

Titus 1:9-15

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Preacher: Nathan Rambeck

[0 : 00] Open up to Titus chapter, we're still in chapter 1, and we've been looking at the qualifications for elders.

We really got through a bunch of qualifications that really have to do with character, and then we started just barely last week getting into a little bit more than just character, but how to handle really the truth and the Word of God.

And so that's kind of what we're going to be spending our time on today. We are, let's see, where are we at? We'll start in verse 9.

Titus, again, if you're looking for it, if you find 1 and 2 Timothy, it's a short book, so it's hard, it's easy to miss, but it's right after 1 and 2 Timothy. And after he gets through all these qualifications having to do with character and conduct, he says this in verse 9, holding fast the faithful word as has been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convict or convince those who contradict.

And we'll continue reading on, for there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households teaching things which they ought not for the sake of dishonest gain.

[1 : 31] One of them, a prophet of their own, said, Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons. And this testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply that they may be sound in the faith, not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth.

To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but even their mind and conscience are defiled. They profess to know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

All right, so I think that's where we'll spend our time today. By the way, we'll look and see if we can have some time at the end for questions and comments.

So if you think of anything while we're going through this, just jot it down. And if you'd like, we'll pass the mic around and we'll see if there's any comments or questions to follow.

So we touched on this. We just barely got into this last week, holding fast to the word of God as has been taught. And the faithful word that we hold to, for Titus, the faithful word was, well, both the Old Testament scriptures, which is the only thing that they had, that Titus had at that time as far as scripture, but also what, the words of Paul, the things that Paul taught, because God had given to Paul kind of some new instructions.

[2 : 55] And so Titus was a Greek. He was not a Jew. We don't know if he was familiar with the Jewish scriptures or not. He may have been, but maybe not.

Maybe the Jewish scriptures were new to him. But the word of God back then was the Jewish scriptures and then the teachings of Paul. Now today, the teachings of Paul have been inscribed in Holy Writ, we call it, in scripture.

So what we do is we don't go to a man to find out what we ought to teach. We go to the scriptures. Now, the scriptures were brought down to us or written down by men, but as the scriptures themselves teach, these men were inspired by God through the Holy Spirit with what should be written down and taught.

So for us to hold fast to the faithful word, we're going to the scriptures. And so for any leader in a church, you need to be able, by sound doctrine, it says, both to exhort and to convict those who contradict.

And he says this, For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision. And when it says idle talkers and deceivers, it makes me think about, well, you have those who are just being intentionally destructive, destructive, deceiving for their own

profit or their own gain.

[4 : 20] Really, they know or at least should know that what they're saying is false. But they say or they teach it anyway. But what's an idle talker?

An idle talker. Somebody who just says whatever comes to mind. That's what I think of. Somebody who just speaks and they don't really think through what they're saying. And that can be dangerous too, can't it?

Especially if you are a leader or a teacher, you have some kind of influence over people, to just say and speak whatever comes to your mind. And we ought not to do that.

We ought to, especially when it comes to instruction, spiritual instruction especially, right, to be thoughtful in everything that we say, everything that we teach. Not just to say whatever comes to mind.

And, you know, it makes me think about the Internet, right? And everybody knows that if you want to find out what's true, you just Google it online and the truth will just appear, right, in front of you, right?

[5 : 19] Or you go on Facebook and you just see what everybody is posting, right? And whatever is posted there is the truth that we ought to just, you know, spread abroad, right? And, you know, obviously that's tongue-in-cheek.

But what I've noticed sometimes is that that's what many of us will do, especially when it comes to social media, is somebody posts something and, man, it's really juicy.

I'm not sure if it's actually true, but, man, I sure hope it is. Because maybe it makes the other guys look bad that, you know, whether it's a political thing or a cultural thing or whatever it might be.

And so it's easy for us to take something, some kind of salacious story, and then just to spread it around without actually investigating whether it's actually true or not.

And a lot of times that has to do with kind of what we believe and what our fundamental values are.

And so, you know, somebody might say, oh, this person got, you know, said this thing or did this thing.

[6 : 26] And, you know, they're our political enemy or whatever. And we don't actually look into, oh, did somebody just make that up? And we ought to, especially as Christians, not be so quick to just pass around any kind of word, or especially if it's salacious, right?

Because those are the things that tend to make their rounds. And so if we tend to just pass along information without considering the truthworthiness of it, and it's found out to be false, one, we should always give an apology if we do that.

If you pass along information that's found out to be false, you should make a correction and let people know that you made a mistake. But, and also, the next time, be more careful.

Because what happens when we pass along untruths, and people will take notice, won't they?

Right? And you become the kind of person that people disregard as untrustworthy.

And is that the way we want people to see us as Christian believers? As those who just pass along whatever thing kind of makes us feel right?

[7 : 45] Or like we're, you know, sticking it to somebody? No, people are going to say, well, that person is not the kind of person that I can trust. And so when that Christian tells me about the resurrection of Jesus Christ, or what God did in their life, well, is that the kind of person I can trust?

