
SOUND DOCTRINE

Most preachers I know are sound in doctrine. Hard to get along with; but, sound, nonetheless. They have a healthy teaching of salvation by grace, through faith. They immerse only those who profess a testimony of trusting Jesus Christ; having been saved (Only '**dead-to-sin**' people can be Scriptural **buried**, Romans 6).

Paul knew something about healthy doctrine; for it was doctrinal truth that brought Paul comfort from all the worldly woes he endured. Sound Doctrine allowed him to overcome all the trials and live a productive life for his Lord, Jesus.

In 2 Corinthians 11, Paul recounts some of his mental, physical and social sufferings he endured. He knew that this wasn't just a job. His love, for Christ and for the lost; as well as, his care for the local churches was extraordinarily Spiritual. The cost of his labors, imprisonments, beatings and near-deaths were worth whatever he went through, (V 23).

On his frequent journeys, Paul underwent dangers of rivers, robbers, countrymen, Gentiles, wilderness, seas and false brethren (V 26). It wasn't an easy life back then. Often, Paul was in hardship, without sleep, food and water; even suffering cold and exposure to the elements (V 27).

How can one do these things? Why would one do these things? In beautiful and Spiritual verse, Paul explains to us about convictions, preaching the gospel and, about "**the daily pressure upon me of concern for the all the churches,**" (V28). "**Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern?**" (V 29).

"**Boasting is necessary, though it is not profitable,**" Paul explains in chapter 12, verse 1. Paul did not seek credit for what God was doing through him, but he understood how easy it is to pat oneself on the back. To avoid this, God allowed "**a messenger of Satan to buffet**" the apostle (12:7) - to keep him from self-exaltation.

The result of Sound Doctrine is finalized by finding contentment in service. "**Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong,**" (12:10).

Paul explains that it's the calling that moves the servant to serve. "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me...putting me into service," 1st Timothy 1:12.

And, what is our service? Paul explains, "It is a trustworthy statement...that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. And yet for this reason (mercy given to the worst sinner) I found mercy, in order that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience, as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life," 1 Timothy 1:15, 16. Every one of us has a witness to uphold. Is it Christ; or, me?

SOUND DOCTRINE IS TO BE KEPT "Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you," 2 Timothy 1:13, 14.

TIME WILL WEAR ON SOUND DOCTRINE IF WE ARE NOT CAREFUL. "For the time will come when they (laity) will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths," 2 Timothy 4:3, 4. Why are there so many different ways offered, today?

A PASTOR (Overseer) MUST BE OF SOUND DOCTRINE

"...holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in **SOUND DOCTRINE** and refute those who contradict," Titus 1:9.

"But as for you (Titus), speak the things which are fitting for **SOUND DOCTRINE**," Titus 2:1.

In Paul's letter to Titus, specific instruction is laid out for each member.

OLDER MEN: Temperate, dignified, sound in faith, love and perseverance.

OLDER WOMEN: Reverent behavior, non-gossipers, teaching younger women to love their husbands and children.

YOUNG MEN: Sensible, example of good deeds, purity in doctrine, dignified.

EMPLOYEES: Obediently do your job. Be well pleasing, not argumentative. Don't be lazy, stealing time from the boss.

SOUND DOCTRINE NOT LIMITED TO PAUL, THE APOSTLE

Nor are trial and tribulations. Every servant will have some problems until the Second Coming. Trials, Peter says, are the "...proof of your faith, being much more precious than gold which is perishable" (1st Peter 1:7).

The outcome of faith, and its proof, thereof is "...the salvation of your souls," Peter says in 1:9. Again, why suffer hardships for Christ and insist on SOUND DOCTRINE; especially if all the saved are members of the church?

A deeper and clearer question would be: '**Why would anyone give up the calling in Christ Jesus?**' For an easier, feel-good approach? For someone special? For fellowship with others? Sound Doctrine overrides deception.

SOUND DOCTRINE is not Paul's, Peter's or ours. It isn't even that of Jesus. "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself," John 7:16, 17.

"...all the multitude were astonished at His teaching," Mark 11:18b. And, they still are. They ask, 'Do you think you're the only ones going to heaven?' Our reply is, No! But, if anyone is saved, they are saved by the blood of Christ, nothing else. That's SOUND DOCTRINE.

The multitudes remain in a daze over baptism; but, immersion is the only means acceptable. The ordinance, once understood, allows a believer to deny himself by burial and raise up out of the burial and into service, living unto Christ (See Romans 6).

A proper candidate for baptism is one that has been saved. He wants to follow Christ and requests immersion by the only institution that has authority, the local church. Remember, the two chosen from the church to be deacons had to have the baptism that began with John, the Baptist (Acts 2:22).

Multitudes are in a constant fog when it comes to the location of the government of the church and that of the coming kingdom. Both are on earth. The church, now - any where it meets; not Rome, Salt Lake or Mecca. And, the Kingdom will come to earth, headquartered in Jerusalem, when Jesus sets His feet on the Mount of Olives to rule and reign. It's when the "meek shall inherit the earth" (Mt 5:5) and when "Thy Kingdom come" (Mt 6:10).

SOUND DOCTRINE is a serious matter because it is eternal. I never doubt anyone's faith or dedication. Yet, when considered as a whole, sound doctrine requires that one builds upon the foundation of Christ in a proper manner (See 1 Cor 3).

Indeed, **SOUND DOCTRINE** is the cry of Christ, the LORD. He pleads for everyone to listen to what the Spirit says unto the churches (See Revelation,

chapters 2 & 3). The church is the only recognized witness on the earth since it began, and remains the only true witness until Jesus comes for Her. "I will be with you, even until the end of the age," Mt 28:20.

Clearly, Paul established New Covenant Churches. Just as clear, he wrote letters to them to reassure the authority of the church and each members position within the church. To the Church of Ephesus, Paul wrote: "to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever," 3:21.

He added, "I, therefore the prisoner of the LORD, entreat you to walk in the manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called," Ephesians 4:1.