

The Importance of Preaching Sound Doctrine

COSTI HINN

1



Some years ago I worked for a church that did things a bit differently than they do now. We had a band filled with hired guns and we paid them to play the lights out every Sunday. To illustrate: our guitarist would tour the world with a famous boy-band, then roll in on Sundays to put on a show for our church – *true story*.

As far as the sermons would go, they were a mixture of some topical truths, exciting and emotionally driven stories, and an ending that was designed to move everyone into an emotional response to the message. We were the typical, modern, attractational, evangelical church. And make no mistake about it, lots of people were dawning our doors. But they were not coming for doctrine – they came for the personalities, the music, and the emotion. It was working!

This is why it seemed like our teaching pastor had lost his mind when he suddenly got up one Sunday having fired all the hired musicians and telling the congregation, “If someone is musically gifted and won’t play for free, this church will no longer be a good fit.” Going even further he started preaching verse-by-verse through books of the Bible to grow our church in doctrine, and songs changed from the latest Jesus Culture or Hillsong hits to songs rich in theological truths. Emotionally driven services were

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replaced by the clear preaching of God's word. Suddenly, there were calls for biblical action out of love and obedience for Christ, not emotional manipulation.

Then, there was an exodus. We went from being a brand-new shiny object — a fast-growing church plant holding multiple services and cruising through the 300-attendance mark — to suddenly having empty seats everywhere. Eventually, we grew past where we once were, but this time, it would not be merely numerical, it was spiritual.

Sound doctrine (paired with prayer and patience) did the heavy lifting.

We Need Sound Doctrine

From big-name preachers suggesting we “unhitch” ourselves from the Old Testament to sermon series’ on mere behavior modifications from self-help books, to entire services being absent of the Bible but full of entertainment, the church today is in dire need of a strong dose of good ole’ fashion sound doctrine.

In short, doctrine matters.

Nothing else will satisfy the deepest needs of the human heart. Nothing else will quench the spiritual thirst of believers who have been transformed by the Gospel, and nothing is more true to the mandate of Christ's commission in Matthew 28:16-20. Jesus didn't suggest that *some* of what He taught be passed along in whatever modernized way His disciples saw fit. Nor did He give the nod to whatever methods get people in the door. He said that “making disciples” included “teaching them to observe *all*”(emphasis added) that He commanded (Matt. 28:20).

When the Apostle Paul was providing ministry instructions to his young protégé in the faith, Timothy, he hammered home imperative after imperative concerning the importance of sound doctrine! From that model alone there is no question of what a good minister of the Gospel is to do. We must be nourished by — and be nourishing others with — words of faith and sound doctrine (1 Timothy 4:6).

What Exactly Constitutes “Sound Doctrine”?

Sound doctrine in the Christian faith is accurate Bible teaching. “Doctrine” can be defined as the central beliefs that are held by a group of people and “sound” implies that something is reliable. Therefore, when churches spend more time entertaining people and giving shallow sermons, they are not fulfilling what a church is supposed to do and be. We must be preaching and teaching the central beliefs of the Christian faith based on what the Bible teaches, regardless of how the world around us is changing. Like a reliable

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friend who will tell you what you *need* to hear vs. what you *want* to hear, a reliable church (and specifically, the preachers) should be giving you the truth and nothing but the truth.

Why Preaching Sound Doctrine Matters

Much is at stake, but great things are in store if a church stops playing games and bolts the Bible to the pulpit and the pulpit to the floorboards. Sure, some people may not like it, but God's word promises that the blessings will outweigh the backlash.

Here are five simple reasons that preaching sound doctrine matters:

1. It is Required of Faithful Pastor-Elders

Do you know a pastor-elder who doesn't want to be faithful in their duty to Christ? Most of them do. Plainly, the pastor-elders who are called to be the servant-leaders of the church are failing their duty if sound doctrine is not the central focus of the teaching and preaching ministry. Churchstaffing.com does not determine a pastor's job description, nor does any other agency. God has, and continues to expect His mouthpieces to fulfill His purposes laid out in Scripture. Men of God must be faithful. The New Testament lays out the role of those who oversee the church in no uncertain terms (Acts 20:17-38; 1 Tim. 4:6, 11-13, 16; 2 Tim. 3:10, 14-17; 2 Tim. 4:1-5). God commands that His people be served spiritual food loaded with sound doctrine. A pastor-elder can be gifted in many ways, but he is only faithful if in all that he does he preaches sound doctrine.

