

“Sound Doctrine”  
Titus 2:1  
(Preached at Trinity, January 26, 2020)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Several years ago we identified what we call the “Seven Distinctives of our Church.” These distinctives have become the heart of our mission. You might call them our mission statement in brief.
2. As we begin a new year it is excellent to stop and evaluate, to perhaps realign our church and recommit ourselves to these distinctives. They are really just marks of a New Testament church and they must remain a major priority for our church.
3. The last two weeks we’ve examined our first distinctive—Christ Centered. It is at the heart of our church and it governs all of our other distinctives. If Jesus Christ is not the Head of our church we are not a church.  
**Colossians 1:18 NAU** - "He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything."  
We might also say, if Jesus Christ is not the Lord of your life you are not a Christian.  
**Romans 10:9 NAU** - "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved"
4. This morning I want to direct your attention to our second distinctive—Sound Doctrine. While it is true that our first distinctive is chief, we can also say that the second distinctive also governs and directs the other distinctives of our church
5. In His Epistle to Titus Paul warned of the danger of false teachers:  
**Titus 1:10-11 NAU** - "For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, <sup>11</sup> who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not *teach* for the sake of sordid gain."
  - A. And then he admonished Titus:  
**Titus 2:1 NAU** - "But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine."
  - B. The word for “sound” is from a word which refers to good health. After Jesus healed the centurion’s servant we read:  
**Luke 7:10 NAU** - "When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health."
  - C. Sound doctrine is that which actually feeds the soul. It maintains the health of the church. This must be our focus. This is the charge to every NT church, every NT pastor, every Christian.  
Whatever else we may claim about our church if our doctrine is not sound we are not a healthy church.  
We must teach sound doctrine which is able to save souls and feed and edify the brethren.

I. The source of sound doctrine

- A. The Bible is the foundation of the doctrines of our church  
**2 Timothy 3:16-17 NAU** - " All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; <sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."
1. Sound doctrine is God's instruction to us about Himself. The source of this instruction is the Bible, the Word of God. The Bible is inerrant and infallible.
  2. The Bible is our sole authority for faith and practice – thus saith the Lord LBC Chapter 1:10  
 "The supreme judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Scripture delivered by the Spirit, into which Scripture so delivered, our faith is finally resolved."
  3. As the "Pillar and ground of the truth" the church has been entrusted with the Bible. We are to protect it and defend it and preach it with boldness.  
**Jude 1:3 NAU** - "Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints."  
 The word for "contend" implies a strenuous struggle.
  4. This was the great emphasis regained by the Protestant Reformation
    - a. The medieval church had become drowned in ritual. The Word of God had become buried by tradition.
    - b. Luther and Calvin regained the preeminence of Scripture. The pulpit was placed in the center of the building where the Word of God could be thundered before God's people and they would be drawn to worship Him in the fullness of His attributes.
    - c. One of the great cries of the Reformation was Sola Scriptura
  3. We must examine every practice of our church under the lens of Scripture.
- B. Consistent with our Reformed heritage, we also recognize the importance of historic confessions of faith
1. Our Confession of Faith describes what we believe about the essential doctrines of the faith. Reformed Protestants have long seen the value of Confessions to maintain the integrity of our doctrinal beliefs.
  2. Jim Renihan writes: "As confessional Christians, we are convinced that our Confession of Faith summarizes the system of doctrine contained in the Holy Scriptures. Confessions of faith have a long and noble history in the life of Christ's church. After the days of the Apostles, as the fledgling church grew and spread, it faced challenges, both from within its ranks and through errors creeping in from outside. Following the well-established pattern of Scripture, the leaders of the churches wrote creeds and confessions to express in clear and definitive terms the 'faith once for all delivered to the saints.'"<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> James M. Renihan, Richard C. Barcellos, *Recovering our Confessional Heritage*, (Palmdale: RBAP, 2017), Page 11.

3. Robert Martin adds: “A confession is a useful means for the public affirmation and defense of truth. Credal formulation is part of the public teaching task of the church. A confession of faith is a public definition to those outside of our congregations of the central issues of our faith, a testimony to the world of the faith which we hold in distinction from others. It is also a helpful instrument in the public instruction of the congregation. A confession is a body of divinity in a small compass which can be used to give our people a broad exposure to truth, as well as a hedge against error.”<sup>2</sup>

