***Inerrancy, Love, and the Hope of Eternal Life

Colossians 1:3-8

COL-038***

Our subject is "Thanksgiving for the Colossians," segment number 16, in Colossians 1:3-8.

**Three Decisions for Every Christian**

Every Christian should be aware of the fact that he faces three basic decisions as he lives out his life. These are three imperatives. Listen carefully. Every Christian has to deal with three issues that he must decide someplace along the line one way or another. And deciding how you come out on these three issues will determine the nature of your life and the nature of your eternity.

1. **The Bible is Inerrant**

First of all, you must decide whether or not the Bible is the inerrant record of God's revelation to mankind. That seems like a simple thing. The Bible is God's record delivered to us without error. But in the Christian community, there are many people who take that with a grain of salt, and who, in one way or another, would not even say the Bible has mistakes in it, but they will quite readily say that the Bible has to be interpreted properly. And the implication is that there are different ways of interpreting a certain passage of scripture.

So, people who actually have some loyalty to the Bible have an appreciation for the fact that God does exist, and that somehow the Bible is a product of divine intervention in human history. Yet, you must be aware of the fact that there are people within that Christian community who have reservations about this principle.

If the Bible is the inherent Word of God, then it is the product of God produced under divine inspiration. There's no way a Bible could have been produced over a 1,400-year span by over 40 different authors, some of whom never even saw each other's writings, and have a book that doesn't contradict itself, and have a book which progresses consistently building up doctrine (progression of doctrine) – adding to previous revelation without contradiction, merely expanding it.

If it is the inerrant Word of God, then you will recognize that it is God's production. In that case, it is divine inspiration that has made it inerrant. If it is the inherent Word of God, then the words that are used mean what they say with no human meaning that requires human intelligence to figure out. And you must not fall for the fact that some guy comes along and says, "I just found a scholar who contradicts what the meaning of this Hebrew or this Greek word has to be with the implications of doctrine." Don't ever be bowled over because somebody's got some authority.

This is exactly what Jesus was faced with. What on earth do you think Jesus was faced with when He dealt with the scribes and the Pharisees? These were the smart intelligentsia of His time. And they had the same contempt for Him that the medieval church had for this monk called Luther, who stood up and said that 1,500 years of church doctrine was wrong at the core. It missed the boat at the heart of salvation, and then added to its error, year-after-year, and century-after-century. And Luther had to stand there in the presence of the high and mighty of the empire, who were quoting the great authorities of the church: the smart men; and, the educated men. And there's always this stupid idea that if you're smart and educated, that you'll know the truth in spiritual matters. But what does Paul say in the book of 1 Corinthians? "By wisdom man knew not God."

So, you must not be impressed by some guy who comes along says, "I can quote to you an authority, and that is it." Usually, these are people who have reservations about the inerrancy of the Word of God. Usually, these are people in the category of liberal theology, and they have a vested interest in undermining the authority of scripture.

**Evolution is Broader than Biology**

Please remember that the theory of evolution is broader than biology. The theory of evolution is what society has accepted as the premise for all areas of life. Everything is going up and getting better. And man is the ultimate evolved creature who has it at his command to make things better. That's why evolution, even though it's nonsensical just by reason, let alone by the first and second laws of thermodynamics, must be maintained at all costs, because if you don't have that, you have a problem with saying that the Bible is not binding upon us, because the Bible has to be proven wrong in its opening verse. God didn't do any such thing as creating and (with the Hebrew word of "bara") an instantaneous act of the hand of God. As Scripture repeatedly says: "God spoke, and it was there." And the psalmist looked up at the sky and that's what amazed him. He said, "God, your Word did this." He didn't say, "God, your evolution did this." He said, "God, you spoke, and there it is. You spoke, and there were the animals. You spoke, and there was life."

If the Bible is the product of God, then you are up against deciding that the words mean what they say. You can't blow it off, and say, "These have greater meanings (deeper meanings) that require intelligence. That heresy came early in the church era (in the early centuries), and the result was complete disaster to biblical knowledge. It twisted and distorted what the Bible said, so that soon the Scriptures were no longer recognizable.

If it is the inerrant Word of God, then its moral laws and its teachings (such as on creation) are the body of faith. And that which is the body of faith is not optional. It is not subject to revision by the sin-disoriented mind of man. That's what's so pathetic – that man with his tainted mentality (tainted by sin) can figure out how to do things right when the Bible contradicts or rejects that way. Whether to live by faith in the body of doctrine is the issue.

In Colossians, Paul says, "I thank God that the people (the believers) in Colossae went for inerrancy." They went for the authority of the Word of God as revealed through the doctrine of inspiration. And they said, "We choose to live under the body of the faith, the Word of God."

1. **"Agape" Love**

Secondly, you must decide whether or not to be motivated and controlled by mental attitude "agape" love. To live under the control of the indwelling Holy Spirit is the issue; or, to live under the control of the inherent sin nature. These two are mutually exclusive. You can't do part of each one. You are either under the control of the Holy Spirit in your thinking, and in your living, and in your conduct; or, you're under the control of the sin nature. And one man who was a visitor this morning caught the difference as we spoke about this, and he said, "That is the social gospel, isn't it?" And I said, "Exactly!" To live by the social gospel, which is the gospel of liberal theology, is to live by the old sin nature's human reason conclusions. Man, by wisdom, knew not God. To substitute the old sin nature compassion, in the form of human good works, for the Holy Spirit-generated, mental-attitude love of divine good production – that's what you're going to have to decide. You are going to have to decide whether you are going to accept the old sin nature's compassion, which is what evolutionary liberalism goes for, and which God calls "evil," or you're going to go for that which is generated by the love of divine good production.

One of the things that irritates people, when you take the Bible as the literal Word of God, is that you speak with such authority – that you lay it out, and you put it in absolute understandable truth. They consider that very arrogant. That's when they come in and say, "Just, who do you think you are, Dr. Nobody. If you were so great, you'd have hundreds of people sitting there in front of you, and you would have a great reputation, and you wouldn't be so dirt poor." And they think that they will shut you up because, like Jesus, He had no place to lay his head. He hardly had any clothes to call his own. And he lived from hand-to-mouth by the provision of God.

The apostle Paul once said that he was considered the garbage of humanity. And don't forget that if you take the position that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God, you're going to be garbage in the sight of the intelligentsia of the world's system. And the apostle Paul had to scrape and scrounge and work, while he tried to minister as a missionary. Don't let that intimidate you – that we must serve under the hard conditions that the world puts upon us. You have to decide whether you're going to be controlled by mental attitude, "agape" love, and that what you do in your divine service will be the product of the spirit of God.

**"Compassion"**

Human good is part of the evil that condemns people to hell. And the human-good codeword in liberalism is "compassion." It's a good word, but it has been distorted from its meaning. The Word of God uses the word "agape" – mental attitude love. You're going to have to decide whether you're going to maintain your temporal fellowship with the Father through confession of known sins so that the Spirit of God may produce the fruit of the Spirit of "agape" love in your soul.

So first, you're going to have to decide whether the Bible is the inerrant Word of God, to be understood by the literal meaning of the words. Secondly, you're going to have to decide whether you're going to be motivated and controlled by the spirit of mental attitude love that the spirit of God produces within your soul.

1. **The Sure Hope of Eternal Life in Heaven**

The third thing you'll have to decide as a human being is whether or not to live in the sure hope of eternal life in heaven. Whether you're going to live on the promise of God, which is in the gospel – the good news of free grace salvation as a gift to those who believe in Christ. You're going to have to decide whether God lies, or that He speaks clearly, so that the way of salvation is uncertain.

