

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Theology Bites–Introduction

Selected Passages

PowerPoint Presentation: None

Keywords: Sound Doctrine, False Teaching, Theology, Obedience, Truth, Holiness

SermonAudio blurb:

I. Introduction.

- A. In 2014 Lifeway Christian Research at the request of Ligonier Ministries conducted a very large survey regarding basic points regarding the Christian faith.
 - 1. Questions focused on seven key doctrinal areas ranging from God and the goodness of man to the Church and authority.
 - 2. This was not limited to merely professing Christians but to adult Americans. The goal was to see where the nation’s adults differed from orthodox Christian doctrine and faith.
- B. The value for us is two-fold:
 - 1. First we are about to have a sense of what an average American you and I relate with actually believes. That we might not assume that when they say something that it means the same thing as we might think it does.
 - 2. Second we are able to consider certain truths that the bible clearly teaches and be confronted ourselves regarding what it is that we believe.
- C. Certain things are clear from this study. And this introductory sermon is designed to lay down a foundation from which we will explore the various questions from the survey and what should be the proper answers.
- D. The following is a survey of the responses to various questions:
 - 1. “The bible is 100% accurate in all that it teaches.” 43% agree.
 - 2. “The bible was written for each person to interpret as they choose.” 45% agree.
 - 3. “Salvation is found in Jesus Christ alone.” 53% agree.
 - 4. “The bible, like all sacred writings, contains helpful accounts of ancient myths but is not literally true.” 41% agree.
 - 5. “There are many ways to heaven.” 45% agree 11% Evangelicals agree.

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6. “There will be people in heaven who have never heard of Jesus Christ.” 41% agree, 26% Evangelicals.
 7. “A person obtains peace with God by first taking the initiative to seek God and then God responds with grace.” 64% agree, 68% Evangelicals.
 8. “An individual must contribute his/her own effort for personal salvation.” 71% agree, 54% Evangelicals.
 9. This is what pluralism looks like. No truth, no absolutes, just opinions.
- E. The centrality of the Church is also lost in the minds of many.
1. 30% of Evangelicals agree that private, personal worship or worshipping at home with family members is a valid replacement for the gathering of the local church for worship.
 2. Only 7% of the Evangelicals and 8% of everyone polled believe that the local church has the authority to declare that a person is not a Christian.
 3. 41% of Evangelicals believe that the sermons of their pastor are authoritative in their lives.

II. The problem in the Church.

- A. This is not happening in a vacuum. The Church in America is sick and desperately corrupt.
1. One man described it as living in a new Dark Ages, where the people are kept ignorant of biblical truth—R. C. Sproul.
 2. Pastors are actively choosing to be anything and everything other than a theologian.
 3. They are CEO’s, counselors, life coaches and such but they cannot teach sound doctrine because they do not know it.
- B. The Church is not teaching sound doctrine and it must stop.
1. I cannot stress this enough. This attack is not from outside the church, it is from within it.
 - a. Acts 20:25-31.
 - (1) The fact of his permanent departure (25).
 - (2) The declaration of his faithfulness in teaching the Word (26-27).
 - (3) The responsibility of the leaders to guard the church (28).

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- (4) The testimony of imminent attacks upon the church (29).
 - (5) The reality of these attacks being against truth (30).
 - (6) A final plea (31).
 - b. Religious pluralism is rampant in the Church and the idea that there is something that is true or false is not readily accepted by professing Christians.
 - c. The reality is that the mind set of many is that everyone is a theologian.
 - (1) In one sense this is true for all of us live out what we truly believe although this is usually an unconscious act.
 - (2) But in another sense, this idea where the average Christian assumes they are a theologian is deadly.
 - (a) Too many have settled assumptions that are not really based off of sound study of the bible.
 - (b) In fact most Christians believe or reject things simply because it is in accordance to their tradition rather than a biblical-wrought conviction.
 - i) Example, baptism or deity of Jesus Christ.
 - ii) The result of this is that the church is ripe for false teaching and usually incapable to pointing it out until it is too late.
 - iii) In other words, the American church is not capable of obeying the admonition of Paul in Acts 20.
- C. Humanism pervades the Church.
- 1. In the secular world humanism is simply the idea that humanity is the final measure of all things. Therefore he is a law unto himself and therefore his mind and reason is not subservient to anything else.
 - 2. In the religious, pseudo-Christian world humanism merely moves biblical absolutes to the side. What one believes is only one aspect of their human existence. The human still stands supreme to determine on their own what is true or not.

