

Why Doctrine Matters

**A study of what doctrine is and why you
should care**

The basic meaning of doctrine is a set of beliefs that a group adheres to. It is a wide-ranging word that can be applied to everything from political interests to religious ones. As such, everyone at one time or another ascribes to a doctrine, even if they could not articulate it clearly. We all operate every day guided by some set of beliefs or teachings that shape how we see the world and our place in it. These beliefs, like the rudder on a ship, can set a person's life in any number of directions.

For example, if I hold the belief (doctrine) of existentialism which teaches that life is meaningless, I would easily be swayed into fatalist thinking and behavior. If on the other hand, I embrace the belief that the meaning of life is to experience as much pleasure as I can (the doctrine of hedonism), I would be likely to pursue all kinds of sin and debauchery. While these examples may represent a set of extremes, the fact remains that we all ascribe to some type of doctrine that gives direction to how we think and act.

For the purposes of our study, we are going to focus in specifically on Christian or Biblical doctrine and address the question of why doctrine matters.

SERMON NOTES – Why doctrine matters – pt. 1

2 Timothy 4:1-5 – “I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus...preach the Word... – *NASB*

1. We are commanded to _____
sound doctrine
 - a. This requires _____
 - b. This requires _____

2. We are commanded to _____
sound doctrine

3. We are commanded to _____
sound doctrine

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

The church's relationship to doctrine is not passive. God has established for us what truth is and truth always demands a response. The statistics cited in the message this week however indicate that many church goers have a rather disconnected view of doctrine in their daily lives.

This disconnect has far reaching implications for the church. Unmoored from sound doctrine church leaders begin to define success in terms of popularity and numbers. Congregants adopt the attitude we are warned about in 2 Timothy 4:3. Eventually we find ourselves drifting from church fad to church fad chasing an ever-shrinking crowd.

The remedy for this shift requires every person in the local church. It cannot be solved by the pastor alone or by members alone. It requires a all of us to expect sound teaching and accept sound teaching. It requires we all maintain an attitude of humility and a teachable spirit. God has commanded nothing less, will we obey?

THINK ABOUT IT

1. Consider the statistics mentioned in the message: 94% of church goers assume sound doctrine is being taught but only 44% say the bible matters to them personally.
 - a. Do you think this is accurate in your experience? Why or why not?
 - b. What is the danger with assuming sound doctrine is being taught but not knowing your bible?
 - c. Read Acts 17:10-11. What lesson can we learn from these verses?
2. Although Paul's instructions are to Timothy the pastor, how might we apply this passage to the whole church?

SERMON NOTES – Why doctrine matters – pt. 2

2 Timothy 4:1-5 – “...for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine...” – *NASB*

1. Doctrine is _____

2. Doctrine _____
what it means to be a Christian

3. Doctrine promotes _____

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

I wonder what would happen if you surveyed the average church goer in America and asked them to define what the church is. I imagine you would get all manner of answers. For example, some might highlight the importance of fellowship and belonging. Others would point to the many ways a church might serve its community. Still others might talk about it being the place they go to worship God. And these are all good things for sure. A church should be a place where people feel a sense of genuine community. And it should be a gathering of people who desire to serve their neighbors in love. Certainly, corporate worship is a good answer too.

I wonder though, how many people would you have to survey to hear the church defined by what it believes. Would the descriptions of community, fellowship, service, and worship be rooted in the doctrines of the church in the minds of those you might speak to? If not, the church runs the risk of becoming shallow and superficial. Our fellowship, service, and worship held together not by the unchanging truth of Scripture but by our own preferences and interests. This is church with us at the center rather than Jesus. Then it is not church at all.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

I am old enough to remember life before smart phones and GPS navigation. When I was a teenager, it just seemed like you knew how to get places, or you would get directions. It was no big deal to set off for some new place with only a few turning directions and landmarks to guide your way. When I moved from Pennsylvania to attend Crown College, I set out with a Rand McNally atlas in my front seat and told my family I would call when I arrived in a couple of days. I remember turning the page to which ever state I was entering and finding a road that looked like it was going where I wanted to get. When Michelle and I got married computers were more common place and we thought we had it made when we could map out our route beforehand, print the map, and have her navigate for me. We had more than one argument about whose fault it was if I blew past our exit.