When I point it out to a man, on one occasion, Jesus' words that: "The gate into eternal life is small, and the roadway is very narrow, and few there be that find it," I was taken aback by his sophisticated, intellectual, educated response. I said to him that: "The consequence was that most of the human race does not understand the gospel of free grace salvation, and all those who follow the religions of the world produced by Satan – they're all going to end up in the lake of fire. And what Jesus said was that the majority of human beings will end up in the lake of fire." And he said, "Well, fine. If that's what you want to believe, okay. But I don't believe that." So, I said, "Well, one nice thing about spiritual matters and about biblical topics is that the day will come when we're going to find out who's right and who's wrong." And he said to me, "That is a really arrogant attitude."

Now I'm so dumb, I still don't think that it's arrogant. I didn't see anything arrogant about it. I thought that was a very humble position to take: "Well, okay. We're going to find out whether you are right; whether I'm right; whether Jesus is right; or, whether Muhammad is right. We're going to find out someday." And I would think that that would be a very rational and a very gentlemanly and Christian way to have the debate. But no. Always there is distortion. Always there is twisting. Always there is undermining of the truth. And you must understand that in religious matters, as in all other areas of life, the motivation that people have for what they're after, they will distort anything. They will undermine. They will create lies. They will create all kinds of distortions, and they have no compulsion in doing that. We do not deal with people who love the truth. That is a rare bird.

So, whether or not to live in the sure hope of eternal life – you have to decide: does God speak the truth, and is it clear on salvation? Or is it as my friend said: that he realized one day that every people (every culture) has sincerely developed its way to go to heaven, and that God will honor that sincere effort. You gotta be kidding.

All you have to do is go out to the jungles in the Yucatan peninsula, to the Chichen Itza. And there, one of the first things you'll see in this Aztec ruins that were uncovered of a very highly cultured and a very sophisticated people, is a room half the size of this gym – a monument (an enclosure) with walls all around. And all around there are curved skulls. Every block is a skull, because do you know what's in it? That's where they put the heads of the peoples whose hearts they tore out of them, up on the altar at the top of the step pyramid. For what? To please their God, so that they can go to heaven.

Do you take that seriously? Do you think that God is going to say, "I know you were sincere? You ripped up a lot of people, but your heart was in the right place even if there wasn't." And you say, "How can mankind be this crazy?" Because of the sin nature. There is brutality and there is bestiality in the heart of man by nature. You have to decide then: are there other gospels leading to salvation, or only the faith-in-Christ way? You have to decide whether the religions of the world are from Satan, or are they adaptations which God will accept? Is hope generated by the promises of God certain of fulfillment because they're not dependent on human effort, or are they not? Now, we're not talking about unbelievers as such.

I was taken aback on one occasion when I was up in Minnesota, and met a leader of the Lutheran Church. And he was the preacher of the preachers in their association. And when I was introduced to him, he wanted to know what my religious orientation was. And I knew that he was a man trained in spiritual things, and in church history, and in biblical matters, and I knew that he would understand what I was about to say. So, I said, "Well, basically I probably would fall in the category of Calvinism in some respects – Ulrich Zwingli's category." And the first thing that pops out of his mouth was, "Oh, so I suppose that you think that once you're saved, you're always saved." Now this, folks, is a descendant of Dr. Martin Luther. This is the descendant of Luther, who taught justification by faith in Christ. This is the man who fought the Roman Church for its works basis of salvation. And I thought, "Hot dog, I have a big one on the line here." And I was ready to set the hook. So, I said, "Well, yes I do, because I think that's why Jesus used the analogy of salvation as a new birth, because you cannot reverse a birth. And that's what confused Nicodemus, as you'll remember."

Well, his wife was sitting there at the table, and her eyes popped open, and she looked at him. And that's bad when the preacher's wife looks at the preacher, because she's saying, "Yeah, how about that?" And I thought, "Now I got the hook in." And I started reeling. But he cut the line. He just stopped the conversation dead, because I was ready to go up to the next stage: "Well, how is a person saved? What part do you have? And what part can you undo, therefore? If it's all of God, how can you reverse it?" And yet as clear as the Bible is on this, he would have none of it. He was determined that he was not going to have the sure hope of eternal life.

