

Subject: *Why Doctrine Matters – Part 2*

Scripture: *1 Timothy 4:13-16*

Truth matters. Biblical truth matters most of all. When we speak of “Biblical doctrine” we mean the truth of the Bible or the fundamental truths of the Christian faith. These are Paul’s instructions to Timothy who was a young pastor of a local church. This was in effect his job description. As a pastor I have the unusual assignment of explaining my own job description. It says that a pastor should give attention to both to his life and his teaching (doctrine, vs. 13). There are two areas that require him to be faithful: his character and his convictions. These are vital because eternal salvation is at stake: the pastor’s own salvation and the salvation of people under his leadership. We can’t afford to be confused or ignorant. There’s too much at stake. The only way to overcome spiritual deception is truth, and the only way to avoid spiritual confusion is doctrinal clarity. Yes, doctrine matters.

1. THE NEGLECT OF BIBLICAL DOCTRINE

Some would argue that doctrine doesn’t really matter or that it’s not important. Some would even say that doctrine is even harmful or dangerous. Here are some objections to doctrine:

A. Doctrine divides people, but love unites

B. Doctrine is dull 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 through 19th centuries came to be known as the “Puritans.” These were godly men who earned the nickname “Puritan” (although it was used against them as a slur). They were pure in their doctrine and in their devotion to God. They walked the walk.

C. Doctrine gets in the way of evangelism and missions

You can’t do evangelism and missions without Biblical 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.*

Acts 5:28 *...ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine*

D. Doctrine is over the heads of most people

The Bible was written for every person, not just for the scholar, the professor, or the pastor. God doesn’t expect us to be Bible scholars, but He expects us to be Bible students.

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF BIBLICAL DOCTRINE

In the Pastoral Epistles, Paul often refers to “sound doctrine” or doctrine that is healthy and makes believers spiritually healthy. All teaching comes from one of three sources: man, Satan, or God. Bible doctrine is healthy, and all other doctrine is dangerous and deadly.

A. Doctrine is the main purpose of Scripture

2 Timothy 3:16 *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*

B. Teaching doctrine is a priority for the pastor

1 Timothy 4:16 *Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.*

1 Timothy 5:17 *Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine.*

2 Timothy 4:2-4² *Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*³ *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;*⁴ *And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*

C. Learning doctrine is a priority for the church

Acts 2:42 *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.* The apostles' doctrine has been recorded and preserved for us in the New Testament.

If the church neglected to teach sound doctrine, how could false teachers be rejected? How could believers what is true and worth holding on to? How could sin be confronted and corrected? Some people say the church needs to get beyond doctrine, when the church needs to get back to doctrine.

3. THE BENEFITS OF BIBLICAL DOCTRINE

A. Biblical doctrine brings spiritual freedom

John 8:31-32³¹ *Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;*³² *And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

We need to be free from sin, free from tradition, free from guilt, free from fear and superstition.

B. Biblical doctrine produces spiritual stability

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.*

C. Biblical doctrine empowers personal testimony

1 Peter 3:15 *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.*

D. Biblical doctrine provides spiritual discernment

1 Timothy 4:1-5 ¹ *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; ² Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; ³ Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. ⁴ For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: ⁵ For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.*

In this passage Paul was dealing with a popular false teaching in Bible times called Gnosticism. It taught that matter was evil and therefore things that were physically pleasing to our human appetites like marriage and eating certain foods were displeasing to God. How does Paul deal with it? He simply says, "That's not true." How did Paul know it was false teaching? He knew the truth.

E. Biblical doctrine furnishes spiritual nourishment

1 Timothy 4:6 *If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.*