

Is Doctrine Really Important?

Introduction

1. **Why do we not have joint activities with other religious groups?**

A. **Will members of various denominations go to Heaven?**

B. **Do members of churches of Christ think they are the only ones who are going to Heaven?**

2. **To put it in plain words – is doctrine really important?**

A. **The church has been dividing over doctrine since its infancy.**

1 John 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, **they would have continued with us**; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

B. **There are approximately 45,000 plus so-called Christian denominations registered in the U.S.A.**

3. **Over the centuries there have been organized movements to reunite churches.**

A. **In the 1960's the American Methodists, Episcopalians, United Presbyterians, and United Church of Christ denominations attempted to merge – but they only produced another denomination.**

B. **Major mergers were not made on the basis of agreement, but upon agreeing to disagree – to overlook their differences – to declare doctrine unimportant.**

- **The creation of ministerial alliance associations**

4. This is a prevalent attitude today!**A. People do not like to hear definitive statements, the truth.**

- 1) "In my opinion...."
- 2) "Well, I believe that...."

B. Moral relativism seeks to replace God's standard, the truth.

- 1) The words of Pilate are echoed by people today.

John 18:37-38 Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. **Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.**" Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?"

- 2) Men want what they want and seek to mold truth to grant their personal desires.

5. In the lesson this morning we will see four valuable truths:

- A. There IS absolute truth and we can know it.**
- B. God requires that man learn His truth.**
- C. God's truth must mold man's character and conduct.**
- D. God instructs His people to be unwavering in His doctrine.**

There Is Absolute Truth and We Can Know It

1. Jesus declared that people can know the truth.

John 8:32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

A. From this verse we learn at least four things:

- 1) **You will know the truth** – Truth does exist.
- 2) **You will know the truth** – Truth is singular ... one truth.
- 3) **You will know the truth** – One can have knowledge of that singular truth.
- 4) **The truth will make you free** – This singular truth has the power to free people.

2. Jesus declared that the words which He spoke were truth.

- A. **Jesus told Pilate:** "for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth."
- B. **Jesus prayed that Christians be set aside by God's word which is the truth.**

John 17:17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

- 1) **To be sanctified is to be** *"set aside for God's use."*
- 2) **We find God's sanctifying words in the holy scriptures.**
 - **We learn then, that the word of truth must be applied before sanctification can occur.**

C. Jesus affirmed that His words were truth from God.

John 8:45 But because **I tell the truth**, you do not believe Me.

John 12:49 For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me **gave Me a command**, what I should say and what I should speak.

1 Peter 4:11 If anyone speaks, let him **speak as the oracles of God**.....

D. Jesus sent His disciples out with that same message He had received.

John 16:13-15 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, **He will guide you into all truth**; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and **declare it to you**.

3. Truth is of God and He has revealed it to man.**A. God's word is truth:**

Psalms 119:160 The **entirety of Your word is truth**, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.

B. The problem is not that there is not truth, but that men reject truth.

Romans 1:18, 25

C. Just as straying from truth brought judgment on Israel, it will also bring judgment upon many who call themselves Christians today.

Jeremiah 5:3

God Requires That Man Learn His Truth

1. Knowing the truth is essential to salvation.

1 Timothy 2:3-4 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who **desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

A. One cannot be saved without faith in God.

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been **saved through faith**, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Galatians 3:26 For you are all sons of God **through faith** in Christ Jesus.

Hebrews 11:6 But **without faith it is impossible to please Him**, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

B. Faith ONLY comes as a result of knowledge. It is a direct response to learning.

Romans 10:14, 17

C. Therefore, without the doctrine of the gospel of Christ, one cannot be saved!

Romans 6:17-18

1) This is what Jesus meant when He said:

John 8:32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

2. Knowing the doctrine is essential to maturing in the faith.

A. God requires that His followers mature in the faith.

Hebrews 5:12-14 For though **by this time you ought to be teachers**, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Hebrews 6:1 Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, **let us go on to perfection**, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

B. The apostle Peter gives us clear instructions HOW we can mature.

1 Peter 2:2 as newborn babes, **desire the pure milk of the word**, that you may grow thereby,

C. Every office in the church is a teaching office.

Ephesians 4:11-12 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, **for the edifying of the body of Christ**,

3. Those who follow Christ must be willing to learn.

Matthew 11:28-30

A. Jesus considers the work He assigns to be "easy" **LEARN**

1) However, those in Christ must pull in His "yoke" and bear His "burden."

B. God requires that we put forth the effort to learn enough to be sure we are correct.

2 Timothy 2:15

1) The Christian is required to "study" "be diligent" (NKJV) in seeking God's approval.

2) Failure to do so is a cause "to be ashamed."

3) Being approved requires that one "accurately handling the word of truth."

God's Truth Must Mold Man's Character and Conduct

1. James instructs us that the word is only of value if we live it!

James 1:21-24

A. One must implant the word into his heart before he can know how to do it.

1) Just knowing the word is of no value if it is not applied.

2) **James 2:14-26** illustrates the validity of this doctrine.

B. Jesus put it clear and to the point "Why do you call me Lord, Lord and do not do what I say." (Luke 6:46)

2. Doctrine limits what we can do, say, or believe.

1 Corinthians 4:6 Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, **that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written**, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.

A. The attitude of many today is that I can do anything that is not expressly forbidden.

- 1) The man of God seeks to please God and to glorify God.
- 2) Principles are laid down by which conduct is determined.

3. Doctrine limits who we can fellowship.

Romans 16:17 Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, **contrary to the doctrine which you learned**, and avoid them.

A. There are some teachings which we are to learn.

- 1) We are not to fellowship those who do not accept those doctrines.

B. Paul defines the doctrine Christians are to follow:

1 Timothy 6:3 If anyone teaches otherwise and does not **consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ**, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness,

C. John the apostle reinforced what Paul taught.

2 John 7-11

4. When the Apostle Paul knew he was about to die, he wrote to his faithful student in the word, Timothy:

2 Timothy 4:1-4 I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. **For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.**

God Instructs That His People Be Unwavering in Doctrine

1. The doctrine that we are given is complete, we need no more.

A. If we have ALL things, we need nothing more.

2 Peter 1:3 as His divine power **has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness**, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,

B. After being delivered to us, the word was confirmed by signs.

Hebrews 2:3-4 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

Mark 16:20 And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and **confirming the word through the accompanying signs.**
Amen.

2. The doctrine, once delivered, must be taught and defended.

A. Elders are instructed:

Titus 1:9 **holding fast the faithful word** as he has been taught, that he may be able, **by sound doctrine**, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

B. The general membership of any congregation must be ready, willing, and able to defend the truth.

Jude 1:3 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you **exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith** which was once for all delivered to the saints.

Conclusion

1. It is very important to study the doctrines of the Bible because:

A. It is only in knowing the absolute truth that one can be set free from Satan.

B. God requires that man learn His truth.

C. God's truth must mold man's character and his conduct.

D. God instructs His people to be unwavering in doctrine.

2. It is only in obedience to God's truth that one can be saved.

John 8:32; Romans 10:17

3. Knowledge of the word of God is essential to keep one from slipping away.

Hebrews 2:1

Invitation

Place _____

Date _____

Is Doctrine Really Important.wpd
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