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## Titus – Making Things Right

### True Child (vs.4)

Well, we come once again to the book of Titus. I trust that since we looked at it last week, you'll have a little bit of understanding of some of the background which Titus was dealing with. Clearly, to put it in a nutshell, Titus is sent to this island of Crete by Paul. Really up to this point, he has been in some way a liaison; somebody that Paul has been sending to help in many different ways. It's recorded in 2 Corinthians 8 where he was sent for the purpose of really smoothing things out and conveying the heart of Paul. There was a sense of things getting better because of that. So, the Lord had used him in a lot of different ways; ministering for Paul in different places. Then ultimately, he is sent to this isle of Crete which we realize is a very difficult place to serve. Not simply because there are barbaric people that have been known for their rebellious acts, lying and deceit, but you have all kinds of faiths and religions that are converging; not unlike the region of Ephesus. Many times, port cities have a conglomerate of different faiths and beliefs that come into them. Ephesus really had all kinds of mysticism coming from the east and all kinds of mythology coming from the west; all kinds of beliefs not only with Judaism and Christianity. So, the big problem that comes out of that is what we would call syncretism.

The biggest problem that really in some ways infiltrates the church today is syncretism. Syncretism to put it in very simplistic terms, is the blending together of all kinds of beliefs and religions and mixing them. So, it's an amalgamation of these faiths that are coming together. Somebody had mentioned the Bahia faith; which in some ways is that and tries to blend it all together. What you have is just one big mess. You don't really have any truth; you just have a lot of confusion. So, what we have on the island is a lot of confusion because of this. We know that the main god that was worshipped on the island was Zeus and much of that belief was really focused on immorality. So, there was this infiltration of this immorality in worship and deception in which people would deceive by virtue of religion to have relationships with people. So, that was then breaking up families and causing all kinds of problems and here again, a lot of chaos and confusion came out of that. We understand that God warns us against this at the very beginning. In fact, He warned His people, "You can't have any part of the things of the world." It's one of the great problems that once again, the church continues to battle against. I'm going to try to mention this in as practical a way as I can because we're dealing with this all the time. I think sometimes people perceive that Family Bible is just narrow minded and basically "us four; no more" and that's not really true. We're just trying to hold on to Scripture, and we believe that there is only one way and that our faith is *the* faith; but it is the faith of the

Bible; not the faith of Family Bible Church. It's the faith of Scripture, and we're trying to hold to that. We know that Satan would disguise himself as an angel of light, and we know according to 2 Timothy 3 that in the last days people will have a form of godliness, but they'll deny the power thereof. So, we know that there is kind of a quasi-religion that the world has; whether it's worshipping a tree or what we might perceive to be mother nature or whatever; even worshipping man. I think that's one of the reasons why Scripture says stop regarding man whose breath is in his nostrils because it really is man inventing different things that in some way he's already attracted to. So, he devises a particular religion that fits his lifestyle. That's one of the reasons why you have so many of them, but God had been warning about this all along. The fact that it infiltrated the church is not a surprise.

If you read 2 Thessalonians as well as 2 Peter, it's very clear that false religion is being taught. Of course, Jesus reminds us in Matthew 24 that "many will be coming in My name." He says, "See that you're not misled." So, this is because somebody is using the name of Christ, their perception is "Well, they must be Christians." Not necessarily. So, we're going to be looking at that and it's one of the reasons why we put the word "ecumenical"; because it has the connotation of people that are calling themselves Christians; which the Mormons and Jehovah's witnesses would probably throw themselves in that. By virtue of their identification in that regard, the perception is "then we're all of one faith," and that's basically "ecumenical." So, we have kind of a tag on both ends. We have a tag in the sense that the world is telling us all roads lead to Rome, so to speak. So, all faiths lead to God; which isn't true. Then, you have this ecumenical movement that comes in and because people had identified themselves with the name of Jesus, then the perception is that they must be Christians. I just think it's interesting that Paul deals with this and we're going to be talking about this as well in 1 Corinthians; but he deals with this in 1 Corinthians 5, and he talks about you having to be weary of every so-called brother. I think it's interesting that he actually uses that phrase because it's telling us that people are going to be using the name erroneously and we have to discern the difference. That's one of the reasons why the church is the pillar and support of the truth. So, we help you put on those glasses of truth; which the Spirit of God then affirms in your heart "that's truth."

