

5/24/15 Sermon — Living to God — Pastor Shane Patrick

Review of “Welcome to Sound City” Sermon Series to date

In week 1 we talked about the reason for our existence as a church—our mission: to glorify God by proclaiming Jesus, receiving grace, being disciples, and making disciples.

In week 2 we talked about values that ground our Relationship with God:

- commitment to: Sound Doctrine
- commitment to: being a people of Prayer,
- commitment to: Enjoying God,

In week 3 we talked about values that ground our Relationship with Christians (one another):

- commitment to: the Priority of Relationship
- commitment to: Progress Not Perfection
- commitment to: Members being Equipped for Ministry

In week 4 we talked about values that ground our Relationship with the World:

- commitment to: Every Member being a Missionary
- commitment to: Living out the Gospel of the Kingdom
- commitment to: being a Gathered & Scattered People

These nine values represent a “rule of faith” of sorts for us, and are important to our fulfilling of the calling and mission God has given us.

We’ll be spending three weeks, starting today, on focusing on our statement of faith—our doctrinal statement.

In his teaching on matters of doctrine, Saint Augustine is said to have taught this principle, “In essentials unity, In non-essentials liberty, and in all things charity.”

Our focus for our doctrinal statement will be to follow Saint Augustine’s principle, and to:

- focus on major matters, and show grace on minor matters.
- we want to be firm where the Bible is firm, and flexible where it is flexible.

But over and against any objections to the study of doctrine is the Word of God itself:

- Tit. 1:9, 2:1
- 1 Tim. 4:6, 16
- 2 Thes. 2:15

Words used in Scripture like: doctrine, teaching, tradition, and standard all have a sense of meaning of: *a collected summary of truth from Scripture, used to define and teach a standard of orthodoxy.*

In week 1 of 3 of this unit on our Doctrine we’ll cover:

1) Our Doctrine of the Bible

- 2) Our Doctrine of God
- God as Trinity
  - God the Father
  - God the Son
  - God the Holy Spirit

First, our Doctrine of God

Our provisional doctrinal statement about the Bible says:

*The Bible is God's Word. Every word of it completely trustworthy and true. The Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, are the inspired Word of God, and without error in the original writings (i.e. autographs), and are the complete revelation of his will for the salvation of mankind, and as the final authority for faith and life.*

What are the ways we know what we know about God?

- General Revelation (e.g. Rom. 1:20)
- Special Revelation (e.g. 2 Tim. 3:14-17). It takes God's special revelation for us to know God in a saving way, and it takes God's special revelation for us to establish every other biblical doctrine.

Does doctrine/theology matter?

“What you think about when you think about God, is the most important thing about you, because it will determine every other area of your existence.” Dr. Jeffery Bingham

Next, our Doctrine of God

Three summary statements about God form our basic Doctrine of God:

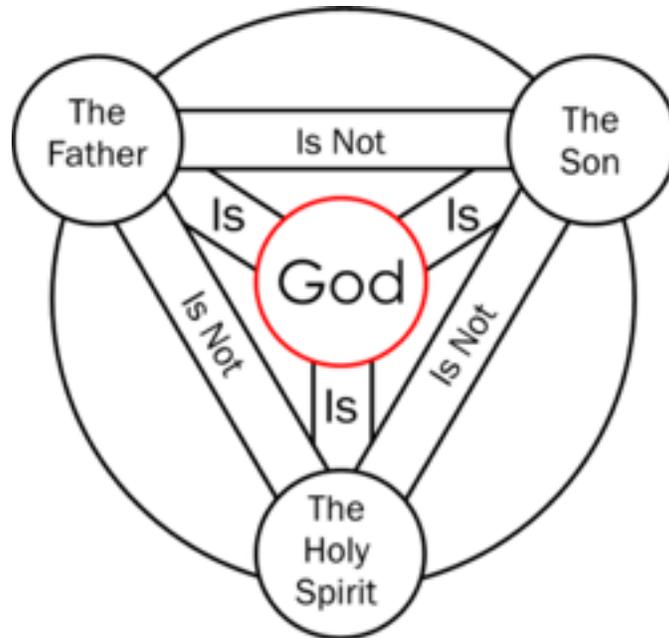
1. God is three distinct persons.
  - 1.1. In general, see 1 Peter 1:1-2; 2 Cor. 13:14
  - 1.2. Distinction between the Father & the Son: John 1:1-2; Jn. 17:24; 1 Jn. 2:1; Heb. 7:25.
  - 1.3. Distinction between the Father & the Holy Spirit: Jn. 14:26; Rom. 8:27.
  - 1.4. Distinction between the Son & the Holy Spirit: Matt. 28:19; Jn. 16:7.
2. Each person is fully God.
  - 2.1. The Father is fully God: See Deut. 32:6; and Mal. 2:10; 1 Cor. 8:6; Gal. 1:1; Eph. 5:20.
  - 2.2. The Son is fully God: Jn. 20:28; Rom. 9:5; Tit. 2:13; 1 Jn. 5:20; Col. 2:9.
  - 2.3. The Holy Spirit is fully God: Acts 5:4; 1 Cor. 2:10-11; 2 Cor. 3:17-18.
3. There is one God: Isa. 45:5-6, 21-22; Jam. 2:19; 1 Tim. 2:5; Deut. 6:4.

