

# Light Brings Salt

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## Iron Range Bible Church

*Dedicated to the Systematic Exposition of the Word of God*



### Is Doctrine No Longer Important?

Pastor John Griffith

The exposition of 1 Timothy along with the other pastoral epistles (2 Timothy and Titus) could be dubbed 'The life of the local church'. For in them we find Paul's instruction in many areas that are crucial to the proper function of the local assembly.

Paul writes at length about local church leadership, the criteria for eligibility for the pastorate, and conduct/ethics of leadership, and how young leaders can ensure that their ministry is accepted, and not despised or rejected on account of their youth.

Other subjects covered include the principles governing the church's social work, that is the church's responsibility towards those in need within the congregation, the support and disciplining of pastors, the superiority of contentment over covetousness, the call to holiness, and the dangers and duties of the rich.

But the apostle's overriding preoccupation throughout all three Pastoral Letters is with truth, the doctrine believed that it might be faithfully guarded and handed on.

The pertinence of this theme, at the beginning of the twenty first century, is especially evident. For contemporary culture is being overtaken and submerged by what is called post-modernism.

Post-modernism began as a self-conscious reaction against the modernism of the Enlightenment, and especially against its unbounded confidence in reason, science and

progress.

The postmodern mind rightly rejects this naive optimism. But it then goes further and swings the pendulum all the way to the other end of the spectrum and declares that there is no such thing as objective, or absolute truth.

The view is that all so-called 'truth' is purely subjective, being culturally conditioned and that therefore each one has their own truth, which has as much right to respect as anybody else's.

Pluralism is an offspring of postmodernism, what it does is to affirm the independent validity of every faith and ideology, and demands in often shrill tones that we abandon as impossibly arrogant any attempt to persuade somebody to our viewpoint or convictions. Their reasoning is that its arrogant since all faiths are equal and all lead to God and salvation.

In contrast to this relativization of truth, it is wonderfully refreshing to read Paul's unambiguous commitment to objective truth.

He has himself been appointed, he says, a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. (1 Tim. 2:7); that the church is 'the pillar and foundation of the truth' (1 Tim. 3:15); and it is the truth which 'leads to godliness' (Tit. 1:1).

The false teachers, on the other hand, 'have wandered away from the truth' and even 'oppose the truth' (1 Tim. 6:21; 2 Tim. 2:18; 3:8; cf. 4:4).

First, there is Paul himself, who styles himself at the beginning of all three letters an apostle of Jesus Christ, adding in two of them that his

apostleship is by the will or the command of God. And all through these letters his self-conscious apostolic authority is apparent, as he issues commands and expects obedience as he communicates the Word of God.

Also, again and again, he refers to what he calls almost indiscriminately 'the truth', 'the faith', 'the sound doctrine', 'the teaching' or 'the deposit'.

The plain implication is that a body of doctrine exists, which, having been revealed and given by God, is objectively true. It is the teaching of the apostles and prophets. That which Paul in Eph. 2:20 says that it is the foundation upon which the Church is to be built.

Paul constantly exhorts Timothy and Titus back to it, that is the truth, doctrine, and since it is a part of the Canon of Scripture it is not just directed to Timothy and Titus together with the churches they oversee, but sets an example for all churches to pay close attention to.

A second thread that also runs throughout, is opposition to Paul and this message of truth and doctrine by those that are false teachers. They are *heterodidaskaloi* (1 Tim. 1:3; 6:3), engaged in teaching what is *heteros*, (ἕτερος) different from and alien to the teaching of the apostles.

They are essentially deviationists, who have 'wandered' or 'swerved' from the faith (1 Tim. 1:6; 4:1; 2 Tim. 2:18). Paul does not mince his words. What they are spreading in Paul's words is not an alternative truth, but 'lies', 'godless chatter', 'myths' and 'meaningless talk'.

Ten times in 1 Timothy and Titus Paul writes 'teach these things', 'command and teach these things', or 'give the people these instructions'.

