

Does Doctrine Matter - Part 3

by Derek Melton

Derek Melton emphasizes the critical importance of sound doctrine in glorifying God and warns against the dangers of a benefit-driven faith.

Scripture: Ephesians 2:8, 1 Timothy 4:16

Topics: "Doctrine"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of glorifying God as the chief purpose of mankind. He passionately expresses his belief that his loud and strong voice is a gift from God to proclaim the word even in challenging times. The preacher also discusses the significance of doctrine and how it matters in the life of a believer. He encourages the congregation to continue in sound doctrine, as it not only saves themselves but also impacts those who hear them. The sermon concludes with a prayer for God's grace to reveal the scriptures and stir a deep longing for His presence in the hearts of the listeners.

Transcript

unto righteousness, but God bethank that ye were the servants of sin, I like that past tense, that ye were servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you, being then made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness. 1st Timothy chapter 4 verse 16, take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine, continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee. Let's pray.

Father it's your grace that we need and loan for and desire. Lord this morning we need your grace to reveal the scriptures, the sacred scriptures of your word to our hearts. Father God we know or that it's by your grace that we are saved and not of works lest that we should boast.

Father work in us Lord God, stir in us Lord God, a deep longing Lord for your grace and your presence. Father God move in us Lord God and Lord that the very faith that you have given unto us Father God that it will be stirred and awakened and raised up Lord whereby we might lay hold of the promises of God and see them to come to pass in our life and our generation and within the church. Father God give us an understanding today of the Word of God that we would not be deceived nor we would be blind concerning the word of truth.

Give us an understanding lest the adversary come and steal away the good seed of the word. Give us a hunger and thirst for righteousness that we might please you. And Father God give us grace unto life in

Jesus name, amen.

We've been talking the last several weeks about doctrine and does doctrine matter and I think after two weeks of preaching in this regard we do understand that doctrine does matter. I think that we have come to that conclusion. So today we're going to continue on in that same stead and that same direction and we're going to continue to talk about about doctrine.

We talked last time about the chief end of man. Not only do we want to talk about our need for doctrine, we want to talk about what doctrine is. We need to have a basic fundamental understanding of the tenets of the faith, the doctrines of the gospel of Jesus Christ so that we'll be able to stand on the day of evil.

We're living in very turbulent times. There are a lot of spirits out there that say they're Jesus Christ that are not Jesus Christ. The only way that you'll be able to measure between the true and the false is if you have that word, doctrinal truths written upon your heart.

The reason I know that an error is an error is because I have the Word of God, doctrinal truth written upon my heart, the tablets of my heart. Like I said, that is a lie because the Word of God says this. The Bible says that we are many times children and we're tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine.

There are a lot of winds of doctrine that are blowing out there in the market of religious fanfare today and there are a lot of people that have no doctrinal foundation nor understanding that are falling by the side that are falling prey that are succumbing to the powers of evil that are at work within doctrinal error. Beloved, it is my greatest concern that we be rooted and grounded in Christ through solid biblical preaching and solid biblical doctrine. The greatest threat to the church today is not pornography.

The greatest threat for the church today is not adultery. The greatest threat to the church today is not homosexuality. The greatest threat to the church of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is doctrinal error, doctrinal heresy, doctrinal apostasy.

Then beloved we have the very means by the Holy Ghost and the sovereignty of God to be equipped against it to be able to stand firm as a mighty fortress rooted and grounded in our God and we need this in our lives today. We talked um I'm yelling my wife's been scolding me that I yell too much but to me it's not yelling it's excitement. Let me tell you something the foreknowledge of God and the predestination of God was in his will that I would have a loud and strong voice.

I saw a picture just this week that was drawn of John Wesley that was standing in a place in England and it is a natural amphitheater to where he was standing and around the sides of this hill were 20,000 people and they had no electricity in those days. Benjamin Franklin had not been born yet. The dude with the kite and the key had not been born yet although God had a plan for him he had not been born yet and there was no audible transmission other than vocal.

They didn't have a megaphone they didn't have a microphone. Sometimes I wish we didn't have them today especially when they're squealing but 20,000 people was hearing the gospel of this man of God thundering the Word of God and God's gave me a set of pipes that I might be able to do the thing the same thing when times grow sour in our culture and when we lose electricity that we don't have to fret we don't have to worry that you'll be able to hear what I'm saying amen. Now I don't want to go backwards too much but it's important that we go forward but again I want to quickly reiterate the first article of the shorter Westminster Catechism which says that the chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.

