



The Good News

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Not Enduring Sound Doctrine

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In 2 Tim. 4:3, Paul explains to Timothy that the time will come when the saints will no longer endure sound doctrine but will “heap up for themselves teachers” that will teach what they want to hear. How is it that Christians, who claim to esteem the truth above all else, could no longer endure sound doctrine? Unfortunately, this is as much a problem in the church today as it was going to be in Timothy’s time. While Paul warns of “fables”, is it possible to not preach any error, yet still not endure sound doctrine? I believe that this is precisely one of the dangers the churches of Christ now face.

Most error and falsehoods are easily shown to be precisely that considering the true Word, and most would not go along with something that was obviously false. Yet, it seems as though some Christians are perfectly happy to preach and hear “feel-good” and “pep-talk” sermons, and not teach the word with distinctive and specific application. When distinctive application is made, some brethren are critical of preaching such “controversial” material; they would rather hear more “happy” sermons and fewer sermons about the “issues” in the church. Since a particular issue is “not a problem here” there is no reason to preach about it. If this is the way preachers are to be, and the way saints who listen are to be, then why does Paul spend so much time warning Timothy about the dangers he will face from false teachers? Why define precisely what these false teachers will be teaching? The reason is simple – Timothy was to equip the saints to beware of these men and these false doctrines. If a congregation is not aware of an “issue” being taught, what will happen when it becomes the topic of conversation among them? Would it not have the potential to cause divisions?

Our congregation is blessed to have so many individuals who will teach the truth of God’s word and

apply it distinctively. We are blessed to have brethren here at the Wichita Falls congregation who are willing to hear the truth of the Word, no matter if it steps on toes. Unfortunately, some in the churches of Christ cannot make the same claim. There are many who, while they do not preach error, they do not take a firm stand on issues such as Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage, or matters such as Fellowship, or Church Discipline. They would rather leave it up to each individual to decide the truth and be friends with everyone, than to take a stand in the truth and risk drawing lines of fellowship.

In 2 Tim. 4:2, Paul charges Timothy to preach the word in season and out of season, and to convince, rebuke, and exhort with all longsuffering and teaching. Timothy was to teach the truth, making distinctive application, no matter how many toes were stepped on, regardless of whether the saints wanted to hear it or not. Today, the pressures on preachers to preach what people want to hear are still heavy. It is a test of faith for preachers to stand up and preach distinctive application of the truth. Will we be the kind of teachers who scratch itching ears, or the kind who provide the truth in its entirety, applying it distinctively?

There are those today who reject this kind of preaching on the basis that it “draws lines” that shouldn’t be drawn and causes rifts. They feel that we should just preach what makes people feel good and energized. Brethren, feeling good about myself and my spirituality is not going to get me into heaven – standing for, and obeying, the distinctive truth of God’s word will. I have to decide whether or not I am going to endure and apply sound doctrine, no matter how many of my toes it steps on – what will you decide?