When coming to this passage, we're just going to be looking in verse 4 in Titus 1 as Paul identifies Titus as his "true child" in the faith. Once again, we're talking about truth as opposed to Cretans or liars. So, they're deceivers and hypocritical; manipulative in the things that they're doing. But we have that which stands in stark opposition, this individual that he has sent is a "true child." The phrase is oftentimes used to define a legitimate child. So, it would be another way of saying he's not illegitimate, he's a legitimate child; which is once again conveying a sense of truth and the relationship was an appropriate relationship. Obviously, the point is he's born of God and one that came into this family based on their desire for truth. So, it's a great picture that he begins to give and is in stark contrast to the Cretans.

I want us to go all the way back to see where this is established because one of the things that I did was put the passage of 2 Timothy 4:10. If you remember this verse, it actually has Titus in

that verse as well. So, you read in there, “Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me.” Remember that? But then he mentions that Titus is in Dalmatia. So, he begins to make reference to those that have been faithful and of course, one who has left so to speak and has abandoned. So, an interesting picture as we get the contrast within the text; the true child and then Demas in 2 Timothy 4.

If you go back with me to Leviticus, God gives this interesting warning. I’m just going to be talking to you about this true child in the faith thing because of the fact that he’s making an issue out of it. It’s one of the reasons why he’s making reference to him being the true child because they have to be able to see in Crete the difference between the truth and the lie; to be able to recognize that. In Leviticus 18, you see the very beginning where God turns to His people, and He goes, “Ok, we freed you now from Egypt. Don’t let Egypt rub off on you.” So, it reads this way in Leviticus 18:1,

“Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

(Leviticus 18:2) “Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘I am the LORD your God.

(Leviticus 18:3) ‘You shall not do what is done in the land of Egypt...’”

In other words, you saw what they did. You saw the patterns that they had. He goes on, and says,

“...where you lived, nor are you to do what is done in the land of Canaan.”

So, from Egypt where they had been, to now Canaan where they’re going, you can’t let the world come into your life. You can’t follow their patterns. Now, as much as God says this throughout His word, it is strange to me how the church wants to emulate the world. It’s just bizarre. It’s the difference between true and a lie because the world of course is living a lie. We’re living in the truth. So, He goes on, and says, “where I am bringing you; you shall not walk in their statutes.”

The word that He uses for statutes is *“ḥuqqâ.”* The word itself is making reference to the customs of the people. A better translation for the word “statutes” would be “you can’t live according to their customs or rituals; you can’t adopt their manner of life. It can’t be a part of you.

Once again, it’s bizarre that we live in a world that is somehow compartmentalized. So, we go to church, and we live a certain way. Then we go and live like the world out there and we think God’s really happy with that. But He’s making it really clear at the very onset, “I’ve called you to be a very different people.” It’s why He calls us “holy”; because “holy” is distinctive, separate; not common. Now, I bring up that word “common” because in verse 4 He refers to it as a common faith. So, he’s not talking about a faith like the world. So that would not be the same thing as not holy. When he brings up “common,” it is the word *“koinos;”* where we get the word *“koinonia.”* He’s saying that we have a faith that is open to anyone. I think one of the

reasons why he mentions that in this particular verse is because if you remember, Titus was a Greek. So, he's sending them not only to this isle of Crete, but as you go on and read in Titus, there are a lot of Jews that are giving him trouble. So, of course they're going to try to undermine his authority by virtue of saying he's not really schooled in the things of God. Then they're going to begin attacking him and Paul is going to be demonstrating that the faith we have is open to anybody, but it is very distinctive. The thing that makes it distinct is the godliness and more specifically, you can see the difference in the life. So, as you go in, God calls out a people to be holy, different from the world; and it's that holiness that marks us, not the fact that we're a Jew, a Greek or whatever. That's not what marks us. The thing that marks us is our holiness. It's a common faith that's open to everybody, but the true are really emulating the lifestyle of Christ. We're going to be looking at the word "godliness" a little bit further because he has already stated back in Titus 1,

(Titus 1:1) "Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God..."

So, obviously there's a distinction there.

"... and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness."

See, that's what he's going to be emphasizing. Of course, the world likes to make the distinction "Well, you were born here, you're a Jew." We're seeing wars fought because certain groups of people have this kind of genealogy, but that's not what unites us. We're united in a common faith. It's that common faith that reveals the true saints.

In Deuteronomy 12, he reiterates this point. It says this in verse 29,

"When the LORD your God cuts off before you the nations which you are going in to dispossess, and you dispossess them and dwell in their land,

(Deuteronomy 12:30) beware that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed before you..."

You would think "Why would you follow somebody that was destroyed?" but we do. It doesn't make any sense. Obviously, sense is thrown out the window. I haven't seen common sense lately anyway. We understand that's not what runs the country.

"Beware that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods..."

You know how you say, "I wonder what they believe..." He says, "Don't even ask." That's where a lot of us fall into a lot of problems. We start getting a little bit curious, "I wonder what that fruit tastes like."

