

# 1 Corinthians Overview

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[ 0 : 00 ] I want you to think for just a second about the idea of the Apollo 13 mission. They blew an oxygen tank, and they had to figure out a way back to Earth.

And to do so, the people on the ground were figuring out all kinds of things, computations and everything. And they figured out this idea of slingshotting them around the moon and making it back to Earth.

But they had to do certain burns and things in order to get the trajectory right of the ship so that they didn't bounce off the atmosphere and go back off out into space.

That was one of their grave concerns. Because the trajectory is so vital to their survival, getting it right is important.

The same can be said for the Gospel. It's very easy to get the Gospel wrong by just a minute thing. And because of that, it puts it on a completely different trajectory.

[ 1 : 05 ] You know, if you have two lines that are starting here and one's just skewed a little bit, by the time you get out here, you're off so far, right? The book of 1 Corinthians is Paul writing to the Christians there, helping to correct the trajectory that they're on.

Because they've gotten off. And because they've gotten off, a lot of problems are showing up. So Paul is writing in order to bring those problems and their theology back to where it needs to be. Correcting the course so that they live the right way. So as we open up today, we want to just give the big picture of what's going on for the Corinthian church, what's going on for their theology, the problems that they're facing, and how the book is laid out dealing with each of these four problems. The city of Corinth is something you kind of need to know about. And as we go through the study, I'll reveal more and more and more about the city.

But just to give you the basics of it, this is a city that's been around since 44 B.C., right? 44 to 46 B.C. is when it was founded. It's an extremely cosmopolitan city.

[ 2 : 27 ] You've got to think cosmopolitan. So it's big. It's diverse. They have got people from all over the world. They've got all kinds of different influences that are coming into this world.

The diversity of religion is massive. They had 26 different temples to 26 different deities in the city. It was extremely religious. It was extremely diverse in its philosophy. The thing about the philosophy that's often difficult for us to grasp, because for us, philosophy feels like some sort of dead old study, but really we deal with philosophy all the time.

If you'll think about it, and you'll think about things politically, you know that in, say, like the Republican Party, you've got various branches of that Republican Party, some that are extremely conservative, limited government, this kind of a thing, some that lean towards more of a populist idea.

Then you have some that are sort of in the middle, moderate, leaning towards a more liberal idea. But they all make up the Republican Party. There's just various branches of it. The Democratic Party is the same way, right?

[ 3 : 42 ] They have some branches in there as well. All of that is built upon philosophy. It's all built on certain ideologies and ideas and thoughts. So that's what I'm talking about.

This city had a diversity of philosophies. And that became a massive thing because they didn't have any entertainment, right? They didn't have Netflix or anything like that.

So what did they have? They had people who were of these various philosophies who were very good orators. And for fun, you would go to the amphitheater and you'd listen to somebody give a speech.

That's what you did for fun. And so Corinth is known for that kind of a thing. It is also known for debauchery. It was an extremely sexualized culture.

They were so debauched in so much of what they did. The church then is a church that Paul himself planted.

[ 4 : 46 ] We see in the book of Acts chapter 18 that he's going there and his first foray is not very successful. There's lots of turmoil that happens.

But he is encouraged by the Lord to stay there. And I think this is a fascinating verse. In Acts chapter 18, it says, In other words, God is telling him, listen, don't give up.

There are people here who are my people that I want saved and I want you to go in there and I want you to preach. Don't give up. There's going to be success. So Paul stays, plants this church, and pastors this church for 18 months.

Right? So he's the founding pastor of this church, preaches to them, teaches to them, gives them the truth, helps them to know how they ought to live. But the problem happens that because of the way the culture is in Corinth, they begin to doubt.

After Paul leaves, other guys come in and begin to teach. They begin to doubt Paul. And they begin to think to themselves that we've graduated from Paul.

[ 6 : 11 ] Paul gave us a nice little foundation, but really there are more truths, a lot more spiritual truths for us to know. And so they begin to shift off of the truth towards other things, and that's where the problems arise.

And you can see this tension between Paul and the Corinthians in a couple of places. There's more than this, and we'll get to them as we go. But in this one, Paul tells them, he says, but with me it's a very little thing that I should be judged by you.

They are judging him. They are thinking to themselves, like, Paul, yeah, he's our founding pastor, but, like, he's not very eloquent.

He's kind of a redneck, and so we just don't really bring him around anymore, think about the things that he's talking about. But Paul is just like, I don't care if you judge me. I don't judge myself.

Right? So there's this tension that's there. It goes on, and he says that there are some arrogant as though I were not coming to you, but I will come to you soon. And if the Lord wills, I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people, but their power.

[ 7 : 21 ] So you see the tension, right? There's this tension, this division, if you will, between Paul and the Corinthians. The reason that's important is because if you just read 1 Corinthians and you don't look carefully at things, you'll think that the only place that division is happening is between the people.

But the reason that the division is happening between the people is because of this deeper problem with Paul. So they're shifting off this gospel.

They're shifting away from the truth, and that brings up four problems, which gives us four reasons to study the book of 1 Corinthians. So the first problem, and this is a problem for any of us, right? We could go this way too. If we shift off the gospel, we could have these problems. And the first one is that we tend towards disunity. Now that's chapters 1 through 4, Paul's basically dealing with and pointing out all of their division, saying, when you shift off the gospel, you're going to end up with disunity.

That's what's going to happen. And so this becomes for us a reason to study, because what happens with this disunity or how this disunity can be solved is by listening to the things or the wisdom of God that Paul's going to bring forward in chapters 1 through 4.

[ 8 : 44 ] to help us understand how we ought to live. We see this disunity not only between the church and Paul, but we do see it between Paul, between the members of the congregation in the very first chapter.

I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and same judgment.

You see how many words he uses to talk about this unity, right? Whether it's negative or positive, he talks about divisions and united, same mind, same judgment.

For it's been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you. So they got a problem. They got a big old problem. And this division is causing trouble.

And what is Paul's solution? Paul's solution is to get to the gospel, to go back over the truth, the power, the wisdom of the gospel to help them understand. Because there is no unity apart from the gospel.

[ 9 : 50 ] There's no unity apart from the gospel. If we do not have the gospel, then we don't have unity. And that's such an important point that I just want to encourage you to think about that so many times what happens is that we think to ourselves that if we're just nice and we don't point out differences or we don't talk about theology, then we're okay.

But listen, the gospel is theology. And to get the gospel right, we've got to understand who we're talking about. We've got to understand who we are in this.

Because if you've got two people who view, just think of it this way. If you've got two people, both say the same thing about who Jesus is.

But one says that to be saved is by faith alone. And one says, no, you have to have faith and works.

That would be like the people, the NASA on the ground with Apollo 13 in computations, one from the perspective that the earth is round and one from the perspective that the earth is flat.

Those computations are going to come out differently. Those two cannot agree together because they have a disagreement in how a person is saved. We have to get the gospel right.

[ 11 : 14 ] So how do we deal with that? How are we going to, and what are we going to see with Paul? How are we going to get the gospel right? How are we going to make sure that we do that?

And let me give you three things. First, we need the scriptures. We need the scriptures. If we're going to stay united on the gospel, we need the scriptures.

And the why we need the scriptures is because the scriptures are the foundation to everything. And when I say this, I'm talking about we need our lives saturated with the scriptures.

Matter of fact, I would say get you a couple of different translations. Sometimes people get stuck on one translation, and that's all they ever use. You are missing the riches of the scriptures by not looking at other translations.

Now, you don't have to buy something. They're all available on the internet for free. Okay? You can go to Bible Gateway, and you can find probably 50 different English translations.

[ 12 : 16 ] Read from other translations. Because what's going to happen is it's going to help you get a better sense of what a passage is meaning because you see the different ways that people have translated it.

The reason this is important is because if we don't study the scriptures, read the scriptures, know the scriptures ourselves, how are we going to know that we're right about the gospel?

