

Importance of Doctrine

Hebrews 4:1 Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it.

Hebrews 4:2 For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.

Doctrine (promises) + Faith → His (Faith) Rest

More and more, I find myself stressing “Faith-Rest.” Claim a promise with faith and rest. Stop worrying. As several passages say, “Fear not.” Originally, this was taught as the “Faith Rest technique.” For me, this is a way of life. Perhaps “Faith-Rest Life” is a more apt title.

Again, historical warning signs are flashing all around us. Economy, military/war, crime, inflation...the list goes on and on. Those who are not rooted and grounded in faith-rest (doctrine plus faith) will have great difficulty dealing with current trends. Let us listen to David from one of his psalms. Turn in your Bibles to Psalm 55. Let us read the entire psalm and then glean one of the promises from it.

Psalm 55:22 Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you (here is an often used promise); **He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.**

Psalm 55:23 **But You, O God, will bring them down to the pit of destruction; Men of**

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bloodshed and deceit will not live out half their days. But I will trust in You (This is our life – trust/faith).

Cast your burden. The word “cast” is a strong word for throwing something. Throw your burdens on the Lord.

I will trust. This word meshes with the concept of throwing your burdens on the Lord. One pastor suggested it was used of a wrestler body slamming someone to the ground.

The same concept is brought into the Church Age by Peter:

1 Peter 5:6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,

1 Peter 5:7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

The past couple of lessons started with a detour. Perhaps the Holy Spirit was leading me toward a new format for my lessons. This teaching is for both advanced and beginning believers. However, much of my teaching has been geared toward mature believers. In a sense, the early service and the main service have been combined into one.

So what has happened in the last few weeks is that the first part of the lesson is geared more toward the newer believer. This week continues that format. The first portion of this lesson is a continuing focus on the importance of doctrine. If doctrine was not important, then why would there be pastor-teachers? There is a great emphasis throughout the Bible on learning and understanding God’s Word.

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Recently, there was a Facebook post from someone looking for a local church to attend. It was interesting to see what was important to young people today. They wanted to join a group and have activities to do. It was not worded that way, but it was obvious that is what they wanted. Where are the people who want to learn about Jesus Christ and have a relationship with God the Father through Jesus? In order to do that, a person needs to know something about God, His character and how He relates to human beings.

Let me ask a question. Why do we send children to school, other than it is a requirement? Some parents pay a lot of money to send their children to private schools. It is true that some parents just want someone to baby sit their children during the day while they go to work. But there is a reason for schools. It used to be to learn the “three R’s: reading, 'riting and 'arithmetic.” Those are skills necessary to function in a society today. Humans are “social animals.” We need to communicate. Hence reading and writing. Most jobs required some skill in arithmetic, even if that is to know how much money one is going to make at a job. Or to go shopping. How do you find good deals while shopping unless you can compare prices? There are endless reasons. “Old” people from the Baby Boomer generation moan at seeing teenagers unable to make change or read hand written notes. The morals have changed as well. It seems anything is OK as long as you don’t “get caught.” Everything has become relative. As a result, there is less absolute meaning in life. Is that why there is such an increase in the number of teen suicides?

There are similar reasons to learn about God and the Bible. How does one function in a society that has no God? Yet, all know of God. Romans says

**Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed
from heaven against all ungodliness and**

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unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

Romans 1:19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. (General Revelation, not General Relativity)

Romans 1:21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Romans 1:22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,

Romans 1:23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

People are aware of God. We call that God awareness. People choose to ignore God and His Word as is documented in Romans chapter 1.

This is an important point for new believers to understand, especially when giving the gospel. All humans eventually come to God-

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consciousness. At least those that are above an idiot IQ. There was a fascinating study done by a Jesuit priest (Wilhelm Schmidt) in the early to mid 1900's titled in English, "The Origin of the Idea of God." I have not read this 12-volume work written in German which was based upon this priest's work among primitive tribes in the Pacific. I can only provide a summary provided by others on Wikipedia:

"There he explained his theory of primitive monotheism, the belief that primitive religion among almost all tribal peoples began with an essentially monotheistic concept of a high god — usually a sky god — who was a benevolent creator. Schmidt theorized that human beings believed in a God who was the First Cause of all things and Ruler of Heaven and Earth before men and women began to worship a number of gods:

- "Schmidt suggested that there had been a primitive monotheism before men and women had started to worship a number of gods. Originally they had acknowledge only one Supreme Deity, who had created the world and governed human affairs from afar."