(Deuteronomy 12:31) “You shall not behave thus toward the LORD your God, for every abominable act which the LORD hates they have done for their gods; for they even burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.”

So, right away he’s conveying why would you learn their ways? They even sacrifice their children for their pleasures. Of course, nobody ever does that. You really begin to see just how influential those things were. Once again, the bizarre thing as you go through the Old Testament, we see all these gods being worshipped. In the book of Numbers, we were talking about Baal of Peor. I’m not going to go into detail about that particular god because when I start reading, I feel like I need to go take a shower. In fact, they said that other nations would go into that territory and when they saw the Moabites doing that, they would slaughter them and feel filthy. Other nations felt dirty. That’s one of the reasons God says, “You’ve got to wipe them all out.” It has penetrated and so messed everybody up. In this passage, He’s saying that you can’t allow this to happen.

The very beginning of Isaiah basically says, “You guys are sick in your head.” I don’t guess I can preach that too much. What does he say in verse 5?

(Isaiah 1:5) “Where will you be stricken again,  
As you continue in your rebellion?  
The whole head is sick  
And the whole heart is faint.

(Isaiah 1:6) From the sole of the foot even to the head  
There is nothing sound in it...”

Now, what’s interesting is that he basically tells them in verse 3, “You’re dumber than an ox.” Right? I guess it’s where we get the phrase “dumb ox” because verse 3 reads,

“An ox knows its owner,  
And a donkey its master’s manger,  
But Israel does not know,  
My people do not understand.”

So, who’s smarter?

Verse 4, “People weighed down with iniquity,  
Offspring of evildoers,  
Sons who act corruptly!  
They have abandoned the LORD,  
They have despised the Holy One...”

What’s happened? As he goes on in Isaiah 1, he begins to convey the fact that now the only thing that the world has done, and the sin in your life which you’ve allowed to come in has caused you to look at your faith as just regiment or ritual.

So, His point in Isaiah 1:11 is “What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?’ Says the LORD. ‘I have had enough of burnt offerings.’”

Verse 12, “When you come to appear before Me, Who requires of you this trampling of My courts?”

(Isaiah 1:13) “Bring your worthless offerings no longer...”

Verse 14, “I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts...”

Verse 15, “So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you...” “I hate what you’re doing.”

So, everything that they’re doing is ceremonially correct, but obviously has no meaning to it because the world has so infiltrated their way of thinking that they’ve somehow blended in the world with their faith. So, when they come to faith, you think, “Well, ok, they can do a little bit of God and a little bit of the world.” No, what ends up happening if you do it that way, when you come to God, and you begin to worship, nothing is sincere; nothing is genuine. It’s like having 20 lovers, and going up to your wife or spouse, and saying, “But I really love you.” Whatever you say doesn’t mean anything because now you’re just coming in a superficial way. How easy it is for the world to infiltrate.

When you look all the way back into 2 Kings 17, remember how when Assyria came in and had taken out Israel into captivity? So, when the northern tribes were taken into captivity by Assyria, what did nations usually do with the land that they had? Well, in order to keep people from rebelling, they would relocate them. So, they would take the people out of the land of Israel and put them in certain places; Assyria, Babylon or whatever; away from their home because you wouldn’t want to put them in their home because they’ll feel comfortable there and probably would think about rebelling again. So, you put them in another place. Then, you want to make sure that they don’t come back. So, you take the people from the other nations, and you put them in Israel. So, that’s what takes place in 2 Kings 17. If you drop with me in verse 24, it says, “The king of Assyria brought men from Babylon and from Cuthah and from Avva and from Hamath...” It lists all these places. It says at the end of verse 24, “they possessed Samaria and lived in its cities,” which is the northern part of Israel.

(2 Kings 17:25) “At the beginning of their living there, they did not fear the LORD.”

Why? Because they don’t know what it means to fear the LORD. They don’t know anything about it. So, they weren’t worshipping the Lord. Well, God was upset about it. So, do you have any idea what God did? He sent lions, and the lions started eating people. So, they’re scratching their heads and going, “I think we have a problem. I think the God in the land that we’re in doesn’t like this.” So, they sent for some priests and say, “Do you have some kind of priest for hire that we can bring in and somehow teach us the ways of the God of this land?” So, they start shipping in priests. This is kind of the conglomerate of Samaria. One of the reasons the Jews didn’t like them very much was because of all the mixing that was going on. So, they bring

in these priests. Of course, they start teaching these things, but the problem was that though these priests were teaching the ways of God, which they were hired to do, the other nations were still holding onto their gods. Israel was still worshipping other gods. So, you have that interesting mix that was going on within the passage.