The second thing that we need is we need a confession of faith. A confession of faith is also called a creed or doctrinal statement. Most churches have one that they have adopted.

Our church and our constitution, we have not adopted one. But my point is not so much about our church needs to adopt one. What I'm saying is that you need to hold to a confession of faith.

The reason that's important is because a confession of faith, here's what a confession of faith does. It says, God. Well, I believe this about God based on this scripture.

[ 13 : 21 ] I believe this about God based on this scripture. I believe this about God based on this scripture. That's what a confession of faith does. It's a written form. That's no different than me standing up here and saying we believe that God is Trinity and then quoting scriptures to you as to why we think that.

Right? It's the same thing. Except it's a written form and it becomes something that we as a body can then coalesce around. Right? We can be united around saying, listen, these are the things we believe scripture teaches.

And that brings unity to a body. Right? Because we're seeing the truth and we're living there. You just have to understand that a confession of faith always lives under the scriptures.

The scriptures are supreme. A confession of faith can be changed because maybe we don't agree with this one statement out of all of it. And so we need to change that one to match what the scriptures teach.

The point is, is that with that confession of faith, you have something that helps you keep all of this mass amount of belief together in one place. So you can go test things.

[ 14 : 30 ] So when people ask you questions, you got an answer because you know what you believe. It's right there, black and white. The third thing that we need is a questioning mindset. A questioning mindset.

And for this, I want to point you to the example of the Bereans in Acts chapter 17. The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea.

And when they arrived, they went to the Jewish synagogue. Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica. They received the word with all eagerness, examining the scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

So here's what happens. One pastor comes, another pastor goes, and another pastor comes. That's just the nature of what happens in a church.

So you got one pastor preaching, and when he leaves, the next one who comes, if you don't know your scriptures, and you don't have a confession of faith, then he could be teaching anything, and you might go like, well, I've never heard that.

[15:35] Well, if you have the scriptures, and you're saturated with it, and you've got a confession of faith, and he's teaching something opposite of the confession of faith, you immediately can begin to question and go like, now, wait a minute.

You're saying something that I don't see in the scriptures, and I don't see in a confession of faith. I need to be somebody of a questioning mindset to say, prove it to me. Let's look at the scriptures and see if what you're saying is so.

And if it doesn't match, then it's not something that you need to just willy-nilly believe. Just listen, let me ask you this. Do you trust me in what I'm saying when I'm preaching and teaching?

Well, in one sense, you should, but in another sense, you should not. You should hold me to a standard.

You should look at the scriptures and go, I don't think the scriptures teach that. But you're going to have to look at the scriptures, right? Because I'm going to go to the scriptures, and I'm going to say, well, I actually believe that, and here are the scriptures that I'm looking at.

[16:42] And then we're going to have a discussion about, do those scriptures mean that? The point is, is this, is that for a church to maintain its unity, it's not the pastor that keeps that unity.

It's the truth of God and who God is and Christ himself that keeps that unity by us continuing to believe that truth. So we want to hold on to that truth, and we want to be sure that we stay united because of that.

Now, here's you a test question, okay? It's test time. Let's see if you can remember it, okay? There are three things I told you that we needed to do to stave off disunity.

What are those three things? Scriptures, confession of faith, and a questioning mindset. Man, y'all are great students.

Look at that. That's awesome. That's perfect. That's perfect. Now, when we get to the end, I'll have one more question for you, and you can't look at your notes for that one.

[17:50] Just give you a heads up. So when Paul writes chapters 1 through 4, that's what he's dealing with, their disunity, and he's showing them how to solve it, okay? The second thing that happens when we shift off the gospel is that we tend towards depravity.

We tend towards depravity. Now, let me define depravity for you. Depravity is a word we use to describe our sinful state.

So if I have lots of sin, I am depraved. It's just a word that we use to describe that.

But Paul's pointing it out because, typically, this is the idea that this person is really sinful, and the Corinthian church was really sinful. And in chapters 5 through chapter half of 10, he deals with their depravity.

He points out their depravity, and he tells them how to deal with it. So if we're going to know how to deal with our own depravity, we're going to have to read these chapters to understand how do we handle this thing.

[18:58] Let me just give you an example. In chapters 5 and 6, he's dealing with their sexual sin. They've got all kinds of sexual sin going on. He shows them how to deal with it.

In chapter 6, he deals with Christians who are suing other Christians. Christians taking Christians to court in front of Gentile unbelievers and letting unbelievers decide this dispute between Christians. Now, this is the case where, like, Christians ought not ever sue other Christians. Now, you might not have ever heard that, might not have ever known that, but that's something Scripture teaches. And that's what they're doing, so Paul helps them to solve that problem as well. Then in chapter 7, they deal with issues of marriage, divorce, and singleness. And one of the problems that they had is that because they had graduated from Paul and they had become more spiritual, okay?

Now, that word right there, you ought to write that word down, spiritual. They thought that they were some of the most spiritual people on the planet because they had graduated from Paul, gone on to

new and better teachers that were helping them to arrive at new spiritual heights and planes, so much so that some of the women were saying that they didn't need their man anymore, and so they were divorcing willy-nilly because I'm so spiritual, I don't need to be married anymore.

[ 20 : 30 ] That was a part of their issue. And so Paul takes that to task and says, listen, this is not how you ought to live, right? In chapter 8, 9, and 10, or that part of 10, they have a problem with idolatry.

Now, you can imagine in a city with 26 temples to all these other deities, that idolatry might be a problem, but the big problem for the Corinthians is that that culture was having a barbecue to Zeus all the time and the Christians were going.

And so what do you do about this idolatry? This is their depravity on display. These people were so prideful about their depravity, that part of their problem is not just the sexual sin of chapter 5, but they were actually proud of the guy who was committing the sexual sin.

They had forgotten the gospel. They had forgotten the point of the death of Christ. They had forgotten that they were to live in light of the gospel. They were rejecting Paul and his teachings, and therefore they had fallen in all manner of sin.

And this just brings home the point that as a body of believers, our living a holy life is important. And it's important for two reasons.

[ 21 : 56 ] Number one, because if we don't live holy as members of First Baptist Church, then we affect our witness in the community.

If we have depravity just running amok among us, then who in this community is going to want to be there?

I remember the girl that I talked to one time who told me she would never go to church because she remembers going to the bar and seeing Deacon so-and-so making a fool of himself at the bar, getting drunk and all kinds of things.

And she had gone to church one Sunday and saw this guy in the pulpit praying for the beginning of the service. And she's just like, that's just incongruous. That doesn't match. It doesn't.

The other thing is this, is that if we don't live holy lives, if we don't live holy lives, then we're going to begin to muddy the gospel. We're going to begin to muddy the gospel.

[ 22 : 55 ] Because not only is our witness affected, but then even what we say, people are not going to understand what we say because they're looking at how we live and they're going to think to themselves this, well, you think you can get fire insurance and then live however you want to.

You ever heard that? Yeah. Yeah, that's what Baptists are accused of all the time. People say all the time that Baptists, well, you just think you can pray a prayer, get your fire insurance, and then you can live however you want to because God's going to forgive you and already forgiven you anyway.

But that's not the truth. We can't live any way we want to. And that's not what we believe. Yet, it begins to muddy the gospel. This is why, and Paul's going to deal with this some too, this is why at the Lord's Supper, I talk about the bread and the cup the way I do.

Because in the Lord's Supper, you have a picture for how to live a holy life. Right? First, you have the bread. The bread is the negative part. Right? And what happens to the negative part?

He takes our place. Right? I should be the one to die, but he died for me. So his body was broken for me. Then you have the positive part.

[ 24 : 12 ] The positive part is in the cup, and it's promises made, like forgiveness, the law written on the heart, him being my God. So it's not just taking my place, but it's giving me something I didn't have before.

