

Why Christians Differ Doctrinally - Part I, The Origin of Doctrinal Differences

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Date: 03 January 2010

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[0 : 00] And if you will keep your place right there in John chapter 17, I want to emphasize the last verse that was read because it is key to what we are going to be talking about.

That is verse 11. Our Lord in this high priestly prayer said, I am no more in the world, and yet they themselves are in the world. And I come to thee, Holy Father, keep them in thy name, the name which thou hast given me, that they may be one.

Even as we are. It is this particular verse, verse 11, that provided the impetus, giving rise to the ecumenical movement that surfaced some years ago.

I think it was in the 1960s. And it was promulgated by the World Council of Churches and by the National Council of Churches that Christians worldwide have a responsibility to be the answer to our Lord's Prayer for oneness and unity here in John 17.

And this particular verse became the motto of the effort, if you will. The word ecumenical, 25-cent word.

[1 : 20] Ecumenical simply means, well, it comes from a word in the Greek that has to do with the household, the oikos, and it is talking about the world household, or the global household, if you will.

The idea being that Christianity, those who call themselves Christians, are radically divided. And what we need to do is put our differences behind us.

Everyone who names the name of Christ needs to get together and think and act as one and agree as one and as a result present a much more formidable front to the world.

We could accomplish so much more if Christians did not spend time competing among themselves and disagreeing among themselves.

Why can't we all just get together? And real efforts were made. There were some unitings and some amalgamations and some groups that began dialogue and were talking together in their leadership at least, groups that had not talked together or been friendly one with another for perhaps over a century, and now they were showing some signs of trying to get it together.

[2 : 47] Well, we know that the ecumenical movement did result in some mergers taking place and a few changes of attitude, basically, but at the same time, there really was no effectual or lasting change.

And I think there is very good reason for that because doctrinal differences are real, and we are going to be talking about why and how they exist.

In this particular passage where our Lord prayed that they may be one even as we are, may I just say this? That prayer has already been answered.

Those who are in Christ are one. There is an organic unity because when someone puts their personal faith and trust in Jesus Christ, they are joined in union with Him and they become a member of the spiritual body of Christ.

This has nothing to do with church membership, Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, or whatever, or your name on a church roll. It has nothing to do with that.

[4 : 04] It has everything to do with being vitally united with the person of Jesus Christ. That is realized when you place personal faith and trust in Christ as your Savior.

You are baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ. You become in union with Him and you are partaker of Him in every way so that you are an heir of God and a joint heir of Christ.

This is all on the basis of the grace of God extended to us through the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. This is called justification by faith.

And all who have exercised that are one in Christ. There is a unity. It is undeniable. Never mind that there are doctrinal differences among those who have placed their faith in Christ.

There is that one unifying factor of being in Christ. Because, and this is so important, your salvation and your eternal life does not depend on you having and believing all the right doctrines.

[5 : 28] Nobody does. Including us. I have told you in time past, we do not have all of our doctrinal ducks in a row.

The reason we don't is because we are limited to a finite mind and human reasoning and there are things that get past us. There are things that we do not see in Scripture.

Things that we do not understand correctly in Scripture. That's true of everybody. It's just part of the human condition. So you do not have to have all of your doctrinal I's dotted and all of the T's crossed in order to go to heaven.

You just need to be a believer in Jesus Christ. And as I've often said, when we get to heaven, everybody's going to get straightened out. But for now and here, we just get as straight as we can, but we still have some crooks and kinks in us because that's part of the human condition.

We just cannot see all of these issues clearly. So, we are already one in Christ. That is an organic unity.

[6 : 49] We are not one in an organizational unity. unity. That should be obvious. You've got the Methodists over here, the Presbyterians here, the Lutherans here, Catholics here, Church of God here, non-denominational here, and all of these.

And they are anything but unified insofar as organization is concerned. Oh, we speak to one another and glad hand and shake hands and say hi and how you doing and all the rest of it.

And there is a certain degree of comedy between us and that's good. But there is no real doctrinal agreement except the person and work of Jesus Christ.

That's what makes one truly Christian. So, in answer to our Lord's Prayer, that prayer has been answered. Everyone who is in Christ is one in Him.

We are united with all other believers all over the world. Whether we speak the same language, have the same culture or not, or have a different skin color, it makes no difference if you are in Christ.

