



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Titus 3:9-15

“Heresy and Heretics”

TRANSCRIPTION

[Message] Today is our final study in Paul’s letter to Titus, and so we’re turning to chapter 3 and reading the last section of the epistle beginning with the 9th verse, Titus chapter 3 verse 9 through verse 15. Our subject for this morning is, “Heresy and the Heretics.” And now will you listen as we read beginning with the 9th verse. Paul says,

“But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; (Perhaps a better translation would be avoid.) knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself. When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter. Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them. And let our's also (By the word ours, Paul means our believers) Let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful. All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.

May God bless this reading of his word, let’s bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we come to Thee in the name again of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We thank Thee that where two or three are gathered together in Thy name, there Thou art in the midst. And we recognize Lord that the power of Thy presence in the assemblies of the saints is of the greatest significance, and so we thank Thee for Thy presence with us. We thank Thee that when Thy word is preached the Holy Spirit is there to use it to the conviction and conversion of those to whom it was intended to come. And Lord we pray that our meeting today may be such an occasion when the word of God by the Spirit of God, comes to us in power in conviction in conversion in edification as our needs may be. We commit the hour to Thee. We thank Thee for the promises of this word of God for us in our daily lives. We know that the problems of life may be solved as they are considered in the light of holy Scripture. We thank Thee for the wisdom of men when it is under the word of God. But most of all, we thank Thee for divine wisdom. The wisdom that comes down from above that is peaceable and pure and which does speak to our need in our human situation.

And Lord we pray that that wisdom as seen in the word of God may instruct us today and out of it there may come good works as Paul has exhorted us so often in his letter to Titus. We commit to Thee all who are unable to be here, particularly the sick, and pray Lord that Thou will minister to them and for the troubled and the distressed, we pray for them. We pray too Lord for many who have decisions to make that are important and who do not know Thy will. May O God we hear Thy voice and be able to be led of Thee into the decision that will honor and glorify Thee. We pray for our country, for our president, we pray that Thy blessing may rest upon us in this land. We pray for the entire church of Jesus Christ, for the ministry of the word, for each member, for those who are to believe through the grace of God. And Lord we pray that our Lord Jesus Christ may come again soon. We leave Lord, of course decisions like this to Thy

hands, for Thou doest know that which is best. But we pray with John even so, come quickly Lord Jesus. Minister to us in this hour, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] It is common for people today who consider the condition of the church of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to comment upon the low spiritual condition, the low spiritual standards that exist in the church of Jesus Christ. One of the reasons that this does exist, that is lower spiritual standards, is because we have neglected the doctrine of discipline in the New Testament. We have not exercised discipline as the New Testament sets forth our responsibilities. And the problem of apostasy has not been dealt with as it should be dealt with. For example, and again I use as illustration the Presbyterian church because that was the church which I have been associated with for many years. My family have been Presbyterians since generations. In the Northern Presbyterian church in the United States in the latter part of the twentieth century it was possible because of the spiritual condition of that denomination to bring to trial in the church courts Professor Charles Augustus Briggs of Union Theological Seminary and defrock him from the ministry because of his apostate views concerning Scripture. Well that was the condition of things in the last century. Now we must remember as Christians that the Apostle Paul has warned us that not only will outsiders attempt to come into the church of Jesus Christ and subvert it, “but of your own selves also,” Paul said, “shall grievous wolves arise attempting to devour the sheep of the flock.” And Dr. Briggs was truly and justly tried before the courts of the denomination and he was removed from his place as a minister and professor in that denomination.

Less than fifty years later, however, conditions had become such that one of the outstanding Christian professors in Princeton Theological Seminary, Professor J. Gresham Machen, when he called attention to the growing apostasy in the church, Professor Machen was himself brought to trial and in a very well publicized religious trial of the thirties, it was on the front pages of the newspapers across the country, Professor Machen

was himself, a conservative, defrocked by the same Presbyterian church. Conditions had become such that if the conservative raised his voice in the church, demanded that conditions be rectified, it was not the conditions that were changed, it was he that was removed.

