

Subject: *The Importance of Biblical Doctrine*

Scripture: *1 Timothy 4:1-16*

We are going to put our study of Genesis on hold, and for the next few weeks and months we are going to consider what our church believes and teaches. We call it biblical doctrine. The message today will be an introduction to the messages to come, and hopefully will set down the foundation for other messages.

1. THE NEGLECT OF BIBLICAL DOCTRINE

Some would argue that doctrine doesn't really matter or that it's not important. Some would say that doctrine is even dangerous. Doctrine tears up a church, so they say. No, doctrine doesn't hurt a church, but resistance to biblical doctrine may hurt a church. Here are some common objections to teaching doctrine in the church:

A. Doctrine divides, but love unites

It's true that doctrine divides. It divides light from darkness and right from wrong. Adrian Rogers said: "It's better to be divided by truth than to be united by error."

B. Doctrine is boring and impractical

How can the teaching of God's Word be boring and impractical? There is nothing more practical and useful than knowing the truth of God's Word. We cannot live right unless we know what's right. A group of believers in the 16th and 17th centuries were known as the Puritans. They were godly people who were named Puritans by those who disliked them. But that name became a badge of honor. They were pure in doctrine and pure in their devotion.

C. Doctrine hinders evangelism and missions

The very definition of evangelism involves teaching Christian doctrine.

Matthew 28:19-20 ¹⁹ *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰ Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

Doctrine doesn't hinder evangelism and missions. It fuels evangelism and missions.

D. Doctrine is over the heads of most people

Jesus didn't think so. Paul and the apostles didn't think so. The bulk of Christian doctrine is found in the four gospels and the NT letters, written for all people and not just for scholars.

E. Doctrine confuses people, so just keep it simple

Some people say we need to focus on Christ and the Gospel, but we must understand who Christ is and what He did and we need to understand the Gospel. Christ and the Gospel are not opposed to biblical doctrine; they are a part of biblical doctrine.

2. THE NEED FOR BIBLICAL DOCTRINE

A. Doctrine is the primary purpose of Scripture

2 Timothy 3:16-17 ¹⁶ *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: ¹⁷ That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

B. Doctrine is important for the church

Acts 2:42 *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

Ephesians 4:14 *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.*

Colossians 2:7 *Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.*

Some say that the modern church doesn't need doctrine and should get beyond doctrine. Rather than getting away from doctrine, the church needs to get back to doctrine.

C. Doctrine is important for the pastor

For a pastor to say he's not interested in doctrine would be like a doctor to say he's not interested in anatomy. Doctrine is at the heart of what a pastor does. All we have to do is look at the New Testament and especially the Pastoral Epistles. The "apostles' doctrine" in Acts 2:42 is the teaching of the apostles that is recorded in the New Testament.

Acts 5:28 *Did not we strictly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.*

Acts 20:20-21 ²⁰ *And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, ²¹ Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1 Timothy 1:3; 2:1-4; 3:2; 3:15; 4:13-16; 5:17; 6:3-5

2 Timothy 1:13; 2:15-18; 2:25; 3:10; 3:16-17; 4:2-4

D. Doctrine is important for spiritual discernment

1 Timothy 4:1-7

In this passage Paul is dealing with a popular false teaching of that day called "Gnosticism." It taught that physical matter was evil and therefore that things physically pleasing to our human appetites were not spiritual and displeasing to God. How did Paul deal with it? He simply says, "That's not true." How did Paul know it was false teaching? He knew the truth.

E. Doctrine is important for spiritual health

Titus 1:7-9; 2:1

“Sound doctrine” is healthy doctrine. The word translated “sound” is where we get our English word “hygiene” (good health).

A pastor must teach God’s Word to people as they are. He is a delivery man, not an editor. He is a steward, one entrusted with the truth. He is a teacher of truth, not the source of truth.

How important is biblical doctrine to you and me?

The martyrs thought it was important enough to die for.

There are many missionaries and churches who believe it important enough to stand for and risk their freedom and their lives for.