul says that you dismantle a false teacher by looking at their wrong view of purity, by remembering that they focus entirely on the outside of a person with their purity entirely on the external. Second, you dismantle a false teacher by looking at the wrong view of defilement. In a similar way, they see defilement as purely physical. They see it as all on the outside and they whitewash the tomb and they clean the outside of the cup, but they don't get to the actual problem of sin.

And it brings us to a third and a final way to dismantle false teachers, and this is what it all boils down to at the end of the day. This is what the passage is really about. A third way to dismantle these guys is by looking at the wrong view of God. False teachers have a wrong view of purity and they have a wrong view of defilement because ultimately, they have a wrong view of God. They don't see Him as He really is. In other words, they have bad theology. I can't think of anything more insulting to say to a false teacher than, "You have bad theology. You have bad teaching." But that's what Paul says next.

And if you read in verses 15 through 16, he says it like this. He says,

15 To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. 16 They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.

Paul really gets to the heart of things at the end of this passage, but he says that all these problems are ultimately because of this, all these problems in Crete boil down to this. Some men profess to know God but by their deeds, they deny Him. Their deeds are what they boast in. That's the irony here. Their deeds are what they say makes them a Christian, makes them holy. They are working their way into heaven is what they say. But Paul says, "By their deeds, they deny Him." The word deny here is *arneomai* in Greek, which means "to reject" or "refuse" someone. It can also mean to push them away. Paul says, "They profess to know God, but they push Him away by their deeds, because they do those needs for the wrong reasons. They do those deeds so they can earn their way into heaven." Paul actually uses three words to describe their deeds here. If you notice, he says, "They are detestable," which means they are "abominable" in Greek. They're disgusting to God. God looks at the works of a legalistic person of someone who is proud in their deeds and it disgusts Him. It makes Him sick. They're also disobedient. That's a funny word because they claim to obey the law, but Paul says they don't because they do it for their own glory. And therefore, he says, the deeds are worthless. That means they don't amount to anything. Some of your translations say "unfit" or "useless". The idea is God can't use the deeds of a man who is dead on the inside. He can't use a whitewashed tomb.

And kind of putting this all together, it sounds kind of strange to say that these men deny God. I don't know if you picked up on that, but you might say they don't understand God or something

like that. But why does he say, “They deny God?” That's a strong phrase. But here's what Paul means, God says, you're saved by faith alone, and these men say you are not. So, that's a denial, right? That's a rejection of God. God says you're saved by Christ and Christ alone and what He does on the cross. That's the only way you're getting into heaven. And these men say you're not. You have to earn it too. And that is a denial. So, Paul says, “By their deeds, they deny Him.” Martin Luther said, “It's a horrible form of blasphemy for God to say you're saved by faith and for you to say, ‘No, I'm not.’” And he took it one step further, he said, “It's also a horrible form of blasphemy for God to put his son on the cross to save you and for you to say, ‘That's not enough, I have to do more.’” You can't get more blasphemous than that.

And let me just stop here for a moment and say, I wonder if there's anyone here who is wrestling with this this morning. I wonder if there's anyone here who is unintentionally blaspheming God. I don't think anybody would come through these doors and intentionally do that. But I wonder if there's anyone here who would say, “By your deeds, you are denying Him.” You don't believe his Son is enough. You don't believe faith is enough. You feel like a dirty cup on the inside. You feel like a whitewashed tomb. You feel in this passage, these words detestable, disobedient and worthless for any good deed, you say, “That's me. I am that.” Do you know what you need to do? Do you know how you need to solve that problem? You need to go back to where we started this whole thing and you need to go back to His grace. You need to go back to the fact that if you are saved, it is not because you are good, it is because you are His, amen? If you're going to heaven, it's because you belong to Him.

I told you guys before, my dad works for Goodyear Tire Company, and he's a public relations guy, which means that he can get me tickets to the Goodyear Blimp. It's kind of cool. And you go fly around and it's pretty neat because you go like 30 miles an hour. You point straight down and you're not crashing. But I can't get on that blimp on my own. I need to know someone who can take me there. You can't get into heaven on your own. You need to know someone who can take you there. And that is Jesus Christ. The church is built on grace, it's not built on works. And your salvation is built on grace, it's not built on works. He gets all the glory for it. He gets all the credit. That's what you need to do with this passage.

To say it this way, when Paul says in Titus 2:11 that for the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all men,” he doesn't mean that all will be saved. He means that all could be saved if they believe. All means all there. All sinners, all failures, all people. Anyone who is defiled can be saved if they trust in His grace, which means you can be saved right now. You can be forgiven if you would just believe in Jesus Christ. I know that this chapter is something of a warning here. That's the tone of this. Paul is warning us to be aware of false teachers, but I want to give you some encouragement this morning. I want to give you some hope. If all this has convicted you and shown you that your religion is a sham, if it's shown you that whatever you are on the outside, you're unclean on the inside. If that's what you've seen here, then the way to be forgiven of all of that is to trust in His grace. Second Timothy 1:9, it says, “He has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace.”

The famous preacher, Billy Graham was once driving through a small southern town when he got pulled over for speeding. And he was told to appear in court later that day, and so he did so.

And in the courtroom, the judge said, “You're guilty. You are guilty. You were speeding. You owe the court at \$10 fine; \$1 for every mile you went over the speed limit.” And to his amazement, he watched as the judge took out his wallet and he said, “But because I know who you are, I will pay your fee for you. Here's \$10 to the court. You can go free.” Friends, that's what God is offering you this morning. This is what he has done. He has offered to pay your fine for you. He has offered to take out his wallet and cover it all, every last drop of it. And you can be saved if you believe it in His grace. Will you do that this morning? Will you believe in the free gift of God? Let me pray for you now that you would if you have not.

Father, we thank you this morning for Your grace as we've talked about this passage and just the danger that false teaching can bring to the church. It also reminds us of the hope and joy we have in what Christ has done for us. Lord, thank you that You have paid for our sins. Thank you that You've paid our fee and thank you that we can go to heaven because we are Yours. Lord, I do pray if there's anyone here this morning who is wrestling with that, I pray, Lord, You would remind them that there is hope in Jesus.

Lord, help us to always remember what the church is about. Help us to always remember why we are here. We're here because of what You have done for us. May you receive all the glory, Lord, for our worship. May You receive all the praise for what we do here in this place at all times in Jesus' name we pray, amen.