

TITUS 1:10-16

A. Introduction

1. Titus is one of three letters that the apostle Paul wrote, which are known as the Pastoral Epistles.

These are letters addressed to individuals who were church leaders, one of whom was Titus.

2. Why Titus?

Titus is a great book for us to study together because it gives us a model for how to lead a local church that is healthy in terms of what it believes and how it behaves.

In the opening greeting to Titus, Paul reminds us that:

The goal of a church that is healthy is to see people become Christians, remain as Christians and grow as Christians.

The method a church that is healthy will use to achieve this is to preach the gospel.

The motivation of a church that is healthy to do this is in response to God's grace and peace.

But a church will not be healthy in these areas if it does not have qualified leaders and so Paul instructs Titus to appoint elders.

"The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you." (Titus 1:5)

The elders who Titus was to appoint were to be men who are godly in their conduct, character, and conviction.

The elders who Titus was to appoint were urgently needed.

"For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group." (Titus 1:10)

Within the church there were false teachers and members who were being led astray by their teaching.

This could not be ignored.

Something needed to be done about this if the local church was to be healthy.

3. What are the elders to do?

Paul gives Titus instructions about two essential tasks that elders are to do.

B. Elders are to confront those who are deceiving

1. Who are these false teachers who are doing the deceiving?

How can we spot them?

They reject the truth that is taught in God's Word.

"Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth." (Titus 1:14)

They teach what is wrong.

"They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach - and that for the sake of dishonest gain. Even one of their own prophets has said, "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons." This testimony is true." (Titus 1:11)

They lead people away from godly living.

"To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good."
(Titus 1:15-16)

2. How are these false teachers doing the deceiving?

They are going from house to house spreading their lies.

"They are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach." (Titus 1:11)

3. How are elders to confront these false teachers who are deceiving people in the church?

"They must be silenced." (Titus 1:11)

How are false teachers silenced?

Three ways:

By not giving them a platform to speak to the church.

By making it clear to the church that what they are teaching is wrong.

By speaking to them the truth of God's Word in the hope of bringing them back to the truth.

4. Application.

One of our responsibilities as elders is to be aware of false teachers who are seeking to deceive members of this local church and to silence them before they do.

How do we do that?

By being careful about who we allow to teach the Bible from the pulpit and in the various ministries and groups we have.

By having a basic awareness of the false teaching that is affecting the church worldwide.

By having a specific awareness of the false teaching that is particularly dangerous to this local church.

By publicly speaking out against false teachers and teaching that is actually affecting this local church – we don't need to highlight false teachers and teaching that is having no impact at all.

By teaching the truth so that the members can spot false teaching themselves.

C. Elders are to confront those who are deceived

1. Who are these church members who are being deceived?

They are ordinary church members.

"whole households." (Titus 1:11)

They are exploited church members.

"for the sake of dishonest gain." (Titus 1:11)

They are damaged church members.

"ruining whole households" (Titus 1:11)

2. How are they to be confronted?

They are to be rebuked – they need to be told that the teaching they are believing is wrong.

“Therefore, rebuke them sharply.” (Titus 1:13)

They are to be rescued – our aim is to bring them back to believing the truth.

“...so that they will be sound in the faith and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth.” (Titus 1:13-14)

3. Application.

We should be concerned about what the members of Banstead Community Church actually believe.

This is why a vital condition of membership is genuine conversion and adherence to our Statement of Faith, which summarises the essential Christian beliefs as taught in the Bible.

Church discipline is not only concerned with the wrong behaviour of church members but also with the wrong beliefs of church members, and as elders we must not be afraid of lovingly speaking to those members who have been deceived by false teaching in order to win them back to the truth found in God's Word.