

“The Essentials Of Our Faith”

Session XIII

December 5, 2010

A Summary:

The Practical Importance Of A Dispensational Interpretation Of The Word Of God

God has placed a “**calling**” upon Riverwood Bible Church – we are called to “rightly divide (handle accurately) the Word of truth,” II Timothy 2:15. The leadership of this Body of Believers will “give an account” to the Lord Himself for its teaching and oversight, Hebrews 13:17. Each member of our Assembly holds a similar responsibility, especially those who are parents.

A. We are called to _____ the truth, _____ the truth, and _____ the truth!

“Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.”

Colossians 2:6-7

“May the Word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. ”

Colossians 3:16-17

The mandate to “rightly divide the Word of truth” is deeply rooted in the history of our Church. Riverwood has held a “**Dispensational**” interpretation of the Word of God from its beginning.

B. Teaching the Word of God from a “Dispensational” doctrinal base insures that we are being _____ to our theological _____, _____, _____!

“Remember those who led you, who spoke the Word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace . . .” Heb. 13:7-9

C. It is not enough that our history is one of faithfulness to the “calling” to “rightly divide the truth”, it must be our present “_____”!

“Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.”

II Timothy 1:13

*“**Be diligent** (study) to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, **accurately handling** the word of truth.”*

II Timothy 2:15

“These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no man disregard you.”

Titus 2:15

Charles C. Ryrie has succinctly observed that, “the ultimate test of the truth of any doctrine is whether it is in accord with the Biblical revelation.”

How can this be true of us?

--“Be _____” → “_____”!

1. Read: “Dispensationalism” by Charles C. Ryrie;

2. Read: “What On Earth Is God Doing?” by Renald Showers.

D. While we hold our interpretation with “conviction” and “passion”, we respect the “right” of every individual to hold their own interpretation of the Bible. The broad categories of interpretation are:

1. “_____” → it contains _____!

“The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” Psa. 14:1

2. “Interpretation by Human _____” → it contains _____ in _____ or _____ words which must be interpreted!

"Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Indeed, has God said . . .'" Gen. 3:1

3. "_____ revelation → it contains _____ in normal human _____, but _____ by God.

"Sanctify them in Thy truth; Your word is truth." John 17:17

"All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." II Timothy 3:16-17

--Key: The Bible _____ what it _____!

4. **Note:** Correct interpretation of the Bible is not primarily a function of human intelligence or logic – it is a supernatural ministry of the Holy Spirit. He was sent to earth for this purpose!

"But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you." John 16:13-14

--Key: The Holy Spirit _____ correct Biblical interpretation!

E. While we believe that our Dispensational method of interpreting the Bible is essential to correct interpretation, it must not be our main _____ in personal _____. Our emphasis must be on the "outcome" of our method of interpretation – an understanding of the _____ and _____ of God in human history, which will _____ Him forever!

Frank E. Gaebelin has observed, ". . . dispensationalism is not a theology but rather a method of interpretation helpful in grasping the progress of revelation in the Bible."

Practical Application: We are not called to _____ dispensational truth with other people. This is not what they should think of when they think of us → _____, _____ people! **However**, they should think of us as those who can "_____ a _____" of what we believe when **asked** to do so by _____ people!

"But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence." I Peter 3:15

F. Being a “Dispensational” Church or Christian does not mean we cannot have genuine _____ with those who _____!

“Every Christian has a right to his convictions about biblical truth, but as long as we are in earthly bodies none of us can be infallible. No one in any age has all the truth – not the apostolic fathers or the Reformers or dispensationalists or nondispensationalists. Nevertheless, we should hold with conviction the truth we believe God has given us . . . False humility may be only a cover-up for unwillingness to take a stand for what one considers to be the truth. On the other hand, a cocksure attitude can be used to cover a multitude of sins! The Biblical mandate is well expressed in Paul’s words: ‘speaking the truth in love’ (Eph. 4:15).

“Circles of fellowship are not in themselves wrong; it is our failure or refusal to recognize some of them that is wrong. When someone fails to recognize the larger circles and builds a wall of doctrine or practice around the smaller one, refusing ever to move out of these circles for any reason, he is in error. Equally wrong is the attempt to make believers have the same kind of fellowship with all other believers and not allow them to have the smaller circles of fellowship.

“. . . dispensationalists are conservatives and affirm complete allegiance to the doctrines of verbal, plenary inspiration, the virgin birth and deity of Christ, the substitutionary atonement, eternal salvation by grace through faith, the importance of godly living and the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the future coming of Christ, and the eternal damnation of the lost. Those who are divided from us on the matter of dispensationalism or premillennialism may remember the areas in which they are united with us. . . . some doctrines are more important than others, so it particularly behooves us not to cut off our fellowship from those who share similar views about important doctrines. . . . Something is wrong with our circles of fellowship . . . when conservatives view fellow conservatives as the opposition party . . . There is something wrong, too, with our conception of wisdom and scholarship when we discount the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit.

