

“True Profits, False Prophets, & Christian Mission”
Sermon Notes

➤ **Tighten your grip on the gospel - it’s the difference between the making and the marring of our mission**

***Because...**

1. A church with gospel roots inevitably bears gospel fruits (v. 8; Luke 6:43; 1 John 4:19)

2. A church that neglects the gospel is a church that will infect the gospel (v.9; 1 Timothy 1:4)

MEFC Community Group Study Guide

For the week of June 21st - 27th

Getting Started

1. Now that summer's officially here and the "[Stay Safe MN](#)" order offers increased opportunities to be out and about, what are you most looking forward to over the months ahead? Due to underlying health conditions for some within our body, this season may not look much different than the one from which we've just emerged. Can you think of anyone in our fellowship who might appreciate a card, a phone call, or perhaps a visit?

Digging Deeper

2. Turning our thinking toward outreach, it's probably the case that your strategic investment in the folks on your 'List of 5' was a bit lower-impact over these last several months. As you ponder the opportunity that these summer days afford us, how might you begin to rekindle these relationships? Using the [B.L.E.S.S.](#) practices to get you thinking creatively (Be in prayer, Listen, Eat, Serve, Share), pick three ways you are going to bless even one person in your life this week who's far from Jesus.

Open Your Bible to Titus 3:8-9...

3. In verse 8, Paul tells Titus, "The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things...". What does he mean by "these things"? Considering the immediate context (especially vv.1-7), to what must he be referring? Is ours a church that follows this pattern (1 Corinthians 15:1-5)? If so, how so? If not, how might we better conform to this apostolic pattern?

4. According to the middle section of v.8, what's the practical upshot of Titus insisting on "these things"? What is the connection between the preaching of the gospel of salvation apart from works (Titus 3:5), and the creation of a people zealous for good works (Titus 2:11-14; Ephesians 2:8-10)? In other words, how is grace the best motivation and foundation for mission as opposed to simply assuming the gospel (since these folks are already believers) and commanding them to be all about good works? Consider, too, how the Apostle John puts it in 1 John 4:19.

5. Finally, verse 8 ends with the observation that "These things are excellent and profitable for people." What are "these things" in this case? How does that fact that "these things" are "excellent and profitable for people" help us to know more about the nature of "these things"? What concrete evidence is there of God's work in our church in this particular area? How could "these things" be strengthened in our fellowship?

6. In verse 9, Paul advises Titus to "...avoid foolish controversies...". Notice that he doesn't say "avoid all controversies". Why is it tempting to avoid all controversy? What specific desires in our hearts tend toward this disposition? What sorts of controversy are absolutely critical for us to engage in? Can you name any? What makes them rise to this level of importance? If you'd like a New Testament example, consider the "controversy" described in Acts 15:2,7 (the word for "controversy" in Titus 3:9 is translated as "debate" in these verses in the ESV). Paul clearly didn't avoid this one. Why?

7. Verse 9 goes on to highlight three aspects of foolish controversies for God's people living in 1st century Crete: "genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law". In 1 Timothy 1:4, Paul says that this obsession over genealogies "...promotes speculation... rather than the stewardship that is from God." Furthermore, discussions about the use of the Mosaic law had grown into debates ("quarrels", literally "battles" in the Greek) which resulted in divisions in the church (see v.10). Can you think of any specific examples of doctrine or practice that we ought to discuss as a church (perhaps even charitably debate) but over which we must never divide? Why is it so very crucial for us to distinguish between these matters? How does Paul answer this at the end of verse 9?

8. As you close your time in prayer as a group, be sure to ask the Lord to help our local fellowship to grow increasingly committed to expending our energies and resources on that which is "profitable" for our mission (v.8) as well as to steer clear of those things which are "unprofitable" (v.9).