Now we have seen conditions like this grow in the south as well, just recently in one of our denominations in the south, one of the professors has of one of our universities, denominational university which is supposed to teach the truth of the word of God, in this denominational college, this doctor has committed himself to the doctrine of universalism which is contrary to the standards of his own church. One of the conservatives has requested a certain presbytery that he be brought to trial and he was brought to trial and he was acquitted by that presbytery. I would like to say, I do not know the facts of this case other than what I've read, so I do not know whether it was justified or not, but I do think that that man who demanded that something be done about views expressed which were contrary to the standards of the church as he understood them, I do think he did right in bringing it to the attention of the presbytery. Because it is a duty, biblically, for us if we are Christians to deal with the question of unbelief in the local congregation, as well as in the church at large.

Down through the years when I have had occasion to speak to people who want to identify themselves with congregations with which I had some place of responsibility, frequently in calling upon them and attempting to answer their questions about the church, I made it a point to ask a couple of questions which I thought were significant and still do. I frequently would ask, after I'd attempted to answer the questions about our church, I would ask this question of them, “Well now, are you prepared if you feel that God is leading you to associate yourself with us in our testimony, do you feel that you can be subject to the guidance of the elders as they are subject to the word of God?” In other words, I wanted to make sure that if the elders were out of harmony with the word of God it is not our responsibility to be subject to them. “But do you and are you willing

to be subject to the leadership of the elders when they are in accord with the word of God? And frequently, that drew a hasty yes, of course. And then I would say, “Well now are you willing to follow the guidance of the elders in case they find it necessary to exercise discipline in the congregation upon some member?” And that always produced a look of surprise and puzzlement. And it’s very understandable, because in the twentieth century, the church has forgotten it’s responsibility to exercise discipline, and consequently most of us who sit in congregations and listen to the word of God and perhaps even have an active part in evangelical churches have never had any acquaintance whatsoever with discipline.

Now it’s not because in the twentieth century we live such model lives that it is impossible for us to have moral questions arise in the congregation, or doctrinal matters come up for discussion. As a matter of fact, the Bible makes it very plain that this is one of the great subjects of the New Testament. Just think of these chapters, for these are chapters in which the subject of discipline is prominently set forth, Matthew chapter 18, Romans chapter 16, 1 Corinthians chapter 5, 2 Corinthians chapter 2, Galatians chapter 6, 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, 2 Thessalonians chapter 3, 1 Timothy chapter 5, Titus chapter 1, Hebrews chapter 13, 2 John, 3 John and Titus chapter 3 is one of these chapters. Now here we have almost ten or approximately ten chapters in which the subject of discipline is an important part of that chapter. It is obvious that the apostles felt that discipline was a matter that the local church must face. And further, they themselves faced it and it is reflected in their own experiences as seen in the epistles of the New Testament.

In the epistle to Titus in this 3rd chapter, Paul brings up again the question of discipline which he had referred to in the 1st chapter. And we’re going to make that the major point of the message of this morning. Now Paul in chapter 3 has been following his familiar pattern, he has pointed out that men are depraved in the opening part of the chapter then he has unfolded the divine act of redemption in grace by which men are justified, by which they are washed through the new birth, by which they receive the

Holy Spirit, by which they are made hopeful of eternal life, and they are exhorted then finally to do good works in the light of their faith.

Now if you should be listening at this point, and you were not here last Sunday morning, in which we stressed the plan of salvation and the things that God has done, then of course I would like to just insert a word or two for you particularly here. Now one cannot consider the question of discipline until he has considered the question of the new birth, and so if you are not born again, then of course the question of church discipline does not really concern you. Your first responsibility before God is to put your faith and trust in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Now I have a good friend whom I admire very much in the Lord, and he always ribs me about using the expression, “put your faith” and so I don’t want to mislead you, the faith that we put in our Lord Jesus Christ is a faith that is first put in us by our Lord. But our responsibility is to believe in our Lord Jesus Christ. Then having become a Christian, having become a receiver of eternal life, having been justified by God’s grace and having become a part of the body of Christ, then the subject of discipline is a subject with which we are very definitely concerned. And so if you are here, and you have never believed in our Lord Jesus Christ as an ambassador of him, I issue you an invitation, it is a universal invitation to believe in him who died for you and through him to receive everlasting life. You do not come to life by being baptized, by doing good works, by reforming yourself, by being a member of a church, any church, even this church, you do not become a Christian by observing the ordinances, you do not become a Christian by being a good citizen, by being cultured, by being educated, by being a citizen of the United States of America or a southerner or anything like that. You become a Christian through faith personally in Jesus Christ and there is no other way, it is apart from works, apart from works of righteousness which we have done. Paul says it is simply the work of God done in our hearts by him from beginning to end so that when we come to see what we are and what Christ has done for us and we rely upon him and what he has

done, then we are born again, we are given new life, we are different creatures from that moment on. Now that's the beginning of life. So if you have never made that decision that is your responsibility.