There's somebody who will just pass along any kind of information. You know, if it fits their narrative or their story. And so I'm actually especially careful if I read something online, and I think, oh man, if that's true, this would be awesome.

Because we're just exposed so-and-so or such-and-such. But if I find myself feeling that way, then I especially right then and there say, hold on a second.

This is probably not true. It probably isn't. And have that kind of attitude towards it. And I'm not going to share this with anybody else unless I take the time to investigate it.

myself and verify that it is true. Because I want my Christian testimony, my testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ and the scriptures, and everything that God says in his word to be something that people will trust.

[9 : 02] That I'm the kind of person that doesn't just spread about false things, but I'm serious about what is actually and really true. Amen? We should all do the same thing.

So don't be an idle talker or an idle Facebooker or social media person or whatever. Just passing about every little bit of information. Take the truth seriously.

He mentions especially those of the circumcision. And we talked a little bit last week about how we have, during this time, people that we now today call the Judaizers, those who were teaching that these Gentile, new Gentile believers had to keep the law of Moses and how that was not correct, that was not appropriate.

In fact, it's dangerous and counterproductive for the Christian to put themselves under the law. And we talked about the story of Paul and Peter, one of Jesus's, as far as we can tell, it seems one of Jesus's, if not his favorite disciple, Peter, who, of course, Jesus rebuked Peter as well, right? In fact, Peter was kind of the kind of person who would tend to just speak whatever was on his mind, right, without thinking it through. But Jesus still loved him, didn't he?

[10 : 21] And so, Peter and Paul really got into a huge conflict because Peter was eating among the Gentiles. These were converts of Paul's, people that Paul had brought to the Lord.

He was eating with these people. And then a bunch of his Jewish friends, Jewish Christian friends, not just Jewish, but Jewish Christian friends, came from out of town to where, I think it was in Antioch where this happened.

And Peter decided, oh man, I mean, I'm a Jew. I'm not really supposed to eat with the Gentiles, but I know that this is the Lord's work. The Lord is bringing the Gentiles to him and their real believers, but I'm really not supposed to do this.

And what are these other people going to think about me eating with these Gentiles? And so, I mean, I won't say anything, but I'll just kind of tend to not go to this table over here, but I'm going to go to this table over here where all the Jews are.

And what did Paul do? It says there in Galatians, he rebuked him sharply, confronted him to his face. That is serious business.

[11 : 31] And for Paul, it was an important thing that the Gentiles not be treated as if they were lesser than because the Jews were the people of God, right?

But now, the Gentiles, both the Jew and Gentile, are the people of God. And that needs to be made clear. The Gentiles should not be treated as second-class citizens in any kind of way.

He says this in verse 11, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households teaching things which they ought not for the sake of dishonest gain.

And you know, the dishonest gain can be, you know, for money. Sometimes we see people doing that, you know, send in your best gift and the Lord will richly reward you.

And that is, tends to be true. true. The Bible teaches that if you give, you will be rewarded. But typically, especially in this age of grace, those rewards are typically spiritual rewards, not getting rich.

[12 : 41] But some people will teach it in such a way as, if you give to my ministry, the Lord will make you wealthy, make you rich. And so, who's the one that ends up getting rich in those cases? It's the false teacher, right?

But then others, for dishonest gain, we might think about gain as not just monetary gain, but, you know, you get social credibility. You might, instead of teaching plainly the Word of God, you might kind of work your way around certain passages or verses or things that the Scripture teaches in order to gain more credibility maybe among the world or among those who do not honor the Scriptures the way that they ought to.

In verse 12, he says this, one of them, a prophet of their own, and when he says one of them, who's he talking about? He's talking about people that are on the island of Crete where Titus is.

Titus is on this island of Crete. There's multiple cities there on the island. And so he said, one of them, a prophet of their own, said, Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.

So a Cretan is somebody who is from Crete. And when he says prophet, I don't know that he necessarily means, you know, somebody who foretells things.

[14 : 09] That's typical to think that way. Even prophets, even Jewish prophets or prophets in the Scriptures, don't always, in fact, very infrequently foretell things.

It's mostly just giving a message from God. But really, we can think of this as somebody who is a philosopher, a sage, somebody who speaks in public. And we actually know who this is.

It's actually pretty clear and almost undisputed. In fact, I haven't found anybody who would say otherwise. But there's, we know that there was a philosopher of sorts whose name was Epimenides.

Anybody say that three times fast? Epimenides. Epimenides. And he was considered a poet and a philosopher. And he lived about 600 years before Christ.

So this was about 600 years before the time that this was written. This letter was written to Titus. And he is known to have said as a Cretan himself, as somebody from the island of Crete, that all Cretans are liars.

[15:19] And it has led to a, what do we call it, a truth paradox. Right? So if you have somebody who is from Crete, right, and they say that all Cretans are liars, what does that infer?

