



'Commit to the Bride!' Sermon Series

Sermon #7:

'Committed to Church Discipline!'

Titus 3:9-15

Sunday, February 25th, 2024

Last week in Titus:

- It's hard to believe, but today is the last sermon in our 'Committed to the Bride!' Sermon Series.
 - ***Since January 14th of this year we've been traveling verse-by-verse through the book of Titus.***
 - Each week we've looked at different areas that the Apostle Paul addressed that the NT Churches on the island of Crete needed to commit to.
- ***So far in this series, we've looked at how if we want to be the Healthy Bride of Christ that God has called us***

to be here at FBC Gaston, then we too need to commit to these things that are revealed in Titus.

- ***'Committed to Serving!' Titus 1:1-4***
- ***'Committed to the Proper Qualifications of Church Leadership!' Titus 1:5-9***
- ***'Committed to Confrontation!' Titus 1:10-16***
- ***'Committed to Biblical Gender Roles!' Titus 2:1-10***
- ***'Committed to the Gospel!' Titus 2:11-15***
- ***'Committed to Christ Honoring Citizenship!' Titus 3:1-8***

This morning we are going to wrap up this series, by looking at how we as the Local Church should be committed to Church Discipline!

'Committed to Church Discipline!'

Titus 3:9-15

Sermon in a Sentence:

We can be a Church that is committed to Church Discipline when we Avoid Foolishness, Address Facades, Accept Firm Leadership and Advance Fruitfulness.

Intro:

- ***Church Discipline is arguably one of the least talked about and least practiced things that are mentioned in the NT.***
 - If we truly want to be a healthy NT Church, we have to practice Church discipline.
- ***What does the rest of the Bible say about Church Discipline?***

- Jesus Himself addressed it in **Matthew 18:15-20**.
- The apostle Paul addresses Church discipline in Romans 16:17-18, 1st Corinthians 5:1-13, 2nd Corinthians 2:5-11, 2nd Corinthians 13:1-3, Galatians 6:1-2, 2nd Thessalonians 3:6-12 as well as here in Titus.
- ***The fact that Church discipline is discussed over and over again in God's Word, makes it that more alarming that in 99% of 'Bible Believing' Churches today, it is non-existent.***
 - Dr. Daniel Aiken said ***'Indeed, the contemporary Church's disregard for this clear teaching of Holy Scripture is perhaps its greatest visible act of Disobedience to our Lord.'***
- **The History of Church Discipline.**
 - One of the reasons that the denomination of Baptists were even formed, is because the original Baptists viewed Church discipline as a core value.
 - ***If you look back at the records of Churches who have been around for longer than 150 years, you will find records of Church discipline.***
 - You will find records in our very Church, where Church discipline was enacted with two people going to see a member about a

particular issue and handling it Biblically.

- ***In my own family history in the Hills of North Carolina, I have records of Church discipline being handled on Saturday afternoons.***
 - If someone missed a Church service, and were approached by two members of the Church and didn't have a good reason for missing, they would be voted out of the Church.
 - ***Now I don't necessarily think that legalism is the answer to the lack of Church discipline in most Churches, but lackadaisical living is not the answer either.***
- Notice that in the Southern Baptist Faith and Message of 1925, 1963, and 2000, none of them has a statement on Church Discipline, which is clearly mentioned in Scripture.
- ***In my Baptist History class at SWBTS, Dr. Greg Wills was my professor and he wrote a fascinating book on this subject, here's an excerpt.***
 - He says ***'Church discipline began to wane in Southern Baptist life in the 1870s and rapidly decreased thereafter, merely the cleaning of the Church rolls of names of members long inactive and forgotten'***

- ***So how did we get to this point that most of us don't even know what Church discipline is because we haven't seen it Biblically modeled?***

- *I think Dr. Daniel Aiken provides 3 good reasons as to how we got here:*
 - #1: We've lost our Theological Nerve.
 - #2: We've morally compromised.
 - #3: We are sadly Biblical Illiterate.
- My own reason:
 - ***For over a century Southern Baptist Churches would rather not upset people and keep 'members', then to potentially upset someone for the sake of being Biblically Healthy.***
 - Church discipline is Biblical, and the apostle Paul speaks of it here to the young Titus. Let's open up God's Word and see what He has to say to us concerning this matter.