Now the apostle has just said that believers do good works. And in verse 9 he says, believers are not to do these things, but, “But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.” Let me say this about the heresy that apparently infected the church in Crete, it was similar to the heresy that infected the church at Colossae, it seems to be reflected in some of the other situations of the New Testament. It was a form of syncretistic Gnostic Judaism. Now I'm sure having said that there is no need to amplify or clarify because [Laughter] you all understand what syncretistic Gnostic Judaism is. In case there is some neophyte who has come in who does not understand, Gnosticism was one of the early heresies which affected the Christian church. It was really a former philosophy; I can not go into details. But of course by the very name, it professed to have a knowledge about God that others did not have. In Gnosticism, there were certain aesthetic rules that were practiced and aesthetic rules apparently were reflected in this heresy that Paul had to deal with in Crete. In Timothy which seems to reflect the same situation, certain of the “thou shalt nots” are referred to there. So there were aesthetic rules which were discussed.

There were also myths regarding the genealogies of the Old Testament, and apparently the Jews were responsible for these. Many of the scholars of the Old Testament who were Jews who were rabbinic students, took the genealogies of the Old Testament those chapters in which we have the long series of names and constructed biographies for each of the men of the genealogical list, and they did this out of whole cloth, it was purely imaginary and that is why Paul speaks about endless genealogies in 1 Timothy. But it was a very popular pastime, and they engaged in it and they expected others to listen to their genealogies. And apparently in Crete in the heresy there was this

mingling of the Gnostic and Jewish heresies into Gnostic Judaism. And Paul speaks of this when he says, avoid foolish questions, avoid the genealogies and other things.

Now in connection with this, we are of course immediately, we ask ourselves the question, “Well now if Paul has warned them about Gnostic Judaism and we do not have Gnostic Judaism in the twentieth century, what meaning does this text have for us?” Now I do not think that word genealogy has any particular reference to us. I have heard of people who have spent two hundred dollars to discover and obtain their genealogy and usually, their genealogy traces their descendants back to Adam. Or if not to Adam, at least to some well known spot in the background of your human existence where you can be quite proud of the fact that you came from some place and from some people. As a matter of fact, I have my own genealogy. [Laughter] And my genealogy takes me back to County Kent in England, and there are a number of illustrious men in my genealogy I assure you. But I have heard of people who spent hundreds of dollars for this. My father spent it for me and sent me a copy. And then I've heard of those after they have done that who spent five thousand dollars to suppress the information. [Laughter] Because they discover that in their line there were thieves and sheep stealers, and all manner of diverse crooks. Now Paul is not speaking of that when he speaks of genealogies here, he's talking about the Old Testament genealogies which these Jewish men made into long fanciful biographical tales.

But what is the application to us? We do not have to be exhorted by you Paul to avoid such questions, to avoid genealogies, to avoid contentions and strivings about the law, for we are not concerned about these things. No, we are not. But we are concerned about other 20th century problems which are of a similar kind. We are concerned for example, like the Greek philosophy of the day of Paul with philosophers today with their fine spun problems. And unfortunately, it is often the case that some of our evangelicals become so involved in existentialism that they neglect the word of God. Some of them become so involved in the philosophy of logical analyses of Wittgenstein for example that

they neglect the word of God. And some of our evangelicals have become so involved in Duyavert's Neo-Augustinianism that they have neglected the word of God. Now it seems to me that this is precisely what Paul is speaking about, he is saying, I'm sure, I'm not telling you you should not be acquainted with philosophies that are contending for the thoughts of men in the twentieth century. But I do not want you to be so concerned with this that you spend your whole time in the questionings and strivings about philosophical things that really do not profit us and ultimately lead us to vain thinking.