Now of course things are different. Our phones can map our course, alert us to road closures, police ahead, or objects on the road in real time. We are given ample warning and exact distances to our next turn or exit. In truth it would be hard to go back. Now that we know how useful the technology is we would undoubtedly feel a bit apprehensive if someone told us to travel without it.

How marvelous God's love for us is. He knew this world would be a tangle of dangerous detours and hidden obstacles for us as navigate toward home. And so, He has given us His Word to guide us and His Spirit to lead us. How sad it is when we ignore this divine "GPS" for the rudimentary and unreliable methods of the world to give our lives direction.

THINK ABOUT IT

1. Read Matthew 7:24-29

- a. What similarities existed for these two men?

- b. What was the major difference between them?

2. Read James 1:22-24

- a. What is the emphasis of this passage?

- b. Relate this to the role sound doctrine plays in how we live our lives?

SERMON NOTES – Why doctrine matters – pts. 4

2 Timothy 4:5-8 - "...do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry." - *NASB*

1. Doctrine drives the _____
of the church

2. It is a mission of _____

3. It is a mission of _____

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Missio Dei is a theological term that emphasizes the truth that mission is not just something the church does but something that God is doing through His church. Our God is a sending God. The Father sent the Son; the Son and Father have sent the Holy Spirit. And God has sent the church into the world to proclaim the gospel.

While this concept is widely accepted and even celebrated by most who call themselves Christian, the practical outworking of this often comes up short. Today it is common to elevate the mission even while holding wrong beliefs about the One who has sent us on this mission. The work of ministry has too often become an end unto itself rather than an extension of our worship and service to God.

By holding a low view of doctrine or ignoring it all together we have diminished core truths critical to the gospel mission. Issues such as the universal reality of sin, God's holiness, and the end of those who deny Christ are set aside for more palatable talking points. I am grateful for the emphasis by many today on calling the church to take up the *Missio Dei*, the mission of God. I just pray we don't forget God in pursuit of the mission.

SERMON NOTES – Doctrine in the home

Ephesians 6:1-4 - “Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” - *NASB*

1. Sound doctrine produces _____
in the home

2. Sound doctrine produces good _____

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

i. _____ our
children

ii. _____ our
children

iii. _____ our
children

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Michelle likes to switch out the pictures in the frames around our house from time to time. The other day I noticed a small framed picture of her and the four kids from a dozen years ago had been placed on the counter in the kitchen. I picked it up and stared at it for a while. A sense of melancholy and longing swept over me. I suddenly wanted my kids all with me right then and there. My mind raced back through time and I felt like I had to recapture every memory I could before they were gone. It is true what they say, when it comes to raising kids, the days are long but the years are fast.

As I revisit those long-ago days in my mind against the backdrop of this week's message, I find some memories put a smile on my face. The times when harmony marked our home and we were enjoying each other. Other memories gave me a twinge of regret or sadness. The time I was not as gentle a father as I could have been. Or the times my children were persisting in disobedience. The saving grace to it all is knowing that God was still good and at work in our family. I am not a perfect parent, and my kids are not perfect children. But our heavenly Father is perfect, and He has lovingly designed the home for our good. How much better it is when we follow His design.

SERMON NOTES – The source of doctrine

2 Timothy 3:12-17 – “All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable...” - *NASB*

1. The Bible is a _____ book

2. The Bible is a _____ book

3. The Bible is a _____ book

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

There is a lot of talk these days about “misinformation” and “disinformation”. It seems to me these two words would be good candidates for the most overused words in American discourse. If someone on the other side says something you don’t agree with it is “misinformation”. It is not that I deny the proliferation of such dubious information or the motives behind such efforts. It is just that there used to be a simpler word for it, a lie. So addicted to euphemisms is our culture that we cannot even call a lie a lie, it is simply “misinformed”.

This is but one example of how relying on a myriad of sources to define truth has led us down a dangerous path. When we as individuals or as a society accept as truth something other than the Word of God, we eventually can’t even tell truth from lies. The Bible stands apart from all other books. As Christians we need to hold it high. We need to stand firmly on its truth. It is ok to wrestle with the hard places, but it is not ok to set it aside for lesser things.

Sermon notes answer key

Teach
Preparation
Boldness
Guard
Pass on

Foundational
Defines
Unity

Direction
Sin
False teaching
Worship

Mission
Evangelism
Service

Harmony
Character
Obedience
Honor
Gentleness
Encourages
Nurtures
Disciplines

Timeless
Holy
Useful