****Read Titus 3:9-15****

Question to Ask:

How does this passage show us that Church discipline should be practiced by Bible Believing NT Churches and is essential in order to follow the Biblical model that Paul gives Titus?

Point 1: *Avoid Foolishness. (V. 9)*

- 'But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless.' Titus 3:9
 - Paul is getting ready to wrap up this short letter to Titus.
 - ***As human beings, sometimes when we are concluding a conversation with someone, we will oftentimes leave the important things we want them to remember, last.***
 - For example when your spouse says at the end of a phone call, 'I Love you and don't forget _____.'
 - ***What is interesting about verses 9-12 (specifically 9), is that Paul returns to the issues that he addressed concerning false teachers back in Titus 1:10-16.***
 - ***A major theme in Titus is that Paul wants these new Churches to protect and keep sound doctrine, while living out their faith via good works.***
 - ***The apostle Paul opens up this last and final section of Titus with what we call a contrast.***
 - In Titus 3:1-8, he (Paul), was instructing them to do good works. Here, he starts off with ***'But avoid foolish controversies'***

- *One reason that Churches must be committed to Church Discipline, is because Church members are often committed to carnal Christian habits, some of which are mentioned here in verse 9.*

- *If we want to be the Healthy NT Church that God has called us to be at FBCG, then we need to avoid all such foolishness mentioned in verse 9.*

- *What are the examples of Foolishness that Paul gives that we should avoid and squash?*

- *Controversies.*

- ‘But avoid foolish controversies,’

- **Word Study**

- In the greek text, the way that Paul starts off what the Christians at Crete should avoid is very interesting.

- *‘Foolish’* comes from the Greek Word **Moros** *which is where we get the word Moron. Literally means dull or senseless wickedness. Occurs 12 times in NT.*

- *‘Controversies’* comes from the greek word **Zetesis** *and literally means disputes or debates.*

- *This word only occurs 7 total times in the NT, and*

is used by Paul several times to denote a negative connotation or warning.

- *John McArthur said ‘About Christians becoming involved in futile arguments about matters of philosophy, or even theology, that are based on human reason and imagination rather than god’s Word.’*
- *In the Church, we should avoid such foolish conversations that don’t build up the Kingdom of God.*

- *Genealogies.*

- ‘Genealogies’

- The NT & OT is full of genealogy records.

- *I do not think that Paul was belittling them by any means.*

- In fact we know that the genealogies in scripture give great information about the priesthood, kings of Judah and Israel and Matthew even opens with the genealogy of Jesus.

- *Instead, I believe Paul is referring to what many Judaizers were known for in this time.*
 - *Adding to the scripture and to the Savior.*
- These people would debate mythologies and allegories that were based off of Bible Genealogies.
 - *After the apostles died, these added stories and fallacies were a threat to the NT Church.*
- *In our Church context, we can struggle with Genealogies in different ways.*
 - We can worry about who's related to who, instead, we don't need to waste time on those kinds of things.
 - *The only family that should and needs to be made known in our Church, is the Family of God.*
- The only other time this word for 'Genealogies' is found in the greek, is in 1st Timothy 1:4.
 - *'nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations*

rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith.'

- *Dissensions.*
 - 'Dissensions,'
 - This is a general term, but one that has been responsible for tearing up and splitting Churches for many centuries.
 - *This term sums up self-centered rivalries and deceptive ways involving the truth.*
 - If there are any dissensions in the Church or are families (that may affect the body), we must deal with them and then avoid them.
- *Quarrels.*
 - 'and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless.'
 - *No doubt here that Paul is referring to the judaizers who sought to mix law and grace.*
 - *Those who would have a 'Jesus plus' and a 'faith plus' and a 'word plus' theological agenda.*
 - There's no point in quarreling about things that do not advance the Gospel of Christ when there are souls that are dying, going to hell, and in need of Jesus.

- ***Want to be committed to Church Discipline? Avoid Foolishness.***

Point 2: Address Facades. (V. 10-11)

- Facade is defined as a false, superficial, or artificial appearance or effect. It can also mean deceptive.
 - ***When facades appear in the Church, they must be dealt with. Scripturally, swiftly, smoothly, and softly.***
 - I believe in the immediate context of this passage, that Paul is showing the Cretan Church how to handle those that he just described the actions of in verse 9.
 - ***So in this context, it would be false teachers and or Judaizers that he would give instructions for how to handle.***
 - ***But, I do believe that this still applies to us today.***
 - The leaders of the Church (Pastors & Deacons), should address facades that may come up.
 - ***Whether they come up through controversies, genealogies, dissensions or quarrels, they must be handled and it must be done in a biblical way.***
 - As your Pastor, I have had to enact Church discipline on several occasions in the last 3 years.