On each occasion ταυτα ('these things') refers to the teaching which Paul is giving Timothy and Titus. They are not only to hold on to it themselves, guarding the precious deposit of truth (1 Tim. 1:19; 3:9; 6:20), and to fight for it against the false teachers (1 Tim. 1:18; 6:12),

but also to pass it on faithfully to those in the church. 2 Tim. 2:2

These pastoral epistles were written to individual men, gifted men given to the church who were to be responsible for the L/C, its direction and function, the how to or how not to do certain things and to be operating within the will of God.

Look at 1 Tim. 4:11 - here and in the following verses Paul gives Timothy a series of commands that are very important as we consider the message of the pastoral epistles and their importance in the function of the local assembly, as it seeks to honor God.

If you read through 4:16 this section tells us that Timothy needed to be challenged - and charged related to his responsibilities as a pastor.

Therefore we are better informed as to what are the responsibilities of a pastor and therefore what we should expect to find in a properly functioning local church.

Teaching is central - question is teaching what? The word for teaching is didaskalia (διδασκαλία) and it refers to doctrine, Biblical teaching on any given subject not emotional devotionals for the nursery crowd, that is believers who have never grown and matured being only fed milk not solid food of the Word. The sad thing is that most do not care about advancing in the truth of the Word of God at all.

The importance of correct doctrine as you study carefully the Pastoral epistles cannot be over stated. Too many believers are ashamed or shy away from saying that doctrine is important. Oh, its too dry, its too academic, not so!! The nursery crowd needs to be entertained and made to feel good since most operate on emotions.

Question! Is it not important for us to know, to understand the message God has for us?

What the creator of the Universe has said, is it true or false? Important or can we just ignore it with no consequences? Don't think so!!!

## Some Observations on the Importance of Doctrine:

1. True Doctrine finds its source only in divine revelation. Jn 7:14-16
2. Doctrine was the message of the early church. Acts 5:27-29

Do we see this consistency of focus on doctrine, teaching, in the pastorals?

In 1 Tim 4:1 we are instructed that we need to be on guard since Satan is a great teacher, so also are his operatives demons. This is the reason that there are so many counterfeits, false teaching, apostasy found in so many pulpits today. Check also 1 Tim. 4:6; 4:13; 5:17.

In 6:1 we are exhorted to conduct ourselves in harmony with will of God so that the Word of God will not be defamed or spoken against.

In 1 Tim. 6:3 defines sound words, while in 2 Tim 3:10 we are exhorted to follow after truth as exhibited by the teacher of truth.

2 Tim. 3:16; 4:3 both give us a warning.

Titus 1:9 strong instruction to Titus, all pastors; pos. build up; neg. refute false teaching. Titus 2:1; 2:7

How can we say as a believer, this is the Word of God and never study its message, don't even crack the cover, except at church and you only do that when its only convenient for you.

This book, the Bible, has the greatest, highest claims of any book ever published, the greatest number sold of all time, and its studied the least.

3. True doctrine was to be guarded from error.

Jude 3 "contend earnestly for the faith"

1 Tim. 1:3 ἑτεροδιδασκαλέω strange doctrine; totally different message, not truth

4. True Doctrine is the basis of right conduct, moral conduct. 1 Tim. 1:10
  - man's conduct reflects use of or lack of

understanding of sound healthy doctrine.

5. True Doctrine will eventually become intolerable to most. 2 Tim 4:1-4
  - focus today is need centered preaching, psychologized "me" centered preaching, all designed to make you feel good, not to live righteously before God.
6. What is the test of fellowship?? 2 Jn 9-10
  - Doctrine is the test, specifically one's Christology.
7. True BD is to be the identifying characteristic of the Church. 1 Tim 3:15

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## Muddle-headed Politicians and the Terrorist Threat

By: David Limbaugh

Have you seen the latest reports and photographs of Al Qaeda's brutality and savagery in Iraq? In view of these, how can any reasonable person still maintain our own policies and actions are making them do it?

How can so many be blind or indifferent to the ruthlessness, tenacity and implacability of our jihadist enemy? How can they so easily downplay or ignore this global threat as if its existence is purely a product of our perception, which we can wish away with positive thinking, legislate away or make disappear by withdrawing from Iraq?

Ending our involvement in Iraq will not end the Iraq war as Democrats glibly imply, nor our involvement in the global war. But it will surely increase the violence and death in Iraq and the likelihood of victory for our terrorist enemies.

What kind of deceptive force possesses American and Western European liberals to make obscene claims of moral equivalence between the consistent acts of barbarism unquestionably committed by our enemies and the rare cases of alleged misconduct by our troops in Iraq or Guantanamo?

Better yet, what makes them look the other way or even apologize for the terrorists' actions -- "our policies caused them to do it" -

- but rush to embrace the worst imaginable, mostly untrue allegations against our troops, our commanders and the Bush administration?

Don't accuse me of hyperbole unless you have a sufficient explanation for the left's utter lack of outrage over the horror perpetrated by the enemy in Iraq on a daily basis. Don't accuse me of distortion in saying you are willing to believe the worst about our soldiers unless you can explain why your first instinct is to believe the enemy's propaganda instead of our own people in Gitmo and elsewhere.

Don't say I'm misrepresenting the facts unless you have a satisfactory answer for the liberal media's refusal to report the good news from Iraq, but more importantly, their calculated free pass for terrorists and their unimaginable atrocities.

What gives here?

Are liberals so consumed by Bush derangement syndrome (BDS) that they've lost all perspective? Is their contempt so intense that they don't have any passion left for the forces of good against those of evil in this worldwide struggle? Are they so invested in their opposition that they refuse even to believe the terrorists' own words about their global designs?

To the extent their vision isn't marred by BDS I have to conclude their worldview doesn't permit them the clarity of moral vision necessary to comprehend the true nature of our enemy and that it cannot be reasoned with, negotiated with, mollified or deterred short of the use of force.

Despite their unconvincing protests to the contrary, it's painfully obvious liberals just don't believe in our cause in Iraq. Their behavior cannot be explained any other way. They're clearly rooting against, indeed trying to preempt the surge and otherwise thwart our mission.

If they wanted the surge to work, they wouldn't be declaring it a failure prior to the date Commander David Petraeus set for fairly evaluating our progress -- especially

considering that many signs are pointing to the surge's success.

Reports coming out of Iraq indicate that our new strategy of rooting out terrorists and holding the areas is working. Evidence is accumulating that even if our homegrown liberals aren't, the Iraqi people are increasingly turning against Al Qaeda, largely because of their brutality. Sectarian violence, for now, is declining.

In an interview with columnist Ralph Peters, General Petraeus said, "If I could only have one [thing] at this point in Iraq, it would be more time." There are no shortcuts, he said. "It's a test of wills, demanding patience, determination and stamina from all involved."

Democrats and other liberals are unwilling to give it time -- that's nothing new, and no surprise. What is profoundly disappointing is the growing number of Republican politicians who, apparently corrupted by beltway hubris and toxicity, have abandoned the mission just when it looks like we have captured momentum.

These tired elephants appear more concerned with achieving some abstract bipartisan consensus -- as if politicians rubbing each others' backs is a higher moral aspiration than protecting the nation -- than in dealing with the concrete threat of an enemy trying to subjugate and kill us. It's disgraceful.

If they are so hell-bent on affecting a premature withdrawal, they should consider affecting their own withdrawal from Congress. Perhaps it's time for these foreign policy geniuses who think they can tame terrorists and achieve world peace with a wave of their magical legislative wands to step aside and make way for ordinary people who are capable of seeing beyond their own interests and confronting the evil that threatens our future.