It says in verse 29, “But every nation still made gods of its own and put them in the houses of the high places which the people of Samaria had made, every nation in their cities in which they lived.”

Then, it says in verse 32, “They also feared the LORD.”

Ok, how’s that going to work out? Not well.

“They also feared the LORD and appointed from among themselves priests of the high places, who acted for them in the houses of the high places.

(2 Kings 17:33) They feared the LORD and served their own gods...”

Wow, does that make any sense to you? Well, if it does, there’s something wrong with you.

“They feared the LORD and served their own gods according to the custom of the nations from among whom they had been carried away into exile.”

So, it had started blending. Now, as this passage ends, it goes this way,

(2 Kings 17:36) “But the LORD, who brought you up from the land of Egypt with great power and with an outstretched arm, Him you shall fear...”

That’s what he told us in Leviticus, remember?

“...and to Him you shall bow yourselves down, and to Him you shall sacrifice.”

(2 Kings 17:37) “The statutes and the ordinances and the law and the commandment which He wrote for you, you shall observe to do forever; and you shall not fear other gods.”

Actually, it’s one of the first commandments. So, “we’re going to serve God, and we’re going to serve other gods.” Ok, one of the first commandments of God is “You shall not have any other gods.” Right away, you can see how they can’t live together so to speak.

So, it goes on, and says in verse 38,

“The covenant that I have made with you, you shall not forget, nor shall you fear other gods.

(2 Kings 17:39) ‘But the LORD your God you shall fear; and He will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies.’

(2 Kings 17:40) However, they did not listen, but they did according to their earlier custom.

(2 Kings 17:41) So while these nations feared the LORD, they also served their idols; their children likewise and their grandchildren, as their fathers did, so they do to this day."

It's interesting how it just mixes, isn't it? Yeah. This was the problem when Isaiah the prophet came. He goes, "You guys have been so mixed up for such a long time that you can't think straight. You think that by going through the ceremony that God is pleased." This is one of the problems of syncretism. It's what Titus was having to deal with in Crete. Like the phrase went, "Many of the Christians looked more like Zeus than they did like Jesus." It was actually one of the phrases that was being used. It was because they were allowing these things to infiltrate the church that caused everybody to be confused. This is why the church has to guard the truth. Families didn't know how to live because in one case, they were being taught immorality; then, in the other case, people were proclaiming that you have to be faithful. So, who do you listen to? This is what he was having to contend with.

When you look at Isaiah, you realize just how the nations had come upon them. They had really distorted even the kind of people that they should respect or honor. Now, once again, I know this would never happen in America...

I was talking to someone the other day about how we don't have any statesmen anymore. It used to be that people could debate over something, but there was a sense of decorum; some kind of wisdom in the way they handled things and a concern for the people; but you really don't have statesmen anymore. What you have are selective groups that are just vying for their own desires.

The interesting thing about the passage is it begins to talk about the fact that in a nation that goes the way of the world, a mighty man and a "wise" man begin to wane. Then you go, "Who takes over?" Scripture says in Isaiah 3:4, "And I will make mere lads their princes, And capricious children will rule over them."

Who's making the decisions anymore? You've got to ask yourself. If it's not the kids that are ruling the house, it's the dog. Somebody's ruling the house and it's not the dad. It's one of the things that you see.

So, it goes on, and says,

(Isaiah 3:8) "For Jerusalem has stumbled and Judah has fallen, Because their speech and their actions are against the LORD."

It talks about the expressions of their faces and the rebellion in there. It says this in very simple terms, and I think one of the reasons why the prophet spoke in simplicity is because their head was sick. So, you have to talk to somebody like "Ok, if you keep doing this, it's going to be bad." You can just imagine somebody talking to someone asking, "Ok, do you know what bad means?" "Uh, yeah." "Ok, and if you do the right thing, it's going to be good."

So, it says in verse 10,



“Say to the righteous that it will go well with them,  
For they will eat the fruit of their actions.

(Isaiah 3:11) Woe to the wicked! It will go badly with him,  
For what he deserves will be done to him.”

The clarity of the passage is pretty interesting.

Watch this, verse 12,

“O My people! Their oppressors are children,  
And women rule over them...”

I don't know if that sounds familiar or not.

“O My people! Those who guide you lead you astray  
And confuse the direction of your paths.”

Do you want to know why people are so confused?

In verses 16, 17, and 18 it's talking about the women who are boasting, seductive, and using their wares to manipulate. This is why it says in Isaiah 5:20, “Woe to those who call evil good,  
and good evil.” We've oftentimes read that passage, but it really is in the context of the world that has so infiltrated your way of thinking that you don't even know what right is anymore. Once again, is that happening? Yeah, sure, it's happening.