That I'm a liar, right? You are accusing yourself. And so, if you think of this in a very absolute sense, that Cretans never tell the truth, right?

As a Cretan, if you say that all Cretans are liars, that means you're a liar. So that means what you just said is not true. And if that's not true, then Cretans aren't liars.

See how that's a paradox? So, it's, this was something that he said, and I don't know that he actually said it to be a paradox, but it kind of, over time, and I think even by this time, had come to be seen that way.

And philosophers were known for like all these thought experiments, and these can be really fun. Philosophers and idea people can think of different thought experiments to, to, to kind of examine truth and truthworthiness and what is truth and things like that.

[16:29] But, so this came to be somewhat of a paradox. I'm not sure if that's what Paul was referring to, if he was using this as a paradox.

We'll look in the second verse in a second. But, notice that he's saying, listen, the Cretans are known for something and it's not something good. The Cretans are known for being liars.

And, is it just the Cretans that are known as a people group that are known for certain things? Don't we have in our day different people groups who are kind of known for certain vices especially?

Makes me think about the gypsies. You know, if the gypsies were typically from Europe but they're gypsies in the U.S. In fact, I, in fact, I think if I'm getting this right when we were down in, we used to, we lived for six months in Augusta, Georgia and I found out, I never met anybody but I found out that there was a gypsy community in Augusta, Georgia.

And, people told me, you know, they're not trustworthy. And, that's kind of been a long-going thing for, you know, the gypsy people. In fact, you'll, there's a, there's a guy named Gypsy Smith.

[17:42] Anybody ever heard of Gypsy Smith? A few. Yeah. Really neat testimony. I can't remember what era he's from but within maybe a hundred years or so and he was a gypsy, grew up in a gypsy home and ended up coming to the Lord and was quite an evangelist and a spokesperson for the Lord and the gospel.

But, if I remember correctly, he would tell, you know, his, his view of his upbringing was, you know, somewhat scandalous. You know, there's a lot of not only lying but thievery and stealing and that kind of thing.

What about if you think about New York City? Are there any vices, specific vices that come to mind? Or, or how about I say this? Wall Street.

Any vices that come to mind? Greed. Yeah. Lots of greed. That's top of the list. Greed when it comes to Wall Street. What about Hollywood?

Yeah. Sexual immorality. Yeah, it's a long list, I heard. It's a long list. But sexual immorality, is the thing that comes to my mind at the top. I think about Chicago. Is Chicago known for lots of virtue?

[18:56] No. In fact, you know, we think about really even the mafia, right? You think about the mafia and murder and lawlessness, really.

And so certain groups of people, whether it's based on a location or maybe some other kinds of things can be known for vices just like this. But he says in verse 13, this testimony is true.

So there's a Cretan of old who said that all Cretans are liars and he was right, they are. That tends to be the case. Of course, it doesn't mean that all of them are, but I kind of wonder, is this a joke that Paul's making?

Because, you know, is he kind of playing into this paradox that we talked about? To say, oh, this testimony is true that all Cretans are liars, including the one who said so.

And he says this, therefore, rebuke them sharply that they may be sound in the faith. So, rebuke is a tough thing to do.

[20:06] Rebuking those who need rebuke. The Bible uses this word many, many times, both in talking about a rebuke actually happening and also talking about the need for rebuke.

Now, when we use the word rebuke in English, it tends to come with it a certain amount of severity and harshness. Is that true just for me? Or does it seem like when you talk about rebuking somebody, it seems like that's a pretty harsh thing.

Now, but that doesn't necessarily have to be the case and is not necessarily the case always in Scripture when you read about rebuke. In fact, I think sometimes some better words that might be used are correct.

Sometimes people just need to be corrected or chastised, even chastised, or even, maybe even more gently, some people need to be challenged. Right?

And this is something that I think about a lot as a father. As a father, it's your job, also a mother, but a father especially, it's your job to provide correction in the home.

[21 : 12] And you can provide correction in a sharp manner all the time, or you can maybe try to use wisdom to decide whether, do I need to have a sharp rebuke or a gentle one?

Right? Here, Paul's talking about rebuke sharply. What that infers is, is that not every rebuke is a sharp rebuke. And so, there are times where a sharp rebuke would actually be not only unnecessary, but also counterproductive.

Right? And so, if every time, and I'm speaking as a father, if every time as a father I see some kind of foolishness or disobedience or mistake even, or accident, and I rebuke sharply every time that happens, it's going to have a negative impact eventually, won't it?

Right? You're going to start to create a distance, a relational distance between you and your children because of that constant sharpness and severity.

And so, you know, I'm speaking now as a father, but it's important to have wisdom on how we ought to correct, especially children, but also thinking, you know, more broadly.

[22 : 34] And so, if there's something, if there's an accident that happens, somebody spills something, and the rebuke that comes is sharp and aggressive and severe, that's inappropriate, right?