I would think that all such things as discussions about legalistic details, all of these things are also considered by Paul religious discussions that are discussions of such fine points that they lead ultimately to the dead end of no activity in the faith. And Paul says, “For they are unprofitable and vain.” He does not mean that I am against discussion groups, although it is obvious that there are discussion groups that argue just for the sake of arguing, and they are unprofitable and vain. He is saying in effect, all of our discussion, even about good things must end in action. And so avoid these things. Thus, Paul has discussed in verse 9 then the danger of discussion.

But in verses 10 and 11, he turns to the duty of discipline. What attitude shall I as a Christian have to these wranglers who are discussing always and never coming to any definite advance in the truth? What is my attitude to be to them, and also to those who are misled by them? Well in the church of Jesus Christ, there is specific action that is to be taken and that action is called biblical discipline. Some of you have had the opportunity to hear my series of seven messages on the church in the Sunday school class. And so what I am going to say to you now is largely a repetition of that. And I am sorry, preachers unfortunately repeat even when they don't want to and that's bad, but sometimes it is necessary to repeat, because there are some of you who did not hear them and consequently, you may not have been acquainted with the steps of discipline as set forth in the word of God, and so I'm going to have to repeat. I apologize to you to whom I am repeating old information.

I remember a story that I heard this past summer about Dr. Harold Hockengay one of our outstanding preachers of today and Dr. William Ward Ayer who is another one of our outstanding evangelical ministers of this day. Some years ago, the two of them were traveling around in the East, preaching in various churches, attempting to push a certain movement with which they were concerned. And they had meetings and they were well known preachers and they were well attended meetings and one of them would speak and then the other one would speak. And as they went from church to church, week after week, on their spare night or two for these meetings, Dr. Hockengay noticed that Dr. Ayer was preaching the same message every time, and he began to get a little weary of hearing that message. And finally, being like most preachers, possessed of a quirk in character, he said “you know if I get an opportunity to preach first one of these nights, I’m going to preach his sermon and then I’m going to see what happens to him.” And so the opportunity came shortly after that and he was asked to speak first, and he got up and he gave almost word for word, for he knew it by then, the sermon that Dr. Ayer ordinarily gave and then he sat down. And he looked at Dr. Ayer and Dr. Ayer did not seem to be disturbed, and he got up in the pulpit and he gave a marvelous discourse that night and sat down afterwards. And when the meeting was over, Dr. Hockengay is reported to have gone to him and said “now look here, I don’t understand what happened tonight, I got up and preached your sermon on purpose just to see what would happen to you and if that had happened to me, I wouldn’t have had anything to say and you got up and preached a marvelous discourse, now what happened?” He said, “Well I would have been in the shoes that you thought you would have been in except that I’ve been in this church three weeks ago and gave that message then.” [Laughter] So I am going to have to repeat something and I hope you won’t mind.

Now the New Testament is very plain on it’s teaching on discipline. There are at least four steps in the discipline of the Christian as set forth in the New Testament. And I’m going to ask you if you will to turn back to Matthew chapter 18 and we’re going to

read a passage from our Lord’s own lips because here in this passage we have just about as good a summary of principles of discipline as we have in all of the New Testament. And I am furthermore convinced that the Apostle Paul in Titus chapter 3 draws upon this particular passage. And you will notice that Paul’s words that the heretic after the first and second admonition is to be rejected is probably a statement drawn from what happens here, for here we do have the first and second admonition referred to. Matthew chapter 18 and verse 15, the Lord says, “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou has gained thy brother.” In other words, the first step in biblical discipline when we observe a Christian brother or sister who is not living in accordance with the Scriptures, the first step is not to go to our friends and tell them, it’s not even to go to the elders and tell them, it surely is not to go to your wife and tell your wife or your husband as the case may be, it is not to tell your children parents or children it is not for you to tell your parents, if it is some of your friends, it is something that is to be between you and that person first of all. We are to go to him. “If thy brother trespass” and by the way the words against thee are not found in our better manuscripts, so it is, “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.” So the private rebuke is the first step in Bible discipline. In other words, we should clear it with the person involved first of all. And so if we repeat our opinions to others, we are already ourselves out of the will of God. I think that is why Paul says “if anyone of you see a brother taken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness.” The Germans have an expression; they say such a thing should be discussed “Unter vier augen,” under four eyes. That is just between the two parties themselves. That’s the first step in Bible discipline.