“Woe to those...  
Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness;  
Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!

(Isaiah 5:21) Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes  
And clever in their own sight!”

One of the things he talks about is those who judge at the gate and somehow convict the innocent with just the wrong word. How is it that lawyers can get away with this? Because it really isn't as much about truth as it is about the ability to manipulate words and people.

(Isaiah 5:22) “Woe to those who are heroes in drinking wine  
And valiant men in mixing strong drink,

(Isaiah 5:23) Who justify the wicked for a bribe,  
And take away the rights of the ones who are in the right!”

You would never think that people would applaud burglars so to speak, but that's what we do. People hate the ones that want to be law abiding. So, they turn things upside down. Well, that's what happens when you blend the laws of God with the laws or lifestyle of man. There's a lot of confusion that comes about because of all that. How bizarre that is when you think about that.

As you think about Titus and what he had to deal with, it is that blending that he has to contend with. One of the statements that he makes in Titus 1 is about empty talkers, deceivers, especially those of the circumcision; which is very interesting because we're dealing with a facsimile of Judaism which should be based on the law of God, but because Judaism had so blended with the world, nobody could tell the difference. So, the Judaizers were only using their laws to manipulate people just like the barbarians were on the island of Crete. They were all just deceiving people in whatever way they could to get what they wanted. There was a lot of confusion that came out of this. In fact, it goes on and says in verse 11, "who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain." Isn't that telling you that they're trying to make money?

(Titus 1:12) "One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, 'Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.'"

(Titus 1:13) This testimony is true..."

So, what you're dealing with is an interesting mix of nefarious things, and somehow, it's a part of the church. Do you wonder why Titus was sent? "Titus you've got to clear this up."

In fact, if you look in verse 5, "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains." Now, that really is the theme of the book. It's one of the reasons why we just gave you the title "Making Things Right" because we live in a world that's upside down; not simply because the world is upside down, but because the church has allowed the world to infiltrate it and thus confuse. Unfortunately, the very place in which people should be going to get turned right side up is confused itself; under the guise of opening their arms to everybody. They begin to compromise everything, and before long, you just have no truth. When he talks about "Titus, my true child in a common faith" he's saying that he's somebody that's real. You have to make that distinction. Truth has to be distinguished from a lie. You can't perceive that you're helping somebody when you're blending in and accepting all kinds.

Let me give you some examples of this. There's this thing in New Orleans called the Mardi Gras. Have you ever heard of it? It comes about every so often. From what I understand, there's actually a place called Point Mardi Gras that's just south of New Orleans; in which many years ago, a French individual that was coming to look at the area comes to the land. He comes and explores the land about two days before a festival that they would celebrate. Actually, Mardi Gras seems to be a word that literally conveys "carnival." So, every so often at this place they had this carnival in which they marched through the streets. Well, what happened was that the French Catholic church decided that they would also make this a part of their faith to blend in with the culture; which the Catholic church is pretty good at doing. During the carnival they have floats and music. Who doesn't like music, right? Such a wonderful thing, music. So, you blend all of these things together and you have this parade. Have you ever seen the necklaces with beads that are thrown? Ok, it's going to surprise you, but these were basically beads of the faith. So, what you have are the different colors that convey certain things. The three colors are

purple, green, and gold. The purple color means justice. The green color actually means faith. Gold means power. So, you have these three things on the beads that are being thrown out. Well, we know that if you go to Mardi Gras today, and really shortly thereafter in the celebration, because the way of the world so easily gets involved in these things, the throwing of the beads became something extremely immoral. It became associated with a woman's fertility. I won't go into a whole lot of details with this. In fact, today, one of the ways that women get the beads thrown at them is by disrobing. They say that over a thousand women disrobe every Mardi Gras in order to get more beads.

Now, it's interesting how it started out seemingly sanctimonious in the sense of blending in with the world. Don't think for one moment that once you blend with the world, you're going to make them better. "Do not be deceived: 'Bad company corrupts good morals.'" (1 Corinthians 15:33) So, by the virtue of blending, what's going to happen? The church is going to take in those things. When you look at Mardi Gras even today, you have these social clubs that are kind of in the parade. Do you want to hear the names of the social clubs? One of them is "Krewe of Druids." I don't know if you know what druids are, but basically Celtic polytheism; which is many gods and the worship of mysticism kind of blending in with holistic medicine.