“There are, then, large areas of agreement between dispensationalists and non-dispensationalists. . . . Our differences with non-dispensationalists lie in three areas: 1) we believe in the clear and consistent distinction between Israel and the Church; 2) we affirm that normal, or plain, interpretation of the Bible should be applied consistently to all its parts; and 3) we avow that the unifying principle of the Bible is the glory of God . . .”

–Charles C. Ryrie

G. Our Dispensational method of interpreting the Bible allows us to _____ and _____ the dangers or weaknesses of other systems of Biblical interpretation.

--Observations concerning common differences and dangers:

(This is not a comprehensive discussion of these theological systems)

1. “_____” Theology:

- a. The Word of God is not seen as _____ or even as _____!
 - The Bible becomes a _____ written by _____;
 - The “truths” of Scripture become in large part the _____ of mankind.
- b. Justification:
 - Blood atonement _____ required;
 - “Hell” and “eternal punishment” are _____ realities;
 - Basic Belief: “The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man”;
 - Salvation: Attained by “_____” or “_____”.
- c. Sanctification:
 - Achieved by _____ and _____ to Christ;
 - Goal: To be _____ Jesus!
- d. Fellowship Possible? “_____” → It would require _____!

2. “_____” or “Arminian” Theology:

- a. The Word of God is not seen as _____, but is _____!
 - The Bible is not consistently interpreted as being _____;
 - Gen. 1-11 and O.T. prophecy concerning Israel are not _____;
 - Dispensational interpretation is basically _____.
- b. Justification:
 - Understood by most to be the work of Christ “_____” the “_____” of the individual;
 - _____ (“reward” and “punishment”) determined at the “Sheep and Goat Judgment” (Matt. 25:31-46).
 - Key: No security of the Believer → Salvation can be _____!**
- c. Sanctification:
 - “Holiness” and “sinless perfection” possible by “baptism” of the Holy Spirit (seen as a “second work of grace” by many—“exceptional” not “normal” experience);
 - “Holiness” and “sinless perfection” are defined by “conduct” (not sinning) and “emotional experience” (individual feelings).
- d. Fellowship Possible? “_____” → In a “_____” circle!

3. “_____” Theology:

- a. The Word of God is seen as _____ and _____!
 - The Bible is interpreted as being _____; (Dispensational harmony)
 - Gen. 1-11 and O.T. prophecy concerning Israel seen as _____;
- b. Justification:
 - “Charismatic” → “faith alone in Christ alone”;
 - “Pentecostal” → the work of Christ “_____” the “baptism” by the Holy
“_____” continuance in “good works”;
 - Personal Judgment (“reward” and “punishment”):
 - “Charismatic” → harmony with dispensational interpretation;
 - “Pentecostal” → determined at “Sheep and Goat Judgment” (Matt. 25).
 - Key: Security of the Believer? → Based upon interpretation!**
- c. Sanctification:
 - “Charismatic” → “Holiness” made possible by “baptism” of the Holy Spirit;
 - “Pentecostal” → “Holiness”/“sinless perfection” (a “second work of grace”);
 - “Holiness” and “sinless perfection” are defined by “conduct” (not sinning)
and “emotional experience” (individual feelings).
- d. Fellowship Possible? “_____” → In a “_____” circle!

4. “_____” Theology:

- a. The Word of God is seen as _____ and _____!
 - The Bible is interpreted as being _____ (but not consistently);
 - Gen. 1-11 seen as _____;
 - O.T. prophecy concerning Israel not seen as _____, but _____;
 - no “_____”; no “_____”;
 - no literal fulfillment of Millennial Kingdom → “amillennial”.
 - No distinction between Israel and the Church:
 - no “_____” with Christ as His “_____”!
- b. Justification:
 - “faith alone in Christ alone”;
 - “Lordship Salvation” → “Lordship” required for justification;
 - “No “Carnal” Christian → “Carnality” indicates no “saving faith”;
 - Personal Judgment (“reward” and “punishment”): determined at the
“Sheep and Goat Judgment” (Matt. 25:31-46) after the Second Coming.
 - Key: No security of the Believer → Salvation can be shown to be
invalid by failure to “persevere in good works”!**
- c. Sanctification:
 - The Christian life is lived by “keeping the _____ → the _____
_____ in the _____ of the Holy Spirit;
- d. Fellowship Possible? “_____” → In a “_____” circle!