## II. The importance of sound doctrine

### A. Everything in our church is dependent upon the soundness of our doctrine

1. We cannot know God in an atmosphere void of sound doctrine  
In Mark Dever’s book, “Nine Marks of a Healthy Church”<sup>3</sup> he describes a healthy church as having a Biblical understanding of God:  
*The God of the Bible is a Creating God*  
*The God of the Bible is a Holy God*  
*The God of the Bible is a Faithful God*  
*The God of the Bible is a Loving God*  
*The God of the Bible is a Sovereign God*  
This is sound doctrine - everything in our church depends on it.  
Our Distinctives flow forth from this principle of Sound Doctrine.
2. Our church is “Christ Centered” but you can’t claim the centrality of Christ if you don’t know who He is. You can’t know who He is except through His revelation of Himself in His Word. You must have sound doctrine regarding the person and work of Christ.
3. Our church maintains “Biblical Worship” but you cannot rightly worship God apart from sound doctrine  
Jesus described Biblical worship as worshipping in Spirit and truth.
  - a. God will not allow us to worship Him according to our own imagination. He will not allow us to consider Him as someone other than He is.
  - b. God must be worshipped in truth. What is our source of truth?
4. Our church values “Expository Preaching” but expository preaching has an eye upon the Biblical text in order to maintain doctrinal balance and stability. Expository preaching is an exposition of the Biblical text.
5. Our church holds to “Personal Holiness” but holiness is the living out of the precepts of Scripture.
6. We are a “Loving Community” but such a body finds its full expression in the love and unity that demands the maintenance of sound doctrine.
7. Our church maintains a “Commitment to Evangelism” but we cannot proclaim the Gospel without sound doctrine. The Gospel depends upon the right preaching of the person and work of Christ.

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<sup>2</sup> Samuel Waldron, *A Modern Exposition of the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith*, (Webster: Evangelical Press, 2005), Pages 16-17.

<sup>3</sup> Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, (Wheaton: Crossway, 2004), Pages 60-75.

- B. Sound doctrine is our defense against false doctrine. The best way to expose what is false is by speaking the truth.
1. John Calvin wrote: “Trifles vanish away, when that which is solid is taught.”<sup>4</sup>
  2. Again, doctrine is God’s instruction about Himself. God is jealous for His glory. False doctrine is misrepresenting God.
    - a. False doctrine is like a cancer or gangrene. False teaching in one area of theology affects others. The Gospel can be eroded and souls can be lost.
    - b. No one can claim perfection in their doctrine. This side of glory all of us have flaws in our theology. We cannot find comfort in the ignorance shared by fallen humanity. We must guard carefully against allowing error to creep in.
    - c. Error is something we must never take lightly. James warns of the weightiness of being a teacher.  
**James 3:1 NAU** - "Let not many *of you* become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment."
    - d. Jesus gave a solemn warning against leading others astray  
**Luke 17:1-2 NAU** - "He said to His disciples, "It is inevitable that stumbling blocks come, but woe to him through whom they come! <sup>2</sup> "It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea, than that he would cause one of these little ones to stumble."
  3. False doctrine has always been a danger to the church.  
 The Bible teaches that the prevalence of false doctrine will increase more and more until Jesus comes back.  
**Matthew 24:24 NAU** - "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect."  
**2 Timothy 4:2-4 NAU** - "preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. <sup>3</sup> For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, <sup>4</sup> and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths."  
**2 Peter 2:1-2** – “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.”

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<sup>4</sup> John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries, Vol.1*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2003), Page 309.

4. We must resist the modern love affair with shallow simplicity, church life void of doctrinal integrity, and greater emphasis on feelings than Biblical truth.
- C. As a church we must give high priority to the integrity of our doctrine
1. We can only prosper as we rightly preach and teach the word of truth. Our church can only grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ if we are being built up upon sound doctrine.
  2. A church can only enjoy true unity as they share a common faith. Doctrinal error erodes that faith.  
**Ephesians 4:3-6 NAU** - "being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup> *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all."
  3. We must also be careful to hold sound doctrine before the world. The church has been greatly weakened today as sound doctrine has been eroded. We've lost our strong voice upon the world.

#### Conclusion:

1. As we continue to examine the distinctives of our church we must not fail to see how each one impacts the others. I pointed this out last week as we considered the centrality of Christ in our church. He must be the focus of everything.
2. We must also understand how our doctrine affects everything in our church. Your doctrine will affect your behavior. Paul often taught doctrine in the first half of his letters and then applied it practically in the second half – that is, he explained how doctrine affects how we live.
3. We need to pray that God will protect our church in future generations. That we will always make doctrine a high priority and seek out men who will faithfully proclaim it.  
**Titus 1:9 NAU** - "holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict."  
Paul's words to Timothy:  
**1 Timothy 4:6 NAU** - "In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, *constantly* nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following."
4. We need to teach our children the importance of sound doctrine and train them up in sound doctrine. We must lead them to place great value upon it in our church, so that in future generations they will uphold it and to be prepared to suffer in defense of it.
5. And give yourself to the daily investment of training yourself in sound doctrine. It will bear the fruit of righteousness and equip you in your daily battle with the evil one.  
**Jude 1:3 NAU** - "Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints."
6. This is the substance of the final paragraph of our Covenant.  
*I moreover promise that when I remove from this place, I will as soon as possible unite with another church of like faith and practice where I can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.*