Now the second, verse 16, “But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And so if the brother does not respond to the counsel which you know is the word of

God, then the thing that you should do is gather two or three more with you and discuss with that brother so that there is proper witness to the rebellion of the individual involved. And I think at this point it would be good to select some of the elders of the church.

Third step, verse 17, “And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church. But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.” And I want to combine the two things that are set forth here and just call them the third step, the public rebuke and the refusal of assembly or church privileges. Will you turn at this point just for a moment to 2 Thessalonians chapter 3 and verse 14 for a parallel passage. 2 Thessalonians chapter 3, Paul states in verse 14 page twelve hundred and seventy-three, in my version, and verse 14, use the index. We have plenty of time, it’s not twelve o’clock yet, LBJ is not crowded for those of you who are waiting to rush westward. “And if any man” notice, “if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man.” That is mark him out for attention “and have no company with him that he may be ashamed, yet count him not an enemy but admonish him as a brother.” And so the third step in our discipline is the public rebuke, he is to be noted he is to be brought before the church, his name is to be called out and the discipline against him that the elders have decided upon is to be expressed publicly and he is to be refused privileges.

Now what are the privileges? Unfortunately in many of our churches today, it is the common belief that when a person is out of fellowship with the Lord, and guilty of some moral evil or doctrinal error, that if he does not repent of his error that he is to be excommunicated from the church. Now as far as I can tell, there is not such teaching in the Bible, there is no such teaching of excommunication from the membership of the church. That is the New Testament does not teach that ever are believers to be put out of the church, eliminated from the membership role. Now unbelievers yes, but believers no. The reasons I think should be obvious to us because if we do believe that a person who has genuinely believed in Jesus Christ possesses everlasting life and that life is always his,

then it is impossible for us to take that life away from him. And if we put him out of the local church, we are in effect saying, “He does not belong to the body of Jesus Christ.” Now that is wrong. And so I do not believe that the excommunication of the Bible is elimination from church membership, it is excommunication, that is he is to be refused the privileges of the Lord’s table, for you see, the Lord’s table is the visible expression of the union that we have with our Lord and with one another in the faith. It is the local expression of the union and communion of the body of Jesus Christ. And so the excommunication is excommunication from the privileges of observing the Lord’s table, now not from the presence of the Lord’s table, but from the partaking of the elements.

John Calvin in the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* has this to say concerning the Lord’s supper in Book four chapter seventeen paragraph forty-three, he says,

“Now to get rid of this great pile of ceremonies (he’s talking about Roman Catholic additions to New Testament practices) the supper could have been administered most becomingly if it were set before the church very often and at least once a week. (It’s striking that Calvin does more than once say the Lord’s supper should be observed at least once a week. And then he goes on to speak how it should be observed. He said,) First then it should begin with public prayer. After this a sermon should be given, then when bread and wine have been placed on the table the minister should repeat the words of institution of the supper. Next he should recite the promises which were left to us in it. At the same time, he should excommunicate all who are debarred from it by the Lord’s prohibition.”

In other words it is at this point that mention should be made of those who do not have the right to participate. As I’ve mentioned many times to you, I grew up in the First Presbyterian Church of Charleston, South Carolina which is one of our old Presbyterian churches in this country, established in seventeen thirty-one, I think it’s the oldest

Presbyterian church in the United States. And I can still remember as a young person in that church, they never practiced this, but there were present in the church still a number of the old tokens that were used for admittance to the Lord's table. And when the monthly observance of the Lord's supper came around you had to present one of the tokens which were sent out to the members in good standing, not to all members, but to the members in good standing. They were to prepare themselves for the Lord's supper by proper spiritual exercise, confession and then they were to have that little token and that was the admittance, that was in effect the elder's believed that they were in fellowship with the Lord and thus able to sit at the table and give testimony to their fellowship with him and with one another in the Christian faith.