Well, I guess that probably the reason for it was that he was afraid that if people knew for certainty they were going to heaven, they could act like the devil. Well they can, and God will deal with them if they do. He might even take them to early retirement into heaven if they persist in their evil. That's a sure thing. But He will take them into heaven.

Do you have hope generated by the promise of God of a certain, absolute surety of salvation?

Do not assume that these three things are easy. Satan has a way of even getting into your mind so subtly, point number one – the Bible is not the clear, inerrant Word of God. I'm having people who listen to the tapes, or are in the congregation, who pop it to me about the things I say. And they say, "How can you say these outrageously false things?" And what they mean is: "You say that the Bible says this. Period. How can you say that, because that irritates me? That's against my lifestyle. That's against the way I want to live. And you really aggravate me when you say that."

However, they never say, "Here, bunko-head, let me explain to you what the Word of God is really saying there." You're going to have to decide whether the Bible is the inherent record of God's revelation to mankind, and if you're capable of dealing with it on that basis. You're going to have to decide whether you are motivated and controlled by the Spirit of God so that the attitude of "agape" love is what moves you. And the Christians are always going to be attacked on their love. The world is such a fakery.

We had an old lady that used to live in these apartments here. And she had the habit of walking her dog on our campus. And one of the favorite places for the doggy to relieve himself was right there where the swings and the slide are. And she would walk along there doing that. One day, Mrs. Danish saw her doing that, after she'd done some cleaning up, and she went out there and said, "This is the playground. We have children here. Please do not walk your dog here as you do every day. Take him someplace else."

She got a little huffy, but took the dog, and walked home. She got almost over to the apartments, and then turned and said, "That's some kind of Christian love, all right." So, be careful about what you tell people about how they deal with the dog on your lawn. You must show your Christian love by just letting him do it.

Now, that poor, ignorant woman had no idea what love is, and you should not never be intimidated by people who think you are unloving because you have spoken the truth.

Also, you must decide, thirdly, whether you're going to live in the sure hope of eternal life in heaven.

Now, the Colossians Christians had, as you know, received the biblical gospel as a message of truth from Paul via Epaphras. From the foundation of the truth about how to go to heaven follows the full counsel of God's truth in Scripture. To obey the truth, one must believe the gospel of free grace salvation. The Bible way of salvation, as a gift from God apart from any human good works or religious rituals, is totally alien to the mind and the nature of man. This is not man's kind of salvation. When the religions of the world invent a salvation, I guarantee you that it is never a non-works salvation, and it is never an act of God alone, so that it comes to you as a gift, as a permanent repository of righteousness that qualifies you for heaven. Natural man on his own will never come up with that kind of a way of salvation.

However, when you do reject the Bible's gospel of the grace of God, then you are, in effect, challenging the integrity of God. And it is very important that you know that. 1 John 5:9-12 make this very clear: "If we receive the witness of men" – what people tell us. And boy, do we receive what people tell us: "The witness of God is greater. For the witness of God is this" that He has born witness concerning His Son." Do you believe that? Has He told us something about His Son? Has He given us a revelation that is accurately recorded? That's the first point. You're going to have to decide: "The one who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself." God the Holy Spirit, within you, confirms that you did right in believing in Christ as the Savior: "The one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the witness that God has born concerning His Son. And the witness is this: that God has given us eternal life, and this is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life. He who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

So, do not think that you can get around God's revelation of the one way of salvation. You can thumb your nose at Him. You can say that He just wouldn't send all those people into hell. You can say that He has another way that He will tolerate, as long as you're sincere. But that is not what the Bible says. It says you call God Himself a liar if you do not understand free grace salvation.

So, be very careful how you play with salvation. Be very careful when you give a misrepresentation of what is the truth. Be very careful if you ever tell somebody: "You can have salvation if you behave yourself. And if you don't behave yourself, we know that you don't have salvation." In heaven's name, who could we have less expected to have salvation than King Saul, by the way he acted? He degenerated into spiritism, and yet he ends up in heaven.

