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Series- Putting Feet to Faith:

Becoming a Matthew 25 Church

Part 9- Reflective Works

Text: Titus 1:15-16

Let us celebrate theological and biblical literacy. We know quite a bit. We have read the Bible through. We have read Christian books and studied, on various levels, the grand themes of theology, ecclesiology, soteriology, eschatology, and Christology. This faith community is populated by people who know their stuff.

The situation was the same in Crete. That city had a *mature* and *maturing* Church in it. Paul left a young pastor, Titus, in Crete with this assignment: *set in order the things that are lacking* (1:5).

Pastor Titus is to identify people with leadership potential and ordain them as elders and bishops. These are not mere titles. They are functions. These leaders are to, according to 1:9,

1. Hold fast the faithful word (9)
2. Exhort those who contradict (9)
3. Convict those who contradict (9)
4. Sharply rebuke the insubordinate heretics (10, 13)

Over against the articulate members of the faith community there were, in Crete, members of the circumcision. They are described as *insubordinate, idle talkers, deceivers and people who teach what they ought not* (10-11).

We have, in Crete, the pure and believing and the impure and unbelieving (15). We have the same two groups in our society today: The pure and believing and the impure and unbelieving.

Verse 16 contains a pithy but telling description of the unbelieving heretic. They have **profession** but no **demonstration**.

They have the **words** but not the **works** that accompany the words.

They have **talk** but no **walk**.

This phrase in the first clause of verse 16 is worth a closer look.

They profess to *know* God. We would all agree that that’s a good thing. We desire that all would *know* God. But....

In works they *deny* God. What is missing is alignment.

**Illus.**

Every few months I have the wheels of my car aligned.

Four benefits of getting a wheel alignment (westautomotive[group.com](http://group.com))

1.  Increase Fuel Efficiency. When your automobile isn’t aligned correctly, your wheels aren’t working together they way that they should. Because of this, your vehicle’s engine must work a lot harder to propel you forward, and this reduces your car’s fuel efficiency.

2.  Reduce Expensive Auto Repairs. Driving with a bad alignment causes the parts in your car to wear unevenly and prematurely. Each time you hit a pothole or bump in the road, your steering and suspension systems take a hit. When your tires aren’t evenly helping with the impact, certain areas of these systems take the hit harder than others, causing them to break down sooner than they should. If they break down completely, you’re faced with an expensive auto repair service that could have been avoided.

3.  Experience Smoother Driving. When your car’s wheel alignment is off you will usually notice that your automobile drifts slightly to the right or left even though your steering wheel is aimed straight ahead. Constantly adjusting your steering to overcompensate for bad alignment is tiring, inefficient, distracting, and dangerous!

4.  Increase the Life of Your Tires. Last but not least, your tires. Your tires are an expensive and important auto part that wear our much more quickly when you don’t get regular wheel alignments. When you align your tires, and they are working together in harmony, they will take you a lot further and you won’t have to buy new tires sooner than you need to.

**These heretics are out of alignment.**

The words of the heretic are theologically sound but....note the three adjectives used to describe the heretics in verse 16.

In works they deny God.

In word they are **respectable**. In deed, they are **abominable**.

In word they are **obedient**. In deed, they are **disobedient**.

In word they are **qualified**. In deed they are **disqualified**.

**The works of the heretic are reflective of a weak theology, a not-well-worked-out belief system.**

There are some in this faith community who can *talk* but they don’t wish to *do* anything!

For some saints there is a large chasm between

* rhetoric and reality
* doctrine and duty
* precepts and practices
* faith and works
* Belief and behavior

Let us not *study* Matthew 25 for a year or two before we *do* Matthew 25.

Let us not only *profess* to know God. The Greek word translated *profess* here is *homologeo*. It means *declare publicly; to speak the same word.*

Let us not only **say** what God would say but **do** what God would do.

Let us **show**that we love God by the quality of our works.

May we all be guilty of reflective works, which show the love we have for God.

**Harry Blamires, in his work *The Christian Mind,* writes that an authoritative revelation leaves us with two options and two options only: “it is either the bowed head or the turned back.”**

These teachers failed to bow their heads to God (v. 16). To say, “I know God” sounds ultimate. However, if that statement is not accompanied by obedient action, it is vain.

1 John 2:4

*He who says, “I know Him” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”*

Final word:

What we *believe* ought to **directly** determine what we *do*!

Amen