[7 : 58] I remember hearing one time about an incident that took place outside the Garden Tomb. And it was very early in the morning.

This is something that happened just a number of years ago. And there are tourists, of course, are always going to Israel and seeing the famous places where biblical events took place.

And there at the Garden Tomb, two men visited one early morning just as the sun was coming up.

And these men knew just by looking at each other and the way they were dressed and the way they appeared that they were from different worlds culturally. and neither could speak the other's language.

But as they both stood there at the Garden Tomb, one of them recalled something that he had heard about there being one word that is the same word in every language.

[9 : 12] every known language in the world uses this same word pronounced the same way.

And he thought he would say that and see what the other man did. And he said the word standing there as the sun was rising outside the Garden Tomb.

one looked at the other and said Hallelujah! And the other responded with Hallelujah!

They had something in common. They were so diverse. Different languages, different cultures, different skin color, different everything. But they had one thing in common.

Jesus Christ and their faith and trust in him. That's what unites believers together in Christ. While we are in John's Gospel, please come to chapter 7 and verse 17 because we are going to be talking about doctrine and denominations and denominational differences.

[10 : 35] John's Gospel chapter 7 and verse 17 Our Lord said dressing his disciples he said If any man is willing to do his will he shall know of the teaching.

Some of you have a King James version. What does it say? What's the word? Doctrine. He shall know of the doctrine. What is doctrine?

Doctrine is teaching. Teaching is doctrine. So, if anyone is willing to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine or the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from myself.

God is God is God is going to set the stage for several that are going to follow in connection with revealing the utter importance of doctrine.

And it is very, very important. But let me precede that with this. These are questions that are on the minds of a lot of people. And they are very legitimate questions.

[11 : 56] Why are there so many different denominations? Why do Christians believe so many different things? Is there anything at all that Christians do agree on?

How is anyone able to sort it all out? And the thinking is if all of these people these religious figures, authority figures, ecclesiastics, if they can't agree, and they can't get together, and they can't come to some kind of an understanding as to what the doctrine ought to be, how in the world can you expect me to?

I'm just a lay person. I don't have the original languages and the expertise and the theological seminary background that these people have, and they have all of that, and they still fuss and argue over these things.

So how in the world can I sort it out? Good question. Isn't doctrine the main thing that Christians differ on? Yes, it is.

why don't we just eliminate doctrine and get together? I've even heard people say things like, I'm not interested in doctrine, just give me Jesus.

[13 : 22] I don't want doctrine. But do you realize that Jesus is doctrine?

Do you not talk about who is he without dealing with doctrine? Is he the son of God or not?

You're into a real doctrinal issue. Who sent him? That's doctrine. Why did he come? That's doctrine. What did he do? That's doctrine. Why does it matter?

That's doctrine. It's like saying, I just want to know what I need to know but don't give me any teaching.

Pardon me? What? This is an impossibility. There isn't any way that we can know what we need to know without teaching. Teaching doctrine is teaching.

[14 : 22] In fact, the word doctrine in the Greek didaskalos is the word for teaching in the Greek.

And it literally means information that is communicated in a didactic kind of way. If you are into didactics, didactic means teaching.

It is related to the word didache. I won't put that on the board. Didache is a second century document that was purportedly written by some of the twelve apostles.

We do not know who, for instance, for sure because it's just not able to be determined. But the didache is a list of teachings or doctrines set forth by some of the original twelve apostles supposedly.

And it's called the didache and it simply means the teaching. Otherwise translated doctrine. And that's all doctrine is.

[15 : 51] It is teaching. I suppose what some people really mean when they say that I would just like to get rid of doctrine because doctrine divides people.

That's true. But I think what they're really saying is they would like to get rid of controversial doctrine. Doctrine that does divide.

And how are you going to do that? Because, for instance, if you talk about the doctrine of the security of the believer, well, are you secure in Christ?

Or are you insecure in Christ? That's a doctrinal issue. That's very controversial among believers. How are we going to treat that?

Which position are you going to take? It is impossible to avoid controversy. Deal with it. Just get used to it. the reason it is impossible to avoid controversy and controversial doctrine is because these are important issues upon which believers differ and take very seriously.

[17 : 07] we just can't jettison these things at will because let's just scrap everything that we disagree about. What would you have left? Not much.