So, why don't we want that proclaimed in the church? Do you understand what I'm saying? There are oftentimes very altruistic things like yoga classes that people bring into the church, but where does it come from? How easy it is to take the focus off of Christ and onto these things. Once the focus is off of Christ, guess what begins to happen? All kinds of degradation begin to happen. Another group is called "Zulu Social Aid." That sounds nice, doesn't it? Ok, let me read the rest of it, "and Pleasure Club." Another one is the "Knights of Chaos."

There's a statue or a symbol of the Mexican nationalism called the Lady of Guadalupe that they call Mary, but it was actually an apparition or ghost so to speak that came to Juan Diego at night. Now, the church has made that lady Mary, and they blended in. Of course, whether the church knows the difference or not, the Mexicans do. The blending then begins to bring a lot of confusion. The same thing happened with the Aztec goddess who was then turned into Mary as well. I'm just using the Catholic church as an example; this is what oftentimes begins to happen by virtue of thinking "we'll get more parishioners into our church if we just look more like them." However, it doesn't make the distinction clear, and it doesn't make the people better. In fact, the result is not godliness, but ungodliness; that's what begins to happen with the blending of these things.

Most of us are not involved in the Catholic church, but when you think about America and our faith and how the things of our nation have somehow mixed in with the churches. For instance, let me give you an example. I've mentioned this before, but do you remember a phrase back in the early stages of America coming in, we're finally going out west, and we had this phrase called "manifest destiny." That phrase literally means that Americans have the right to claim any land that they want and control it the way they want. They can move what they want to out. So, we went into the nation claiming everything we wanted for ourselves because that's

our destiny. It's bizarre that we would actually use the phrase in Genesis, where God says, "Go into the world and multiply and what's that other word? "Subdue." They would use that text. Now, let me just say this, when God told them to do that there weren't other people living there. So, when He talked about subduing, He wasn't talking about subduing anybody. There wasn't anybody there. It's interesting how we take what to us is dear, we tag it with God, and we somehow blend it into our faith so that you come out with something like "God helps those who help themselves." What is that? Well, that's independence. See, independence gives me authority to do these things.

Galatians 5 says you can't allow your freedom to be used to take advantage of people. Christ as come to set you free, yes. Freedom is a wonderful thing unless you use it to hurt people. Then, it becomes very destructive. Well, we've made a god out of freedom and once again, we've placed it in the church. People then go, "I have a right to do this." Yeah, but Paul says that you might have the right to do all things in Christ, but if you cause somebody to stumble you've now crossed over your rights and into infringement on God's turf so to speak.

I remember we had these business meetings at churches. In order to make the business meeting proper, you would use "Robert's Rules of Order." Remember those? You'd have to have a quorum. Anyway, I'm not going to go into the details of it. It was actually devised by an army officer in 1870. So, if you ever wanted to know where "Robert's Rules of Order" came from it was basically that. The church would use this, and you would take votes, "All those in favor," and everybody would have an opportunity to say something. Is that biblical? No. How did it get in the church? Well, that concept was actually devised out of democracy because it's democratic. So, the 2/3 majority wins. Why did churches start doing that? We don't vote on truth. Truth is not something you vote on. It's either what God said or it's not. I thought it was interesting that a while back the Southern Baptist had gotten together, and they were going to vote on women pastors and whether they should have gays at the pulpit. I'm going, what are you voting on that for?

There's an interesting passage in Matthew 6. I'm trying to make this as practical as I can because once again, it's hard for us to identify with a guy going into syncretistic society. How do we identify with that? Unless you begin to think, "that's what's happened here." If you look with me in Matthew 6, the phrases that Jesus use are directly saying that you've allowed the world to infiltrate your thinking. How does He introduce that? In Matthew 6, He introduces it when He's talking about prayer. He says this in verse 7, "when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles," or nations; "*ethnikos*" means different nation groups.

I was in LA when Hare Krishna was really big. So, you'd go the airport and hear "Hare Krishna". They were all over the place at the LA airport and you begin to realize "Ok, why are we repeating things?" Then you hear people, "How many 'Hail Mary's?'" What are you doing repeating the same words over and over again? Let me just say this too, though we might not do it that way, sometimes we come back to God with the same prayers over again; our thought is "if we bring it before God in a repetitious way enough times..."

He uses an interesting example of the widow before the judge, but the point is that she's irritating the judge, and the unrighteous judge hears her. His point is, "What, do you think I'm not listening? You don't think I'm not more compassionate than an unrighteous judge?" In this passage, He's saying, "You don't have to repeat with Me." I think we kind of get in our heads that it's about repeating something with God, and God goes, "It's not about repeating; it's about genuine. So, if you'll come to Me and be genuine and humble of Spirit." See, we're talking about godliness; truth that shows itself in a godly change. It's not something that is rote. It's not something that is repetitive. It's not something that looks like a ceremony. It looks real, which is truth. Truth is real, right? Within this passage, we begin to realize "what is the world really worshipping?" You can say Zeus in Crete, but in verse 24, it's the god of mammon; which is money. So, really, it's all based on greed or more specifically in the case of the god of mammon it's what helps him pursue his personal preferences and in some cases it's some form of security. Maybe money will buy him pleasures or opportunities, but it's those things that he goes after that he worships. See, that's what's important to him.

