



A Clean Church

Titus 1:5-16

November 14, 2021

Pastor Mickey Klink

Introduction

In this text God gives us insight into the kind of work the church must do to be faithful and fit for good work.

The Text: Titus 1:5-16

⁵ This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you— ⁶ if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. ⁷ For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, ⁸ but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. ⁹ He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. ¹⁰ For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party. ¹¹ They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach. ¹² One of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." ¹³ This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, ¹⁴ not devoting themselves to Jewish myths and the commands of people who turn away from the truth. ¹⁵ To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their minds and their consciences are defiled. ¹⁶ They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.

Paul commands that the church and its leaders should work to establish "a clean church."

- a) A clean church will put things "into order" to make sure the church is healthy (v. 5a).

- b) A clean church will have an elder structure for leadership (v. 5b).

- c) A clean church will appoint elders who respond to the gospel in word and deed (vv. 6-8).

- d) A clean church will be willing to have hard conversations and address difficult topics (vv. 9-10a).

- e) A clean church will teach what is biblical and confront lies and disobedience (vv. 10b-16).

Response

Let us pray that God will make us a "clean church" – honorable, obedient, and fit for good work (v. 16).

Small Group Questions

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- 1) Starter Question: How do you understand the proverbial saying: “cleanliness is next to godliness?”
- 2) Read the text aloud and discuss together any significant observations or issues needing clarification.
- 3) Paul commands pastor Titus of the church in Crete to “put what remained into order” (v. 1). What would a disordered or “out of order” church look like?
- 4) Why are elders the first thing Paul prescribes for the church in Crete (v. 1), and why is the elder structure of leadership and church management important?
- 5) As a congregant, how do the elder qualifications in vv. 6-8 help you both recommend and approve individuals for the office of pastor-elder?
- 6) V. 9 expects elders, and arguably all of us, not only to instruct one another in sound doctrine but also to rebuke those who contradict it. How might we practice these things in our church?
- 7) Paul says this about the church in Crete: “there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers, and deceivers” (v. 10). How will we know if such people participate in or influence our church?
- 8) Paul also says this: “rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in faith” (v. 13). What would this look like and how would it be a regular habit in a healthy church?
- 9) V. 16 makes it clear that unhealthy Christians “profess to know God but deny him by their works.” Why are our faith-based works in the life of a Christian so important?
- 10) How clean and healthy is Hope Evangelical Free Church, and how can we, where needed, put things “into order?”

Further study this week: Passages on the connection between faith and works: James 2:14-26 (Mon); Ephesians 2:8-10 (Tues); Matthew 7:15-20 (Wed); Matthew 7:21-23 (Thurs); Mathew 25:31-46 (Fri).