- ***I've done my best to do it the Biblical way.***

- ***I don't come to the pulpit and broadcast when I've had to do it because that's not biblically.***

- But as the undershepherd I've done my best to address issues when they come and when Church discipline is needed, act on it.
 - Myself and the Deacons will follow the Biblical example and follow through. As we have had to do before, several times.
 - ***So, just because you may not hear it from the pulpit, don't assume Church discipline isn't being followed in this Church.***
- I believe the apostle Paul shows us 2 ways that we need to address these facades.
- ***The Biblical Model for Dealing with Division. (V. 10)***
 - 'As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him,' Titus 3:10
 - ***Scripture does not contradict scripture.***
 - ***The directions Paul gives to deal with a troubling individual in Titus 3:10, are the same instructions we find in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1st Timothy 5:10-20.***
 - "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between

you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. **16** But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. **17** If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.’ Matthew 18:15-17

- *Our Church bylaws also follow this scripture text.*
 - In my study of Church bylaws, we are one of the few Churches that have an entire article devoted to Church discipline (page 2).
 - *Our bylaws state that we must follow Matthew 18.*
- *It is rare, but there have been times that we have had to execute Church discipline by taking it to a vote and excluding a member just as Matthew 18 shows us.*
 - *Usually, the first two options work, but when they don't we follow the Biblical model.*

- *When studying what Jesus said in Matthew 18 and what Paul says here, there is an important thing to keep in mind.*
 - *Dr. Daniel Aiken said it well ‘Note carefully the sin we confront: it is public, habitual, serious, and lacking repentance. We are not called to be spiritual garbage inspectors or theological peeping toms.’*
- Trust me, we do not go looking for trouble or the sins of others. But when it is made public, that’s when we must follow the Biblical model.
 - *Keep in mind, restoration and repentance is 100% possible.*
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer said *‘Nothing can be more cruel than that leniency which abandons others to sin. Nothing can be more compassionate than that severe reprimand which calls another Christian in one’s community back from the path of sin.’*
 - When following the Biblical Model, we also must not forget **Galatians 6:1-2**:
 - *‘Brothers,[a] if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. 2 Bear one*

another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.'

- We've seen the Biblical Model, but also, the brokenness.
- ***The Brokenness brought on by Oneself. (V. 11)***
 - 'knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.' Titus 3:11
 - ***Church discipline is not something that Church leaders do to be 'mean' or to show 'power', it's simply because the one they are confronting brought this upon themselves.***
 - ***If you get a speeding ticket this week, odds are it's not because the officer was having a bad day and wanted to 'target' you, it's because you broke the law by speeding and he has proof of that (radar).***
 - ***Paul wants Titus to know the individuals that he (and all Pastors/Church leaders), will have to deal with.***
 - Verse 11 is a clear description of those individuals.
 - ***Verse 11 does not mean that there is no redemption, repentance, or reconciliation possible, instead it means that this person has decided not to follow the Biblical Model.***
 - ****Word Study****
 - The word 'warped' here is translated from the greek word

Ekstrepho which only occurs here in the NT and literally means to turn out of or to turn inside out.

- Thomas D. Lea said ***'Literally it means he has been (perfect passive) and remains off the track.'***
 - The phrase 'sinful' here in the greek text does not indicate repentance, rather willful and continual sinning.
 - ***Bring your brokenness to Jesus. Allow Him to transform and heal you.***
 - We can be committed to Church discipline by avoiding foolishness, addressing facades, and....
- Point 3: *Accept Firm Leadership. (V. 12-13)***
- Verse 12 indicates the beginning of Paul's closing words to Timothy.
 - ***Some may look at the closing of verses 12-15 and say that there is little or no correlation to that of the Church Discipline that is discussed in verses 9-11.***
 - ***I personally believe that these verses conclude Paul's letter to Titus, while still giving light on how we should handle Church discipline due to the proximity of the verses and how they still flow together in the Greek.***

