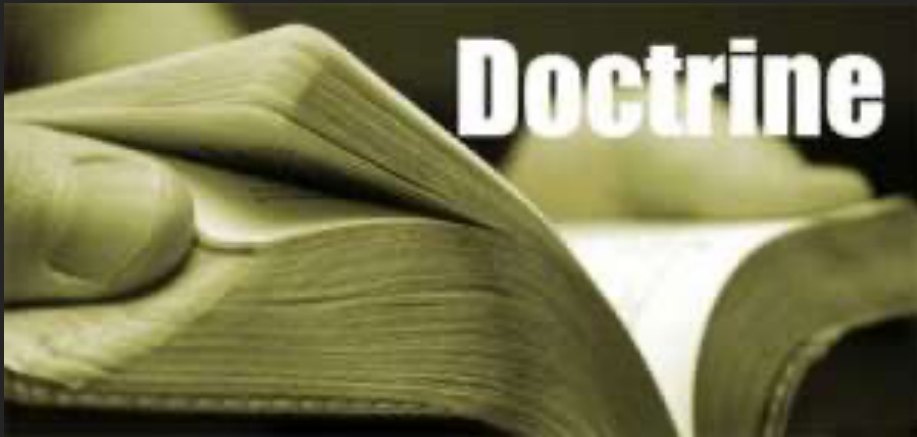


Abiding in the Doctrine of Christ

Reviewing the Gospel/Doctrine Distinction





What is the Background of the Gospel/Doctrine Distinction

- “The man, not the plan” (John 12:47-48; 14:15; cf. Matt. 7:24-27)
- “Majoring in minors” (1 Tim. 3:15; 4:1-6; 2 Tim. 4:1-5)
- “Doctrinal issues don’t really matter” (1 Tim. 4:16)

Grace-Unity Movement

- Multiple waves of this movement among churches of Christ (1970's, 80's, 90's, present)
- Ed Fudge
- Carl Ketcherside
- Leroy Garrett
- Arnold Hardin
- Steve Dewhirst
- Kevin Burt



**Advocates of a
Gospel/Doctrine
Distinction**

**“Not one apostolic
letter is a part of the
gospel of Christ...the
letter to the Galatians
was not a part of the
gospel”**

Carl Ketcherside

Advocates of a Gospel/Doctrine Distinction

"No honest opinion held by one who is in Christ Jesus and who respects his lordship, is 'another gospel.' Since it is the gospel which forms the basis of the fellowship with the Father, the Son and with one another in Christ, such an opinion can never be made a test of union or communion in Christ. A man may hold a view as to the perseverance of the saints, the manner of the resurrection, or the second coming of our Lord, and he may prove to be as wrong as one could be, but he cannot be debarred from citizenry in the kingdom of heaven by the other subjects... (Carl Ketcherside, "Another Gospel," Twisted Scriptures, Mission Messenger Pub., 1965, pp. 4, 7-9, via Truth Magazine, 8/21/75).

**Advocates of a
Gospel/Doctrine
Distinction**

"No man 'preaches another gospel' simply by being mistaken about some aspects of the will of God, otherwise one would need to know perfectly the divine will or be a perverter of the gospel...Regardless of motive, [those who oppose gospel/doctrine distinction] reveal that they are ignorant of what constitutes both gospel and apostasy

(Carl Ketcherside, "Another Gospel," Twisted Scriptures, Mission Messenger Pub., 1965, pp. 4, 7-9, via Truth Magazine, 8/21/75).

Advocates of a Gospel/Doctrine Distinction

The implications of all this to unity and fellowship are weighty. It means that the gospel itself, not our doctrinal interpretations, is the basis of our being one in Christ and in fellowship with each other. That is, when one believes in Jesus and obeys him in baptism, he is our brother and in the fellowship . . . This is oneness and this is unity. That fellowship is strengthened and made joyful by doctrine, but it is the gospel and not doctrine that determines the fellowship"

(Leroy Garrett, Mission Messenger)

**Advocates of a
Gospel/Doctrine
Distinction**

"The gospel is not defined as everything in the New Testament ... Not all truth is gospel; though all truth is for our instruction" (Arnold Hardin)

Leonard Allen: "Doctrines do not save us; we are saved by Christ. Doctrines do not cleanse us from our sins; it is the efficacious blood of Christ . . . We are not baptized into [doctrines], but into Christ. We do not hope in them, trust in them, glory in them, but in Christ Jesus our Lord"

(Quoting Charles L. Loos, teacher with Campbell at Bethany College, p. 89).

Core Gospel Approach

- Birth
- Life
- Death
- Burial
- Resurrection
- Faith



“If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing”

1 Tim. 6:3

- Baptism
- Lord’s Supper
- Worship
- MDR 
- Any doctrinal issue?

The Gospel Includes

- Good news about salvation (Rom. 1:16)
- Good news about Christ's kingdom (Matt. 4:23; Acts 28:31)
- Facts to be believed (1 Cor. 15:1-4)
- Commands to be obeyed (Mark 16:16; Rom. 10:16; 2 Thess. 1:8)
- Promises to be enjoyed (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38)
- Interpretation of the facts of the gospel is doctrine or teaching (1 Thess. 2:2; Acts 28:31).
- The grace of God offers instruction that leads to salvation (Tit. 2:11-14)

Do the
Scriptures
Distinguish
Between
the Gospel
and Doctrine
of Christ?

