

Hallelujah Anyway, Part 12

Pastor Steve Berger June 21, 2015

Importance of knowing and believing sound biblical/doctrinal truth

Philippians 3:1

Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.

- **rejoice in the Lord** —
 - **Hallelujah Anyway**... having a faith that no matter what happens in your life, you continue to trust and praise God, knowing that God, and no circumstance, has the final word over you!
- **writing same things isn't tedious** —
 - rejoicing in the Lord AND all other repeated doctrine, isn't tedious, grievous, boring for me because...
- **it is safe for you**
 - intentional repetition of sound doctrine gives you the best chance of not going spiritually sideways where you're blown around by every new thing that tries to assault the truth of God
- **2 Peter 1:10-12**
 - Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth.

We are living in days where the essential, historic doctrines of the Christian faith must be repeated over and over again, from our pulpits, and in our minds, lest we fall victim to the seducing spirits and doctrines of devils that try to overturn the truth!

In that spirit comes a warning

Philippians 3:2

Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation!

Christian love ISN'T void of speaking sober warnings and/or hard corrective truth!

- **Jesus occasionally used truthful yet derogatory language to describe people**
 - Matthew 7:6 — do not give holy to dogs, do not cast pearls before swine
 - John 8:44 — to Pharisees — father is devil, murderers, and liars
- **John 2:15** — When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables.
- **confronting doctrinal errors**
 - majority of New Testament epistles confronted doctrinal errors creeping into church- Judaizers, Gnosticism, carnality, and compromise of all kinds

***THIS IS NOT GIVING LICENSE TO BE MEAN* — I am saying Christian love ISN'T void of speaking sober warnings and/or hard corrective truth!!**

- If you won't stand and speak corrective truth in love...**
1) you'll silently contribute to the moral decay of society...
2) you'll silently contribute to the weakening of the churches testimony...
3) you'll forfeit opportunities to genuinely help people in need

Who are the dogs, evil workers, and mutilation Paul speaks of?

- **Judaizers** —
 - false apostles, mixed Old Testament law with New Testament grace, yet said believed in Jesus
 - BUT still keep Old Testament law, Sabbaths, feasts, dietary laws, circumcision etc. otherwise you can't be saved
 - Galatians 5:12 — I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!

"Since the Judaizers were so insistent on circumcision as a means of pleasing God, they should go to the extreme of religious devotion and mutilate (castrate) themselves."¹ John MacArthur

History of salvation by grace of Jesus, not works of law

- **Acts 15:1-11**

And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question. So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brethren. And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them. But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the Law of Moses." Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter. And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: "Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.
- **struggle and dispute**
 - in early church about what it takes to be saved
- **Pharisees**
 - Jesus plus law of Moses
- **Peter**
 - grace of Jesus alone — none of us could keep the law!
- **Acts 15:23-29**

They wrote this letter by them: The apostles, the elders, and the brethren, To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings. Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, "You must be circumcised and keep the law"—to whom we gave no such commandment— it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to

¹ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible, NIV*, (Nashville, TN, Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2013), 1798

send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.

- **clarity**

- separation from prevailing pagan things of the day, pagan idolatry, sacrifice (blood) and sexual immorality
- NO KEEPING OF CEREMONIAL, SACRIFICIAL OR DIETARY LAWS OF MOSES, NONE!

***Interesting** — prior to this clarifying doctrinal decree, **Peter** struggled how to navigate between ancient Jewish law and the newly revealed grace of Jesus.*

- **Galatians 2:11-16**

Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews? We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

- **Peter**

- wouldn't eat with gentiles when Jews were around, tried to get gentiles to live like Jews by keeping law, yet he himself as a Jew, wasn't keeping law

- **Paul brings clarity**

- not justified by works of law, but by faith in Jesus alone!

Judaizers resisted grace and insisted on law — Paul continually warns the church

- **Galatians 4:9-11**

But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.

- **Galatians 5:1-4**

Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

Christ doesn't profit law-keepers, debtor to whole law, estranged from Christ, fallen from grace... doesn't get any worse than that... no wonder Paul called those who preached that and confused others dogs, evil workers, and mutilators — people's very salvation was at stake!

- **Colossians 2:4, 8-17**

Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words. Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

- **don't be deceived**

- with persuasive, deceitful, manmade, worldly, philosophy

- **fullness of God dwells in Jesus**

- He's more than sufficient, complete in Him!

- **completeness shown**

- circumcised by removal of our sinful flesh — heart change, removal sinful desire
- buried old lives through baptism, raised through faith, made alive, forgiven all trespasses...
- wiped out handwriting of requirements against us (law), nailed it to cross
- disarmed enemy power through crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection, public spectacle

**Jesus forever settled every issue concerning you in both heaven and hell!
You must know that now that you have believed and received Jesus —
you are complete!**

Question — *Why in the world would you go back to trying to keep dietary and ceremonial laws to be right with God, utter foolishness — you have the Substance — why retreat to the shadows?*

Beware — *Hebrew Roots, Torah Observant Believers Yeshua, etc. They are retreating to shadow, forsaking Substance, falling from grace!*

Discussion Questions

1. How much did you know about biblical/doctrinal truth when you were first saved? Was it important at that moment? Is it important now?
2. In Philippians 3:1, why did Paul say that writing the same things were not tedious or boring?
3. What is the difference in speaking sober warnings or hard corrective truth — and being mean?
4. What happens when we do not stand and speak corrective truth in love?
5. Who were the Judaizers, and why did Paul call them dogs and evil workers?
6. In Acts 15:23-29, there was a struggle and dispute in the early church about what it takes to be saved. What was it? How does that same struggle apply to us today?
7. Paul continually taught that we are not justified by our works, but by faith in Jesus alone. Do you ever work so hard to show that you love Him, that you fail to find rest in Jesus' finished work on the cross?

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We pray for requests for one month, and at our weekly prayer meetings.

Please come join our House of Prayer, Tuesday, June 23th at 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary.