

# Living A Life That Befits Sound Doctrine

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To Paul, sound teaching had two parts, foundation and superstructure, or otherwise, the root and tree with its fruit. And he said one became the other, that is, one was inextricably tied up with the other, one was the effect of the cause, the other was the cause, one was the foundation, the other the building, one was the root, the other the fruit and the tree. And he couldn't think of these apart, and he wouldn't.

He said, now, there in Crete, that miserable place, you notice how often, and just in the passage I read briefly and imperfectly here, you notice how often he said, be sober. They were a Hollywood bunch, evidently, and sobriety, both in temperament and in practice, didn't seem to be their characteristics. So, he said, he warned them sharply that they were to be so.

Now, I want you to note here that to Paul, salvation in Jesus Christ carried with it beliefs about certain things, and practice in harmony with those beliefs. Now, Paul knew nothing else but that. That was Paul.

If you want to teach Paul, then you can't separate certain parts of Ephesians and say, this is Pauline theology. Pauline theology had two sides to it, as I've explained. The one side was the theology of belief, and the other was the morality that results from the theology. The one side was the right belief, and the other side was the right living. One side we call the foundation, the other the building.

Or changing it around to Paul, Christian belief, Christian doctrine, sound doctrine consisted of the root and the tree, which grew up out of the root, along with the fruit of the tree. That is, again, we have it, the root was the theology, what you believe about God and Christ. And the tree was the morality, and the fruit was the right living.

So, we have theology and morality, right belief and right living, all bound together, and they can't be taken apart. Strange that we've forgotten that in the day in which we live. Strange. And even to mention it is to have it said of you, you're a legalist. You're a legalist. Even to mention it, you're a legalist. We don't mind names, so we'll go on and teach what Paul taught.

Now there's a great delusion, and anybody's likely to fall into it, and it is the delusion that you can separate the foundation from the building, the root from the tree, that you can have the one and not the other. One reason why fundamentalism has fallen on hard times in our day, and thousands and multiplied thousands of believers who are true believers are turning away from the Word itself.

It's not as many of the brethren say that they're turning away from Christ. They're turning away from foundations without buildings. They're turning away from roots without trees. They're turning away from theology without morality. They're turning away from right beliefs without right living. And I am turning with them if I must, for I

believe that we're to have a foundation as well as if we're to have a building we're to have a foundation. But if we have a foundation, we're to have a building.

Now, how completely foolish to separate the root from the tree or the tree from the root. Would you consider what value a root is buried deep in the earth if it has no tree and no fruit on the tree? Would you consider how vain it would be to have a tree without a root, just as you can't have a tree without a root, so you can't have or shouldn't expect to have a root without a tree? The two go together. And think about how foolish it is to lay a foundation.

Imagine, if you will, laying a foundation, digging down with a bulldozer, getting rid of all the dirt down there, shoveling it away, then laying the footings in and building the foundation up, and then letting it lie there for a hundred years. What good is a foundation? It's to lay a building upon. What good is theology unless it eventuates in right living? What good is right doctrine unless it means morality and sound truth and sound living?

So, we try to build a building without a foundation. That's what our liberalistic friends do. They want to live right, and yet they don't have any foundation for their buildings. So, they push the building up and keep it inflated with wind. And the result is talk, talk, but there's no foundation.

But we, on the other hand, tend to lay foundations everywhere and not have any buildings. But Paul said, Titus, see to it that you get both. See to it that your people are well taught in sound theology but see to it that they understand that theology without conduct is vanity.

Charles G. Finney, to my mind, the greatest evangelist that ever lived, greatest evangelist that ever lived, and that's including Paul. Greater than Paul as an evangelist, not as great as Paul as a theologian, not as great as Paul as an apostle, not as great as Paul in receiving the inspired Scriptures, not great in that way, but greater than Paul in the one job God gave him to do, evangelism.

He taught and taught boldly that to teach Bible classes without making an application was to grieve the Holy Ghost and tempt God. And he said it's all a mistake to have classes where you teach doctrine, unless when you've taught your doctrine, you make the application and say to the people, now, as a result of believing this truth, how are you going to live? Bring your life into conformity with it. Right belief without right living has very little value, very little value. And how are you going to have right living if you don't have right belief?

