

The Purpose and Plan for the Church Pt. 5

Acts 2:42-47

Acts 2:40–47

And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.”

41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*.

42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common,

45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,

47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

Introduction

If you're familiar with the life of Charles Hadden Spurgeon you've probably heard of the "downgrade controversy." Spurgeon spent the final four years of his life at war against the trends of early modernism which he rightly saw as a threat to biblical Christianity. The name by which history remembers the controversy from a title of a series of articles that Spurgeon published in his monthly magazine called "The Sword and the Trowel." Spurgeon wanted to admonish his flock about the dangers of moving away from the historic positions of biblical Christianity. Biblical truth, he said, is like the pinnacle of a steep slippery mountain, one step away and you find yourself on the downgrade.

Once a church or an individual Christian gets on the downgrade, momentum takes over. And the slide begins. Recovery is unusual and it occurs, said Spurgeon, only when Christians get on the upline through spiritual revival. controversy

In the controversy that transpired as a result of these articles, Spurgeon resigned from the Baptist Union, though he had the largest church in the world in the Baptist Union. Later after his resignation he was subject to an official censure by the Union. Within a few years the Baptist Union was hopelessly lost to the new theology and Spurgeon was dead.

In 1900 Spurgeon's wife Susannah wrote these words, "So far as the Baptist Union was concerned, little was accomplished by Mr. Spurgeon's witness bearing and withdrawal. But in other respects I have had abundant proofs that the protest was not in vain. Many who were far gone on the downgrade were stopped in their perilous descent and by God's grace were brought back to the upline. Others who were unconsciously slipping were made to stand firmly on the rock while at least for a time in all the churches evangelical doctrines were preached with a clearness and emphasis which had long been lacking." She believed that the Lord would ultimately make clear how right her husband had been in his protest against the downgrade.

To this day, church historians will debate whether or not Spurgeon should have withdrawn and resigned or whether he should have stayed in and fought to keep the Baptist Union orthodox. He considered that option but concluded it would have been futile. Personally I guess I'm inclined to agree with Spurgeon's choice. But whether we agree with the course of action or not, we will have to acknowledge that history has vindicated Spurgeon's warnings about the downgrade. He was right.

In the early part of the twentieth century, immediately following his life, the spreading of false doctrine and worldliness, theological liberalism and modernism ravaged denominational Christianity. Most of the mainline denominations were violently if not fatally altered by these influences and have never recovered.

Here we are a hundred years later and history is repeating itself. The church again has become worldly. And not just worldly but studiously so...winds of doctrinal compromise are beginning to stir. False doctrine and worldliness, the two things that Spurgeon spoke about, the very two influences he attacked always go hand in hand. And listen to this, worldliness usually leads the way.

The term "modernism" was not used, first of all, to designate a theology, it was used, first of all, to designate a methodology. And the methodology that wanted to be modern, to reach modern man soon became a theology. Christians forget that modernism was not at all at first a theological agenda. It was a sociological one. And early modernists were not trying to hit at the core of biblical faith, they were simply trying to make Christianity more palatable to a cynical world, a methodology. But it became a theology because worldliness inevitably ends up as false doctrine.

The same spirit is abroad in the church today. I'm convinced that most of those behind it would not deliberately undermine biblical Christianity, but neither did those in Spurgeon's day believe they were doing it but they were. And today, these who are concerned about a new methodology have introduced into the church a philosophy of pragmatism and with it a spirit of worldliness that left unchecked will eventually reap the very same bitter harvest

that it reaped a hundred years ago, namely the loss of biblical Christianity.

Paul had personally mentored the young pastor. But Timothy was encountering severe trials when he was assigned to Ephesus to cleanse and straighten the church. Paul wanting to give Timothy all the information he needed and wanting to strengthen his hand and wanting to maximize his opportunity and his ministry wrote him two letters...1 and 2 Timothy. And in them you have what is the most complete ministry philosophy given anywhere in the New Testament for the church.

Paul instructed Timothy that he must...and here's a list in the first letter...correct those teaching false doctrine and call them to a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith.

He must fight for divine truth and for God's purposes keeping his own faith and a good conscience.

He must pray for the lost and lead the men of the church to do the same.

He must call in the...call the women in the church to fulfill their God-given role of submission and raise up godly children, setting an example of faith, love and sanctity with self-restraint.

He must carefully select spiritual leaders for the church on the basis of their giftedness, godliness and virtue.

He must recognize the source of error and those who teach it and point these things out to the brethren.

He must constantly be being nourished on the words of the Scripture and its sound teaching, avoiding all myths and all false doctrines.

He must discipline himself for the purpose of godliness.

He must boldly command and teach the truth of God's Word.

He must be a model of spiritual virtue that all can follow.

He must faithfully read, explain and apply the Scriptures publicly.

He must be progressing always toward Christ's likeness in his own personal life.

He must be gracious and gentle in confronting the sin of his people.

He must give special consideration and care for those who are widows.

He must honor faithful pastors who work hard.

He must choose church leaders with great care, seeing to it that they are both mature and proven.

He must take care of his physical condition so he is strong to serve. He must teach and preach principles of true godliness, helping his people discern between true godliness and mere hypocrisy.

He must flee the love of money.

He must pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.

He must fight for the faith against all enemies and all attacks.

He must keep all the Lord's commandments.

He must instruct the rich to do good, be rich in good works, be generous.

And he must guard the Word of God as a sacred trust and a treasure.

All that in the first letter.

In the second epistle Paul reminded Timothy that his duty was to keep the gift of God in him fresh and useful.

To not be timid but powerful.

To never be ashamed of Christ or anyone who serves Him.

To hold tightly to the truth and guard it.

To be strong in character, reproduce himself in faithful men, suffer difficulty and persecution willingly while making the maximum effort for Christ.

Keep his eyes on Christ on all time.

Lead with authority.

Interpret and apply the Scripture accurately.

Avoid useless conversation that leads only to ungodliness.

He must be an instrument of honor set apart from sin and useful to the Lord.

He must flee youthful lusts, pursue righteousness, faith and love.

Refuse to be drawn into philosophical and theological wrangling. He must not be an arguer but kind, teachable, gentle and patient even when he's wronged.

He must face dangerous times with a deep knowledge of the Word of God.

He must understand that the key to his own maturity and that of his people was the Scripture.

He must preach the Word in season and out of season, reproofing, rebuking, and exhorting with great patience and instruction.

He must know the priorities for all of life, endure hardship and do the work of an evangelist.

In all of those statements you have summed up the nature of ministry. Nothing hints at a market-driven philosophy. In fact, some of those commands are absolutely impossible to harmonize with the theories that are so popular today. To sum it all up in five categories...one, Paul commanded Timothy to be faithful in his preaching...two, to be bold in exposing and refuting error...three, to be an example of godliness...four, to be diligent and work hard...and five, to be willing to suffer hardship and persecution.

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Review

I. Christ is Lord of His Church

II. Christ Builds His Church

III. Christ Plans His Church

IV. Christ Gives Purpose to His Church

Lesson:

I. Christ is Lord of His Church

II. Christ Builds His Church

III. Christ Plans His Church

A. Separated

B. Saved

C. Steadfast

D. Teaching

E. Fellowshiping

F. Celebrating Lords supper/ baptism

G. Praying

H. Giving

I. Praising

1. The Church was Separated

2. The Church was Saved

41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.

47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

3. The Church was steadfast.

42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,

v.42 And they continued steadfastly — —

Pres Active Participle

46 So continuing daily — same word, and parsing

proskartereó: to attend constantly

Original Word: ΠΡΟΣΚΑΡΤΕΡΕΩ

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: proskartereó

Phonetic Spelling: (pros-kar-ter-eh'-o)

Short Definition: I persist

Definition: I persist, persevere in, continue steadfast in; I wait upon.

4342 *proskartereó* (from **4314** /*prós*, "towards, interactively *with*" and **2594** /*kartereó*, "show steadfast strength," derived from **2904** /*krátos*, "prevailing strength") – properly, to consistently showing strength which *prevails* (in spite of difficulties); to *endure* (remain firm), **staying in a fixed direction.** [**4342** /*proskartereó* means "to continue to do something with intense effort, with the possible implication of despite difficulty – 'to devote oneself to, to keep on, to persist in'"

4. The Church was Teaching

42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine
 "I don't need theology. Just give me Jesus!" "No creed but
 Christ." "Deeds, not creeds." These are common
 sentiments, but are they biblical?

When people repeat sayings like "Christianity is a life, not a doctrine," they are either buying into a cultural distaste for claims to absolute truth or pushing back on what they see as a dry, academic approach to the Bible.

Such statements reveal a misunderstanding of what doctrine is. Doctrine is simply a set of accepted beliefs held by a particular group. Biblical doctrine defines the parameters of Christian teaching on a given topic, such as God, sin, salvation, etc.

Dorothy Sayers' poignant book, *Letters to a Diminished Church: Passionate Arguments for the Relevance of Christian Doctrine*. With extraordinary wit and charm, Sayers forcefully argues that the church has become diminished, incapacitated, disabled if you will, because it has forsaken vital Christian doctrine which communicates the essence of Christianity; that is, the character of Christ who is "energetic, dramatic, and utterly alive." According to Sayers, Christian doctrine tells us the truth about God, ourselves, and our world. To forsake Christian doctrine, then, is not only perilous for the church, but it can also mean the unraveling of the very fabric of our society.

In the Summer of 2006, *Biola Connections* ran a front page article entitled, "The "D" Word: Has Doctrine Become the New Dirty Word?" Several professors from Talbot and Biola were interviewed for the article and together they gave some solid evidence concerning the diminishing role of doctrine in the evangelical church today. For example, a doctrine which the historic

Christian church from its very inception embraced is the Trinity. It is a crucial doctrine which gives explanation and insight into the nature of the Godhead. But as relationships take precedence over essential doctrines in the church, these explanations and insights seem less important.

The National Study of Youth and Religion, for example, found that nearly half of Protestant youth believe many religions may be true, and 36% of them think it is alright to pick and choose some aspects of the faith and leave the rest. Not only did this study reveal the selective approach which some young people have taken toward doctrine, it also highlighted the fact that many youth attend several different churches in order to seek out what best meets their needs. The study found that 16 percent of respondents participate in more than one church on a weekly basis. Many critics cite this as a consumerist approach to faith, void of any kind of loyalty and commitment.

Pastor Lee McFarland of The Radiant Church in Surprise, Arizona prides himself in his congregation's ability to lure people away from other potential weekend activities. How do they do it? Well, it is not by teaching the essential truths of the historic Christian faith, but by "meeting felt needs." McFarland says, "I am just trying to get people in the door." To that end, Jonathan Mahler, who interviewed McFarland for a New York Times Magazine article, notes that Radiant designed its new

55,000 square foot church to look more like a ski lodge than a place of worship. The foyer includes five 50 inch plasma-screen televisions, a bookstore and a café. The children's program is equipped with Xboxes (10 for fifth and sixth graders alone). The baptism pool is set at 101 degrees. McFarland says that some who have been baptized have said, "Leave me under; it's like taking a dip in the spa." McFarland indicates his reason for designing Radiant in this way: "We want the church to look like a mall. We want you to come in here and say, Dude, where's the cinema." This reason also demonstrates why his messages are light on doctrine and heavy on "successful principles of living...If Oprah and Dr. Phil are doing it, why shouldn't we? We should be better at it because we have the power of God to offer." In one of his most recent books, *The Transformation of American Religion: How We Actually Live Our Faith*, Alan Wolfe observes that "American faith has met American culture and American culture has triumphed.

According to Alan Gomes, Professor of Historical Theology at Talbot, the church's move away from doctrine began with the teachings of Frederick Schleiermacher (1768-1834), who taught that the goal of religion was to have a feeling of total dependence upon God. Doctrines which did not lend itself to feeling were considered unnecessary for the Christian life. But, as Sayers asks, if doctrine is irrelevant for the Christian life, to what indeed is it relevant? Christian doctrine matters intensely. After all, it concerns the true nature of the universe and the meaning of human life. These are hardly "trivial" matters.

In her penetrating and deeply insightful essay, *Creed or Chaos*, Dorothy Sayers minces no words as she puts her finger on the fundamental problem of trying to practice the Christian faith without knowing what it actually is all about: It is worse than useless for Christians to talk about the importance of Christian morality unless they are prepared to take their stand upon the fundamentals of Christian theology. It is a lie to say that dogma does not matter; it matters enormously. It is fatal to let people suppose that Christianity is only a mode of feeling; it is vitally necessary to insist that it is first and foremost a rational explanation of the universe. It is hopeless to offer Christianity as a vaguely idealistic aspiration of a simple and consoling kind; it is, on the contrary, a hard, tough, exacting, and complex doctrine, steeped in a drastic and uncompromising realism. And it is fatal to imagine that everybody knows quite well what Christianity is and needs only a little encouragement to practice it. The brutal fact is that in this nation not one person in a hundred has the faintest notion what the Church teaches about God or man or society or the person of Jesus Christ.

Sayers wrote these words in the mid-twentieth century and they were directed toward the Church of England. I think her words are even more relevant for us today who live in North America in the 21st century.

We have much to lose if we continue to ignore doctrine, not only in the church but in society as well. For if Christian doctrine communicates what is true about all reality: God, the universe, humanity, and society, then to

forsake Christian doctrine is to invite world chaos on a grand scale. This is serious, and if the church wants to be taken seriously, it must take its doctrine seriously. In other words, if we are to have any influence in our culture, if we are to carry out our mission to reach all people, especially those who are most vulnerable, then we must preach Jesus Christ and not simply Jesus.

Why Christian Doctrine Matters
By: Kathy McReynolds

1. Sound doctrine is important because *our faith is based on a specific message.*

The overall teaching of the church contains many elements, but the primary message is explicitly defined: “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures [and] . . . he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). This is the unambiguous good news, and it is “of first importance.” Change that message, and the basis of faith shifts from Christ to something else. Our eternal destiny depends upon hearing “the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation” (Ephesians 1:3; see also 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14).

2. Sound doctrine is important because *the gospel is a sacred trust.*

and we dare not tamper with God’s communication to the world. Our duty is to deliver the message, not to change it. Jude conveys an urgency in guarding the trust: “I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints” (Jude 1:3; see also Philippians 1:27). To “contend” carries the idea of strenuously fighting for

something, to give it everything you've got. The Bible includes a warning neither to add to nor subtract from God's Word (Revelation 22:18-19). Rather than alter the apostles' doctrine, we receive what has been passed down to us and keep it "as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 1:13).

3. Sound doctrine is important because *what we believe affects what we do.*

Behavior is an extension of theology, and there is a direct correlation between what we think and how we act. For example, two people stand on top of a bridge; one believes he can fly, and the other believes he cannot fly. Their next actions will be quite dissimilar. In the same way, a man who believes that there is no such thing as right and wrong will naturally behave differently from a man who believes in well-defined moral standards. In one of the Bible's lists of sins, things like rebellion, murder, lying, are mentioned. The list concludes with "whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine" (1 Timothy 1:9-10). In other words, true teaching promotes righteousness; sin flourishes where "the sound doctrine" is opposed.

4. Sound doctrine is important because *we must know truth in a world of falsehood.*

"Many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). There are tares among the wheat and wolves among the flock (Matthew 13:25; Acts 20:29). The best way to distinguish truth from falsehood is to know what the truth is.

5. Sound doctrine is important because *the end of sound doctrine is life.*

“Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers” (1 Timothy 4:16). Conversely, the end of unsound doctrine is destruction.

“Certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord” (Jude 1:4).

Changing God’s message of grace is a “godless” thing to do, and the condemnation for such a deed is severe. Preaching another gospel (“which is really no gospel at all”) carries an anathema: “let him be eternally condemned!” (see Galatians 1:6-9).

6. Sound doctrine is important because *it encourages believers.*

A love of God’s Word brings “great peace” (Psalm 119:165), and those “who proclaim peace . . . who proclaim salvation” are truly “beautiful” (Isaiah 52:7). A pastor “must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it” (Titus 1:9).

The word of wisdom is “Do not remove the ancient landmark which your fathers have set” (Proverbs 22:28, NKJV). If we can apply this to sound doctrine, the lesson is that we must preserve it intact. May we never stray from “the simplicity that is in Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:3).

42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine

Verses that show the emphasis of the NT on Doctrine

Titus 1:9 He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

Titus 2:1 But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine.

2 Timothy 4:2-4 Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

1 Timothy 6:3-5 If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain.

2 Timothy 4:3 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions,

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

1 Timothy 1:3 As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine,

2 Timothy 1:13 Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

Jude 1:3 Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

1 Timothy 4:16 Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.

Romans 16:17 I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them.

1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons,

Psalms 119:9 How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.

1 Timothy 6:20 O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called "knowledge,"

1 Corinthians 11:1-2 Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you.

2 Thessalonians 2:14-15

To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.

Galatians 1:8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.

Proverbs 4:2 For I give you good precepts; do not forsake my teaching.

Psalms 119:11 I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

Ephesians 4:13-15 Until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ...

Why are people unwilling to endure sound teaching? Because they love...what?...sin. Sound preaching confronts and rebukes sin and people with love for sinful life style will not tolerate it, they just want their ears tickled. Paul says we can't do that...we can't do that.

They want to be entertained. We can't do that. I think there are thousands of evangelical churches worldwide that can't even tolerate sound doctrine. They wouldn't listen to it for two weeks in a row because it would confront their sin, it would confront their error, convict them, call them to truth and obedience. They don't want healthy teaching. Why? Because they've been corrupted by the world. They don't want to give up their sinful life styles. They want someone who makes them feel good about the way they live.

And what do they want to hear? Ear tickling stuff and they will literally heap to themselves teachers who give them that stuff. In periods of unsettled faith, says one writer, and skepticism and mere curious speculation in matters of religion, teachers of all kinds swarm like the flies in Egypt and the demand creates the supply. The hearers invite and shake their own preachers. If the people desire a calf to worship, a ministerial calf maker is readily found.