I've put in my notes that it's really challenging for me to traverse beyond this because of the attack against this in our Christian culture. Beloved the chief end of mankind the reason that you have been born the reason that you have been reborn is to glorify God. Beloved I'm going to be so bold to say that any doctrine that that is contrary to that preeminent truth is foul doctrine.

That above and beyond all things friend we must glorify God. If everything goes wrong in your life we are called of God to glorify him. If everything goes right in your life we're called of God to glorify him.

Beloved it's not about you nor is it about I it's about the glory of God and that's the very chief purpose in our creation and our recreation is to honor and glorify God. God saved you by his grace through faith not to give you an escape from hell alone but that you glorify God in his redemptive work. God saved you under his own glory.

Everything God does God does for his own glory and we are of him cut from his own loin of loins by the glory and the majesty of God and all that we are and all that we are called to do is glorify God in all we say and do amen. So whoops Pastor Pete he said that he didn't like his microphone because when he adjusted his glasses it it thundered but that's okay it just has to come with the territory and so I might mention earlier it's quite challenging for us and it's really challenging for me to go beyond this preeminent doctrinal truth that we've been talking about in to other truths simply because of the gross misappropriation of the gospel in our current religious culture and I think that you all are very much aware having listened to Christian radio and what's called Christian radio what's called Christian television and you have with your own eyes and your own ears seen and heard the misappropriation of the gospel or the mis-contextualization of the gospel in in a mainstream religion today cultural religion today. I want to read you an email response that was sent to Sam Ketcher whenever he addressed and also I as well did with KXOJ promoting the book The Shack.

You all do know that that book has been born in the very pit the very abyss of hell. It glorifies this whole ecumenical issue this whole heretical issue and we talked about it somewhat with the emergent theology last week it has been born from this very same thing and let me find it here and I'll read it to you. Now this is the one the director of our Christian radio KXOJ.

I'll read you Sam's. So are you still promoting The Shack? I have stopped listening to KXOJ because I can't support heresy. I hope this gets resolved.

You should never rely on ORU for what you promote. They should rely on the Word of God. This is the response.

We will have to respectfully disagree on our opinions of this work of fiction. Again I never under I would never I would understand if it were be pre being proclaimed as truth but as it is it's an art and the author has stated this over and over again it is an angle that is causing people to think. In my life I found it better to be proactive than just to be reactive.

Otherwise I'm just allowing the actions of others to dictate my actions and therefore control me and I end up constantly boycotting the things I see others doing wrong rather than getting on with my father's work. Beloved if the the church is to be against things have they not read the gospel? We are to set ourselves against doctrinal error, doctrinal apostasy, lies that come from the pit. I am greatly concerned when we have men that call themselves by the name of Jesus Christ that continue to be blind concerning apostate conditions that are overtaking what is called the church in our generation.

Who is going to stand up against what is evil? Who's going to stand up for what is wrong and thereby stand for the truth? The reason that our world is succumbed with evil and there's more of this and I won't read it but it's worse. The reason that we have such moral degradation in our society is because we have been pacifist in the church against error and against sin and against wrongdoing and wrong being. We've kept our mouth silent when we should have been a voice and beloved I tell you that I will not support anything that calls itself by the name of Christ that is wrapped up in the very womb of doctrinal error and heresy.

No way, no way I will not. Beloved you're better off to have no music than to have perverted music. I'm getting on my bandwagon mama before it's time.

Beloved you must understand something and I'm going to go on forward please. I've got a lot to say. The love of pleasure that's inundated our society has crept into the hallowed sanctum of the church.

Subsequently the pulpit has cowered down and traded its birthright for a bowl of cultural porridge and with this loss of biblical truth there has in its place come a new gospel that is culturally palatable, hyper-tolerant, seeker-sensitive and benefit-driven and this is the gospel that is accepted among the throngs of pleasure pursuing parishioners simply because it's perceived as a means to the end of their own self-gratification through riches and through fame and through favor and through preeminence and a life that is filled with pleasure, the chief end of their own desires. Therefore the pulpit spends its time watering these inordinate seeds of these men and women's wicked desires within its congregation and with man-made religious maladies in the name of church growth and cultural religious success. The true gospel beloved in these regions and in these churches is never preached among these seeker-sensitive crowds because of its offensive nature.