Now I think that's good scriptural practice. I do not think that there is any church that I know of in this country that applies any thing like that today, but still, I like it. And if I had my way, we would go back to something like that, and we would not be snooping around watching you all the time, but I do think that it is important that we remember as Christians that we are responsible to adorn the doctrine which we hold. And we as Christians should be characterized by a personal holiness that is above question. And so that's the third step, the public rebuke and refusal of privileges and I think it would mean a great deal to us when we sat down at the Lord's table and I think our Christian faith would mean a great deal to us also if we really carried out some of these things that are set forth in Scripture. We should rebuke in love of course, in the sense of “Lord speak to me that I may speak in living echoes of Thy tone.” But it's in the word of God.

Now the fourth step is this, there should be constant personal appeals to the one who is out of fellowship with the Lord and under discipline. Paul says in 2 Thessalonians 3 we are to, admonish him as a brother not as enemy. And that verb is in the present tense, we are to go on admonishing him as a brother. We should not because we have stood up in the meeting and we have said that brother so and so because of certain

practices is declared by the elders to be out of fellowship with the saints and with our Lord and is debarred from participation in the Lord's supper, we should not therefore have nothing more to do with this brother at all, but we should admonish him as a brother.

Now Paul tells us in more than one place, we should not have fellowship with him. That is we shouldn't go out and say, “I'm sorry over what the elders did to brother so and so, how mean of them, how cruel, I think I'll invite him over to supper on Thursday night, have a good time of fellowship with him.” No, Paul says not to do that, he says, “Do not mingle with them.” Because they are to be ashamed by what has taken place, and our fellowship with them in their sin involves us in it. But we should admonish them as a brother because they're one of us, and we should love them as Christ loves them. And be concerned with them and pray for them. For you see, the aim of excommunication is always restoration, restoration to purity of life and restoration to the fellowship of the church of Jesus Christ. Discipline is not exercised to put away a brother as the end; it is exercised in order to recover a brother to the fellowship of the Lord. Holiness someone has said is what a Christian has when he reaches the age of eighty. No, that is a confusion of holiness, and maturity. Every Christian should have holiness. Aged Christians should attain to maturity, but every Christian should have holiness.

Now in the light of that, Paul says in verse 10, “A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, avoid.” There are stages in heresy, in the New Testament, you can take this word heresy and you will discover that there are stages in the use of it. For example in the Book of Acts, the word heresy from which the adjective heretic is derived is used of a party or a school of thought in the Book of Acts. It's used of the Sadducees, and when it says the sect of the Sadducees and the sect of the Pharisees, it does not mean necessarily that they were wrong in doctrine; it means they belong to a party. It's the word that we would use of republicans and democrats we would say, the heresy of the democrats, now I know all you republicans would say, Amen, right.” But

we would also use it of republicans too, the heresy of the republicans, because in that sense, the word meant simply a party. That neutral sense such as you might say Arminianism, heresy, in the neutral sense of a school of thought, a party.

Then it is also used in the bad sense in Paul of partisan cliques that is little groups in the Church of Jesus Christ that gather around some leader and think that that leader has all the truth. And they say, “Ah, I’m a follower of Paul or I’m a follower of Cephas I’m a follower of Apollos, and thus they come to be a Paulite, or and Apollosite or a Cephasite or in the twentieth century you can think of a number of Bible teachers who unfortunately have gathered people around them as if they were kind of a little clique and they who listen to that particular person are completely unhappy if they have to listen to anyone else. Now that is heresy. That Paul speaks of in a pejorative sense, it’s a bad sense. And when you are involved in something like that you are involved in something that involves you in Church discipline.

This past week, we got a telephone call from another city, in the course of the conversation, reference was made to young men who -- tell it not Gath, publish it not in Ashkelon, lest the uncircumcised Philistines from some other seminary shall hear -- but his young man attended Dallas Theological Seminary for a time. He did not graduate, but he attended for a time, he is a fine Christian man, but he went to a city in the south, and so stirred up the Christians of that city through a series of messages that the result is that they are totally opposed to the local church now. And on Sunday, instead of meeting with the saints in their weakness and attempting to help, they gather and listen to tapes instead of meeting with the saints. Now it is obvious that that is nothing more than the creation of what Paul would call a heresy, a party a little clique within the Church of Jesus Christ that is sin according to Paul.

