

The Importance Of Sound Doctrine

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[0:00] Let's take your Bibles and open up to Titus. Titus and we'll be peeking at chapter 2 today. So as we pick up today, so it's been a few weeks since we've been in Titus, but I hope you haven't forgotten too much of it.

We spent about, you know, nine weeks in chapter 1. And I think the elders thought I was going to continue with that, thus they're both not here today. They were just tired of getting beat up every single week as we talked about the role of elders.

But no, that is not what we're at. We have studied that and looked at that thoroughly. The role and qualifications of elders, their purpose in the church.

And then as we are now finishing up, if we finished up chapter 1, rolling into chapter 2, there is a shift in focus in the letter here.

So chapter 1 focused on establishing leadership of the church and their role and purpose, especially protecting against false teachers. And then chapter 2 is going to focus on the sanctification of the church and the work of discipleship in the church.

[1:15] And all of it flows together because discipleship happens when the Word of God is opened. When the Word of God is opened and preached or taught or read, you can be sure that discipleship is taking place to some degree.

And we're going to dig into the topic of discipleship and what that looks like in the local church. I'm going to encourage you with some things in the weeks to come. But today we're going to look particularly at the importance of sound doctrine.

The importance of sound doctrine. As I mentioned at the end of chapter 1, we saw there a railing condemnation against false teachers in the church.

Go back to that. Titus 1 verse 16. Apostle Paul writes that they, these false teachers, profess to know God, but they deny Him by their works.

They are detestable, disobedient, and unfit for any good work. And that is quite the statement to make by Paul because if you recall, the particular individuals that he's talking of or speaking about are what we would know as Judaizers.

[2:27] We're talking about those who are either Jewish in background and believe you need to keep the law of Moses even after coming to Christ. And so basically the keeping of the law, that is a works-based salvation.

That is a works-based religion, of course. And so what he's saying is they profess to know God, but they deny Him by their works.

And of course because the grace that is given to us by Christ and the offer of salvation through the death and burial and resurrection of Christ, that is grace and not works, at least not any work that we ourselves can do and accomplish.

So this is quite a statement made by Paul. And, you know, these false teachers, they represent the opposite of what a good elder is to be in the church, naturally.

In fact, they can never lead to the building up of the body of Christ. I mean, these are statements that I'm making that should be clear, right? You have somebody who's a false teacher or believing a false doctrine and trying to spread that among the body of Christ.

[3:36] That can never lead to the building up of the body because it's a poison. It's a poison that can only make sick or kill the local assembly when you allow false teaching to any degree to take place within the church.

And so that's why the role of the elder is so important, to protect the sheep and to teach and preach sound doctrine. So Paul's going to exhort, as we see here in chapter 2, verse 1, he's going to exhort Titus in the life that he is to live and to what end that's going to be.

He says in verse 1, so this is a direct lead-in from verse 16 of chapter 1 to verse 1 of chapter 2. He says, but as for you, so these guys, these false teachers professing to know God, denying Him by their works, they're detestable, disobedient, they're unfit for any good work, but as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine.

Teach what accords to sound doctrine. But for you, this contrasts the false teachers in the church to what Titus is being called to do in teaching what accords to sound doctrine.

So what does that mean, to teach what accords to sound doctrine? You might write that off as being, oh, it just means teach sound doctrine. Kind of, yeah, but it's about more than that.

[4:59] It's about being consistent. See, the word teach is the Greek word *laleo*, which emphasizes the idea of ordinary conversation. You know, kind of how you would talk to somebody else, just conversing back and forth.

That is the focal point of that word to teach. Now, King James and the New American Standard, they don't say teach, they say speak.

Speak the things that accord with sound doctrine. So Titus is being instructed to speak about right living as it relates to right doctrine.

And this coincides with the expectation of an elder in Titus 1.9, where it says the elder is to, he must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine, and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

So the idea here that Paul is telling Titus is like, as you talk to people and as you are, as you're living your life ultimately, may it be according to sound doctrine.

