

Importance of Staying True to God's Word

Written and typed: 1/8/24

- Titus 2:1 – *“You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.”*
 - Paul left Titus in Crete and Titus is making sure the church is getting started properly, making sure that the church in Crete stays faithful (1:5)
 - Part of the instructions that Paul writes to Titus here is to teach sound doctrine
 - Paul writes to the Galatian church in Galatians 1:7 that the 1 true gospel, the only gospel, is the gospel of Christ
 - So when we compare these Scriptures, we can see that sound doctrine exists and that sound doctrine is the gospel of Christ – everything else is not even gospel and if something else is taught as gospel, let the teacher be eternally condemned (Galatians 1:8-9)
- To know sound doctrine, we must take the time and effort to study, understand, and put into practice God's Word
 - 2 Timothy 2:15 – *“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”*
 - Psalm 1:1-2 – *“Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.”*
 - Joshua 1:7-8 – *“Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.”*
- Paul writes to the Corinthian church in 2 Corinthians 1:13 – *“For we do not write you anything you cannot read or understand.”*
 - So this sound doctrine can be understood
 - Ephesians 3:4 – *“In reading this, then, **you will be able to understand** my insight into the mystery of Christ,”*
- Matthew 10:34 – *“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.”*
 - Jesus knows that His teaching – the 1 true sound doctrine is going to make people mad
 - It has the power to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, etc. (vs 35-36)
 - Please don't be the person that gets mad
 - Be the person who seeks the 1 true sound doctrine
 - The Bereans were said to be of more noble character than the Thessalonians because they received the gospel with eagerness and examined the Scriptures to verify what Paul was teaching them (Acts 17:11)
 - Search the Scriptures – don't leave your salvation in someone else's hands

- Leave your salvation to God and His Biblical instructions
- There's only 1 Bible – and in the Bible we are told to not be divided
 - 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 – *“I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. My brothers, some from Chloe’s household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. What I mean is this: One of you says, ‘I follow Paul’; another, ‘I follow Apollos’; another, ‘I follow Cephas’; still another, ‘I follow Christ.’ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul?”*
 - Contrary to this, if you ask some in the religious world they’ll tell you that the reason for all the different doctrine is that people just interpret the Scriptures differently
 - By this logic - God wrote a book that’s subject to man’s interpretation but in that book he tells us that we must not be divided?
 - Of course not – the only logical explanation is that there is 1 doctrine taught in the Bible. It is not open to man’s interpretation
 - God says what He means and He means what He says
 - The only way we can be united is by studying the Bible diligently to get the sound Biblical doctrine that God intended for us to get
 - 2 Peter 1:20-21 – *“Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”*
 - So if God didn’t allow man’s interpretation when the Holy Spirit inspired the penman (the human writers of the books of the Bible – Peter, Paul, etc.), why would He allow man’s interpretations after it has been written? Of course the answer is that He doesn’t
 - 1 Corinthians 9:27 – *“No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.”*
 - Paul worked very hard to find and preach the truth
 - If he had to work hard to find it, 1 – it implies that it can be found, and 2 – this implies that there are wrong answers out there
 - 1 John 4:1 – *“Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”*
 - Not all roads are going to lead to heaven – only the road that God has given us
 - Think of a road map
 - You and I can read it differently, we can interpret something differently perhaps – but if I interpret a left turn will get me to my destination and you interpret a right turn, one of us is right & the other is wrong, or neither is right – maybe we have to go straight
 - The Bible and the plan of salvation is no different
 - Matthew 4:4 – *“Jesus answered, ‘It is written: Man does not live on bread alone, but on **every word** that comes from the mouth of God.’”*

- We cannot pick and choose commands that fit our narrative and dismiss those that do not fit our narrative
 - Every word of God is critical – anything less and we’re not going to reach the destination we’re targeting – heaven (James 2:10)
 - John 17:23 – Jesus prays for complete unity. We cannot be united if we’re all interpreting the Bible differently
 - Galatians 1:6-9
 - This different gospel that the Galatians had turned to (if you read Galatians in its entirety, you’ll find that what Paul is referring to is the old law – specifically the practice of circumcision) is really no gospel at all
 - It perverts the gospel of Christ
 - If a different gospel is preached other than the gospel of Christ, let him be eternally condemned – this is so important that Paul said it twice
 - There is but 1 gospel – it is the gospel of Christ and that gospel is the only gospel that will lead to salvation (Romans 1:16)
- A question for consideration: Is the Bible truly from God?
 - 2 Peter 1:20-21 – *“Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”*
 - Hebrews 1:1-2 – *“In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.”*
 - 2 Timothy 3:16 – *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,”*
 - So the Bible is clearly from God
 - For further proof, consider the message
 - Genesis – Revelation: though they were written many years apart, they all point to the same Savior
 - The Jews in the NT times did not recognize that Savior when He came (Jesus), but everything points to Him
 - Read Isaiah 53 sometime and then compare that with the accounts of Jesus’ crucifixion
 - You’d think Isaiah was an eye witness – but Isaiah wrote this prophecy many years before Jesus was even born
- Secondly, is the Bible true?
 - We know that the Bible is from God based on the Scriptures I just provided
 - Titus 1:2 – God does not lie
 - So if the Bible is from God, God does not lie, therefore – the Bible is truth
 - John 17:17 – *“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.”*
 - So if God’s word is truth, and I don’t follow God’s word – I’m not following the truth
 - The more important question: is God going to accept the fact that I’m not practicing the truth?

- Let's take a look
- Numbers 16:1-7
 - These 3 individuals and their followers rebelled against Moses (Moses was chosen by God, so ultimately they were rebelling against God)
 - 1 Corinthians 10:1-6 – Paul is writing about the things that the Israelites did in the desert and says these things occurred as examples for us to not set our hearts on evil as they did
 - This specific event is actually referenced in vs 10
 - So we know that we can take this story as an example for us today
 - Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and their followers rose up against Moses (vs 2)
 - You may think that this is a trivial matter – but the exact opposite is true
 - Exodus 3:10 – God says He has chosen Moses to take His people out of Egypt
 - So Moses was God's chosen leader here
 - Remember in Acts 7 (Stephen's speech to the Sanhedrin which prompted his stoning) – he tells them in part "God chose Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, through the desert, and into the promised land (vs 35-36) and the Israelites didn't recognize him. Just like that – you current Jews (the ones Stephen is speaking to in Acts 7) are just like your fathers. Because God chose Jesus and you all rejected him – even killed him." (I'm paraphrasing here of course)
 - So getting back to Numbers 16 – this was a big deal
 - The fact that they were rebelling against Moses – whether they realized it or not, meant that they were rebelling against God
 - The same thing happened in 1 Samuel 8:7 when the tribes of Israel wanted a physical king – they did not reject Samuel there, they rejected God
 - Remember in 1 Samuel 24:5-7 when David had the chance to kill Saul (the same Saul who had been trying repeatedly to kill him) – and he told his men "I cannot harm the Lord's anointed"
 - That's what we're dealing with here – these people rebelled against God's anointed (Moses)
 - And their followers were not "common" men – these were well known community leaders (vs 2)
 - This group gets together to approach Moses and Aaron in opposition (vs 3)
 - There's clearly a division here – which as we discussed earlier is forbidden by God (1 Corinthians 1)
 - This group tells Moses and Aaron: "*The whole community is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is with them. Why then do you set yourselves above the Lord's assembly.*"
 - So this group was doing things that they thought made them holy
 - I'm sure that most of what they were doing was sound doctrine, but it obviously wasn't completely sound doctrine – they were adding or subtracting

somewhere because Moses says in vs 6-7 – God is going to show which one of us is holy

- If they were both holy, there wouldn't have been a choice here to make – and notice, Moses doesn't make the choice
- He turns this over to God – he says God is going to make the choice
 - When we have conflicting doctrine being taught today, the only way we can determine which is right is to go to God
 - He gives us the sound doctrine in His word – if the doctrine we're teaching disagrees with the sound doctrine of the Bible, let the teacher be eternally condemned (Galatians 1:8-9)
- Moses tells them in vs 11: *"It is against the Lord that you and your followers have banded together."*
- Moses tells them that they are the ones who are in the wrong here
- Now, remember: this group doesn't agree – they think Moses is in the wrong
- So let's see what happens

- **Numbers 16:16-19**

- Moses gives them instructions on what to do
- And Korah gathers his followers and opposes Moses at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting (vs 19)
- Then the glory of the Lord appears (vs 19)
 - Now in this case, this is not good
 - We typically think of the glory of the Lord as "He is so glorious and worthy of praise" – which is true, but that's not what this is talking about
 - If you read further into Numbers 16, you'll find that the glory of the Lord appears to the people again in vs 42
 - This was some sort of a plague (vs 46-50) – 1 Corinthians 10:10 mentions a destroying angel when talking about this event
 - So we're left without the specifics, but we do know that whatever this was exactly – 14,700 people died in a relatively short time period – however long it took for Aaron to offer incense and make atonement for them (vs 47)