Just the person of Christ. But even then, when you start defining his work, it's unavoidable. You're into doctrine again. So it is just something that has to be faced and dealt with.

You cannot eliminate it. There are those who think that Christians should just bury their differences over doctrine and present a united front to the world.

And that's the heartbeat. That's the mantra of the ecumenical movement. Look, if all of these denominations would be willing to just lay on the altar those things that they hold dear, and just jettison them.

In other words, be willing to sacrifice your sacred cows for the sake of unity. And everybody gives up something.

[18 : 19] And this group gives up the demand for infant baptism. And this group gives up the demand for trying immersion. And this group gives up pouring.

Once under the water immersion, and this group gives up sprinkling, and this group gives up pouring, then you would all end up like Grace Bible Church.

How likely do you think that is to happen? Not very. Not very. Not very. good. So, what happens is, it sounds kind of good in theory.

Yeah, we should all be willing to sacrifice these things for the sake of everybody getting together and having commonality, but it's just not going to happen. It hasn't happened, and it isn't going to happen, because these groups regard these things as important.

Come with me, please, to Deuteronomy, and then I want to take you to several verses that relate to this issue. And, by the way, what we are giving you this morning, understand, is just introductory to the issue.

[19 : 28] And I want you to look very briefly at a statement by Moses, what is referred to as the Song of Moses, a beautiful portion of scripture. And it is in Deuteronomy 32, and the first four verses.

We'll just confine ourselves to that. Give ear, O heavens, and let me speak, and let the earth hear the words of my mouth.

Let my teaching, what's the King James? Doctrine. Let my teaching or doctrine drop as the rain.

What does that mean? Doctrine or teaching dropping as the rain. How does the rain fall?

pretty extensively. Pretty definitively. I mean, the rain really comes down. And Moses, under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, is saying, folks, I want you to get ready for this because I've got a whole lot of teaching that I'm going to drop on you right now.

[20 : 46] And you go on and read the rest of the chapter and you can see what it is. It is magnificent. This idea of doctrine goes all the way back to the Old Testament.

It isn't something that is confined to the New. The basis for it is as far back as Genesis. But I'm going to confine ourselves pretty much to the New Testament simply because it is more current and more up to date than the Old.

Not that it is any more inspired than the Old because it isn't. So let's come back now to the New. And I'm going to take you right on through several books in the New Testament.

And we will keep them all together. You'll keep your fingers warm on this chilly morning. and let's start with Matthew chapter 15, shall we?

While you're turning to that, let me emphasize something that needs to be kept in mind as we engage this series of why Christians differ doctrinally.

[21 : 54] And when I use the term Christian, I am not confining myself to what we would call evangelical or born again Christians.

I'm not talking exclusively about evangelicals or I'm talking about everyone and anyone that places themselves under the general umbrella of Christianity.

This includes all Protestants, all Roman Catholics, all Greek Orthodox, all anybody and everybody that considers themselves Christian as opposed to Jewish or Muslim or something else.

So, within this huge body of those who subscribe to Christianity, there are those who are true believers who have a personal relationship with Christ and they are Christians.

Christians. But they're also included in this huge umbrella those who merely have churchianity and they think they have Christianity but they don't.

[23 : 09] They've just got a church connection and they call themselves Christians simply because their parents were or their grandparents were or they were born into a Christian family so they consider themselves Christians.

we are talking about all of those people who are generally under the umbrella of Christian. There are some things that all Christians and all denominations and all beliefs that are called Christian, there are some things that they have in common and one is each one claims that theirs is the true position.

They all have that in common. Each one claims all the others are wrong. Each one claims their position is based on scripture and each one offers chapter and verse to support their doctrine.

So they have that in common. And that's about all. So let's look quickly at Matthew chapter 15 and verse 7.

Our Lord Jesus is speaking. This is, by the way, our mild and gentle and meek Jesus. Verse 7. You hypocrites!

[24 : 43] Doesn't sound too terribly mild, does it? You hypocrites! rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, this people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far away from me.

In other words, Jesus is saying, these people are steeped in religiosity. They have a lot of religion, a lot of religious external, but nothing internal that really connects them with God.

But in vain do they worship me. In other words, their worship is empty, it is void, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.

Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men. These are nothing more than human ideas, human conclusions, human preferences, human biases, human viewpoints that are presented and taught with the authority that they are divine.

And they are not, of course. But the claim is that they are. What I am telling you is the truth of God. So you better listen and you better do.

[26 : 18] But Christ said, all they have done is replace the truth of God with human viewpoint and insisted that it is the truth of God.

That's what the scribes and Pharisees were doing. That's what the religious establishment was doing. Standard operating procedure during the time of Christ.

And actually well before Christ ever came on the scene and even after he left the scene. And do you know this still goes on today.

There are pastors and priests across the world that stand behind pulpits and thunder pronouncements and convince the people that what they are giving them is the truth and the word of God.

When in fact all it is is the grinding of their own acts. The putting forth of their own ideas, their own demands, their own dreams and trying to sell it to the people as if it is the word of God.

[27 : 25] And do you know you can always find people who will buy into that. P.T. Barnum made a phrase famous years ago when he said there is a sucker born every minute.

My experience has been there is a religious sucker born every 30 seconds. You just look at some of the offerings on television and radio and I don't mean to pan the whole thing with a broad black brush because there is a lot of wonderful stuff that really honors Christ on television and on radio.

But there is a lot of garbage and a lot of stuff the average person is unable to sort out. And it is all presented in the name of and under the authority of the God of heaven.

People hear this stuff. They see this religious figure, this authoritative individual. He's got letters after his name, obviously very well educated and he's been here and he's been there and he obviously is an authority and he knows what he's talking about.

And sometimes sometimes PhD means doctor of philosophy. Sometimes it means piled higher and deeper. and you get a lot of that.

[28 : 55] And the poor individual sitting out there in their living room taking this in is victimized. They are unable to discern. Here is an authority figure.

He's supposed to know what he's talking about and this is what he's this is this was going on in Jesus day. He said you teach for doctrine.

the commandments of men. And you impose these burdens on people. You tell them that the authority behind it is God himself and it most certainly is not.

Well we must hurry on or we won't have time for Q&A.; Let's go to Acts chapter 2 please. Acts chapter 2 familiar portion Acts 2 and verse 41 So then those who had received his word this is Peter's message were baptized and there were added that day about 3,000 souls and they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles teaching or doctrine and to fellowship to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Now you've got to remember that the New Testament at the time this occurred in the book of Acts the New Testament had not been written and the authoritative word that was available at the time after the exit of our Lord Jesus at the transfiguration happened to be the apostles the twelve apostles whom he left behind to whom he also gave instruction.

[30 : 42] They represented God's authority figures after the ascension of Christ and they were communicating to the people. What did the apostles doctrine consist of?

Well, I think we can make an assumption there. The apostles of whom there were twelve spent approximately three years with Jesus Christ in public ministry.

All during those three years Christ was teaching them. He was imparting information to them. Doctrine, if you will. So, what do you think the apostles doctrine consisted of after Christ ascended to heaven?

I think we could reasonably assume that it consisted of things that Jesus taught them for three years and it became theirs because they imbibed it.

They took it in. They believed it. They accepted it and they were acting on it. And then, of course, they were updating it somewhat with Christ's death, burial, and the big hammer they had that they used frequently was the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

[31 : 57] That was the apostles doctrine. But the rest of the New Testament didn't even exist at that time. So, they were simply updating the information they had on the old as well as communicating to them what Christ had given to them.

Now, let's hurry along, please, to Romans chapter 6 over just the next book. Romans chapter 6 and verse 17.

The apostle Paul said, But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of doctrine or teaching to which you were committed.

So, there as well as in chapter 16, same book, Romans chapter 16, we'll just skim on through here. We're not taking all of them, I've just cherry-picked some of those that I thought expressed it as well as any other.

in Romans chapter 16 and verse 17. Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching or the doctrine which you learned and turn away from them.

[33 : 26] You see right here how doctrine is controversial? There are the doctrines that Paul communicated and then there are the doctrines that some came in after Paul had been there and they communicated them.

And they were different. They created a conflict. They created dissension. We see that happening repeatedly with the Judaizers who would come in after Paul had evangelized in an area.

They try to come in with the law of Moses and impose the demands of the law back upon these people. And this was something that Paul was contending with repeatedly.