You must understand the gospel of Jesus Christ is an offense to them that are lost. It's an offense to religious people. It's unpalatable in its demands.

Beloved, the gospel of Jesus Christ will place demands upon you, demands in so much, demands so powerful and so rich that you cannot fulfill the least demand without the grace and power of the Lord Jesus Christ and of His Spirit. So here we find men that are not men without spines, without character, without the Spirit of God that are behind the pulpit giving in to the demands of a seeker-sensitive crowd and hours and hours are spent in seminars, hours are spent, money has spent in conventions instructing these spineless puppets that stand in the pulpit how to use the benefits of the gospel to draw crowds and to build great and successful and wealthy ministries. I'm feeling sick about it and all the while the Spirit of God is grieved.

The true gospel is perverted and multitudes of unsuspecting churchgoers are bound by deception and they're bound by sin with no power to break free from their dungeon of despair that is ultimately leading them to an irreversible eternal damnation. And I am very much aware that some of you think that I'm taking this far too serious. You may feel that I'm overreacting.

You may feel that I'm reading into our religious culture a norm that is not as pronounced as I am mentioning. But beloved, I truly believe it is much, much worse than I'm mentioning. I believe it's much, much worse than I'm mentioning.

Earlier I made mention of the greatest threat against the church today is not porn, it's not eroticism, sensualism, it's not any of that. It's doctrinal error, it's doctrinal apostasy. It doesn't say that in the last days

that many will fall into pornography as they'll depart from the faith.

The faith, the fundamentals, the foundational truths of the Word of God. How? Why? Because of doctrinal error. There are those that will creep into the church, that will creep into the church and they'll introduce a new gospel which is not a gospel at all.

And many not having any foundational truth or any doctrinal ability to be able to discern it as a lie will follow these lies and they will be given over to their lust after the fullness of time. They'll be given over to the fullness of their lust. That's the greatest threat against the church in the hour in which you and I live.

And I believe that this is much worse than what I'm mentioning. If you think I'm too radical, if you feel that I'm out of touch, that I'm concerned about the power of deception that's being asserted over you, I'm concerned about the power of deception that has control of your mind and has control of your heart. And it may be that you are a candidate for doctrinal apostasy.

Beloved, if the benefits of the gospel are the only motive for your commitment to Christ, you are an idolater. You are an enemy of the gospel. You're an enemy of the sovereign king of all glory.

For you are a lover of his gift, but not a lover of his person. Let me ask you a question. If the benefits of the gospel were stripped away, would you still love Jesus? Would your commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ remain strong, steadfast, unwavering as a bulwark? Or would it fade away as the dew of the morning? Would it vanish away as a mist over the ocean? If the benefits of the gospel were taken away, would your commitment and loyalty to the person of Christ remain unwavering? I understand the challenge in that question.

But listen, my friend, a love that finds its commitment only within the dividends that are accrued is a feigned love, a false love. Let me say that again. A love that finds its commitment within the dividends that are accrued is a feigned love, a false love.

But a love that is birthed out of a passionate and abiding adoration for the character, that means the attributes that are ascribed to that individual that makes that person who they are, attributes. But the love that is birthed out of a passion and an abiding adoration for the character of that person is a lasting and a pure love, regardless of the benefits that are ascribed to them. And it's my great concern that the multitudes of many church-attending, professing believers in Jesus Christ are in love with what he gives, but they are not in love with who he is in his divine character and attributes.

And much of this dreadful condition is attributed to the pulpit and the rubbish that is being fed to the people of God. And it's unfortunate but true that multitudes of pulpiteers spend the majority of their time discoursing upon the benefits of the gospel while grossly neglecting the God of the gospel. And from this malady comes a generation of church-attending professors in Jesus Christ that are wonderfully and excellently taught about what Jesus Christ can give, but sadly they have no idea who Jesus is.

This is our generation. And they have not been taught Christ, just as the Apostle said in Ephesians 4:20, but ye have not so learned Christ. Christ.

Beloved, I hold you to account that if this pulpit reverses in its forward momentum and begins to hyper emphasize the benefits of redemption while ignoring and neglecting the God of redemption, cast me out as an unbeliever. I beg with you, I plead with you, hold me accountable. Hold me accountable for the sake of your heart.

Hold me accountable for the sake of the glory of God. Hold me accountable for the sake of your children. Hold me accountable that if this pulpit begins to reverse, and beloved I have no intentions of so doing, but beloved I'm a human, that if the day ever comes when I start preaching a benefit-driven gospel instead of a God-exalting and God-glorifying gospel, beloved, remove me.

I purposely in the beginning started this church to where I can be removed. The elders of this church have the authority and the power legally to remove me from the pulpit, and I did so purposely, knowing the error of man in his capacity to fall into error. And once again, beloved, I must mention that when the benefits of the gospel leave our peripheral vision and remove Christ from our direct vision to replace him, then we are in doctrinal error.

And the Apostles addressed to the Hebrew believers, he stated this, looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith and everything in between. Looking unto Jesus. And this is a challenge for the church to fix our eyes, our direct vision to the person of Jesus Christ for our growth, for our maturity, and for our success.

Looking unto Jesus, beloved, and the benefits are always and must always be and forevermore remain peripheral. You don't pursue benefits, you pursue Jesus. Will benefits come? Yes! But beloved, they come as a byproduct of your relationship with the person of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and not your pursuit of the benefits alone.

I didn't marry my wife because I'd like to have sex with her. I married her because I love her. Nowhere in the Bible is it mentioned that we should remove Christ from the center of our focus and for us to fill our eyes with the benefits that make our life more comfortable and easier.

And once again, beloved, it's the chief end of man to glorify God. And with this end before us, let's spend some time, energy, and passion going forth today and glorifying God as God. The Word of God says in Romans chapter 1, and I'm gonna make some references to this this morning, in the 21st verse of Romans 1, it says, "...because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God.

Neither were they thankful, but they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." I could camp out up on this text longer than your tail link can sit in that chair and talk and talk and talk and talk about the glory of God, about the the fallen state of man, about the the confused state of many that go to church, and about how that can be alleviated and remedied that most folks are not willing. I could camp out here, but it might take, I put in my notes, it'd probably be a little bit over the top. And there's other things for us to learn in regard to true doctrine.

Now, the second question, and friend don't get me wrong, I'm not preaching the West Minister Catechism. These are doctrinal tenets, doctrinal truths that are the very essence of true God-ordained and sovereign gospel preaching. The first question is what? What is man's chief end? What was the answer? Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy God forever.

The second question is, what rule hath God given to direct us on how we may glorify and enjoy Him? The answer is the Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the, listen to this word, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him, the Word of God. We're going to talk this morning about the sufficiency of the Scriptures, the sufficiency of the Scriptures. The Old and the New Testament is the only rule.

Say only rule. It's the only rule that instructs us on how we are to glorify God and to enjoy Him. Beloved, it's not how you think that God should be glorified.

It's not what your thoughts tell you. It's not what our culture teaches and instructs you on how you're to glorify God. It's what the Word of God says that how you should glorify God, and it's the Word of God appropriated in our life, fulfilled in the life of a man or a woman just like you, that glorifies God and not by any other mechanism or means.

Now we discussed at length again last time the first article, to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever is the chief end of man. All true gospel doctrine flows from this truth. Any doctrinal matter, any scriptural matter, any truth that flows from another direction is a false gospel.

Every subsequent truth must flow from this very foundation that God must be glorified as God in all things. Now the second article of the Westminster Catechism gives us the means whereby the end is attained. What is the end? Glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

And so we learned the who. Now it's important that we learn the how. The how.

And it's one thing for us to have an understanding that God must be glorified in all things, even in our lives, but it is wholly another thing for us to understand how this is to be what I've called fleshed out or to be fulfilled in our lives, practically applied into our lives. Being so, we must know that it's impossible for us to fulfill the chief end of man in the glorying of God without the second revelation, which is the means to achieve the chief end. And the means to this end is the Word of God.

It's the Word of God. The second article states that the Word of God, which is contained in the scriptures of the Old and the New Testament, is the only rule. It is the only rule to direct us on how we may glorify God and enjoy God.

There's no greater enjoyment of the glory in the presence of God that whenever you are with Him in His glorying, glorifying Him. But when you glorify Him, you can enjoy Him as God. When you're glorifying Him, beloved, there are benefits that flow into your life that are nothing short of glorious and divine.

The beloved, the benefit is given with a pleased heart of an almighty and a sovereign majestic God begins to pour out His love and His character and His benefits upon those that are committed to Him, that love Him, that walk with Him by faith, not by sight, not by feeling, not by emotion, but by faith in the Word of God and the promise of God that is given in the holy writ of the Word of God. And that God begins to pour into our lives supernatural and wonderful sweet things that can by no other means be accomplished or received. But it's by the sovereignty of God, the love of God, the mercy of God, as we are with Him in His glorying, glorifying Him, lifting Him up, then we might enjoy Him.

And not just as benefit, but yesterday I spent the whole day enjoying the company of my wife, enjoying one another, enjoying who she is, fellowshiping with her, talking with her, discoursing with her, enjoying her attributes and her character, spending time. And beloved, we need to spend time enjoying God, enjoying God. And beloved, there's no enjoying of the triune Godhead unless He's being glorified, unless He's being glorified.

As we're glorifying Him with obedience by the Word of the living God. Oh, beloved, then we can begin to experience the river of living water that flows into our character and our hearts. We can enjoy His sweet presence, that sweet communion with Him as we're glorifying Him.

And there's no glorifying Him apart from the Word of God being applied into our lives on a daily basis. Do you people realize how much I love you? I wish those people that hated me that have been here would only realize that I love them. I wish they'd only realize that.

And the offense of the cross is only a result of my greater love for Him. So friends, it's impossible for us to fulfill the chief end of man and the glorifying of God without the second revelation, which is the means to achieve that end. And that means is the Word of God, the article of the second, the second article of the the Westminster Catechism says that the scriptures of the Old and the New Testament is the only rule to direct us on how we may glorify and enjoy God forever.

Turn with me to 2nd Timothy, if you would, chapter 3, please. Verse 13 of the third chapter of 2nd Timothy says, but evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse. What's that mean to you? It ain't gonna get any better.

Any doctrine that says it's gonna get better is not the right doctrine. It is not gonna get better out there. Do I believe the church is going to get better? Yep.

But I believe it's going to reduce, and numerically, but it's going to increase in fervency and loyalty and commitment. I believe that culture and I believe that circumstances are going to become a crucible that's going to purify and separate, cleanse, and deem who's who and what's what. That's another sermon, isn't it? Deceiving and being deceived, but continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.

Who's that whom? It's the Lord Jesus Christ. And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto what? Salvation through faith, which is in Jesus Christ. All scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect.

That word there means complete and thoroughly furnished unto all good works. First of all, let me say this after I drink of water here. It's impossible to glorify God apart from his word.

Let me say this again. It is impossible for us to glorify God apart from the Word of God and the knowledge that is ascribed to the Word of God. I read earlier in Romans chapter 1 where the Apostle Paul mentioned a people that knew God, but they did not glorify him as God.

We might ask, how can someone know God and not glorify God as God? And to this we must answer that the knowledge of God is inherent and instinctive within every man. It's the gospel. That's why I don't believe in atheists.

I don't believe in them. There's not such a thing. The most professed and avowed atheist is not an atheist.

God has instinctively and inherently placed within his heart the knowledge of God. He only glorifies himself instead of glorifies God. Every created being has an instinctive awareness of the existence of a creator.

Listen to me. Not justifying faith, not converting grace, but instinctive awareness and it's manifest within them according to the first chapter of Romans. So it's important for us to understand that the knowledge of God that is instinctive is not sufficient to the glorifying of God, for these mentioned by the Apostle Paul had knowledge, but God was not glorified.

Hello? So it's important for us to understand this. The instinctive of the instinctive knowledge of God must lead us to the Word of God. Beloved, don't don't drift off mentally from me here.

This is important truth that we need. The instinctive knowledge of God that you and I have must lead us to the Word of God whereby we learn by the very Holy Writ of God how God is glorified by such unglorious creatures such as we, such as you and I, how God is glorified by an unglorious creature such as you and me. The Word of God directs us upon that path.

In my opening remarks I made mention that it's impossible to glorify God apart from the Word of God. The Word of God is the rule, not only the rule, but the only rule whereby we are directed upon how we must glorify God and to enjoy him. As we mentioned earlier in this message, multitude after multitude of church attending professors in Jesus Christ have a knowledge of God.

Yet this knowledge cannot glorify God because the rule of their faith is opposed to and deviated from the written Word of God. You may ask this, the chief desire of their pursuit is merely the benefit of the gospel versus the God of the gospel and this is knowledge disproportionate to truth. Let me say that again, the chief desire of their pursuit is merely the benefit of the gospel versus the God of the gospel and this is knowledge that is disproportionate from the truth.

Any knowledge, friend look at me, any knowledge that is disproportionate to the truth does not, neither can it, glorify God. Are you with me? Any knowledge that is disproportionate with truth, any knowledge of God that is disproportionate with the truth revealed to us by the Word of God cannot, will not, does not, and will never glorify God. Amen.

All scripture is given by the inspiration of God that the man of God may be perfect, that the man of God might be complete, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. It might be correctly interpreted to say that all scripture is given by the inspiration of God, that the man of God might be perfect and thoroughly furnished unto the glory of God, for what value are the good works if they are not unto his glory? Amen. Beloved, I love the preaching of the gospel, don't you? Beloved, I don't care whose mouth it comes from, as long as it's the gospel, I love to hear it.

It rings in my ears as the majesty and the glory of God. Thank God for the preaching of the gospel or the good news about Jesus Christ. Now, one of the greatest obstacles that is standing between modern Christianity and the glory of God is in the great lack in the knowledge and confidence in the sufficiency of the scriptures.

A great host of church attending and good mannered people are knowledgeable in what their church is teaching. They're knowledgeable in what their denomination might believe, but they're altogether ignorant of what the inspired scriptures say. Being so, the foundation of their spiritual lives is laid by quaint sayings, partial truths of denominational or undenominational beliefs.

Hello? Many of these doctrinal establishments, if stripped away of all of their money, if stripped away of their popularity, if stripped away of their cultural power and their witty presentations, would be found greatly lacking in purity of doctrine and sufficiency of scriptural standards. It's within these mentioned artifices that the doctrinal and scriptural deficiencies become palatable, even desirable. Let me explain that.

There's something about the degenerate heart of man that loves money, power, popularity, witty presentation. There's something about fallen man that cleaves to those identities. And it's within these doctrinal and scriptural deficiencies that we see heresy becoming palatable and even desirable.

They heap upon themselves teachers having itching ears. There's something within the degenerate heart of man, even within the carnal heart of redeemed man that has a voice, that loves preeminence, that loves wealth because wealth signifies what? Power. Not only power, but what? Success.

Beloved, I want you to listen to me clear, that if we judge the life and works of Jesus Christ by what we judge common church practice today, Jesus Christ was an utmost and abhorrence of a failure. A failure. Beloved, he was cast out of the church.

The church leadership tried to crucify him. In fact, inevitably did. They chased him around the country.

They mocked him. They ridiculed him. They rebuked him.

They called him a devil. Are you with me? He was sold out for 30 pieces of silver by one of his own followers. Another one denied him three times after he had chopped off a soldier's ear with a sharp sword.

They were all scattered after the crucifixion, like to the winds of the earth. They all ran fear and terror while he laid there bearing their sins. They left him and he was all alone.

And by our cultural church standards today, we would say that the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ was an absolute shipwreck and failure. Because we want money. We want to see fame.

We want to see preeminence. We want to see large crowds. But beloved, the gospel is still a sword that divides.

The true man of God still yet may be a man of poverty and physical riches, but rich in the presence of the power of God. And we want to judge success by how fancy the servant of the preacher is, and not how big the Holy Ghost is on the inside of him. I'm yelling again.

I'm gonna put a noise meter back here. Getting into the red zone. Beloved, these things that we have mentioned, the love of money, the love of power, the love of the sight-driven and sensory-driven sense of success, act as catalysts to inoculate good-intentioned people against their primary end.

And that's to glorify God. They inoculate people. And we begin to live for those things that the carnal heart craves.

Preeminence, power, fortune, riches, money. The seeming successes of ministry that, beloved, it is set against, it inoculates us against the primary end, the calling of our heart and life, and that is to glorify God. Turn with me to Acts chapter 17.

We're so blessed last week, weren't we, Pastor Pete? In Acts chapter 17, verse 10, it says this, that the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas by night unto Berea, who coming thither went into the synagogues of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and they searched the Scriptures whether those things were so. I'm gonna make a statement and I want you to ponder as I explain.