2. It Saves the Lost

Church growth from disgruntled "transfers" are a dime-a-dozen...especially in America where we treat our churches like restaurants and the customer is always right. But the real goal when it comes to preaching sound doctrine is genuine conversions that happen when the lost come to faith by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17). Of course, people transferring from a doctrinally dangerous church to one that preaches sound doctrine is wonderful, but it can be argued that few things are sweeter than seeing new believers come face to face with the awe-inspiring power of the living Word through faithful preaching! From old sinful ways to a new creation in Christ, sound doctrine washes over the heart and mind of lost sheep, regenerates their soul, and preserves their faith (1 Tim. 4:16).

3. It Empowers the Saved

Sound doctrine catapults the people of God into spiritual growth because they are building their lives on the bedrock foundation of God's Word rightly taught and rightly

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applied. They are mobilized and equipped to live mature in their faith and protected from false teaching (Eph. 4:11-14). Sound doctrine empowers Christians to live high-impact lives because they are living out right relationships with God, fellow believers, and the world. A right relationship with God means a proper view of the Gospel and His attributes like holiness and omnipotence. A right relationship with fellow believers means serving one another (Gal. 5:13), loving one another (Rom. 13:8), forgiving one another (Eph. 4:32), exhorting one another (Heb. 3:13), and stirring one another up towards good works (Heb. 10:24)! A right relationship with people in the world means evangelizing them (Rom. 1:16), being a model in your Christian witness (Col. 4:5), and never compromising the truth (1 Cor. 16:13). It's incredibly amazing what can happen when Christians are taught sound doctrine and live their lives for the glory of God.

4. It Purifies the Church

Preaching sound doctrine is important because it not only produces strong believers, it purifies the church of false ones. This may not seem like a very “nice” strategy but consider for a moment what Jesus did to thin out the ranks of those who were superficially following Him merely for divine favors. Luke records Jesus delivering one of His toughest truths when the crowds were large (Luke 14:25-35). Jesus was dishing out free food, miracles, and wisdom, but the minute He pushed into deep doctrine and hard truths, it divided the real followers from the false ones. True converts love God’s Word, false converts will be repulsed by it. Eventually, as books of the Bible are unpacked and the glorious doctrines contained in Scripture are laid bare for all to see, a decision will inevitably be made by those who hear the truth. Their hearts will either turn towards it, or they’ll scoff at it and turn away. This is a vital part of a preacher’s duty in the ministry of the word. In doing so he is participating in Christ’s building of His church, which includes purging it of imposters.

5. It Impacts the Future

Now before you imagine “preaching sound doctrine” as a sort-of boring academic forum in the church each week, remind yourself of what sound doctrine is one final time: *reliable and accurate Biblical teaching*. Preaching sound doctrine may seem dull and simple to some people, but it’s dynamic! If the New Testament church leaders were willing to risk their lives for it, why shouldn’t we prioritize it? The impact of this is exponential and powerful. When sound doctrine was taught in the early church, it exploded in all the right ways (Acts 2:40-41). If a generation of believers will preach sound doctrine and stand for the truth, they will be modeling faithfulness for those who will come next. In other words, they’ll be discipling the next generation of disciple-making disciples with the foundation they’ll need to glorify God.

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Preaching sound doctrine matters both now and in eternity.



Costi Hinn is a church planter and pastor at The Shepherd's House Bible Church in Chandler, Arizona. He is the president and founder of For the Gospel. He has authored multiple books including *God, Greed, and the (Prosperity) Gospel* [Zondervan, 2019], *More Than a Healer* [Zondervan, 2021], and a children's book releasing in the Fall of 2022. Costi and his wife, Christyne, live in Gilbert, Arizona with their four children. Follow him @costiwhinn.

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