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3. It is this reality of religious humanism that is driving much of the current way “church” gets done for the last few decades.
 - a. The whole idea of being relevant flows from the belief that sound theology is not helpful nor good for the people in a church.
 - b. Broad doctrinal statements are favored over specific ones so as to not create any firestorms.
 - c. So we believe that the bible is God’s word but not really going to say what that means in any specific way.
 - d. God wants us to be saved but not sure exactly saved from what or when. You need to believe in Jesus but not clear what “believe” means nor is it real clear what about Jesus we are to believe.
- D. The bible is replete with warnings to this effect.
 1. Note the statement by the Apostle Paul to Timothy (1 Timothy 1:3).
 2. This issue of truth is and always will be the root issue. Always we shall have attacks on truth (Genesis 3:1-5).
 3. 2 Timothy 4:3-4.
 - a. First, note that it is a wilful choice by the church.
 - b. Second, these false and weak teachers only find a place to flourish when the church welcomes them.
 - c. Third, for the true shepherd/teacher, accommodation is not optional.
 - d. Fourth, the groundwork that prepares a church to become like this is the lack of true holiness (2 Timothy 3:1ff).
 - (1) This sort of congregation will not tolerate sound doctrine for long.
 - (2) The point of authority shifts from the Word to the pew, which never is good.

III. The necessity of sound doctrine.

- A. Ezra 7:10 with Nehemiah 8:1-8.
 1. Note Ezra’s commitment first to applying the Word of God to himself and then to instruct plainly the people.
 2. This loss of the Word did not happen in some mystery.

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- a. Amos was a shepherd from Judah in the days of Isaiah and Micah. He prophesied against the Northern kingdom of Israel.
 - b. "Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord GOD, "When I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, But rather for hearing the words of the LORD. People will stagger from sea to sea And from the north even to the east; They will go to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, But they will not find it. (Amos 8:11-12)
 - c. Only by the grace of God did the nation of Israel again hear the Word.
- B. John 17:17 is part of the prayer of our Lord.
- C. Perhaps the most forgotten part of the great commission of our Lord is Matthew 28:20.
- D. We love to quote John 3:16 but what do we do with John 3:36? How does one obey what they are not taught?
- E. Last Sunday we heard in Psalm 19 that the Word of God alone is able to make the simple wise and to make the dead alive.
- F. In the Pastoral Epistles there is a term that is used repeatedly—"sound."
1. It is the word we get "hygiene" from.
 2. It speaks to that which is healthy and is used to refer to proper, sound, or healthy teaching/doctrine.
 3. Sound teaching is intrinsically unpopular which is why Paul must constantly remind those teaching to not stray from it.
 - a. 1 Timothy 1:10.
 - b. 1 Timothy 4:13 — the bible must be the centerpiece of the gathering of the Church.
 - c. 2 Timothy 4:1-2, 5 — this is not merely for pastors, it is for each person who desires to speak into the lives of others with the Word of God. This is the task of every mother and father here.
 - d. Titus is filled with admonitions about sound doctrine. It is always contrasted with foolish teachings, controversies, disputes that are taught by rebellious people who are empty talkers and deceivers.
 - e. Titus 2:1ff.

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- (1) The beginning and end of the chapter is bracketed by a strong command to “speak.”
- (2) “But as for you. . .” could apply to each of us here, a challenge to be different with what we say and withhold.
- (3) But notice in vs 1 that the command is not to teach sound doctrine rather it is to teach what is fitting for sound doctrine.
 - (a) He has already dealt with the need for sound doctrine in 1:9.
 - (b) Here he is building off of that. Sound theology drives sound speaking and teaching. It is the spring board for that which is good for the health of the church.
 - (c) This involves the application of sound doctrine into the lives of the people. Helping them think through how truth intersects with the way they spend their time, how they speak, what they do, how they handle money or view events around them.
 - (d) Notice how Paul gives examples in vss 2-10. Notice especially vss 5, 8 and 10.
 - (e) Note how vss 11-14 is again an application of what the gospel calls us to both believe and then become and do.

IV. Conclusion.

- A. We are rapidly moving toward a time of intolerance for truth. Not from outside the Church but inside.
- B. Part of the vision and purpose of Missio Dei Fellowship is to be a blessing to our city.
 1. At one level this is simply us being good citizens and seeking the welfare of the people of our cities we live in.
 2. But at the ultimate level it is first the hold fast to sound doctrine and then instructing others in it, starting with the gospel of salvation and then into the fulness of the Word of God.

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3. We are being the greatest blessing when we bring to people what the Apostle Peter calls the “pure milk of the Word” by which he says we grow in respect to salvation.
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Community Group Questions

- **What are ways we guard ourselves from false and poor doctrine? What are the ways God has given us to do so?**
- **What challenges lie before you to grow in sound doctrine? What strategy for 2015 do you have to grow in doctrine?**
- **Read Hebrews 13:7 and 17. First ask yourself if you believe these passages? Then answer how you obey them (they are commands)? What are the ways you make it easy for your leaders to speak the Word to you and to joyfully give watch over your soul?**