We will never be free from Rome until we abandon the practices of Rome. Let me explain. In the 15th and 16th century, in Roman Catholicism, and even before that time and even subsequent to that time, the priests alone were committed to handle and study the Word of God.

The common man, such as you and I, were wholly unable to study the Word of God, and as it was only given to the learned priest so that they could understand the native tongues of the manuscripts. Being so, the church was controlled by what the people believed simply because they were unable to hear anything except what they were told by clergy. This is important that you understand this.

The priest handled the Word of God and instructed the people upon what they wanted them to know. From this, great historical but heretical beliefs were formed and practiced, and many of you here know the history of the Reformation, but Protestant reformers diligently labored to put the Word of God into the hands of the common man that the common man might be able to study and to search the scriptures as the Bereans did in the days of the Apostles. Of course, we know that great men of God, such as William Tyndale and Wycliffe, were burned at the stake.

They perished. They burnt to death for their work in the placing of the Word of God into the hands of the common man, such as you and I. Now, beloved, it is Rome that oppresses the injustice of clergy alone handling the scriptures, and it's not of Christ. Church, beloved family, listen to me.

We must abandon the maligned practice that leaves the study of the scriptures wholly in the hands of the clergy. We must, as Christ's dear children, have a divine mandate and adhere to the divine mandate from the Word of God that tells us that we must study the Word of God to show ourselves approved unto God. 2nd Timothy, if you want to flip over there, chapter 2, and I think you all know the scripture by heart.

You could memorize it, probably have it memorized. Verse 15, study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightfully dividing the Word of Truth. Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman.

Amazing word there. The Greek literal translation means a laborer. A laborer.

What do you do day in and day out? Beloved, that is making specific reference to common people studying the Word of God individually and showing themselves approved unto God in their search of the scriptures. Showing themselves approved, searching and studying the scriptures. Beloved, it's the common man and not the laity alone that is being mentioned.

It's the common man such as you and such as I. Beloved, scriptural neglect is the pathway to scriptural deviation. Scriptural neglect is the path that scriptural deviation trods upon. Scriptural deviation is the path that spiritual apostasy trods upon.

And it's scriptural apostasy that reserves the mist of darkness forever for the apostate. This gross neglect of the study of the scriptures has led to the demise of the evangelical community. And beloved, I must sadly tell you that it is catastrophic.

It is catastrophic. The gross neglect of the study of the scriptures has led to the demise of the evangelical community. And it is an epidemic and a catastrophic proportion.

I attribute this to Rome mindsets, leaving the diligent study of the Word of God in the hands of the clergy alone. Therefore, from this comes misinformed evangelicals that have no plumb line whereby they might

measure the truth. They must simply rely upon what they have been told by clergy.

And the scriptural purity and accuracy is left wholly upon the shoulders of the clergy, leaving the parishioner wholly vulnerable to his doctrine. Scriptural deficiency and apostasy is fueled by the lack of the people of God given to the study of the holy scriptures of God and the sufficiency of the Word of God. A book by George Marsden entitled *Reforming Fundamentalism* quotes a survey of student belief at one of the largest evangelical seminaries in the United States.

The poll indicated that 85 percent, beloved these are Bible College seminary students, 85 percent of them did not believe in the inerrancy of the scripture, that the scriptures are free from error. Eighty-five percent of young men and young ladies that are entering into full-time evangelical ministry do not believe the Word of God is inerrant. The book also lists the results of a poll that was conducted in 1987 by Jeffrey Hadden of 10,000 American clergymen.

Listen to this. They were asked whether they believe that the scriptures are inspired and that they are inerrant, that they are the Word of God, in faith, history, and secular matters. And these are the following percentage said no, they did not believe that.

Ninety-five percent of Episcopalians laity out of 10,000 said they did not believe that the Word of God was inerrant and that the scriptures are inspired of God. Eighty-seven percent of Methodist laity, eighty-two percent of Presbyterian laity, seventy-seven percent of American Lutheran laity, and sixty-seven percent of American Baptist laity said no, we do not believe that the Word of God is inerrant and inspired. These are the leaders.