[6:06] May it be consistent with what the word of God calls you to do and instructs you to do. So basically, Titus, don't just get up there and read the word and speak the word and preach the word, but live it as well and show it in your words and how you speak.

And Titus was to be aggressive in speaking about godly living based on sound doctrine. Because if you have false teachers in the church, and they're there, Paul makes it known, he doesn't say, if you come across them or they might come.

Remember, we talked about that like, you know, seven weeks ago or whatever it was. You know, that the fact is that they were already there, these false teachers. They already had some sort of platform.

They already had a rapport with the people in the church. They already had an influence going on. And so Titus and the elders that he's establishing there in Crete, they're going to have to speak out against them.

They have to speak up and be louder than them and be consistent in what the truth is, what the word of God is. He was to give regular and careful pastoral instruction about practical Christian living and about godly attitudes and actions that result from believing and obeying divine truth.

[7:29] As I was prepping for today and thinking about this, I was thinking about like, we live in a time in our nation where politics drives everything.

And politics is also driving the church in many ways. And so you get people who are feeling like, well, should politics be in the church?

You know, that's a question and, you know, a debate that can go on. You know, should it ever be raised or should we ignore it and continue on? And this is the way I feel about it. You don't hear me. You know, I'm not up here, you know, endorsing candidates.

I'm not telling you who to vote for and all that stuff. But what I do hope to get and tell you is you need to be careful about who you're voting for and what you're propagating and promoting.

And I think for me, one of the biggest things is I do not know how, in good conscience, a Christian can vote for somebody who's so pro-abortion as some of our politicians are.

[8:33] We have a worldview that's supposed to protect the life in the womb. We have a worldview that's supposed to stand up for life. And yet, so there are politicians.

And honestly, I mean, this is about as political as I'm going to get right here. The Democratic ticket this year is the most pro-abortion ticket there has ever been in the history of the United States.

And the woman who's running for president truly does believe that abortion can go to full term, 39 weeks or whatever it is that they want to believe.

So that should cause us concern. I mean, and really like, hey, we serve a God of life. We serve a God who promotes life and protection of life.

And so we need to be consistent and teach that from the Word of God. And we need to compare what we do and what we believe and what we say and how we act to what God's Word says.

[9:32] That is the idea behind teaching what accords with sound doctrine. It is also living according to sound doctrine. 2 Timothy 4.2, Paul gives a parallel instruction to Timothy where he says, So Titus, Timothy, both pastors in their churches are told to teach, reprove, exhort patiently because you're going to come across people who push back against you.

You're going to come across people who disagree with you. You're going to come across people who flat out teach heresy. And you need to patiently endure. It doesn't mean you're not firm. And that's another thing too. Patience doesn't mean like you're a soft Michelin man when it comes to these things. And certainly not as a pastor or an elder. You need to be firm. You hear that, Josh and Ian?

I hope they listen to this audio. But you need to be firm as an elder with sound doctrine in teaching it and not giving the false teachers an opportunity.

Ephesians 4.29, this is more of a practical general instruction to the church. Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up as fits the occasion that it may give grace to those who hear.

[11:08] What are the words you're speaking? How are you saying things? Are they said in such a way that they don't give grace to those who hear it?

Are you saying things harshly in a hateful tone? I'm going to go back to the low-hanging fruit of politics in America.

I don't know that you can have people who are in disagreement and actually have a civil conversation anymore. It seems that it is becoming fewer and far between. And so we need to be careful about the way we portray things and the way we are speaking about things and the way we are talking to others who disagree with us.

And the way they talk to us is no reason for us to have an excuse to return in kind the way they spoke to us to speak to them that way either. We do have to be careful.

To call yourself a Christian and proclaim that you're going to follow Jesus with your life must be supported by the fruit you show in your life. Now that's something that, you know, it's not saying that, you know, if you're going to proclaim Christ, you're going to claim Christ, that I'm a follower of Christ, that you're going to have a perfect life.