He says in verse 25 that you'll get anxious. Well, I can tell you why you're anxious. It's because you're trusting in something that never will bring comfort to you. Recently, there was a movie star that died. We know he had money and the ability to do a lot of great things, but where was the comfort? The problem is that you begin to trust in the things that have no comfort. There is such a thing as real comfort that comes from a real God. If in fact you don't have the real, then you don't ever feel comforted. You'll never feel secure or fulfilled. None of those things ever come. So, it's one of the reasons why He says in verse 25, "For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life." Now, why is He following verse 24 with that? Because worshipping the wrong god is going to bring anxiety. Here again, I give the example that I oftentimes give, if somebody's hanging over the side of a cliff and someone throws them a little string, and say, "Hold on you'll be ok." Well, there's just something about the little string that I don't feel comforted about. I'd like them to throw me a really big rope and I would want to know that it's tied down. So, what you're dealing with is you're never going to feel comforted. Why are you anxious about your clothing? Why are you anxious about your body? Why are you anxious about what you eat? Why are you anxious about these things?

Now, it says this in verse 32, "For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things...

(Matthew 6:33) But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness..."

When it's talking about the kingdom of God, it's talking about the rule of God; in other words, His customs. You think in terms of His customs, His mannerisms and follow what He tells you to do, and all these things will be taken care of. Well, that's real comfort, real faith, and a real promise that is given by God. The point of the text is that man doesn't do that. He pursues everything else.

James 4 says, "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.'" It then talks about how you

should have said, "If it's the Lord's will," but you went ahead and planned your own thing on your own time to do what you wanted to do and you think that God's pleased with that? Think again. What did He say? Seek first the kingdom of God then all these things will be added to you. We like to blend, and people will say something like "That's the way they do it over there," and "That's the way they did it over here." I'm going, why are you allowing them to tell you what to do? What does Scripture say?

Jesus will touch upon this in Matthew 20. I'm sure you remember this passage in which the disciples are thinking like the world and that's why they're wanting to be on one side of Christ and the other on the other side. Of course, Jesus says, "What do you wish? What do you want?" They wanted a position. Really what they're asking for if you think about it is they're asking for position, power, and possessions. They want to sit one on the right and one on the left because they see following Christ in a worldly view. Matthew 20:25 says, "But Jesus called them to Himself and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles think this way.'" Jesus is saying, "Men, you know that this is the way the world thinks." They like to exercise authority over people. They like the position and the power. They like possessions. This is how they define greatness, by oppressing people; by being superior to everybody. Jesus says in verse 26, "It is not this way among you." That's not the way we do it. It's just a different way of thinking, isn't it?

I've oftentimes thought of the prayer of Daniel in Daniel 9; here you have a person that you would say, "Wow, he really is probably the wisest in all of Babylon." He had a lot of reason to boast in himself, and he had been doing the right thing all along; but when he comes to God and he begins to pray for his nation, he says, "We have sinned, and to us belongs open shame." The interesting thing about his prayer is it's a prayer of contrition. It's a prayer of humility. You realize that God is opposed to the proud, but He gives grace to the humble. Now, the world doesn't think that way because the world is all about saving face, looking good, establishing who they are, and everybody forgets about Him. "He's inconsequential. It's about me." Well, that's the world's way of thinking. We've allowed it to come into the church and take over. That's why the people that you want to elevate are not people of position, power, and prestige. They might have that position, but that's not what you're looking for. When he talks about Titus being a true child of the faith, he's talking about somebody that walks in humility before God; that's fundamentally what the term "godliness" is all about.

Paul talks about this in 1 Timothy 3:16, where he says, "Let me tell you, the thing that we follow, there's a mystery of godliness that happens." We know that our salvation, coming to Christ, we come to Him humbly; confessing that we're sinners. It's by confessing that we're sinners that we become cleansed. Which is strange, isn't it? Because you would think if you could just hide it, you could actually pass yourself off as a good person, but you're coming and saying, "I'm a wretch." By that, the power of cleansing comes in and it makes you godly. The world would say, "No, stick up for yourself. Defend yourself. Do whatever you can to make sure that nobody thinks ill of you." That's not the point. We've sinned. I've sinned before God.