There is the question of the truth. Paul's gospel message was the Word of Truth. Pilate, when examining Jesus with skepticism, posed the question to Jesus at one point: "What is the truth? How could anybody know what the truth is?" And remember that this is the way people are going to attack you – even people within your own Christian group. They're going to attack you: "And how do you know what the truth is? I know Dr. Bunko-head over here, and he has degrees, and he has a different opinion." Now that should scare the fool out of you, but if you know the Word of God, it doesn't do anything. It just rolls right off of you. You look at him eyeball-to-eyeball. And one of these days we're going to find out whose eyeball was right.

Pilate, with skepticism, said to Jesus: "What is the truth?" John 18:37: "Pilate therefore said to Him, 'So you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I've come into the world – to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth, hears my voice.'" You and I had that voice in Scripture. We have the truth because we have the Bible: "Pilate said to Him, 'What is truth?' And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews and said to them, 'I find no guilt in him.'"

Pilate did not wait for an answer to his question. It was a rhetorical question, and he didn't anticipate, therefore, as you do with rhetorical questions, to get an answer. He knew, however, the truth of the innocence of Jesus. That he did know. But had he pressed it (had he waited), what a moment in time that was for him. What is the truth? And of all people to have posed that question to was Jesus.

Jesus could appointed him to Psalm 119:160: "The sum of Your Word is Truth and every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting." "The sum of Your Word" is the Word recorded in scripture – the Word of doctrine. And that's the truth. And every one of those doctrinal principles is everlasting. Jesus could have pointed him to the concept which He had enunciated in His high priestly prayer the night before, at the Lord's Supper, the final Passover memorial in John 17:17. On that occasion, Jesus says of the believers, "Sanctify them (set them aside) in the truth. Your Word is truth."

So, don't get your nose out of joint, and don't start hyperventilating because we stress to you that if you are not here in these services, enjoying the truth of doctrine, you're out of step with God. You are set apart to everything that God has planned for you, in all that is potential for you in your Christian service, by the truth of doctrine. That is the Word of God. "Your Word" is truth.

Paul's gospel message was the Word of Truth. Epaphras had conveyed this true gospel to the Colossians. The purported gospel of the false teachers in Colossae was untrue. Their teachings were inane; they were deceitful; they were false; and, they were a great delusion. But I want to assure you that they were delivered with great sophistication. They could quote the great men of wisdom; the great philosophers; and, the great authorities.

This is what irritated the spiritual and political leaders of Jerusalem with Jesus, because when Jesus finished a sermon on one occasion, and on that occasion, He was stressing the truth of God – when He finished, the people were dumbfounded. And what did they say? "Who is this man, for He speaks with authority" – the Word of God. He speaks with authority, and they hated it, because what he spoke was contrary to their beliefs. And yet, there was that ring in the power of the authority that comes from those who quote the Word of God. He spoke with authority, and no matter how much they beat Him up, verbally and physically, he was still right, and they were still wrong. And the day came when they found out, whether you like it or not, when all those elitists found out who was right and who was wrong.

This is what's on the back of our little evangelism brochure, that sums it up. Proverbs 14:12: "There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death. False doctrine in Colossae was destroying the hope of the people for salvation. It was leading them fearful and uncertain about their eternal destiny. With the loss of hope came the loss of living in sound doctrine and mental attitude love. Hope from true doctrine fills a believer with faith in the Word of God, and love for His people.

There were two things that were certainly true about the hope that was possessed by the Colossian saints, which so please the apostle Paul. First, that hope was securely laid up for them in heaven, like a marvelous Christmas present, waiting to be opened at the proper time.

Secondly, their hope of great blessing in heaven came from hearing God's true gospel of free grace salvation, which they believed, and which salvation can never be lost again, because it is all of God and none of man.