Simple analogies that we hear about God and the Trinity, while they may be helpful on a very basic level, ultimately fail, and many of them—if taken as truth—can lead us into a faulty view of God or into heresy. Better for us to embrace what the Bible does tell us and leave room for the

mystery of God as well—understanding we'll only know in part (dimly), rather than fully (completely) this side of eternity concerning the things of God (1 Cor. 13:12).

Leaving room for the mystery of God on complex biblical doctrines often better maintains a “bigger” view of God, letting him be out of our mind’s reach—when that’s most appropriate.

One thing that has been helpful with understanding the Doctrine of God and yet not using faulty analogies, is charts like this one, concerning the Trinity:



How does this understand of God impact our daily lives of faith? Let's consider four areas:

- 1.1. **Creation:** All members of the Trinity are shown to be critical to creation, so what happens to creation if we don't have the Trinity and the view of God presented by our three statements summary of the Doctrine of God? See Heb. 1:2; Gen. 1:1-2; Ps. 104:29-30; Col. 1:16-17.
- 1.2. **Baptism:** All members of the Trinity are shown to be critical to baptism, so what happens to baptism if we don't have the Trinity and the view of God presented by our three statements summary of the Doctrine of God? See Matt. 28:19.
- 1.3. **Salvation:** All members of the Trinity are shown to be critical to salvation, so what happens to salvation if we don't have the Trinity and the view of God presented by our three statements summary of the Doctrine of God? See Jn. 3:5-6; Jn. 1:12-13; 2 Tim. 2:10.
- 1.4. **Prayer:** All members of the Trinity are shown to be critical to prayer, so what happens to prayer if we don't have the Trinity and the view of God presented by our three statements summary of the Doctrine of God? See Heb. 7:25; 1 Tim. 2:5; Jude 20; Rom. 8:15, 26; Eph. 6:18.

So our doctrine and theological commitments matter greatly, and are deeply practical in these areas, and many many others.

The study of doctrine & theology is not only the *study of God*. The study of doctrine is *the study of God for the purpose of living to God*.

Discussion Questions for Community Groups and personal reflection:

1. Discuss with your group what comes to mind for you when you think about doctrine & theology? Discuss the ways the message today changed or affirmed your initial impressions.
2. Talk about the ways our view of God changes our views on baptism, salvation, creation, and prayer. Discuss what part of that teaching most stood out to you and why?
3. Discuss the three statements we used to define our basic Doctrine of God, and try and think about other reasons the truth of these statements matters to your life as a Christian (i.e. other than creation, baptism, salvation, and prayer). Doctrine of God statements are: (a) God is three distinct persons, (b) Each person is fully God, and (c) There is one God.
4. Look up the words orthodoxy and orthopraxy, then talk with your group about what the proper relationship between the two should be according to the Bible.
5. Reflect on today's message, and then share with your group the most impactful thing you've learned from our study today, and what God's asking you to do about it.