But, if you say now, I don't want you, you know, I want you playing in the yard, don't run out into the road, right? And what happens? Oh, the ball goes out and I run out into the road, and the kid runs out into the road.

Then, now it becomes more appropriate, right, to have a more severe correction, more severe rebuke, because the risk is higher, the danger is higher, and it needs that kind of jolting correction. This is not acceptable at all. And so, I think as Christians, in whatever scenario, whether as a father or a mother, or in any kind of sphere where we are overseeing something or somebody or people, we need to have wisdom to know when to correct more gently and when to do so more severely when it's necessary and needed.

A few scriptures that kind of relate to this, this is in 1 Timothy chapter 5, both of these. 1 Timothy chapter 5, verse 1, says this, do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father and younger men as brothers.

[23 : 57] And I think that's what he's speaking to. When you're a younger man, and maybe you're, and he was talking, Timothy, here, to leaders of a church, if you are a younger man and you have somebody who's older than you, you need to treat them differently than you would somebody younger or your same age.

Treat them as a father, an elder, somebody who demands really more respect. And so we should treat people differently based on age and maybe maturity and all kinds of other different things.

We need to use wisdom. Verse 20 in that same chapter, 1 Timothy 5, 20, says this, those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all that the rest also may fear.

Does that sound like a gentle rebuke? No, in that case he's saying the rebuke needs to be in public and is that gentle or severe? When you're rebuking in public, that is definitely on the severe side. When there are times when things are happening with my kids where I have to make a decision, am I going to correct in front of everybody else or am I going to take them aside and correct them in private?

[25 : 10] And I can make a mistake and maybe correct something in public that really isn't appropriate for that because it is more severe. Even if it's done gently, even if it's said in a gentle voice, because it's done in public, it's more severe, right?

And so that's another thing to consider is rebuke or correction in public or that in private. And I think in general, this is just a general rule of thumb, when somebody does something, and this is whether

it's children or others, when somebody does something that needs correction, but it's done in private, it's not done kind of in everybody's face, so to speak, it's done in private, then in general, it should be addressed privately.

But when something is done in public, when somebody is being rebellious outwardly so that everybody can see it, then in those cases, in general, it's appropriate to address those things, to correct those things in public.

Because, as he says here in 1 Timothy, that the rest also may fear. Because what's the risk if you don't address it publicly? Is that people will see the rebellion or whatever it might be, the bad behavior, and see that it's not addressed, or at least to their eyes it's not addressed, right? And they think, oh, well, maybe that's okay, or maybe at least I can get away with it. So, when things are done publicly, in general, should be addressed publicly. But when things are done privately, in general, should be addressed privately.

[26 : 55] So that they may be sound in the faith, and that word sound is healthy. We want people to be healthy in their Christian faith, not getting off into false doctrine or crazy ideas.

Then he says this in verse 14, not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth.

And so, with these two things, and really I'm going to look also at the next verse about to the pure all things are pure, which is a little bit, it seems out of place.

It seems like it comes out of nowhere, that particular verse, and we'll get to that in a second. But as I read these two verses, I think about how false teaching can come in three categories.

So I'm going to address that here. The first category, we'll just use the word that Paul uses, fables, fables, something, stories without merit or without authority or authenticity.

[28 : 01] The second one is commandments of men, commandments of men, and commandments of men are things that are commands or rules or sometimes we call them traditions that become rules that are not from God but from man only.

And then the third one is adherence to the Jewish law for somebody who's not under it. It's good to follow the law when you're under it, but if you're not, then it can be counterproductive.

So we'll talk about all three of these. So he says not giving heed to Jewish fables. He's talking about Jewish fables. And so let's talk about that for a moment. So a fable, it's a fable, it's a made-up story, right?

And sometimes fables can have value and benefit, right? What's the most famous? There was an author from thousands of years ago who wrote fables. Aesop, right? Aesop.

He wrote fables. And usually the fables, almost always, the fables involve what kind of characters. Animals, like a lot of them included animals, right? And the purpose of these fables were to teach moral lessons, virtues, so they're very, very appropriate.

[29 : 18] fables. And so fables in and of themselves, right, are not bad.

You can tell a story and it have merit to teach virtue. In fact, I just talked about that a couple weeks ago, about the value of stories in teaching virtue to children and even to adults.

But one of the important things with fables is that it needs to be clear that they are fables, that they are not true, and that we not treat them or give them any kind of spiritual authority.

Right? We're not going to say Aesop was a prophet of the Lord. He wasn't, and we shouldn't say that he is. We shouldn't treat Aesop's fables as if they are holy scripture, should we?

We shouldn't do that. But he's talking about Jewish fables, and what was happening even at this time was that this kind of thing was happening among the Jews.

[30 : 22] We have today among Jewish scripture. Jewish scripture is the Old Testament, the Christian Old Testament, right? In Christianity we have the Old Testament and the New Testament. And the New Testament is newer, but you have the Jews, the Hebrews, and they have their Hebrew scriptures, which is the Old Testament.