Now the word heresy was also used in the New Testament of heretical doctrine. Peter speaks of men who shall bring in Damnable heresies, heresies of destruction, false doctrine concerning the Christian faith. I think Paul is talking about these separatists in

this chapter, “he that is an heretic.” That is these people who come in with these doctrines about genealogies and foolish questions and strivings about the law what are we going to do about them? Well after the first and second admonition, then when proper discipline has been exercised we’re going to avoid them Paul says. As Christians, we are to avoid them, “knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.”

Now in the latter part of the chapter, Paul gives us some messages of ministry, and I like this latter section, because you see, Paul writing apparently from somewhere in Macedonia perhaps Philippi, tells Titus that he is going to winter at Nicopolis. Now that’s interesting because that’s just precisely as if we were to say, “Now I’m going to spend the winter, dear friends in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.” Because Nicopolis was a well known watering place a winter resort, and it let’s me know that Paul himself had a few human frailties and he wanted to spend the winter in a nice place. Now we want to be nice to Paul and say that was a wonderful place from which he might evangelize Dalmatia. But he did tell Titus that he was going to winter there, and he has some instructions for him. Now I know I’m not going to say anything about what this has to say here about the authorship of the pastorals, I don’t want to be boring. Mrs. Gladstone said about William, her famous husband once, “William, if you weren’t so famous, you’d be a bore.”

[Laughter] And I don’t want to be a bore and talk about these verses in connection with the Pauline authorship of these books. But as you know, many of our modern scholars feel Paul did not write the pastorals, they feel that there are a few little fragments of Pauline thought here and there in our three epistles. But when you look at these personal words here in which the author, whoever he is speaks about things that are not even found in the Book of Acts, mentions characters who are not found there, it surely is not a forgery. And such theories cannot handle such facts.

In the course of these last words, he says that he’s going to send Artemas unto Crete or Tychicus, he’s undecided to help in the ministry there, and then he gives Titus

instructions about Zenas the lawyer. He says bring Zenas the lawyer and bring them on their journey, he means by that help them diligently. Give him a little financial help, give him a little material help, be hospitable to Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey. The early church was strong on hospitality, and so should we be. Now Zenas the lawyer, isn't it interesting, this is the only jurist mentioned in the New Testament, and if you're a lawyer, you ought to be happy about this because it does prove in spite of what people say that a lawyer can be a Christian. [Laughter] “You are lying so clumsily” said the judge to the defendant, “that I would advise you to get a lawyer.” [Laughter] You heard about the farmer who said, “And how's lawyer Jones doing doctor?” The doctor said, “He's lying at death's door.” He said, “Well what do you know, at death's door, still lying.” [Laughter]

I heard of one man I heard this by the way after I preached this morning, one of my good friends who likes to pass me on little tidbits of information after I'm finished. He never tells me these things beforehand. But he came to me and he said, “You heard about the man who was on his death bed and called for his banker and his lawyer didn't you?” And I said, “No.” He said, “Well he called for his banker and his lawyer and he had them stand on both sides of his bed, and someone asked him, why are you calling for your banker and your lawyer to stand on both sides of your bed? He said I want to die like Jesus Christ between two thieves.” [Laughter] Now in case you're a lawyer my dear friend, you can get to heaven and Zenas is your household saint, “Bring Zenas the lawyer. It is probable that he is a Gentile lawyer, a barrister, rather than a Jewish scribe, that kind of lawyer, even though he is associated with Apollos. And I know he's a Christian lawyer, because he's poor and needs help from Titus. And anyone that a preacher could help is undoubtedly poor. So a poor Christian lawyer.

And then Paul winds up his great book by saying, as he has said five times previously, let ours also learn to maintain good works.” For good works are the fruit of which faith and new birth is the root, and so as a Christian, as we have listened to Paul

preach to Titus, this has come through with tremendous force, the wonderful grace of God that has brought us to salvation. But also that this wonderful grace of God that has brought us to salvation is to be seen in Christian good works. I would always hope that Believers Chapel should be known for its purity of Bible doctrine. I don't know any place where the word is preached any purer. If it was somewhere else, that's the way I would preach it. But I would also hope that our congregations who listen would also be characterized as Christians who adorn the doctrine that they hold, by love and good works. May God grant it for his name sake. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father we are grateful to Thee for the words of holy Scripture, we are thankful even for these sections which are difficult and hard, sections on discipline. O Father help us to exercise discipline in love that the saints may be ...

[AUDIO ENDS ABRUPTLY]