And I want you to note in particular the pastorals in 1 Timothy chapter 1. And I think it's really significant that these are in the pastorals. And the reason for this is in Timothy and Titus in particular you've got to bear in mind that the Apostle Paul was the mentor of both of these men.

Timothy is referred to as his son in the faith. Titus I suspect was somewhat akin to that. And Paul knowing that he is going to be passing off the scene shortly is communicating to his protege the things under the spirit of God that he views as most important.

[34 : 51] And as you read 1 and 2 Timothy and also Titus you get the distinct impression at least I do and I trust I'm not reading into it. you get the distinct impression that Paul is telling Timothy and Titus fellas these things you've got to get down.

These things you've got to emphasize. These things you've got to include. These things are important. These are non-negotiables. Go with these things. These things of course all had to do with doctrine.

1 Timothy chapter 1 and verse 3 As I urged you Timothy upon my departure from Macedonia remain on at Ephesus in order that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines.

What are strange doctrines? They are aberrant doctrines. They are doctrines that are contrary to the truth that you have reached. They are doctrines that are off the wall.

They are doctrines that are illegitimate. They are doctrines that lead astray. They are doctrines that confuse people. And Timothy you need to position yourself there in the assembly so that if and when people come along teaching contrary doctrine you can nail them.

[36 : 24] this is really important because let me tell you something doctrine or teaching is that which people take into themselves and if you embrace it and believe it then the logical thing to do the consistent thing to do is you act on it.

Action comes from a belief system. What do you think prompts the action of Islamic terrorists who strap bombs onto themselves or try to blow up airplanes?

What do you think prompts them to do that? It is their belief system. It is their doctrine. It is the things they are taught.

But they are not merely taught these things they inculcate these things. They really believe this stuff and they act on it.

And many Americans come back and say well that's ridiculous it isn't even true. The stuff they believe it isn't true. That has nothing to do with it. Of course it isn't true.

[37 : 41] But what incites them to action is they believe it. They believe it. And people are just as dead as if it were true.

That's the point. That's the danger of error. Error can be deadly. Have I not told you over these past 30 years I have two great fears every time I teach.

one is that you will believe what I say. One is you will not believe what I say and the other is that you will believe what I say.

And do you know what? Both of those have terrific consequences. There are serious implications that come from believing or not believing something.

The difference can be so significant it can mean an eternal difference in the destiny of your soul. Instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines.

[38 : 54] Look at verse 9 same chapter realizing that the law is not made for a righteous man but for those who are lawless and rebellious for the ungodly and sinners for the unholy and profane for those who kill their fathers or mothers for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine.

Sound doctrine. What is sound doctrine? Sound doctrine is doctrine that is rooted in truth. It is factual. It has God as its origin. He is the origin of all truth. Sound doctrine is the opposite of unsound doctrine.

Well, that tells you a lot, doesn't it? Well, let me put it this way. is it not true that a lot of wills begin by I, John Smith, being of sound mind?

What is a sound mind? Well, what is an unsound mind? An unsound mind is someone who believes their health can be improved by hanging a poached egg over their left ear.

[40 : 28] That's really weird stuff. You know, we say they've got a problem. You know, they are not of sound mind. An unsound mind is somebody who really honestly believes that he's Napoleon.

And we just think that that's a joke. But there really are people in mental institutions who believe they are Napoleon or Douglas MacArthur or something. That's an unsound mind.

Unsound doctrine leads people to wrong belief and wrong conclusions and wrong actions. That's what unsound teaching does.

Sound teaching stabilizes, strengthens, comforts, enlightens, strengthens. Sound doctrine is the truth of God.

But we must hurry along. Look at chapter 4 and verse 6, please. Same book, Timothy. In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith.

[41 : 39] That's a beautiful concept. Nourished, fed, sustained, on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine, which you have been followed.

Solid doctrine, straight doctrine, kind of doctrine that builds up and establishes. And while we're in chapter 6, look at verse 13.

Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture to exhortation and doctrine.

do not neglect the spiritual gift within you which was bestowed upon you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.

Take pains with these things. Be absorbed in them so that your progress may be evident to all. Pay close attention to yourself. Look at this. Look at this.

[42 : 40] Verse 16. Paul to Timothy, father to son. Pay close attention to yourself and to your doctrine, your teaching.