And it's the same. It's not like they have a different Old Testament than we do. It's exactly the same. But over the years, the last couple thousand years, there have been additional books that have been written on top of the Hebrew scriptures.

And some of them are just really commentaries on the scriptures. And is it okay to write a commentary? I'm seeing some nods. Sure.

It's okay. I mean, in this office back here, there's probably a hundred commentaries. And these are people just trying to explain the scriptures. And really, what I'm doing right now is a commentary on

the scriptures, isn't it?

And that's appropriate. And the Bible actually teaches that explaining the scriptures, line upon line, precept upon precept, is appropriate and ought to be done. Those who teach the scriptures, who teach the faith.

[31 : 40] So that's appropriate. But what we've seen happen with these Jewish writings is that they have turned into more than that. In fact, some of them really actually twist the scriptures and kind of turn the scriptures themselves on their head, change what the scriptures are actually teaching.

teaching. I have a few different examples and I'm going to share. And so this first one, this is from the Babylonian Talmud.

And the Talmud is a book of, some of it, like I said, is just commentary, but other things are just these made-up stories. And they are supposed, to some degree, they're supposed to provide some kind of wisdom or something.

And to some degree, these fables, I'm not sure whether they're supposed to be considered true or not. Because unlike Aesop's fables, they don't include animals, they include people.

The Talmud actually came out of, during this time where Paul was writing, in Jesus' time, this first century, there was oral tradition. The teachers would, just through oral tradition and over generations, would share their commentary on the scriptures.

[33 : 07] And it wasn't until the temple was destroyed around 70 AD, where, and Rome basically took over Jerusalem, that the Jews decided, we need to get these things down on paper.

These things that we've been talking about, getting our ideas about the Bible, about the Hebrew scriptures down on paper. And so over really hundreds of years, this thing that they call the Talmud, has kind of come about.

And it's a collection of both biblical commentary, fables, they even call them fables, and other things. But here's just one. This is a story, a fable, and it's called Hollahs from Heaven.

Anybody know what holla is? Hollah bread? Have you ever made holla bread? A few. Okay, my family back there. We like to make holla bread actually on a regular basis. It looks like it should be challah bread because it's C-H, but it's pronounced holla bread.

Am I getting that right? Rabbi something Dosa was so poor that he and his wife often had nothing to cook for Shabbat or the Sabbath. Every Friday before Shabbat she would throw a burning coal into the oven so that smoke would drift out of her chimney and the neighbors would assume that she had what to cook.

[34 : 20] They didn't have any food, but she'd just stick a coal in there just so that smoke would come out and her something. A nasty neighbor said, I know that they don't have anything. Let me go and see what all that smoke is about.

When she knocked on the door, Rabbi Dosa's wife was mortified and went to hide in an inner room. The nosy neighbor entered anyway. A miracle occurred and she found the oven full of loaves of bread and a mixing bowl full of dough.

And she called, come, come, bring the spatula. Your bread is starting to burn and you need to get it out quick. Rabbi Dosa's wife said, that's what I went into the inner room for. Indeed, the sages say she was telling the truth.

She was so accustomed to miracles that she wasn't surprised that coals had turned into bread.

Later, the rabbi's wife asked him, how long will we have to suffer like this?

What should we do? And he replied, what should we do? He replied, she said, pray that we will be given something of value. He prayed and a hand-like apparition stretched down from the heavens and gave him a golden table leg.

[35 : 30] He later dreamed that he saw all the righteous people in the world to come eating all at three-legged tables while he and his wife were eating at a table with just two legs.

He asked his wife, will it be okay with you if all the other righteous people are eating at three-legged tables while you and I are eating at a table that is missing one of its legs? What should we do?

She asked. Pray that it should be taken from you? He prayed and it was taken from him. The sages remarked that the second miracle was greater than the first because tradition says that the heavens give but they don't take back.

What in the world is that all about? Yeah, is that provided clarity on anything in the scriptures? scriptures? No, it's just this kind of strange made-up story and I don't know because it includes people's names.

When you include people's names, that tends to indicate that it's an actual true story, doesn't it? And so I don't know if this is taken as a real true story but it's just a fanciful kind of thing that is supposed to have some kind of a lesson at the end.

[36 : 46] The second miracle was greater than the first because tradition says that the heavens says, notice how it says tradition says, not the Bible says. Tradition says that the heavens give but they don't take back.

And what does that even mean? It makes me think of kind of like Eastern mysticism, you know? What's the sound of one hand clapping? What's the sound of one hand clapping? What does that have to do with anything?

So anyway, these are the kinds of things that I think Paul was talking about. Jewish fables that don't really, they're not really useful, they're not really providing any value, it's not coming from the scriptures.

So when people are telling these fanciful stories, stay away from that kind of thing. I also want to bring up another story. I used to travel to New York, Manhattan actually, on a regular basis for business.