[12:24] But your life should show change. There should be evidence that God is working in you through his word to sanctify you and make you more like his son.

It's not perfect. You will never be perfect this side of eternity. You will never be perfect this side of being in the presence of Christ.

But we strive towards following and obeying Jesus. And that's what the focus of our adult Sunday school class is. We're reading through Matthew and we're seeking to answer the question, what do I learn from this text about what it is to follow and obey Christ?

Because as a Christian, we're claiming to be followers of Christ. So what does that look like as we read through the text of Scripture? What do we see? How do we see it happening in the text? And how do we apply that to our lives?

It is about as simple of a Sunday school class as it can be. But I have been personally so blessed to just bring it to the simple and say, you know, not the simple people.

[13:31] Bring it to the simple process of let's read and discuss it and talk about it. How do we apply this to our lives? And what does it look like to us and for us?

And hopefully, Lord willing, we're taking what we're learning and we're putting it to practice. And it's been challenging and a fun time and just such a simple thing of what does the text say and how do I apply it to my life?

Those of you who are familiar with Word of Life quiet times, you know those are the two questions you answer in a Word of Life quiet time. Unless you have those interactive quiet times. Those are weird. Sorry, too much for me.

But no. And that's how we should approach Scripture. What am I reading about here? What is this telling me and how do I apply it to my life? And as we see here, teach what accords with sound doctrine.

What you say and how you say it and what you do and why you do it matter. And make a difference. And these must be reflective of the Savior you claim to know and obey.

[14:34] J.C. Ryle said, sound Protestant and evangelical doctrine is useless if it is not accompanied by a holy life. It does not matter what you believe, what you claim to believe, or what you know about sound doctrine and what the Scripture teaches unless your life is consistent with it.

To say it is not good to steal and then go and steal something from somebody or a store is an inconsistent, hypocritical life.

But we do it. And all of us are guilty of it in one form or fashion. You may not steal stuff, but you might steal somebody's time.

One thing to think about. Sound doctrine, that term, refers to teachings that are true, healthy, and aligned with Scripture. It's rooted in the Word of God and it reflects the character of God.

Our lives should reflect the character of God. And that's a whole other topic I can go on. So what about the role of sound doctrine in our lives?

[15:47] Well, healthy doctrine produces healthy spiritual living. And the Bible, as you read through it, never separates doctrine from duty. It never separates what we are to know and believe from what we are to do.

Romans 12, 1 and 2, for instance. I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

So in those two verses in Romans 12, Paul is commanding that we present our bodies as a living sacrifice to the Lord. That's our duty.

And that we are transformed by the renewal of our mind. That's our knowledge. That's what we're learning. That's the sound doctrine that we are getting and being transformed in our mind and also in our action.

[16:48] Ephesians 4, 1, I, therefore, a prisoner of the Lord urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you've been called. So we've been called by God to a certain life and expectation.

We're to walk worthy of that. Philippians 4, verses 8 and 9. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things and the God of peace will be with you. So as you are learning, as you are being instructed, don't just take it in for knowledge and intellect's sake, but live it out and do it.

Don't be, what James says, be doers of the word and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. There is an expectation of us to not just receive doctrine, but to live it, to speak it, and to represent it well.

Colossians 3, verses 9 and 10. So as we put off the old self, as we put off the old sinful self and the fleshly desires, and we're fighting that and we're being sanctified by the word of God, and God is working and moving in us through his spirit to change us and to make us more into the image of Christ, as that is happening, we've got the new man and we're being renewed in knowledge.

[18:33] So sound doctrine is very important to our lives. We must pursue it. Every Christian should have an insatiable appetite for sound doctrine. That should be what we hunger for.

It is what we want. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. It should be what we desire more than anything else.

To know God, to learn of him, who he is, and how I can live in a way that brings honor and glory to his name. And that's individually.