**The Bible *is* the Word of God**

The Bible *is* the Word of God. We do not say that the Bible *contains* the Word of God. Anytime you hear somebody say that the Bible contains the Word of God, that's liberalism. Spew it out of your mouth as the contemptible insulting thing that it is. The Bible does not *contain* the Word of God. Liberal theologians say that because they want to pick what they want to believe, and kick out and throw away what they don't like. The Bible *is* the Word of God. 2 Timothy chapter 3:17: "All Scripture is inspired by God, and profitable for teaching; for reproof; for correction; and, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate (equipped) for every good work." All scripture is inspired by God.

In Bible translations which are produced by liberal scholarship, this verse is translated as: "All Scripture which is inspired by God is profitable for teaching." Do you see the difference? "All scripture which is inspired by God" – the implication being: some of it isn't, but that which is, that's good. But that's not what the Word of God says. It says, "All Scripture is inspired by God."

Now, by a process of grammar, you can get that kind of a translation. You can say, "Every scripture inspired by God is also profitable." But the implication everywhere in the Bible gives us the guidance on which way to translate it properly, because what did Jesus say? "The scriptures cannot be broken." And if the scriptures cannot be broken (the Scriptures cannot be proven false), then the proper way to translate this, when you have a possibility of going two ways is: "All Scripture is inspired by God."

This is also confirmed to us by 2 Peter 1:20-21: "But know this first of all: that no prophecy of Scripture." The word "prophecy" means prophecy of the future, or revelation from God: "No revelation from God is a matter of one's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." It is clear, therefore, that the Bible claims that what is in the content of the Scriptures came from God. It was God Who was the source of this information.

Psalm 119:89 says, "Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven." There it is on our communion table. That's why we put it there: "Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven." And what that means is that it "stands firm." The word "settled" in Hebrew here means that it "stands firm." Forever, O Lord, Thy word stands firm in heaven." You're never going to change it. You're never going to get around it. And if you don't like it, just tell God that you don't like it, but don't pretend that it doesn't say that. Don't pretend that His Words have some mystical meaning that you, because you're so smart, can discern. The Bible is God's book of absolute truth for all mankind, and is given to us by the Holy Spirit. Each person has to decide whether he believes that the Bible is inerrant or not. The Bible is hated today because its claim of absolute truth leaves no room for indulging and justifying the lusts of the old sin nature. That's why we Christians are under fire.

Our society wants to say, "Sure, homosexuality is all right." Be sure you read the handout today on what happens in a neighborhood where the moral standards tolerate homosexuality – where the moral standards are so degrading and low. What happens to the young people over against what happens in a neighborhood with the same kind of people, with the same backgrounds, where there's a big church activity, and where there is a great participation in moral activities on the part of the youth, and where there are youth activities that honor the Word of God, the Bible. It's amazing the difference that these surveys have found between these two neighborhoods. They're the same kind of people, and the same kind of kids, but what they're surrounded with is different. The point is what they're surrounded with influences their thinking and their conduct.

The Bible is hated today because it doesn't leave the door open for what God says is an abomination to be justified. And to some people, it doesn't make any difference. The fact that God says some heinous sin is an abomination, and clearly so, doesn't make any difference for those who want to process and edit the Bible for their own purposes and their own reasons. But when God says something is an abomination, that is the strongest language of revulsion that He can use, and it indicates the greatest of sin.

I want to remind you that one of the things that John, in his old age, did in those first, second, and third epistles that he wrote, was that he repeatedly said, "Be very careful that you don't support those who stand with evil; that you don't stand with people who are untrue to the Word of God; and, that you don't support those who are untrue to Jesus Christ, and to those who are heretical. Be careful about your association with them, and by that, justifying what they stand for. The Bible exposes, and it condemns, the false human viewpoint of those who are devoid of doctrine: the doctrine of truth; or, in the Christian, who is negative to it.