Every few weeks I'd fly to New York. For about a year I did that. And on one trip I sat next to this young man, I think he was about my age at the time, probably in his 30s, or maybe even a little bit younger than me.

[37 : 50] And he had some kids with him, but you could tell he was an Orthodox Jew. He had all the get up and the kind of clothing. And as we were preparing to take off, he opened up a prayer book and he read it.

Somewhat, I think, under his breath, but out loud. And so I was like, oh, this is neat. You know, I've never like really had any kind of conversation with somebody like this, so let me start up a conversation.

And so we talked for a little bit and I asked him about his prayer book and it turns out that in Orthodox Judaism they have prayers for everything. And so he actually had a prayer in his book for flight, for going on a, and I don't know if it was for just trips or for actually going in the air or what. But I wanted to also just try to share the gospel with him, see if I could make some kind of inroads into sharing Jesus Christ and what Jesus Christ did for him. And one of the best ways to do that, especially with somebody who is a Jew, is to, really for anybody, is to show their need, that they have a need for righteousness, right?

And we all need to be righteous. We all, what Jesus did for us is the just died for the unjust, right? The righteous one, Jesus died for the unrighteous.

[39 : 05] If you don't think of yourself as righteous, will you ever have any kind of care or concern about what Jesus did for the unrighteous? No, because that's not you. That's somebody else. Jesus may have died for somebody else, but not me because I'm a pretty good person, right?

That's how a lot of people think. So, in talking to him, I tried to just talk about his own works of righteousness because for an Orthodox Jew especially, it's very important to be, to live righteously. And so, somehow, I can't remember exactly the details, but I talked about how David was unrighteous and he needed a savior.

And he said, oh, oh, no, David was not unrighteous. And I said, what are you talking about? It's right there in the scriptures. I said, don't you know the story of David and Bathsheba?

Right? That's the famous story of one of, just one, not all, but one of David's many failings. And I said, he committed adultery with Bathsheba.

[40 : 11] He said, no, he did not. David did not commit adultery with Bathsheba. I'm like, I can open up the Bible and show you. And I can't remember the details of what he said, but he said something, something.

And I looked it up this week as I was preparing for this. And so, here, I found it on the same site where I read that story about the fables. I'm not sure exactly where this, this is from some kind of Jewish publication, but it says this.

David meets Bathsheba. Notice how it says David meets Bathsheba. The fact that he had been the cause, however indirect, of the destruction of the holy city of Nob and the fall of Saul and his house, troubled David's mind considerably.

He knew that severe trials lay ahead of him, but he did not know how and when they would come. So he knew trials were coming. It was during the war with the Ammonites that the first grievous sin

was committed by David.

So it does say sin here. Being a prophet, David knew that his heir and successor would be the son that would be born to him and Bathsheba. So David being a prophet, he knew that he would bear a son with Bathsheba.

[41 : 19] Does the Bible say that? Mm-mm. A woman of renown, famous for her excellence of character, no less than for her unsurpassing beauty. Now, that may be true, but does the Bible say that she was a woman of unsurpassing character?

No. Since her husband was, and maybe she was, we don't know. David learned, however, that she was married to Uriah, a captain fighting under Joab's command. Now, it was customary in those days for married men before going to war to obtain a divorce from their wives.

Is that true? Have you ever read that in the Bible? Nope. So that in the event of their being missing in battle, their wives could get married again. Was that a problem in the Old Testament if your husband got killed in battle, that if you didn't divorce him first, then you would have trouble getting married again?

No, not at all. David wished to marry Bathsheba at once. He summoned Uriah to him, and in the course of discussion, Uriah insulted the king. Is that in the Bible?

Nope. David could have had Uriah tried for high treason, but he was afraid that the trial might be considered a means of getting rid of him. David permitted Uriah to return to the battlefield, but instructed Joab that he should not endanger the lives of other soldiers to save Uriah from any predicament.

[42 : 38] Even that's twisted, isn't it? That's not exactly how it happened. For he deserved death in any case. Joab acted upon these instructions, and Uriah fell, pierced by an Ammonite archer.

In due time, Uriah's widow became David's wife, but David was soon to learn that his deed had greatly endangered God. So, notice how this story twists the Bible, turns the whole story of the Bible on its head.

So, this is another example of a Jewish fable that is destructive. It undermines the scriptures. It doesn't support them. It does not just provide commentary. It undermines what the Bible teaches. And for some people, and for this guy that I met on the airplane, this was an opportunity for him to say, well, David wasn't unrighteous.

And you know what? I'm really not unrighteous, too. I'm following the scriptures. I mean, as long as you can twist reality, you know, completely distort reality, we can all make ourselves righteous, can't we?

[43 : 51] We can. But we shouldn't do that. Reality has a way of catching up with us. But let me ask this question. Is it only Jewish people who can make up fables and stories?