Now, Christ gave us a powerful illustration, and I will talk about that a little bit and close. Christ gave us a powerful illustration. I want you to notice. In Matthew, the seventh chapter, and it's in perfect harmony with Paul here. Our dispensationalizing brethren take in Titus but dismiss Matthew. And here yet we have it on the same thing, the same spirit, the same principle, same beliefs, here in the seventh of Matthew as we have in Titus, the book of Titus.

Jesus said, Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them. You see, hearing these sayings of Mine, that's theology. Doing them, that's morality. Hearing these sayings of Mine, that's the foundation. And doing them, that's the building. Hearing these sayings of Mine, and doing them, that's having the tree and the root, or the root and the tree.

And our Lord never separated the two. He expected and meant that the two should go together. I believe that we could have some kind of revival in our land, some kind of a reformation that would last.

Perhaps it wouldn't be so dramatic, but it would last. If every preacher started and for three months insisted that everybody obey what he preached and insists upon it that the Word was given that it might get obedience, and that the foundations were laid they might have buildings, and that the root was there that it might produce the tree and its fruit. But Jesus said, whoever hears and does these, I will liken him unto a wise man.

Here was Jesus with His great oriental love for parables and illustrations. He said, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. And naturally, the rain didn't come, nor the floods didn't descend, just to be a part of this story. But rains descend, and floods come, winds blow, normally. Normally.

In a little country paper that I used to know, there was a character by the name of Peter Tumbledown, and he kept a very bad farm, and he never fixed the roof. And he gave as his reason for not fixing the roof, that when it was raining, he couldn't, and when it wasn't raining, he didn't need it.

Now, when you build a building, you don't use Peter Tumbledown's theology. You build it in good weather, with the knowledge that the good weather won't last. When you build in July, you build with the knowledge there will be a December and a February. You build with not a breath of air and the sun shining calmly on the meadows, with the knowledge the time will be when the wind may hit 50 miles an hour, and the rain come down in drenching torrents.

And our Lord said, this man built his house on a rock, and he did it by doing. He used exactly the illustration I've used before. He heard and did, and the result was that his house was on the rock. When the floods came, and the rain descended, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, it wasn't there they weren't mad at the house particularly. They were just being the way winds and floods and rain are. But that house had to stand up there. But it fell not, says Jesus, for it was founded upon a rock.

But he said over against this, everyone that hear these sayings of Mine, there's theology, and doeth them not, there's failure to have living in harmony with our teaching. He shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon a rock.

And while I have not used this before, in my sermons on divine wisdom, do you notice here how Christ contrasted between the wise man and the fool? There we have moral wisdom, which is as practical as a slide rule. Moral wisdom, when it builds a house, digs down to the rock and lays a heavy good foundation.

Moral foolishness, when it builds a house, builds on sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the wind blew. The rains and the floods and the wind weren't mad at the house. It was just, they do those things, that's weather, and you can expect that. And the beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.

The house was just as, I suppose, as carefully built as the other one, except that the foundation was neglected. The man had the theology, but he didn't have the light. Somebody says, well, but you're confusing your illustration, maybe so, but I'm getting an idea across, am I not, that there must be practical soundness, the hearing and the doing.

There you have the two of them, the hearing and the doing. They're a unit, you can't separate them. And if you separate them, you have no foundation. It goes out from under you, and even your very beliefs cease to have any value to you. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.

Everybody that heard that understood it. Everybody knew about that, everybody. I've heard of houses that were built, and built in filled-in sections, or sections that were so sandy, that they hadn't been built long until great cracks began to appear in the bricks. Plaster began to crack. The foundations were poor. They might have meant well, but the foundations were bad. So, my brethren, a foundation and the building they're one, and so Paul says, speak thou the things that become sound doctrine.

All right, Paul, what do you believe? You believe in the Trinity? Yes, but I'm not talking about that. You believe in the deity of Jesus? Yes, but I'm not talking about that. You believe in baptism by immersion? Well, of course, we'll have to have Paul say yes, even though some people wouldn't say he said yes, but we have a baptistry back here, so we'll say he said yes.

And Paul, what else do you believe in? Do you want us to teach second coming? That's not what I'm talking about. What do you want us to teach? I want you to teach it all, but what I'm specially asking you to bear down on here in Crete is the things that befit sound doctrine.