Don't take it lightly. Don't sell it short. Put the proper emphasis on it. Persevere in these things for as you do, you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.

And in 2 Timothy chapter 3, if you're wondering why these occur so often in the pastorals, as I've already mentioned, just stop and think about it.

This is the advice of the mentor to his underling. He is telling them these are the things that you really need to focus on. And it's a beautiful, beautiful thing.

Chapter 3 and verse 16. 2 Timothy. All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for doctrine, that is, teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, in order that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

[44 : 00] Do you know what makes us adequate? Doctrine, teaching, information, that you can build a life on. Scripture is profitable for teaching, that's knowing what is right, for reproof, that is, getting right, for correction, that is, staying right, and for training in righteousness, that is, modeling what is right.

That the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work, that means you have everything that you need. And then, in chapter 4, verse 2, preach the word, be ready in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with great patience, and instruction, or doctrine.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires.

I really, hate to believe this, but I don't have any choice, but he's talking about believers, and the time will come when believers, believers, will not endure sound doctrine, believers, don't want doctrine.

Can that be? Yes, it can be. And do you know what they will do? They will gather to themselves teachers who will tell them what they want to hear.

[45 : 46] Make me feel good. Make me feel good. Sometimes the truth doesn't make you feel good.

I remember hearing a prominent preacher, I mean, I won't even use the man's name, but he would be known immediately. The worldwide television ministry was being interviewed, and he said, is it true someone said that you are a preacher who never preaches about sin?

Oh, no, no, I never preach about sin. People don't want to hear that. well, shut my mouth and gag me with a spoon.

People don't want to hear that. Well, of course they don't want to hear that. Who wants to hear that? Do you ever have to tell your child something that they don't want to hear?

Sometimes it's just no. that's enough to set some of them off. They don't want to hear that. Paul said, Paul wrote to the Ephesians and said, I have not shunned, I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God.

[47 : 18] I didn't sell anything short. I didn't give you just the feel-good stuff. I gave you the whole nine yards, all of it, the whole counsel of God.

And in it, there's some bad news, and bless God, there's some good news. But it's the bad news that makes the good news good.

And you've got to have a balanced story. You've got to have a balanced approach. That's the beautiful thing. They will not endure sound doctrine. wanting to have their ears tickled.

They will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires. And I must give you a couple from Titus, and then we'll open it real quick for a couple of comments and questions that you may have.

Titus 1 and verse 9. Holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the doctrine or teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

[48 : 26] Now the only reason to refute anything is because it is erroneous. And if it is error, it needs to be refuted.

Wonderful question is this. Wonderful question. If what you believe is not true, would you want to know it?

Sobering question. If what you believe is not true, would you want to know it? You would be surprised at how many people say, no, I'm just satisfied with the way things are.

Don't upset my apple cart. I don't want to deal with the stress of trying to change my mind or think something through. Yeah, I admit I'm miserable now, but it's a misery that I'm used to.

It's a comfortable misery. I don't want any foreign miseries. I don't want anybody upsetting anything. I just want to continue to believe as I believe. That's a terribly unhealthy position.

[49 : 40] It almost sounds like an unsound mind talking doesn't it? Truth ultimately will not hurt you. I said ultimately it will not hurt you. It may hurt a whole lot immediately, but ultimately you are always better off knowing the truth because only when you know the truth do you know what you're dealing with.

And you deserve to know what you're dealing with. And this comes from doctrine. And the last one is in Titus chapter 2 and verse 1.

But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine. And then verse 7.

In all things, show yourself to be an example of good deeds with purity in doctrine. Dignified.

[50 : 54] Sound in speech, which is beyond reproach. Can we afford to scrap doctrine for the sake of some kind of unity?

Absolutely not. And we are a doctrinal church without apology. teaching. We had better be.

There is nothing more that we can or should be about than doctrine. That's teaching. That's who we are.

That's what we are. Questions or comments? Terry, in the back. I just wanted to remind everybody that our church is doctor and it's available on the website.

That's www.35.com. We have it set up so that you can go and go into the period. Thank you very much.

[52 : 07] Terry knows all about that because he's the one who is responsible for it. And we really appreciate that. You can just get on the web. Grace Bible Springfield dot com.