No. Let's talk about Catholics. Our Catholic friends. Anybody have Catholic friends? I have Catholic friends. Good friends. Really good friends. And I know many here have come from a Catholic background.

But one of these things I've seen over the years is common. Have you ever seen you have statues that cry? Has anybody ever seen that?

Sometimes in the news or whatever? Statues that will cry. Or paintings that will bleed. Paintings that will bleed. Or there have been stories in the past of certain holy men, men who are maybe considered saints, who will have what they call stigmata.

Anybody ever heard of that? That's kind of a Catholic thing. They will find themselves that they have holes or wounds in their hand. Right? And this is some kind of a miraculous thing that has happened to them because of their maybe holiness or something like that.

[45 : 02] And all kinds of miraculous stories of the saints. You know, you have the Catholic saints, people who have been blessed as saints or appointed or whatever, declared as saints by the Vatican.

And typically, in order to attain to sainthood, there has to be some kind of a miracle story. It's my understanding anyway. You can correct me if I'm wrong, but I think there has to be some kind of a miracle story involved in order to be considered a saint.

But these miracle stories, they are just fables. They're just fables. But they draw a lot of attention, don't they? Because we as human beings tend to be excited about miraculous things and thrill, you know, it's a little bit more thrilling.

But I'm sure it's just Catholics in the Christian community, it's just Catholics that make up stories, right? Now, what are we?

We're Protestants in general, evangelicals. Do evangelicals ever make up stories? All right, I have a few examples. Anybody ever heard of the Bible codes? That was really popular back like 20 years ago.

[46 : 09] Right? You look in the Bible and you, like, count Hebrew letters, and if you do it in a certain way and count in the right way, then you can find prophecies about things that are going to happen in the future.

Anybody ever remember this? Is it just me? Okay, a few. Okay, great. And so, you know, you open the book right to the middle, you know, you count from the very last letter to the first, and you go to the middle, and you do all these things, and it actually prophesied the death of Princess Diana.

I remember that one. Anybody remember that? It was right there. And this is a fable. This is just something that somebody made up, and I'll tell you what. They talk about statistics, right?

There's lies, really bad lies in statistics, and so that's just statistics. You can do anything you want with letters and numbers. You count them the right way, and you can make them say anything that you want.

But it's easy for us as Christians to think, oh, well, this is God's word. I mean, God could do something like that if you wanted, right? But does the Bible teach us anywhere that God does that with the Bible, that we should count letters or anything like that?

[47 : 15] Now, there is poetry in which, you know, there are things where you can look at them in a certain way and get some value out of it, but that's not. God's word is presented to us as a way to give us understanding, not to hide codes, secret codes in there.

It's to reveal things to us, to make it clear. So we shouldn't be carried away by fables like that.

Another one, and I might get in trouble for this, but there are stories of people going to heaven that are popular today.

Books written about people going to heaven and describing in great detail the things that they have seen in heaven. Now, is it, do we know from the scriptures where there are cases where people went to heaven and then came back?

Paul, Paul mentions, and he says, well, I went to the third heaven. I think I went. It seemed like I went, but it could have been a vision. That's kind of what he says.

It could have just been a vision. Maybe I wasn't actually there, but it seemed like I was there. And so we do have an example of that being the case. But what is the risk of having a story of going to heaven?

[48 : 29] Is that there's all kinds of details in there that just may not be true at all. And so I think we need to be careful about those kinds of things.

And there are cases, and I can't remember the specific case. There's many stories of people going to heaven, but there's one in particular where it was found out to be a total fraud that a father was basically just kind of feeding his son who had some kind of near-death type of experience and then fed a bunch of things to his son and ended up creating this story and got a book deal out of it and all that kind of thing.

With this, I want to kind of bring the scripture to bear. Jesus himself, during his earthly ministry, this is the creator of the universe, said this in John chapter 5.

One fact, oh my word. Let's turn there. We'll finish up with this because my time is running short. But John chapter 5, verse 31. Jesus says this, if I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.

[49 : 57] If I bear witness of myself, don't just take my word for it. This is the creator of the universe saying, don't just take my word for it.

He says this in verse 32, there is another who bears witness of me and I know that the witness which he witnesses of me is true. You have sent to John and he has borne witness to the truth.

Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved. He was a burning and a shining lamp and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.

But I have a greater witness than John's for the works which the father has given me to finish. The very works that I do bear witness of me that the father has sent me.

And the father himself who sent me has testified of me. You have neither heard his voice at any time nor seen his form, but you have not. But do you not have his word abiding in you?

[50 : 58] And because whom he sent him you did not believe? You search the scriptures for in them you think you have eternal life. And these are they which testify of me. But you are not willing to come to me and you may have life.

And so Jesus himself says, if I come to you telling you something, don't just take my word for it. There are multiple witnesses.

The father has given you a witness, what? Through Moses, through the prophets. You search the scriptures and there is a witness to me and what I'm saying there.