- Dr. Daniel Aiken Said *‘Good, Godly leadership is absolutely a must if a Church is to carry out the ministry of loving confrontation. Such leadership must be in place and evident to the congregation.’*
 - While I’m very well aware that I’m not the best leader and I have much to learn and grow on the subject, I do my best not to be a **weak** leader for this Church.
- ***I believe in being strong and firm. Calling a spade a spade when I need to and confronting things when I need to. But I do my best to do so with grace and gentleness.***
 - In Paul’s closing instructions to Titus, I believe he clearly gives a great model of how we as the Church are to accept the leadership of our Pastors when regards to Church discipline in **2** distinct ways.
- ***Listen to our Leaders. (V. 12)***
 - ‘When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there.’
 - ***Even from the confines of prison, there’s no doubt that Paul had to make many decisions in the NT Church arena.***
 - ***Here in verse 12, we see that Paul gives Titus directions that he is going to send one of two men to come and relieve him at Crete.***
- ***Obviously the work that is being done at Crete is important and vital, because Paul doesn’t want it left unattended.***
 - Paul is giving orders and commands, and Titus (and others) were to listen to Paul as a leader in the NT Church.
- ***I believe it’s important to point out the two leaders that Paul mentions by name that may be coming to relieve Titus.***
 - #1: Artemas
 - We know little to nothing of who this is.
 - #2: Tychicus
 - We know more about this individual.
 - ***According to Acts 20:4, Tychicus was Paul’s traveling companion and accompanied Paul and others on Paul’s last trip to Jerusalem.***
 - ***He was also a courier for Paul in delivering letters to the Ephesians and the Church at Colossae.***
 - ***In Ephesians 6:21 and Colossians 4:7, he calls Tychicus a dear brother.***

- 2nd Timothy 4:12 also reveals that Tychicus was Paul's representative at other Churches.
 - Thomas D. Lea said *'He is reported to 'have been the first bishop of Lystra.'*
 - Titus and his replacements, were to listen to the Leader of the NT Churches at this time, Paul, and they had a good leadership manual in how to lead these Churches with the letter of Titus in hand.
- ***Lend a Helping Hand to them. (V. 13)***
 - 'Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing.'
 - ***Who are Zenas the Lawyer and Apollos?***
 - Zenas is only mentioned here, and is the only Christian lawyer that is noted in the NT.
 - ***Many commentators seem to think he was a 'Roman jurist.'***
 - If you've read the NT, you probably recognize who Apollos is.
 - ***I believe this is the same Apollos who was from Alexandria and we see him in Acts 18-19, and know that he was thought highly of in Corinth according to 1st Corinthians 1:11-12.***

- Concerning Zenas and Apollos, Robert W. Yarborough said *'It is also possible that Zenas and Apollos are couriers of the letter to Titus. When they reach Crete, Titus and the Christian community are not only to receive the letter from them but also to be proactive about helping them to their next destinations.'*
 - ***When you help a person who is a leader, you are helping impact the people that he will touch.***
 - The way that verse 13 is written, either Zenas and Apollos were on the way to Titus in Crete, or they were already there.
 - ***Either way, Titus and the Church in Crete were instructed to help them both, then send them on to their next journey for Christ.***
 - This morning we've seen that we can be committed to Church Discipline when we Avoid Foolishness, Address Facades, Accept Firm Leadership and Advance Fruitfulness.
- Point 4: *Advance Fruitfulness. (V. 14-15)***
- When we as the Church, advance Fruitfulness for the Kingdom of God, we will have less time for drama, and more time for helping those in need!
 - ***One of the major themes that is found in the letter of Titus is good works. All throughout the letter we see clear evidence of this.***

- *And as Church members, when leaders of the Church seek to enact discipline, Biblically and Lovingly, you are to follow their lead.*
 - Not to Gossip, get up and leave, or anything to oppose them, simply to submit to their leadership knowing and trusting they are following God's Word in the matter.
- If we want to be a Church that is truly committed to Church Discipline, we will:
 - **Point 1: *Avoid Foolishness. (V. 9)***
 - **Point 2: *Address Facades. (V. 10-11)***
 - **Point 3: *Accept Firm Leadership. (V. 12-13)***
 - **Point 4: *Advance Fruitfulness. (V. 14-15)***
- ***Let's be a Church that desires to be Biblically Healthy, even if that means we become temporarily uncomfortable.***