This appetite for ear-tickling preaching has a terrible end. Verse 4 says these people will ultimately turn away their ears from the truth and be turned aside to myths. You see, ultimately their methodology causes them to be victimized by inerrant theology. They become victims of their own refusal to hear the truth. You show me a church where people say, "In order to reach people we're going to sublimate the truth," and I'll show you a church that in a very few years is going to be devoid of truth. They will have deprioritized it and they will be ignorant of it. They'll not

only not know it, they'll not want to know it...not believing it important. They will turn away and they'll be left with myths. That's happening in the church today, I believe. Evangelicalism has lost its tolerance for biblical preaching and now the church is flirting with serious doctrinal error. The church is throwing its arms open wide and embracing every kind of aberrant viewpoint. Christians madly pursue extrabiblical revelation in the form of prophecies and dreams. Preachers deny the reality of hell. The modern gospel promises heaven apart from holiness. Churches ignore the biblical teaching on women's roles, homosexuality and other issues that are somehow politically charged. The human medium has overtaken the divine message and this is evidence of a serious doctrinal compromise.

They want to be entertained. They want pleasant feelings, anecdotes, humor, psychology, motivational lectures, reassurance, positive thinking, self-congratulation, ego-massaging sermonettes and small talk, not biblical reproof, rebuke and exhortation. But the truth of God doesn't tickle your ears, it boxes them. It burns them.

At the height of the **Downgrade** Controversy, two weeks after he was censured by the Baptist Union, Charles Spurgeon preached a message. The title of the message was "Holding Fast the Faith." I wish I could read you all of it, let me read you some selected portions of this message he preached after this censure in which the Baptist Union disowned him because of his cries against the downgrade.

He closed the message at least with these words, "Everybody admires Luther. Yes, yes, but you do not want anyone else to do the same today. When you go to the zoological gardens you all admire the bear. But how would you like a bear at home? Or a bear wandering loose about the street? You tell me it would be unbearable. And no doubt you're right. So we admire a man who was firm in the faith, say 400 years ago. The past ages are a sort of bear pit or iron cage for him. But such a man today is a nuisance and must be put down. Call him a narrow-minded bigot or give him a worse name if you can think of one. Yet imagine that in those ages past, Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and their compeers had said, 'The world is out of order but if we try to set it right we shall only make a great row and get ourselves into disgrace. Let's go to our chambers, put on our nightcaps and sleep over the bad times and perhaps when we wake up things will have grown better.'

"Such conduct on their part would have entailed upon us a heritage of error. Age after age would have gone down into the infernal deeps and the pestiferous bogs of error would have swallowed all. These men loved the faith and the name of Jesus too well to see them trampled on. Note what we owe them and let us pay to our sons the debt we owe our fathers.

"Look, you sirs," he said, "there are ages yet to come. If the Lord does not speedily appear there will come another generation and another. And all these generations will be tainted and injured if we are not faithful to God and to His truth today. We have come to a turning point in the road. If we turn to the right, may hap our children and our grandchildren's children will go that way. But if we turn to the left, generations yet unborn will curse our names for having been unfaithful to God and His Word. I charge you, not only by your ancestry but by your posterity that you seek to win the commendation of your master that though you dwell where Satan's seat is you yet holdfast His name and do not deny His faith.

"God, grant us faithfulness for the sake of the souls around us. How is the world to be saved if the church is false to her Lord?

How are we to lift the masses if our fulcrum is removed? If our gospel is uncertain? What remains but increasing misery and despair. Stand fast, my beloved, in the name of God. I your brother in Christ entreat you to abide in the truth, quit yourselves like men, be strong, the Lord sustain you for Jesus' sake." And Spurgeon said and I say, "Amen."

Oh, what would some preachers do to get the people to hear them at all? Ah, what are they not doing, dear friends? As things now go, I should not wonder at all if we were to have, in some of our places of worship, a part of Mr. Barnum's show, in order to attract a congregation! We have all kinds of fiddling, and tinkering, and I know not what, going on to get people to come and hear what is called the gospel.

"Oh," said one, "but he brought so many to the place!" Yes, if they had had a clown out of the theatre, he would, no doubt, have brought still more. If that is all that you want,—simply to gather a crowd together,—it is not so very difficult if you are not squeamish about the means you employ. But, oh! when God sends the people to hear the gospel and nothing else, and they come and listen to what a man has to say to them about heaven and hell, life and death, the cross of Christ and the way of salvation, that is [a clear sign that God is at work].

Charles H. Spurgeon, "The Lord Leading; David Following"

IV. Christ Gives Purpose to His Church

- 1.To Serve**
- 2.To Share**
- 3.To Salt**
- 4.To Save**