- **Numbers 16:28-35**

- You can see here that Moses leaves the official judgment to God
- Now Moses knows what that judgment was going to be (this is likely why he fell facedown in vs 4 – because he knew this group was not in accordance with sound doctrine as they thought they were)
- Moses says "If this group dies a natural death, then God did not send me. However, if they are swallowed by the earth, God did send me and this group has treated the Lord with contempt."
- And, of course – that's exactly what happens to Korah, Dathan, and Abiram
- Of the remaining 250 followers – they were consumed by fire

- But this group thought they were right – certainly God would accept them (so they thought)
- God did not accept them – whatever they were doing that they thought made themselves holy in God’s sight was not sound doctrine
- We must conclude that: Moses is practicing sound doctrine – he is doing what God wants him to do. This group opposes Moses’ actions in the name of their holiness and thought that Moses has gone too far with his actions. God’s judgment was clear – there was right and there was wrong despite Korah thinking his group was also right
- **Leviticus 10:1-2**
 - Nadab and Abihu were 2 of Aaron’s sons – Aaron had 2 other sons as well
 - They were given instructions by God through Moses on everything they were supposed to do – all the restrictions around each specific type of offering – guilt offering, grain offering, sin offering, etc. (Leviticus 1-7)
 - So Nadab and Abihu knew or they should have known exactly what to do, how God wanted it done, etc.
 - They offered unauthorized fire – going beyond what was instructed
 - One fire is just as good as another – so they thought
 - God consumes them with fire
 - God made the judgment – I told them to do this, and they did that – I’m not going to accept that
- Let’s look at NT examples
- **Matthew 7:21-23**
 - These were clearly religious people while they were on earth – they prophesied in Christ’s name, they drove out demons, performed miracles in Christ’s name
 - So they thought
 - Christ’s judgment is clear: *“I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!”*
 - What they were doing was apparently good – they thought they were doing the Lord’s work
 - No different from Korah and his followers – they thought they were holy
 - But they were destroyed
 - As were the folks in Matthew 7 – they were not doing the will of the Father, they were not practicing sound doctrine – if they were, Christ would not have rejected them
- **1 Corinthians 4:6**
 - Do not go beyond what is written – God isn’t going to accept that
 - He didn’t accept it when Nadab and Abihu tried – and He’s not going to accept it if we try
 - Proverbs 30:5-6 – *“Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.”*
 - Revelation 22:18-19 – *“I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away*

from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.”

- 2 Peter 3:16 (Peter speaking of the books Paul wrote) – *“He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.”*
- There is 1 sound doctrine – 1 gospel – that is the gospel of Christ
- There is no room for man’s interpretation – God says what He meant and meant what He said
- If we add to, take away, either purposely or by misunderstanding – it’s to our own destruction
- Consider this practical example in conclusion
 - Mom worked night shift when I was growing up
 - She’d leave me and my siblings notes before she went to sleep – we’d find them when we woke up and that was our job for the day
 - If on her note one day she said “Go to Walmart – get peanut butter, bread, and have me a sandwich made for when I wake up and I’ll give you \$20 in allowance”
 - If I went to Walmart and got bread, but no peanut butter – did I fulfill my mom’s request?
 - If I went to Walmart and got bread, peanut butter, and jelly – did I fulfill my mom’s request?
 - If I got the bread and peanut butter, but didn’t make the sandwich, did I fulfill my mom’s request?
 - No – the only way I’m going to get the \$20 allowance is if I get bread, peanut butter, and make the sandwich
 - And if I do that – did I earn the \$20? No, it’s still a gift as the result of my obedience
- The Bible is no different – the 1 gospel of Christ is no different
- The plan of salvation is simple and Scriptural
 - **Step 1: Hearing the gospel** – *Romans 10:13-17*
 - Gospel = Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried, arose, and appeared to many – *1 Corinthians 15:1-8, Romans 1:16*
 - **Step 2: Believing the gospel** – *Mark 16:16, John 3:16*
 - **Step 3: Confession that Jesus is Lord** – *Romans 10:8-10, 1 John 1:9*
 - **Step 4: Repentance of sins** – *Luke 13:3, Acts 2:38*
 - Repentance: a turning away from sin, disobedience, or rebellion and a turning back to God. Change of mind that produces a change in action.
 - **Step 5: Baptism into Christ** – *Galatians 3:27, Acts 2:38, Romans 6:1-10, 1 Peter 3:21-22*
 - Baptism: immerse or submerge
 - **Step 6: Live faithfully** – *Revelation 2:10*