And what's good for the goose is good for the gander. John MacArthur says, A church that is grounded in spiritual truth and protected from spiritual falsehood is to be spiritually healthy and productive through the way in which its members live.

So what's true of individual believers is also true of the church as a body. If individual believers are being poisoned by false teaching and living it out, it is only a matter of time before the church as a whole gets sick or dies.

[19:37] But if the individual believers are being built up by sound doctrine and living it out, it's only a matter of time before the church as a whole is strengthened and fortified against false teachers.

They're strengthened and fortified in the word of God, the meat of the word, in the milk of the word. Pastors are to concentrate on the spiritual depth of their congregation and let God take care of their breath.

And how big it is. That was in there more for me than anything. But it's also a mindset that can easily get caught up in the church.

How many people are in church this Sunday? How big is the church? And, you know, all this stuff. We talk about numbers, numbers, numbers. I've gone on about this ad nauseum before, and I won't bore you with it. But the focus of the pastor is the depth of the congregation.

I'll leave God. I'll let God deal with how many people are here. I'll let God deal with, you know, how many people come. It doesn't mean that we don't live a life in such that we are drawing people and desiring people to come and hear the truth and to be encouraged.

[20:44] I love the fact that people want to be here. I love the fact that people love the congregation here at First Baptist Shapley. It means everything to me. Because I know I have almost nothing to do with that other than I just stand up here and tell you what the Word of God says.

You take it, you believe it, you live it, and you impact others through it. That's amazing. That's God working amazingly.

First Corinthians 3.6. What's Paul write? He says, I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. Right? We just need to be faithful servants wherever we're at, what we're supposed to do. Pastors, elders. Somebody tell them. Sophie, Rose, you tell your dad when you get home. Hey, be good. Right? Second Corinthians 9.10.

He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. So the very God who provides what we need daily sustenance is going to provide the opportunities and will multiply our seed for sowing and for increasing the harvest of our righteousness.

[21:54] That's the fruit of living a life consistent with sound doctrine. He will provide that opportunity. He will multiply it. It is His work to be done.

It is our job to be faithful. Colossians 2.19. Holding fast to the head from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God. Again, we are faithful. We are faithful to the Word of God and sound doctrine and living it out and speaking it and talking it and being a light to the world and being salt in the world.

And God is the one who gives the growth. God is the one who brings about the fruit that comes from our faithful living. Ultimately, sound doctrine fosters unity among believers.

Please turn to Ephesians 4. I know I've read out of it a couple times and it's a passage that I find myself going to more and more often as I prepare and as I'm in the Word of God.

[22:56] This is Ephesians 4. Ephesians 4 verse 11 through 16.

And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers. So talking about Christ in His victory parade. He gave as gifts to the church, apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ.

Why were these gifts given? To equip you. Until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to mature manhood to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

So that is, you know, we're given gifts to be equipped to go do the work of ministry. Basically until we've all matured to be like Jesus. Right? Verse 14.

So that we may no longer be children tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine. We need to be grounded in sound doctrine so we're not tossed about just believing anything that sounds remotely accurate and good.

[24:08] By human cunning, by craftiness and deceitful schemes. Rather speaking the truth in love. Look, speaking the truth in love.

That's kind of like what Titus 2.1. You know, speaking according to sound doctrine. Speaking the truth in love. We're to grow up in every way into Him who is the head.

Who's that? Christ. From whom the whole body joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped. When each part is working properly makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

As we continue to grow and are nourished through Christ and through His word and through sound doctrine, we can continue to encourage each other and help each other to be equipped and continue to grow into maturity, into Christ's likeness.

And the body is then being built together. We are unified as a church. The first part of Ephesians 4 talks about there's one body and one spirit just as you were called into one hope that belongs to your call.

[25 : 12] One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. It is oneness. The unity of the church is in the doctrine of Christ and is growing up into Christ's likeness and we all contribute to it.