Even primitive tribes develop an awareness of God. They understood Him to be the "benevolent creator." Charles Clough once pointed out that young people today have regressed from the Bible aware people of the 1950's. In order to approach today's young people, an evangelist may have to start with creation. The apostle Paul did that for Roman audiences that knew little or nothing about the Jewish God, Yahweh.

But if you choose to believe in Jesus Christ as savior, you are a "new creation" and a citizen of heaven.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

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Philippians 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

Philippians 3:21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

So, as Christians, we have been changed (we now have a human spirit whereas unbelievers do not), we have the indwelling Holy Spirit, the potential to be filled with the Holy Spirit and we have a mission. Many things changed in our being at the point of faith in Christ. How do I know this? It is in the Bible. Wouldn't you like to learn about yourself as a Christian?

In college during the 1960's, there were often discussions in religious circles about what a Christian was. These were mostly unbelievers who didn't have a substantial answer to that question. Was a Christian a person who went to church? Well, just going to church didn't make you a Christian. A Muslim could go to church and be curious or to study so-called Christians. People who did things in churches might be classified as "Christians." They professed to do good in the name of Christ. But they sometimes did bad. How could a Christian do bad? They are supposed to be good people. The arguments went on and on. For me, the answer was given by some InterVarsity Christian Fellowship people: believe in Jesus Christ as Savior. The answer is so simple it usually eludes academics. Or is criticized because it "couldn't be that simple."

There is a story once told by L. S. Chafer, a founder of Dallas Theological Seminary, about a "village idiot." He would wander around

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a town, not bothering anyone and no one bothered him. It was an unspoken rule. Every Sunday, the village idiot would attend church. He attended in silence, not bothering anyone. Then one Sunday during a lull in the service, he stood up. Likely, people silently groaned. He was going to violate the unspoken rule. He said out loud, “Jesus died for sinners. I am a sinner. Jesus died for me.” A “village idiot” knew more about salvation than most PhD’s.

We are citizens of heaven. Before my wife could become a US citizen, she had to study and take a knowledge test concerning the US Constitution and the English language. God makes us citizens of heaven when we believe. We need to catch up on what that means. That leads us to the concept of “doctrine.”

So what is doctrine? The word “doctrine” doesn’t appear often in the Scripture unless you are reading the King James Version. We call it by different names. It is what is referred to in the Bible as knowledge, understanding, wisdom and other terms.

On the internet there are some hefty doctrines on the importance of doctrines. But for today, perhaps it is sufficient to look at some words used in the Bible. The following list of words from the Hebrew and Greek are not all-inclusive, but are representative of some of the primary concepts concerning “doctrine.” It is not important to learn the Hebrew words, only to understand the difference concepts that encompass “doctrine.” It is taken from notes from R. B. Thieme Jr. classes with some editing.

1. Definition of “Doctrine”: It is the content of scripture derived from exegesis, classification of promises, principles, and categories.

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2. Vocabulary

A. Leqach (Hebrew): Doctrine, learning, knowledge, what one receives into his mind or learns. Deuteronomy 32:2, Job 11:4; Proverbs 4:2; Isaiah 29:24

Deuteronomy 32:1 “Give ear, O heavens, and let me speak; And let the earth hear the words of my mouth.

Deuteronomy 32:2 “Let my teaching (this is our word) drop as the rain, My speech distill as the dew, As the droplets on the fresh grass And as the showers on the herb.

Deuteronomy 32:3 “For I proclaim the name of the Lord; Ascribe greatness to our God!

Deuteronomy 32:4 “The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He.

Not only do we have a word for doctrine, but we learn something about the character of God. We learn doctrine relating to God’s faithfulness and His righteousness. We are learning something about the person we should love and have an intimate spiritual relationship with.

Proverbs contains many verses on doctrine.

Proverbs 4:2 For I give you sound teaching (our word; The King James version translates it

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as “doctrine.”); **Do not abandon my instruction (torah).**

There is an important point to take note of in this passage. The New American Standard Bible translation, translates “torah” in this verse as “instruction.” Any word in Hebrew or Greek can have multiple meanings dependent upon context. In this context, torah is understood to mean, not the Mosaic Law per se, but how Bible information is communicated and what it is called. Here it is called “instruction.”

