

Week of October 21-27

## **SOUND BARRIER**

**Scripture Reading:** Read Titus 1

On October 14<sup>th</sup> of this year, the world's attention turned skyward as Australian, Felix Baumgartner, became the first person to shatter the sound barrier in a free fall when he accelerated to over 830 miles per hour after jumping from a capsule 120,000+ feet (24 miles!) in the air. He was in free fall for four minutes and 18 seconds (the 2<sup>nd</sup> longest free fall in history) before pulling his chute at around 5,000 feet in the air. Talk about extreme bungee jumping!

In the book of Titus, Paul was concerned about the churches on the island of Crete because they were breaking a sound barrier, too...a spiritual sound barrier. Instead of being sound in doctrine, faith and speech, they were lazy, lying and out of control. Sadly, the violation of the sound barrier was hindering the work of Christ on the island and harming the church's reputation. It was for this reason that Paul left Titus, his son in the faith and co-worker, there on the island to appoint sound and godly leadership and to straighten out the believers. It's also why he wrote him this epistle with instructions on how to deal with the matter.

Again and again in this book, Paul reminded Titus of the need for the Cretian churches to be sound. Elders were to hold firmly to the trustworthy message so they could encourage others by sound doctrine (1:9). Titus was to provide a godly rebuke to wayward believers so they would be sound in the faith (1:13). Titus, himself, was commanded by Paul to teach what is in accord with sound doctrine (2:1). The older men in the congregation were to be taught by Titus to be self-controlled and sound in faith, in love and in endurance (2:2). Finally, Paul commanded Titus to set an example by doing what is good and to show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that could not be condemned (2:7-8).

What was true in Paul's day is certainly applicable in our day as well. In a time when the church is tempted to run after every fad and fancy that comes down the pike, we do well to take heed to Paul's instructions to Titus about soundness. Breaking the sound barrier spiritually may generate a lot of buzz in the church. Folks love a good sonic boom but all the hype usually leads to a disastrous crash and burn down the road. Spiritual soundness and sobriety may not seem flashy. It may appear to lack the pizzazz, but over time, it leads to healthier believers, deeper spirituality and a more godly reputation for the church. Let's leave sound-breaking to aircraft and Felix Baumgartner and focus instead on living soundly as believers.

**Action Step:** Is your life marked by soundness of speech, doctrine and faith? Are you grounded in the truth and living your life in spiritual sobriety or are you running after the next high, attempting to break the sound barrier?

**Prayer Focus:** That the Lord would develop within you a soundness and sobriety that produces godly character, strong faith and a firm grasp on solid doctrine.

**Take-a-way:** *Healthy churches refuse to break the sound barrier.*