Psalm 32:1 says, “How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,  
Whose sin is covered!

(Psalm 32:2) How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity,  
And in whose spirit there is no deceit!”

Now, once again, he talks about “I kept silent about my sin. I tried to cover it up.” What happened? He just implodes.

(Psalm 32:5) “I acknowledged my sin to You,  
And my iniquity I did not hide;  
I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD’;  
And You forgave the guilt of my sin.”

You say, “Well, that doesn’t sound very godly.” Oh, no, that’s what godliness is. It’s very important that you understand that because the next phrase in verse 6 is “Therefore, let everyone who is godly pray.” Pray what prayer? The prayer of confession of your sins. So, who’s the godly? The ones that confess their sins. It’s the humble ones that will confess that God exalts. You’re dealing with people on this island of Crete that just want to do what they want to do and get what they want to get. He says, “I’ve sent Titus to you and he’s a guy that’s true.”

Ephesians 4:17 says, “So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind.” Why would you follow somebody that’s futile in their thinking? Why would you say, “I want to be like them”? No, you don’t want to be like them.

(Ephesians 4:18) “being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart.”

What happens to the world when they begin to pursue their desires? Their hearts just get hardened. So, do they love people more? No. Do they have better relationships? No, they don’t. It goes on and says this in verse 19, “they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality.” Why does the world give itself over to sensuality? I’m going to tell you why; because it’s the only form of escape that gives them a sense of “I’m still alive” because they’re so numb that they can’t feel anything. So, they’re looking for every sensory thing that can give them feeling. The sensation that they’re looking for goes everywhere from sex to drugs, but they’ve got to feel something. I’ve talked to some of these drug addicts, and they say, “I was just tired of not feeling anything, and I finally had something that made me feel alive.” Scripture says in the passage that they give themselves over to sensuality “for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.”

Verse 20 says that you didn’t learn this from God. Christ didn’t teach you this.

(Ephesians 4:21) “If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus...”

He goes on and says that your lust has lied to you. That's why he uses the phrase "lust of deceit" at the end of verse 22. Your lust has lied to you. The only thing it does is give you a buzz for a moment. Now, you've got to go back and get it again. Maybe for a moment you'll feel like "I think I'm human."

He then says in Ephesians 4:23, but "you be renewed in the spirit of your mind.

(Ephesians 4:24) and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." Something true; something that really works and is genuine. What is that? Well, purity and godliness. In other words, it's what identifies us. Somebody would say, "I'm a Christian." Not necessarily because you say it.

He says in 1 Corinthians 5:11, "But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother." Which is telling us that just because somebody calls themselves a brother, it doesn't mean they are. That would be ecumenical movement; "We said we're Christians, why won't you just join us around the flagpole and pray?" Because you're not living like Christians. There should be a distinction.

The same thing is true in Romans 2:28, "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly..."

"I am a Christian." "I am a Jew." Whatever you want to call yourself.

"...nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.

(Romans 2:29) But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God."

I want to emphasize this in 1 Timothy 3:16, "By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness..."

He's talking about the church in verse 15 being the pillar and support of the truth. He's talking about what makes us distinctive; which is the mystery of godliness in us. In other words, when Christ comes in you, there's actual change. So, you are true children of the faith. You're not just talking about it. Once again, Jesus says, "Many are going to come in My name. Don't let them mislead you just because they're using My name. You'll know the truth because they bear good fruit.

He uses this interesting phrase that was actually a hymn about Him in the early church, but it says,

"He who was revealed in the flesh,  
Was vindicated in the Spirit,  
Seen by angels,  
Proclaimed among the nations,  
Believed on in the world,  
Taken up in glory."



That's actually the plan of salvation and the gospel. He's declaring that gospel which you and I have received has changed our hearts and our life. The Spirit of God came within us and made us true instead of fake; literally took us away from the things of the world and made us like the Holy One who is Christ Jesus. We're very distinctive; nothing like the world.

So, last but not least, in Philippians 2:19 I would say that you have a parallel to Titus. In which Paul says this, "But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition."

(Philippians 2:20) For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare.

(Philippians 2:21) For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus."

The distinction is clear. You can't blend it with anything else. Once you start opening the door to any slight variance, it takes away from the glory of the gospel that truly changes the hearts of men. This is what he's going to be emphasizing and why he emphasizes "Titus, my true child in the faith." He talks about grace and peace and these things that come out of this that can't come from anything of the world.

### **Closing Prayer:**

Father, we give You thanks for Your word and how distinctive it is and how distinctive Your people are. Lord, thank You for calling us together and calling us out. The name church, "*ekklēsia*," means that You've called us out to be different from the world. Let us remain distinct. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.