Old Haldeman-Julius was an atheist. There's reason to believe he finally died by his own hand. When I was a boy, this atheist was publishing books called the Little Blue Books, and I got hold of them and began to learn about the great writers, and what little education I got, I got partly out of an atheist who was a great publisher of great books and published them all, good and bad and indifferent.

I believe I knew the difference between them. But anyway, this atheist wrote a sketch one time about religion. He didn't believe in it. He said he could drive through the landscape and enjoy the scenery without leaning on the God that was supposed to have made the scenery. But when he came to a chapter in his book about the Quakers, he said this significant thing. He said, then came the Quakers and startled the Christian world by living like Christians.

Imagine that. Startled the Christian world by living like Christians. I believe that without any particularly great leaders maybe, but just the common people, the plain Christians, I

believe that we could startle the religious world if we'd begin to take seriously Paul's admonition to live lives that befit sound doctrine.

Not only believe what the Bible says but do what the Bible says. Not only believe the theology but practice the morality of the Bible. Quit our lying. Quit our deceiving. Quit our gorging. Quit our luxurious spending. Quit our quarreling. Quit our nasty treatment of each other. Quit our laziness. Quit our long, unnecessary, and expensive vacations away from God's house.

I believe in the vacation, all right, even if I don't take them, but they run to extremes. In England they say when Friday comes, cars are bumper to bumper for the seashore, and they don't come back till late Sunday night, and the churches are left high and dry for the owls and the janitor. That's carrying a decent thing to terrible extremes. They can import Billy Graham or any other great preacher they want to. They'll never have lasting revival until they've started obeying God.

Paul Rees, they say, I always claimed one of America's greatest preachers, in going to England, said in his church in Minneapolis, that if the English people don't remember that you can't bring the blessing of God by bringing a good man to your shores. Speak the things which befit sound doctrine, that aged men live this way, aged women live this way, young men live this way, young women live this way. Employers do this, and employees do that, and all of you do this. That's the way Paul said sound doctrine ought to sound. And I believe that we could startle the world, rock the liberals back on their heels.

A man wrote me a letter and said, you probably won't like it that you get a fan letter from a liberal. But he said, I just read something you wrote, and I like it. And I wrote back and said, listen, there are two kinds of liberals. There are the smooth talking, hollow fellows with superficial philosophies who don't mean what they say and live on wind and words. And I have no respect for them.

But there's another kind of liberal, the kind that's been driven to liberalism by the hollow lives of the orthodox and the poor living of those who claim to be fundamental in their faith. And I said, I not only respect them, I pity them, and I think you're among them. Instead of damning the liberal, we ought to remember the liberal hasn't had a very good example of godliness.

If we lived the way Paul taught us here, I think the liberals would begin to disappear. One after the other, they'd begin to disappear. Captain Henning, how many of you know Cap Henning? He is connected with the Pacific Garden Mission, and has been a Christian for years. When Mrs. Dietz died, we had her funeral here in this church. Cap Henning sent a floral piece. There was a long ribbon and in gold letters, the florist had written this, I watched her life and sought her Savior.

And I saw Cap Henning and ate with him the other day. And Henning said, I was a fresh, smart, young fellow and I stayed at the Dietz home, and I watched Mrs. Dietz. He said, when I was leaving, they said, would you like to pray with us, Cap? And he said, sure. And he got down on his knees and got converted. I watched her live and then I sought

her Savior. But there's many a liberal today that watches us live and turns to liberalism. Not because he's got anything against Christ, but because he gags on what he sees.

If the holy season, as we call it, means anything, my friends, it means that we ought to take this whole thing practically. If that was God's Son that rode into Jerusalem there that Palm Sunday, if that was God's Son who came out of that new tomb on that Sunday morning and stood among men in shining glory, that's all true and I stake my eternal future on it.

Then we ought to begin to live as if it was true and stop being animals, civilized animals, living according to our glands, chitchat and gossip and all the rest. We ought to begin to live like Christians.

And if we do, immediately our prayers will take on a new power. Immediately our testimony will take on a new sharp edge. Immediately our joy will begin to spring up like wells in the desert. And I believe that we can make an impression on mankind.

Some of my poor orthodox brethren have begun to believe over the last years that if we can get some good polemical writers, that is argumentative writers, who know how to argue with others, and we get some good books arguing for the faith that we can cure liberalism, never, my brethren, you will cure it when we begin to live like Christians, but never before. So, I beg of you, let's begin to live the life that befits sound doctrine.