That's all you need. And you'll find everything there that he was talking about. Ron. I would just like to have your opinion on something. I know a person that believes in Jesus shed his blood, died on the cross, was resurrected, believes the salvation of the gospel.

But they believe that baptism is essential for salvation. So they don't believe that the finished work for the cross. Plus, they don't believe in the Trinity.

They don't believe that the Holy Spirit is a person. this person is very devout in their everyday lives. Do you think a person with those beliefs could be in the body of Christ?

Well, I wish I could say in my expert qualified opinion, but I can't. And I don't want to belittle that.

[53 : 18] I cannot assign an eternal destiny to someone like that because in the first place, I don't have the authority to do that or the wisdom.

But I am convinced that people believe certain things at certain times and they may even later deny it.

But the question is, did they really believe it when they believe it? when they believed it, when they took that position? And what I base that on, why I say that is because receiving additional teaching can cause us to change our position regarding a number of things.

But that would not negate the genuineness of a decision that we made back here. even if we got erroneous teaching afterward that caused us to say, I don't believe that anymore.

Well, you did believe it at one time. I am of the opinion, and I know this sounds really far out, I am of the opinion that if someone actually comes to faith in Jesus Christ and they really do embrace him as their personal savior, I cannot take the position that because they did, it would never, ever be possible for them to deny him.

[54 : 51] There's certainly no reason why they should, but I'm not prepared to say that they couldn't. And we're going to look at some examples in our apologetics class of people who have, and I'm thinking primarily of Charles Templeton, who was a colleague and personal friend of Billy Graham.

and he rejected Christianity after having preached it in evangelistic services with Billy Graham.

And some would say that, well, he no longer is a Christian, he doesn't consider himself a Christian any longer. But my question is, if he genuinely did believe in Christ back there, he was placed in the body of Christ, and those who come to him, he will in no wise cast out.

That doesn't mean if you deserve to be cast out, he won't cast you out. That doesn't mean that as long as you deserve to stay in, you're okay. Listen, you didn't deserve to get in.

So, remaining in the body of Christ is not dependent upon your faithfulness, it's dependent upon Christ's faithfulness. So, people get a lot of wrong teaching along the way, and they change their position regarding things, but that does not negate the genuineness of their decision if they truly made a decision for Christ.

[56 : 15] And that's something I don't know. I just cannot look into people's minds and hearts and see what's there. So, I would just have to put a big question mark. I don't know. I'd be happy to talk to a person like that, but I can't.

I know people, or know of people who profess faith in Jesus Christ, had no reason to believe that it wasn't true, that they weren't genuine, and six months into their relationship with Christ, they get tangled up and confused with Jehovah's witnesses who come knocking on their door.

And they had them turned every six ways to Sunday, and they didn't know right from wrong, didn't know whether they were in Christ, out of Christ, didn't know whether Jesus was God or whether he wasn't, just thoroughly confused.

And that sometimes happens, but was their decision genuine at the time they made it? You see, it isn't he that believeth on the Son and has all of his doctrine straight and keeps it straight, shall be saved.

It's those who believe on the Son have eternal life. And there's a lot of wrong teaching out there. Listen, there is more wrong teaching out there than there is right teaching.

[57 : 43] Understand that? There is a lot more error out there than there is truth. That's why I say, when the question is asked, if you were to die today and stand before your maker and God were to say to you, why should I let you come into my heaven?

There are probably a thousand wrong answers to that question. But there's only one right one. See, truth, truth is grossly outnumbered by error.

The only way to stay on the straight path is to stay right down the middle. But what have you got out here? And everything in between.

And that all represents error. And the truth is cutting down the middle. May we stand, please. Amen. Father, we barely scratched the surface regarding this really important subject.

And we look to you for wisdom we know we do not have for that which is to come. We want this to be enlightening and encouraging and helpful. We trust that people will be able to see issues more clearly after we have defined them in this series.

[59 : 12] And we look to you for your wisdom and your direction. Thank you for the simplicity that is in Jesus Christ and how that on the basis of simple trust and confidence in him and what he did for us can we be delivered from spiritual darkness to spiritual light from spiritual death to spiritual life.

We bless you for the truth truth that you provide and we want to have eyes and ears to hear it and see it. Thank you for each one here this morning and for the day ahead of us in Christ's name.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.