

Discovery Group - Church Pillars

3 - Faithful to the Teachings

Receive God's Word: Acts 20:17-31

- * Read the passage aloud one person retell it in their own words.
 - What do we learn from the passage about God?

 - What do we learn about ourselves as people?

- * Read the article on the other side.
 - What are the implications of separating *believing* the teachings from *living* them? Can we really do one without the other?

 - What might it mean for us to guard the teachings? What do we guard them from? What happens if we fail to take this task seriously? Why is this so important?

 - Why is it important to affirm that the Bible has authority to direct our lives? What might be the consequences of ignoring this?

Respond in Obedience

- * What is Jesus calling you to do in obedience to Him this week?

- * Who can you share this with? Who can you reach out to in order to make disciples?

- * Abide: Study and meditate on the scriptures listed in the article.

Faithful to the Teachings

Paul boldly told the Ephesians elders that he had proclaimed to them “the whole will of God.” He goes on to warn them that “savage wolves” would come and distort this truth. The writers of the New Testament continually make it clear that they considered the teachings they passed on to have come from Jesus Himself. Read the following:

1 Corinthians 11:23 1 Corinthians 15:3 1 Thessalonians 4:1-2
2 Thessalonians 2:15 2 Thessalonians 3:6 1 Timothy 6:2-4

The instructions in the letters have the same authority as the Gospels and other parts of scripture. They are authentic teachings of Jesus, delivered through His first apostles. Furthermore, it is clear that there was a standard of teachings - sometimes referred to as doctrine, the deposit, the faith, traditions, or instructions - that the apostles were convinced everyone needed to know and to follow. This body of teaching was incredibly important, and there was a constant worry that people would change or twist these truths. Leaders in the church were therefore exhorted to guard and to hold fast to the teachings. In addition to the above passages, consider these:

1 Cor 11:2 1 Tim 4:6, 11, 16 2 Tim 1:13-14 2 Tim 2:2
2 Tim 3:10 2 Peter 1:12 Jude 3 Acts 20:25-31

It is clear in the New Testament that this deposit includes two factors. First, they are truths to be believed and trusted in. We must believe things like Christ died for our sins and rose again. Secondly, the deposit is a way of life that instructs us in how to behave. The teachings include how we are to live, to speak, to relate to one another, etc. They are truths to be believed and to be lived. Thus, when Jude talks about ‘contending for the faith,’ he is referring to both doctrines that we hold to be true and doctrines in how we are to live. True faith in Jesus always leads to godly living. As servants of Jesus, we put ourselves under His Word. What He has instructed has authority to direct our lives.

A significant part of our identity as Jesus-followers is that we are witnesses. This calling includes not only what we speak but how we live. The teachings referred to here (and found in the New Testament) touch every area of our lives. When we live according to them, we are revealing Jesus to the world.