And his death, the cup represents that in his death, he's given me these things. He's purchased these things for me. So I can live a holy life, because one, I'm not enchained or enslaved by my former life, because it's been forgiven.

And now I have all of these promises of the new covenant that are poured out in me, and by the work of the Holy Spirit, I can live a holy life. That's one of the reasons that I emphasize that every time, is to remind us of what we have in Christ.

And so Paul deals with their depravity in this way. So let me ask you another test question. What is one danger in a congregation, a church, lacking holiness?

I mentioned two. Just give me one. If we don't have holy lives, we muddy the gospel.

[ 25 : 22 ] That's one. Can anybody give me another one? One. One. That's right. It affects the witness in the community.

Good job. Good job. Good job. Good job. All right. Any questions about either of these two points we've hit so far? Okay. Let's go to the third one then. So shifting off the gospel affects their devotion as well.

They end up with a wrong devotion. Now I'm using the word devotion to signify the idea of our worship, because in chapters 10, half of 10, through chapter 14, Paul deals with the externals of church worship and the internal heart of worship.

He deals with the external things related to worship and the internal heart of worship. He's going to deal with things related to the Lord's Supper, because one of the things you have is you have rich Christians looking down on poor Christians.

He's going to deal with the idea of spiritual gifts, because those who think that they're gifted, the spirituals, end up looking down on those who are not gifted as though they were less Christians.

[ 26 : 44 ] And so this rejection of Paul and the truth means that they just begin to run off and do what they want to in worship rather than doing what God has commanded.

Now historically, there are two ways to think about things. Here's the question. The question is, who gets to determine what a specific church does in their formal meetings together?

Who gets to decide that? Well, historically, there have been two answers to this question. The first answer is, well, anything that God does not forbid, we can do.

Anything that God does not forbid, we can do. Now, I want you to think about that for a second. Can you think of anything that God has forbidden that you think would be terrible to do in worship?

Worship Satan. He has never said, don't worship Satan. Not explicitly.

[ 27 : 52 ] But we might can make the case with idols, right? Have no other gods before me. There's actually quite a bit.

There's a story. I told this story last night, and I'll tell the story today, and I will tell the story again in a couple of Sundays on Sunday morning because we're going to come back to this issue.

In Florida, years ago, this pastor at this church decided that for his sermon, he was going to dress up as a clown. So he had all the clown makeup on and everything.

And his sermon would be wordless. And so he just pantomimed things that he needed to do.

And that was the whole sermon. Now, here's the thing. Has God, just at the basic, has God ever forbidden for pastors to dress up or to do wordless sermons?

[ 29 : 00 ] Has he ever forbidden that? No. No. But that's a terrible way to make decisions because he also has not forbidden things like, you know, foregoing the sermon and doing something else instead.

He has not forbidden bringing motorcycles into the worship service. He's forbidden, you know, having, I mean, you could just go on and on the list. The point is this, is that that is not the way we decide what a church does for worship.

We don't look at it and say, well, God didn't tell us no. How would that go with your parents? But you didn't tell me I couldn't. Get in trouble still, right?

The way that we're supposed to do this is that we're to decide what we do in worship based upon what God has positively told us to do. So for instance, I won't prove it today, but we could prove this.

There are only four things that God has commanded for us to do in our worship. He's commanded us to sing, to pray, to read the scriptures, and to preach.

[ 30 : 11 ] And preaching involves words. You can't have a wordless sermon. There's no authorization for that anywhere in the word at all.

Sing, pray, read, and preach. Now those two views, God didn't say no.

That's actually got a historical name to it. It's called the normative principle of worship. And most of those people would try to keep controls on things and keep things bad from happening. But this is why so many churches have gone liberal.

This is sort of a Lutheran idea, and you can see a lot of Lutheran churches going pretty far liberal. It's the normative principle of worship. The other way is called the regulative principle of worship.

We're regulated. God has given us regulations about how to do things. God has told us what we ought to do. As a matter of fact, there's a verse in Hebrews, Hebrews chapter 9, and in this verse, it's interesting to me because he says, now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and

an earthly place of holiness.