There's only one head and it's not me. Praise God. It is Christ. And it is from Him that we are supplied and nourished. Think of John 15 and the vine and the branches, right?

And we are plugged into the vine and He is giving us the nourishment we need to produce fruit for His glory. And so, you know, as we are plugged in there and as a pastor and a teacher here in the church, it is my responsibility to be honest and true with the text of Scripture, with the Word of God that you might understand it and help you understand it and help you understand how you can live it and to encourage you to live it.

And then as you're doing that, guess what? You're encouraging your friend next to you or spouse next to you, who I hope is your friend too, Steve. So you're doing it with your friend.

You're doing it with your family. You're doing it with the people in the back row and the front row, people you don't even know. Or I keep forgetting that they're here like, you know, a few times every year and I feel bad. I'm sorry.

[26 : 31] I'm so glad to see you today though. But, you know, you've got people everywhere that we are contributing to their growth and their encouragement in Christ and their maturity in Christ.

And a church grounded in sound doctrine is a church that stands together in truth, promoting harmony rather than division. And corporately, we must commit to regular, diligent study of Scripture.

Engage in personal Bible study and group discussions to deepen your understanding of God's Word. Get in the Word yourself. Read it. Have a daily quiet time. Have a time set aside each day. Five minutes, five minutes, ten minutes. You know, give time to God and in His Word. Read a chapter or two at a time. Do your best to understand and reflect on it.

Don't you say, oh, well, I already read it. Oop, next. No. Read it and think about it. What is this text saying? What can I take from this and apply it to my life? How am I being challenged by what I read?

[27 : 31] Are there any commands given to me to follow? Are there any examples given to me to follow or not follow? That happens a lot too.

And encourage one another to remain grounded in truth. If someone strays into unsound teaching, approach them with love and grace, seeking restoration.

Accountability strengthens our resolve to uphold truth. We must be accountable to one another.

And that's the whole concept behind a local church. It's that when you come to a church and you join a church, you are making yourself accountable to the leadership there and to the membership there.

I get there was a time, and maybe it's still out there, I don't know, where people are so resistant to joining the church. And, like, it's some horrible thing. And, oh, it's not in the Bible. You won't find that anywhere. Well, maybe you're right.

I can probably make a good argument for it. But nonetheless, we're told to gather together. We're told, you know, to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. And I would think regularly assembling together and being accountable to one another is a good thing.

[28 : 40] But if you want to fight against it, I mean, whatever. But accountability is a good thing in the church, and we should keep each other accountable and build each other up. The importance of sound doctrine cannot be overstated.

It's essential for our spiritual health, for the unity of the church, and for our witness to the world. And as we commit ourselves to teaching and living out sound doctrine, we honor God and fulfill our calling as His people.

And so I want to encourage you, hunger and thirst for sound doctrine. Hunger and thirst for the truth of the Word of God. And seek to live it out.

Grow in it and live it. Let's pray. Father, I thank You for Your Word. And I thank You for the challenge to know You through it.

That we can know who You are. We can know Your character. Lord, we can know what You desire us to do and how to do it. Lord, I just pray that You would draw us to Yourself through Your Word.

[29 : 47] That we'd be faithful to it. That we'd be willing to learn and ready to learn. That we'd be willing to be corrected where we may be wrong. And ready to humble ourselves, Lord, and draw close to You.

I pray for each one here. That, Lord, they would have a fire in them. Lord, to know You more.

Lord, that there can be... They would understand there's no matter more important in our lives than knowing You and living for Your glory.

And I pray that here at First Baptist Chapel, that would be our major priority in what we do. And why we gather. And why we have opportunities to grow together.

Lord, that we would take them seriously. And take every opportunity we have to grow. And to be exposed to the truth of Your Word. Because we live in a culture, Lord, that is full of sin and deceit and lies.

[30 : 55] And, Lord, they are not letting up. And I pray that we would not let up either. But we would be louder and have more resolve to stand on the foundation of Your Word.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Amen. Come on up, Tony.