B. Musar (Hebrew): Instruction or doctrine. Job 10:8; Proverbs 1:2; 4:13; 23:23

Proverbs 1:2 To know wisdom and instruction (our word), To discern the sayings of understanding,

Proverbs 1:3 To receive instruction (our word) in wise behavior, Righteousness, justice and equity;

Proverbs 1:4 To give prudence to the naive, To the youth knowledge and discretion,

Proverbs 1:5 A wise man will hear and increase in learning, And a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel,

Proverbs 1:6 To understand a proverb and a figure, The words of the wise and their riddles.

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Proverbs 1:7 Hear, my son, your father's instruction (our word) And do not forsake your mother's teaching;

As mentioned above, Proverbs is full of words for doctrine. In this case, there are several words, including words not in our list plus some advantages to learning doctrine. This is not just about our relationship with God, it also helps us function as righteous people in society. Absolutes concerning right and wrong come from God. An atheist has to generate concepts of right and wrong that are relative. They cannot have a firm grounding since they are developed apart from God. That leads to "nihilism." I'm not getting into that here. But there is a fascinating essay by a former atheist titled "Escape from Nihilism" that is worth a read if you find it on the internet.

(It can be found at <https://www.scribd.com/document/283861434/Escape-From-Nihilism> but you have to sign up for the website. It used to be easier to acquire a copy.

C. Shamu'a (Hebrew): What is heard or doctrine Isaiah 28:9

Isaiah 28:9 "To whom would He teach knowledge (the first word in our list), And to whom would He interpret the message (our word here)? Those just weaned from milk? Those just taken from the breast?"

D. Didaskalia (Greek): teaching, doctrine, what is taught from scripture. Matthew 15:9; Ephesians 4:14; Col 2:22; I Timothy 1:10

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Ephesians 4:14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine (our word), by the trickery of men

Ephesians 4:15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,

Ephesians 4:16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

E. Didache (Greek): Act of teaching or what is taught from scripture. Matthew 7:28; 22:33; Mark 1:22,27; Acts 2:42; Hebrews 6:2; Acts 5:48; Romans 2:17; I Corinthians 14:6,26; II Timothy 4:2; Revelation 2:14,15,24

2 Timothy 4:1 I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:

2 Timothy 4:2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction (our word).

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2 Timothy 4:3 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,

2 Timothy 4:4 and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

F. Logos (Greek): Hebrews 6:1 doctrine

Hebrews 6:1 Therefore leaving the elementary teaching (logos) about the Christ (KJV: Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ), let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

Hebrews 6:2 of instruction (previous word didache) about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

Hebrews 6:3 And this we will do, if God permits.

Not only is there “elementary” teaching but there is more advanced teaching. The writer of Hebrews is emphasizing that a believer should not just learn basics, but advance and become a mature believer.

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There is also hostile doctrine: Doctrine of Demons: I Timothy 4:1; I Timothy 5:17; 6:1,3; II Timothy 3:10; 3:16; 4:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1; 2:7,10

Let us finish the first Servant Song starting with a review.

Isaiah 42:1-9 is a prophecy quoted in the New Testament and applied to Jesus Christ. It is the “call” of the servant. It is also used to identify who Jesus Christ is at the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist. Remember

Isaiah 42:1 “Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.

Matthew 3:16 After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him,

Matthew 3:17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”

There is a longer quote in Matthew 12

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Matthew 12:16 and warned them not to tell who He was.

Matthew 12:17 This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet:

This is followed by a quote from Isaiah 42:1-4.

The point is, the “My Servant” is proclaimed in the Old Testament and identified in the New Testament as Jesus.

In Isaiah 42:1-4 there are several key points:

1. Here is the call of the Suffering Servant who is the Messiah who is identified in Matthew as Jesus Christ.
2. God places the Holy Spirit on Jesus for the completion of His task on earth and beyond.
3. God is perfectly pleased with the work of Jesus. That is what got Him to the cross. He was qualified to bear the sins of the world.
4. Matthew makes a point of emphasizing Jesus’ humility by his quote in Matthew chapter 12.
5. It specifically addresses that the Suffering Servant (Jesus Christ) will bring justice to the Gentiles. This happens in the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ.

Now in Isaiah 42:5-9 the following points are made:

1. Jesus is called in righteousness. Jesus was always righteous. Hence, God the Father is pleased with Him.
2. The Suffering Servant is appointed as a covenant to the people. This is a reference to the “New Covenant.” As if to emphasize this, God

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says the old things are being completed and He is declaring the “new.”

3. He will “open blind eyes.” See John chapter 9 and other references to Jesus healing blind people.
4. He will be a light to the nations.