[ 31 : 25 ] Now what he's saying here is that he's talking about the difference between the new covenant and the old covenant. It's very clear that in the old covenant, they had regulations for worship.

That's the book of Leviticus. Right? How to do the sacrifice, what kind of sacrifice, why you're bringing it, all these details and explanations of what he had to do. Here's the key point in this verse.

Now even. Now even, being there in the text means that the new covenant also has regulations. Just because it's the new covenant doesn't mean that we are not commanded about how we worship. It's just that now how we worship is the substance of things and not the shadow.

That's why we sing the word, we pray the word, we read the word, we preach the word because we have Christ front and center. We don't have to do all of these regulations.

[ 32 : 29 ] Right? Because they were pointing forward to the real thing. So, as the Corinthians come along, what happens is that they think they can just do anything in worship.

They think they can have any sort of heart attitude and in chapters 10 through 14 Paul corrects them. Paul tells them, no, this is what you've got to do in worship with these things that you're talking about and you shouldn't do anything else.

What it does is it makes for us, as we start to look at this, it begins to help us see that the most important part of our week is Sunday morning.

The most important part of a Christian's life is Sunday morning Resurrection Sunday because every Sunday is Resurrection Sunday, right? Christ rose upon the first day of the week.

That's why it's Resurrection Sunday. There, let me, look, now I won't go down that path. I'll just reign it in. We'll come back. I just want you to have this concept and this idea that Sunday morning worship or Sunday worship, whatever time it is, it doesn't matter, but Sunday worship ought to be the center of your week and everything else planned out from that.

[ 33 : 45 ] And what we don't do as Americans is that. We tend, we tend to look at family time as the center and we plan things out from there.

And that is not the way we as Christians ought to live. So, let's have another test. There are two ways we can decide what to do in worship.

What are those two ways? One's right and one's wrong. Regulated, that's right, that's the right one. And the other?

Normative. God didn't say no, so we should be able to do it. No, not at all. All right. Any questions about that? Okay.

So, that brings us to the end of 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and 16. They're shifting off Paul, graduating from Paul, so they're off of the gospel, their trajectory is wrong, and what happens is they get wrong doctrine.

[ 34 : 52 ] So, they have some wrong doctrine that they're believing and even though he's been doing doctrine throughout the whole book, there's some specific doctrines that he's waited to get to right here in 15 and 16.

And, how many of you have read 1 Corinthians 15? Do you know, and does it stick in your mind, anything that's in 1 Corinthians 15?

It could have been a while since you read it if you're, you know, reading through the Bible or something. Well, let me give you a clue of a couple of doctrines that they've got problems with, okay? Things that he corrects them about, things that he teaches them about and gives lots of explanation for.

Are you ready for this? The gospel. He tells them what the gospel is. There's a, there's a verse in 1 Corinthians 15.

He says, I have delivered to you what was given to me, what's of first importance that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised according to the scriptures, and he appeared to many, and he lists off all these names of people that he appeared to because they weren't getting the gospel right.

[ 36 : 03 ] Secondly, the resurrection. They were saying that the resurrection had already happened and if you're a Christian, you missed it.

And so you are, the way you're going to be for eternity. And Paul said, listen, if we aren't raised up, then Christ isn't raised up and if Christ isn't raised up, we have no hope.

So they had no idea what to believe about the resurrection. So he corrects them about the resurrection. Then he corrects them about second coming and the kingdom of God. And then he corrects them about how it is we die and our bodies and the change that happens with that related to the second coming.

And he gets into missionary work in chapter 16. So they're not just wrong about peripheral doctrines. I mean, like if you're wrong about the mode of baptism, okay, think about this.

As Baptists, we believe the mode ought to be immersion. sprinkling. But if you're wrong about that and it ought to be sprinkling, no harm, right?