- “Gospel” – Good news regarding salvation and the kingdom of God (Mark 1:15; Rom. 1:16)
- “Truth of the gospel” (Gal. 2:5; 5:7)
- “The faith” (1 Tim. 4:1; Jude 3)
- “The doctrine of Christ” (2 John 9-11)
- Each term emphasizes different aspects of the same message: good news, belief system, truth in contrast to error, and doctrine or teaching from Christ
- Obedience is used of all these terms (Acts 6:7; Rom. 6:17; 2 Thess. 1:8; 1 Pet. 1:22)

Are the terms “Gospel” and “Doctrine” Referring to the Same Revelation?

—

⁷ who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence. This man summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear **the word of God**. ⁸ But Elymas the magician (for so his name is translated) was opposing them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from **the faith**. ⁹ But Saul, who was also *known as Paul*, filled with the Holy Spirit, stared at him, ¹⁰ and said, “You who are full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of **all righteousness**, will you not stop making crooked **the straight ways of the Lord?** ¹¹ Now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and not see the sun for a time.” And immediately a mist and a darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking those who would lead him by the hand. ¹² Then the proconsul believed when he saw what had happened, being amazed at the **teaching of the Lord**. [“Doctrine,” KJV]

Gospel & Doctrine are the Same Message

Acts 20:17-32

-
- “Whole counsel of God” (20:27)
 - Work of “elders” and “shepherds” (20:17, 28)
 - Public and private teaching of all those things which are helpful (20:20)
 - Repentance and faith (20:21)
 - Sacrificial and solemn proclamation of Christ (20:24)
 - Work of being a watchman (20:26-27; cf. Ezek. 33:1-9)
 - Protecting the flock of God from the false doctrines of savage wolves (20:28)

Gospel & Doctrine are the Same Message



- Paul was looking forward to preaching the gospel to the “saints” in Rome (Rom. 1:7,15)
- What does this mean since they already believed in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6:3-4,17)?
- The gospel is not only preached to the unsaved, but also to the saved because it includes all the teaching of Christ (2 Thess. 2:14-15; 2 Tim. 4:2)
- The apostles’ doctrine was necessary for our salvation and fellowship (Matt. 28:20; John 16:7-14; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 11:1-2, 17-18; Col. 1:5, 23)

Gospel & Doctrine are the Same Message

—
⁸ But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, ⁹ realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and worldly, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰ for the sexually immoral, homosexuals, slave traders, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, ¹¹ according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.

Should Fellowship Exclude Doctrine?

- Difference between the doctrine of Christ and the doctrines of men (Matt. 15:9; John 7:16-17)
- We are to continue in the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42)
- Those who teach doctrines contrary to Christ are to be identified and avoided (Rom. 16:17)
- Teachers are to be charged to not teach a different doctrine than the gospel (1 Tim. 1:3, 10; 4:1, 6, 13, 16; 6:1, 3; 2 Tim. 3:10, 16; 4:3; Tit. 1:9; 2:1, 7, 10)
- Sound doctrine in this epistle includes the nature of Christ, morality, organization of the local congregation, church discipline, benevolence, qualities of leaders, worship assembly

Why Does
This
Happen?

¹⁹ They went out from us,
but they were not *really* of
us; for if they had been of
us, they would have
remained with us;
but *they went out*, so
that it would be shown
that they all are not of us.

1 John 2:19

How is this
Doctrine
Being
Presented
Today?

- Building dissatisfaction with the truth
- Emphasis vs. Deemphasis
- False comparisons
- Redefining terms

Redefining “Sound Doctrine”

“I spent a lot of time with preachers, lunch with preachers ... get away with preachers and I started hearing this, hadn’t heard the term that much before, I started hearing the term ‘sound’ a lot. There are sound preachers, there are unsound preachers. There are sound churches where you can go and there are unsound churches where we don’t go... I learned that it had to do with the way a church conducted worship, the way a church used their funds, the way a church did their collective work, it was a lot about churches and their organization and their money, it was a lot about that...it is really easy to label everyone isn’t it...”

Redefining “Sound Doctrine”

“...speaking about the term “sound”] the second surprise is that, I’m going to show you all of them, these verses are about the phrase “Sound Doctrine” to remove it from the work, worship, and mission of the church. I’m not going to study the organization of a local church, how we use the funds...how we conduct worship, but don’t call someone unsound because of those things when the Bible connects it to other things...”

Redefining and narrowing of the phrase “Sound Doctrine” to remove it from the work, worship, and mission of the church

How is this
Doctrine
Being
Presented
Today?

- Building dissatisfaction with the truth
- Emphasis vs. Deemphasis
- False comparisons
- Redefining terms
- Misrepresentations
- Either/or fallacy
- Silent pulpits

The Danger of Silent Pulpits!

“You remember lessons where the word ‘authority’ was mentioned many, many, many times. And it was dissected, and things were drilled down. And you remember lessons about gopher wood, and red heifers, and strange fire. And you remember about all of those examples that we see that talk about how God views things in relation to what He said, in relation to what He hasn't said and how He interacts with His people based on those things...

The Danger of Silent Pulpits!

“And if you have been paying attention very long at all, you know that I have not done lessons like that. I have not done lessons where I used Gopher Wood as an example of God's authority and what He has spoken. You've never heard me do a lesson on specific or generic authority. We've not had any lessons on instrumental music or how the church should spend its money. And I admit to that, that those lessons have not been taught... there's a lot of talk in this town about us being an unsound church”

What
Happens
When We
Stop
Preaching
the Whole
Counsel of
God

- Spoken Truth
- Unspoken Truth
- Unspoken Error
- Spoken Error

Results of this Teaching

- Necessity of the whole counsel of God is rejected
- Authority of Scripture is minimized
- Sin is redefined
- Feelings become more important than the teaching and pattern of God's word
- Broadening fellowship in contradiction to the doctrine of Christ

Beauty and Treasure of the Bride of Christ

We are to adorn the doctrine of
God in our lives as Christians