One man after the service this morning said, "I listened to a tape, and I want to get something clear. It sounded like you were saying that God has equal condemnation for the believer who is guilty of sin and for the carnal Christian who is guilty of the same thing." And I said, "That's right, because they're both in the same category. One is saved, but once he's out of temporal fellowship, he's back into carnality. Paul says in 1 Corinthians that he's a natural man again. And he's just as much under the judgment of God, even as a Christian; and, he's under more severe discipline, because he knows better, and he can do better. And if necessary, God will bring him down, and he will remove him from this earth.

The content of the Bible is not merely doctrinaire. "Doctrinaire" means that it's theoretical, and it's changeable. And that's how the smart people want to treat the Bible – as its doctrinaire: that's opinion; that's attitude; that's outlook; and, that can change. What the Bible is, is doctrine. And that's the word that the Scriptures use of itself, because doctrine is absolute, and it's immutable truth. It's a very, very big difference. And you should not miss that.

Nothing is more important in the life of a Christian than the fact that the Word of Truth, which is to be found in scripture. That is our life.

Let's look at a few Scriptures in closing. Titus 1:9: "Holding fast the faithful Word which is in accordance with the teaching; that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine, and to refute those who contradict." This is the nature of the Christian. This is the nature, furthermore, in this passage, of the pastor-teacher. A pastor-teacher, above all, has to hold fast the faithful Word which is in accordance with the teaching. How does he know that? One way: he looks into the Greek Bible, and he finds what it says. He looks into the Hebrew Bible, and he finds what it says. And then he brings it to the people of God in their own language, and he explains it. He is responsible for the Word of Teaching that is in accordance with what is written in Scripture, such that he may be able to exhort in sound doctrine, and to refute those who contradict.

Most of the people, you will find, who contradict what you say that the Bible teaches, which in truth it does, but which they don't like to hear you say – most of them won't face you. They will insult you. They will misrepresent you. They will twist what you have said. This is what happens in the political realm. This is what is happening before our eyes. Here we have a budget in Congress that is increasing all of the main areas, and the opposition is saying that it's being decreased. And many times I've seen on television: here's what the budget is going to be that is being proposed; and, here is how much the increases are. Then I see the other side saying, "All of these are decreases." Now, that's the worst deceit. And somebody will say, "Well, you're ignorant. That's not the truth. I have better information."

Here, we have, from the very government itself (the office that is responsible for these statistics), flashing them on television, and yet distorting. Can you imagine what people will do in spiritual things if they will do that in temporal things? Don't be deceived. The Word of God is the truth, and nothing is more important than that.

You may add to that Ephesians 4:14: "As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness and deceitful scheming." Don't be afraid of the fact that you know better than the smart people do. Those people are all ignorant intellectuals, who know not God, who are going to spend eternity in the lake of fire. Why should you be intimidated by them? Don't ever be. God's word is the truth, and when you know it, you are smarter than they are. The Bible alone is true, of all the sacred books of the world's religions. There is no other source of divine viewpoint. Truth begins with the gospel of grace, and it goes on to the full counsel of God in the deep things of the Holy Spirit.

To believe God's true Word, and to live by it, it must be taught by the pastor-teacher to the people. Find the pastor-teacher who does his job, and never let him go. As the song from "South Pacific" says, "Never let him go." That is the lifeline. And give him the solidarity and the encouragement to stand up against the riffraff who are seeking to oppose and intimidate him, especially when they can compare him to the big-timers. We Christians encourage one another to live by doctrine. We cling to each other. We support one another with mental attitude love because we share a common hope – a hope in heaven. We hope for heavenly treasure – our mansion in the new Jerusalem with the Lord Jesus Christ. That is our hope.

And that is why we stand with one another; we reinforce one another; and, we don't stand against each other in the face of the world. We protect each other. We gather around each other. And we let the world know that they are wrong, and we are right, because: "Thy Word," Jesus says, "is truth." And you have it.

Father, we thank You for this time in the Word, and we ask Lee to help us to be reinforced in our confidence in the truth. We pray that we shall make our decisions on these three basic factors that then will guide us one way or another in our lives. Help us to stand with the same. . .

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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