[ 37 : 14 ] I mean, if I dunk somebody versus sprinkling somebody, there's nothing in scripture that tells us that that's going to be, oh, you're condemned to hell now because you sprinkled somebody instead of dunking them. there's nothing at all.

But if you get the gospel wrong, you get the second coming wrong, you get the resurrection wrong, man, that's tough. That's tough. This means then that we've got to study doctrine.

We have to understand theology. I was teaching a school class to a group of older men one time and I was teaching through the book of Job. And as we're going through Job, we're talking about different doctrinal things that are coming up out of the text.

And I had one guy raise his hand and this is what he said to me. He says, you know, I don't think talking about all this doctrine stuff really helps anyone. I think we just need to talk about Jesus and leave all that doctrine stuff for seminaries.

Now, I did not answer the way that I wished to answer because he was older than me and I wanted to be respectful. I tried to give an answer that would be gentle and yet also share truth.

[ 38 : 31 ] But here's what I was thinking in my head. You just want to talk about Jesus, okay? Which one? You want to talk about the Jesus who's 100% man?

Or do you want to talk about the Jesus who's below God, but the best of God's creations? Or do you want to talk about the Jesus who was once a human and is now divine because he obeyed God so well?

Or do you want to talk about the Jesus who is simply a prophet of God and the Messiah, but not divine, and he didn't die? Or do you want to talk about the Jesus who simply looked like he had a body, but he was really a ghost?

Or do you want to talk about the Jesus who was an excellent teacher but was not really divine.

Those are all doctrinal statements. Those are all doctrinal things. And each one of those is a different religion, right? You got Muslims there, you got Jehovah's Witness, you got Mormons, you got Gnostics, you got, I mean, all kinds of things. So when somebody says, we just need to talk about Jesus, the very next question of, well, which Jesus, now you're doing doctrine. Now you're doing, you can't help it. If you read a verse of scripture and you say, I believe this means you're doing doctrine. We can't help it. It's just the nature of it. You can't just read it and say, well, that's it. I just read it. Well, what does it mean? Well, I'm not going to tell you what it means. I'm just going to read it. We got to know what it means. And so the only question is not so much of, you know, can we do doctrine? Should we do doctrine? The only question really is, are you a good theologian?

[ 40 : 20 ] Are you using the scriptures properly to get doctrine so that we believe the right things? I'm telling you, I've been in a Southern Baptist since I was born and Southern Baptists as a whole have a tendency to not like to talk about doctrine because in their mind, doctrine is the problem.

Doctrine divides, but it's not doctrine that divides. It's false doctrine that divides. So we need to become good theologians, which means we go back to the beginning. I want you to think about Paul for just a second. One of the ways we try to understand how to apply the Bible to our lives is we try to understand who's who in the story. For example, if you think about David and Goliath, right, one of the things that I've said over and over again is don't think of yourself as David in order to apply that passage to your life. Think of yourself as the fearful Israelites, right? Then you get the right doctrinal application of that text. Here's the question. Paul was pastor of this church. So what's the modern day equivalent to Paul? Not me. Not me and not any pastor.

The modern day equivalent is that Bible right there. That's the modern day equivalent. Because Paul, even though he's a pastor, he was an apostle receiving revelation from God and teaching the very words of God himself, writing them down and giving them to us. As a matter of fact, most of the New Testament comes from the pen of the apostle Paul. And so the point is, is that for us to be sure that we don't get any of these problems that the Corinthians had where they're wrong doctrine, wrong devotion, depravity, disunity, is we got to go back and get back on Paul. We got to go back to

the scriptures and be sure we build our lives on the scriptures, which means we got to know how to read it.

And then we got to read it. And then we got to apply it. We got to listen to the preaching and teaching. That's the whole reason I'm here is not because you're trying to trust me, but I'm trying to help you understand the scriptures. And so long as I'm doing that, then I'm doing my job. If I'm not doing that, if I'm muddying it or I'm teaching other weird things out there, then I'm not doing my job. You know, my job is to help you understand the scriptures so that you can build your life to treasure Christ.