Don't you think you need to know the Word of God? In 1996, Barna Research Group reported that among American adults generally, fifty-eight percent believe that the Bible is totally accurate in all of its teaching, and forty-five percent believe that the Bible is absolutely accurate in everything. It can be taken absolutely literal. That support dropped between that poll and another poll that was taken in 2001, and the same people, Barna, reported that in 2001, that forty-one percent of adults strongly agree that the Bible is totally accurate in all that it teaches.

Forty-one percent. American public's doing better than the American laity. They also published beliefs by denomination and metagroup.

Above average, the Pentecostal and foursquare laity, eighty-one percent, believe in the inerrancy of the Bible. That looks pretty good compared to the other, but there's still, what, nineteen percent that don't? There's people attending those churches, friends. Assembly of God, seventy-seven percent.

Non-denominational, mainly fundamentalists, seventy percent. Baptists, sixty-six percent. Seventh-day Adventist, sixty-four percent of laity believed in the inerrancy and inspiration of the Holy Writ, the Scriptures of God, God's Word.

The Presbyterian, forty percent. The Methodist, thirty-eight percent. The Lutherans, thirty-four percent.

The Mormons hanging in at twenty-nine percent. The Catholics dropping into a twenty-six percent, and the Episcopalians, the Church of England, twenty-two percent. Only twenty-two percent of their laity, their preachers, believe the Word of God is inspired of God and that it's inerrant.

Beloved, I propose to you this morning that if we do not believe the inerrancy of the Word of God, it's an absolute impossibility for us to be truly regenerated and born again. The inerrancy of the Scriptures is a foundational truth that we must never waver from. The inerrancy of the Scripture, while I'm aware of the margin of error in any poll, there is a certain disturbing realism that shows that serious, serious error has entered into and seized the evangelical church, and one of the catalysts, one of the catalysts, one of the proponents that's pushing this and causing this to take place is on the part of the individual evangelical in their failure to study the Word of God personally and diligently.

And I know that this quasi is getting somewhat away from the scope of what we're talking about, but these issues are worth mentioning because we have to face them. Beloved, the Word of God is the only means, the only means to whereby we might glorify God and enjoy God. The Word of God.

It's acutely impossible for us to glorify God as God apart from the Word, apart from the Scriptures that are inerrant. The Scriptures are inerrant, inspired of God, and it's impossible for us as his beloved elect, his dear children, for us to glorify God as God apart from his Word. Beloved, it's also equally as important that we as parents teach these truths to our children, that we teach the children, our children, the Word of God, that we teach them to have disciplined study habits, that their very souls may find refuge in Jesus Christ, and that their little lives might be wholly given unto the glory of God.

The Word of God is the only means whereby we glorify God and enjoy him forever. It is not the responsibility of the pastor to teach you the Word. It is, it is, it is part of my calling.

Beloved, it's the job of the Holy Ghost, the teacher, to teach you as you're on your knees with the Bible open, crying out, Lord I beseech thee, show me thy glory. It's not the responsibility for the teen pastor to teach your teenagers the Word of God. Let me tell you, friend, God will not call Chooch to stand him before that day and hold him solely accountable for the spiritual life of your kids.

He will hold you parents 100% accountable. The youth pastor only emphasizes the importance of what's being taught in the home by the parent. It's not Vernon and Suprena's job to train your children up in the knowledge of the Word of God.

It is your job as parents. They only structurally emphasize and re-emphasize what you are teaching them and training them in the sanctum, in the sanctuary of the home. You are the priest of your own home.

You are to preach to them children, to your children daily, the Word of God instruct them and to teach them how to have disciplined and diligent study habits. It's not the job of the children's church worker as that is from Rome. It's Rome.

We put back into the hands of Rome what God gave us back through the Reformation. God gave us back the Word of God and we push it back into the hands of clergy and we wash our hands of the raising up and the teaching of the next generation in the home. We put it back in the hands of clergy and laity alone and beloved we've put back into the hands of Rome what God by his Reformation grace gave back to us through the Reformation work of men and women of God that knew God, that were strengthened by God, that walked with God, that did great exploits for God.

We'll continue in this line of thinking next week if God's grace permits to talk about the sufficiency of the scriptures and the glorification of Christ Jesus almighty God and the precious Holy Spirit of God. Let's stand.

Audio: http://archive.org/download/SERMONINDEX_SID18931/SID18931.mp3
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/derek-melton/does-doctrine-matter-part-3/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net