

Beware of Falsehood, 11.2.08

Titus 1.10-16

Intro

In 2000, an Illinois scientist named William Walsh studied strands of hair from the body of famous classical composer Ludwig Van Beethoven. By studying those strands of hair, Dr. Walsh discovered that Beethoven's body had 100 times the normal amount of lead. He concluded that Beethoven's untimely death at the age of 57 was due to lead poisoning.

What's interesting is that Beethoven's lead poisoning can be traced to the mineral spa that he went to in order to relax. Think about that: the very thing he thought was bringing him relief and relaxation was actually slowly poisoning him to death.

That's what spiritual falsehood/poison is like, that as people engage in practices and embrace ideas that are spiritually poisonous, they think it is making them more spiritual. But in reality, it's gradually killing them spiritually.

Tim Peck, "Deepening Your Life with God," PreachingToday.com

1. Paul now elaborates about the opponents that the elders titus is appointing must combat..
2. Jewish syncretist & Cretans. Cretans were known as liars & employed trickery and deception for selfish advantage. This was so well known that they developed a noun "cretism" and verb "cretize" which meant to tell lies/deceive like a Crete (like we use the word "redneck")
3. Paul is saying, "Make sure your appointees are qualified b/c there are already insubordinates at work trying to ruin the faith of others."

False teaching will lead to ruin (v.10-13a)

- V.10
 - Useless talkers - futile talkers achieving no useful purpose; fluent & impressive in speech that accomplishes nothing
 - Rebellious people - won't put themselves under authority

- Insist on circumcision– Jewish teachers or possibly Jewish Christians telling people they must participate in ceremonial Jewish customs to be in right relationship with God
- Do it for money – a motive for their false teaching
- V.12
 - Epimenides (5th BC) was held in high esteem as a poet & prophet. Revered & quoted by all. Paul was agreeing with the poet about the false teachers. He wasn't applying this to all Cretans but to the false teacher. The Cretan already knew this about their culture. Paul is saying, "These false teachers are all very Cretan."
 - Liars
 - Cruel animals – like beasts, unrestrained in their brutality, on the prowl
 - Lazy gluttons– their greed and unwillingness to make an honest living through hard work
 - "This is true." Paul agreed with the poet's declaration.
- Characteristics of false teaching
 - False teaching will always be a problem – Mt.13
 - It is contrary to what is the plain & clear teaching of Scripture. Some people are always looking for the bizarre and extraneous to position themselves
 - You must participate in some type of ceremony or have special knowledge in order to receive God's special blessing
 - There are layers of supposed secret truth...only certain people can have the truth. Jesus didn't hold it to himself. He broad casted & He told us to do the same.
 - The truth is only accessible to a few
 - You don't/can't question the teachers/leaders/past.
 - Always some works based relationship with God
 - Often, the reputation of those who propagate it is questionable.
 - It will cause those who hold it to take upon a superior attitude or become withdrawn...attitude changes

- If you disagree, they see themselves as martyrs for the truth.
- Doesn't bear witness with your spirit.
- The focus of the belief isn't upon Jesus but upon the religion; your love for Jesus
- V.11
 - They must be silenced – the word means bridled, muzzled or gagged. Not tolerated but silenced. Earlier in v.10 Paul says to show, but now he's encouraging a more aggressive response.
 - This is a moral necessity of the elder
 - “b/c they are turning whole families away from the truth”
 - The devastating result of falsehood is division and destruction. Sometimes the truth does the same thing.
 - The difference is what kind of fruit is this producing the in the person's life. Are they more in love with Jesus and others?
 - If you have questions about the truth please say something. No question is an ignorant question

Believers must be reprimanded & reminded of the truth (v.13b–15a)

- V.13
 - They are to be reprimanded sternly – the teachers or people? It seems the people, b/c Paul indicates the false teachers won't listen b/c their minds & consciences are corrupt. “sternly” – sharply, decisively; like a surgeon cutting away a cancerous tumor,
 - You are to do this. We can't let the culture dictate our response. Tolerance = damnation in this instance. There may come a time when you don't say anything else b/c the person has chosen to reject the truth. Consider the ex of Paul with the Jews in the various towns, but we have a responsibility.
 - You don't have to be mean!