Also the father has given me these great works to do. What's he talking about? His miracles that he is doing. The father has given him power through the power of the Holy Spirit to do miracles in the earth.

He said these are a witness to me as well. And this goes back to the Old Testament law which says do not accept someone's testimony by itself, right? Isn't that what the law teaches?

[52 : 02] And even ourselves in our day, in our own jurisprudence system, you can't just go on one person's testimony. There has to be multiple, not just eyewitnesses, but other witnesses' testimony.

And so in the Jewish law, it's at the testimony of what? Two or three witnesses. So even Jesus himself said, if I tell you something and it's just me, then don't go with it.

There has to be multiple attestations to that truth. And so, you know, there are miraculous things that may happen like somebody going to heaven.

But if somebody's story is just their story and that's it, that's not something that we should, even if it really did happen, it's not something that we should present to people in that way because it is dangerous, isn't it?

Because we are basically putting ourselves in the positions as prophets of God. Does anybody want that responsibility? I hope not. Now, people in the past have taken on that responsibility and it's a grave and serious responsibility.

[53 : 09] And if Jesus appears to you and says, I want you to be a prophet, then you have to do that. But I imagine that's not likely to happen. But for many people, they consider the Bible itself to be kind of a boring book.

You know, you just read and there's some interesting stories in there. But so we have to go kind of to fables, more interesting things, miraculous things and weeping statues and bleeding paintings. And so I've even seen potatoes in the shape of the Virgin Mary. Because these things are more exciting, more thrilling than the scriptures.

But what Paul is teaching here is that avoid those things, these fables, and let's stick to the scriptures, to what I gave you, to what God himself gave us.

Teach those things. And avoid all this other nonsense. Amen? All right. My time is out. I didn't finish, but my time is out. And I'll, we'll use the rest of this time to take some questions.

[54 : 16] Or add some commentary, if you will. So while he's looking for a mic, any hands raised? Anybody got anything? Anything that they'd like to share or ask?

Right, right up here, John. When the Catholics declare a saint, it's canonization, or canonizing.

Okay, canonize a saint. Yeah. Okay. I thought I'd comment on that. Right. Does anybody know, does that miracle have to be involved to be canonized? John is saying yes. Okay. Okay.

Anything else? Anything else to add, or question to ask? Okay, a few more. We got Joe. Mr. Baumgartner there. Good job running, Caleb.

Use those legs. I think it's a good, important point about just the fables and stories and kind of so along the Catholic thing.

[55 : 17] I remember talking to a guy at work. Well, he wasn't at work. He was like an old customer or something years ago. But we were talking about just biblical things, and I couldn't figure out why we just couldn't connect on certain things.

And it finally occurred to me that they really do elevate the saints and the sayings or the teachings of the saints to the same level as scripture. Yeah.

And so that's another, just an important thing that, you know, again, we don't do that. We should not do that and be on guard against it. But that's something that goes along with what you're talking about. Yeah. Thank you, Joe.

And then Caleb back there, Scott. Mr. Cutlop. Hi. I think it was 2 Corinthians 12, 2 that talked about Paul being caught up to the third heaven.

Okay. That's in 2 Corinthians what? 12, 2. Okay. Yeah. So if you're interested in seeing or reading more about that, you can go to 2 Corinthians chapter 12.

[56 : 15] And then up here, Caleb, unless there was another, was there another comment back there? Are you done? Okay. Caleb, right up here.

That was Jesus' problem with the leaders of the church at the time he lived on earth was how they were twisting the law that God gave the law and making it say something that it didn't say.

That's what his whole fight with them was about. Yeah. And that was the next thing I was going to talk about, but didn't, ran out of time. So we'll get that next week or the week after.

We'll see. Up here, Ron. You're speaking about rebuke. In Matthew 18, it talks about rebuking a brother. You go to him by yourself.

Yeah. You rebuke. You start privately. Right. And you win your brother. If he does not, then you take two. Yeah. And it goes down the church discipline line there. Yeah.

[57 : 24] And then the next, so you take a few with you, right? A few leaders. And then finally, it says take it to the church. It's talking about the Jewish church, which is really the assembly.

It's the larger groups to make it public. That's exactly right. So start privately. And if things have to escalate, sometimes you have to take it to a larger group. So thank you for sharing that.

That's great. Man, this is a very biblically literate church. I love it. Anything else? Going once?

Twice? If you're thinking about it. All right. We'll finish up there. All right. Thanks, everybody. We'll close in prayer, and then it will be dismissed. Father, thank you for your word. We want to take these words seriously.

We don't want to go off to this thing or that, this, you know, looking for miraculous signs or whatever. You gave us your word, and we want to take it seriously. Really, it's thrilling enough, the scriptures that you gave us.

[58 : 27] And may you work your word in us. May we keep it deep in our hearts, understand it with what you want us to understand.

You made this a book of revelation, not concealment. Open up our eyes to understand its truths. In Jesus' name, amen.