- The purpose of the strong rebuke is so they stay strong in the faith. Lit “ to be in good health, be healthy.” If you don’t do or say anything it can lead to their destruction.
- V.14
 - You must stop listening to Jewish myths and the commands of people who have turned away from the faith.
 - Appl – be careful what you read/listen to. It can sound so alluring. False teachers can make it sound like they have the key to knowledge & truth.
 - “commandments of men” – refer to human tradition; concepts that some things are “clean” and others are “unclean”
- V.15a.
 - Paul was addressing a teaching of Jesus that these false teaches disagreed. It’s a matter of the internal (Mk.7.15; L.11.39ff) not the external (gal.2.11–21; col.2.20–23; 1 T.4.1–5).
 - They were saying you must observe this & that; purity was all external
 - Paul was reminding them purity of the heart (3.5, Ro.14.20)
- Appl – you have an obligation to speak to those who are embracing falsehood and encourage them to turn & seek the truth. They may not listen until they hit a difficult place
- III
 - In July of 2004, the Arizona Game and Fish Department began nursing more than 30 emaciated, dehydrated, banged-up pelicans. During the previous two weeks, the injured pelicans had been found from Yuma to Phoenix.
 - The brown pelicans were injured when they descended from the sky, sailed low over sidewalks and asphalt highways, stretched out their feet as though to make a perfect splash landing in water, and then tumbled end over end when they instead hit the pavement.
 - The pelicans, apparently suffering a food shortage in California, flew to Arizona looking for fish. From the sky, the shimmering hot air over the

black asphalt appeared to the Pelicans like water. Down they flew for fish and a refreshing dip in a lake. What they found instead was solid pavement, dehydration, hunger, and near death. Reality hits hard.

- Thankfully, the Arizona Game and Fish Department came to their rescue.
 - Benjamin Larson, Washington D.C. and Craig Brian Larson, Arlington Heights, IL; source: Associated Press, "Pelicans Mistake Arizona Asphalt for Lakes," CNN.com (posted 7-12-04) (viewed 7-13-04)

False teaching emanates from a corrupt & unbelieving heart (v.15b–16)

- All this impure teaching comes from an impure heart
- They profess to know God, but their actions belie their profession.
- Corrupt
- Do not believe
- Minds & consciences are corrupt – due to being in doctrinal or moral perversion for so long their minds and ability to make correct judgements has been polluted.
 - If a person or group refuses to embrace the truth of God, at some point, they are unable to embrace truth. You can't just reason them away from the falsehood. Once they've decided a certain falsehood is the truth it becomes extremely difficult to change.
 - This is a critical reason why when we are either uncertain about some teaching that we seek godly counsel or when we see people stepping into error that we make attempts to bring them back to the truth. You can't drift or let someone else drift into falsehood.
 - You can't dip in & out of false teaching w/o it having an impact on your life.
- Look at their lives not their claims
 - They claim to know God
- Their real condition–
 - Detestable – disgusting; that which cause horror & disgust to God their conduct didn't match their teaching

- disobedient – they cannot & will not be persuaded; their minds are made up and you aren't going to change them.
- Worthless – castaway; athletic term wh means they are disqualified.
- Look at the fruit of their truth. What is it producing in the lives of people who believe their truth?
- Illust –

In the 19th century Charles Bradlaugh, a prominent atheist, challenged a Christian man to debate the validity of the claims of Christianity. The Christian was Hugh Price Hughes, an active soul-winner who worked among the poor in the slums of London. Hughes told Bradlaugh he would agree to the debate on one condition.

Hughes said, "I propose to you that we each bring some concrete evidences of the validity of our beliefs in the form of men and women who have been redeemed from the lives of sin and shame by the influence of our teaching. I will bring 100 such men and women, and I challenge you to do the same."

Hughes then said that if Bradlaugh couldn't bring 100, then he could bring 20. He finally whittled the number down to one. All Bradlaugh had to do was to find one person whose life was improved by atheism, and Hughes—who would bring 100 people improved by Christ—would agree to debate him. Bradlaugh withdrew!

D. James Kennedy and Jerry Newcombe, What If Jesus Had Never Been Born? (Thomas Nelson, 1997), p. 189; submitted by Jeff Allen

- Mt.11.19 – Wisdom is proven to be right by her children.

Conclusion: Paul is urging Titus to appoint strong men who would courageously confront those who were adding external religious requirements to the gospel. This was an issue that confronted the early church and still confronts us today.

We can't be fooled by the deep sounding teaching of false teachers. We must look at the fruit it's producing in the lives of those who follow it.