

BALANCE IN AN UNBALANCED WORLD

(Josh. 1:7; 2 Tim. 2:15)

Introduction:

1. The church takes a lot of abuse because of our stand on the Bible. We refuse to compromise on one verse, one word from our Lord.
2. People tend to like extremes, but we must always find the biblical balance in our study and live that in our lives. We do not turn to the right nor to the left and that leaves us in the middle of the road taking hits from both sides.
3. Let us consider how balance shapes our understanding of some key Bible topics: grace, faith, and salvation.

Discussion:

I. Grace.

- A. The Extremes.
 1. God does everything.
 2. Man does everything.
- B. The Truth.
 1. God provides the grace to allow man the opportunity/possibility to be saved.
 - a. The Promise: given; fulfilled; proclaimed.
 - b. The Invitation to partake of God's grace.
 2. Man accepts God's grace and humbly/thankfully complies (Titus 2:11-14).
 - a. Receive the gift of God (Acts 2:36-41) via hearing (Rom. 10:17), believing (Mark 16:16), repenting (Acts 2:38), confessing (1 Tim. 6:12 vs. John 12:42), being baptized (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21; et al).
 - b. Retain/remain in the grace of God via living faithful unto death (Acts 2:42-47; 13:43; Rev. 2:10; Heb. 2:1-4).

II. Faith.

- A. Extremes.
 1. Mental assent of Jesus as Son/Savior.
 2. We must earn our salvation via works of merit.
- B. The Truth.
 1. We must have faith.
 - a. We must believe everything God has revealed to us via the Holy Spirit (John 8:24; 1 Thess. 2:13; Jas. 2:10).
 - b. We must trust everything God has revealed to us via the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 15:2; Jas. 1:22; 1 Pet. 1:3-9).
 2. We must obey the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3).

III. Salvation.

- A. The Extremes.
 1. All are saved = universalism.
 2. Once a person is saved he can never be lost.
 3. None are saved; no not one.
 4. Living in constant terror of being lost.
- B. The Truth.
 1. Not all will be saved (Matt. 7:13, 14).
 2. But, many will be saved (Rev. 7:9).
 3. Salvation in the past (Eph. 2:8 = "have been saved" = perfect tense = action that took place in the past and stands complete in the present); salvation now (1 Cor. 1:18 = being saved = present tense), and salvation to come (1 Cor. 15:2; Rom. 5:9).
 4. Blessed assurance is given but "iffy" (1 John 5:13; 1:7).

Conclusion:

1. God has given us all that we need in order to live blessed lives here and now; and to live eternally in glory with Him in heaven. Most importantly He has given us the Bible and our brains; and we must use both.
2. People choose extremes because they are easy and do not require a lot of thinking or discerning. But God expects more from those who would be His. He has given us the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16) and we need to utilize it for His glory and our salvation.
3. Invitation.

MORE ON “BALANCED IN AN UNBALANCED WORLD”

1. The correct understanding of scripture is achieved via two imperatives.
 - A. The correct Hermeneutic.
 1. The inductive approach is to read and study all the Bible, in its context in order to draw off truth (specific to general).
 2. This is the method our courts use to determine truth.
 3. Jesus used this method in His teaching (Luke 24:13-35).
 4. To determine truth we must know all the truth (John 17:17; Ps. 119:160). To learn about “faith” I must study everything written in the Bible about faith, not go to the Bible looking for a verse that appears to support what I or my group believes (Dogmatic Hermeneutic).
 - B. An honest, submissive heart.
 1. The goal of our Bible study must be to determine God’s will not win an argument or garner support for our theology.
 2. We must accept what the Bible reveals and submit to it as being from God (1 Thess. 2:13).
 3. When there is something that we are uncertain about we can know one of two things:
 - a. There is something that we have not considered/learned/been shown.
 - b. That “something” is not of importance (Deut. 29:29; 2 Pet. 1:3).
 4. The more we study, on our own and together, the more “pins” we ought to be able to take down from our “wall”. This is one of the great joys of being a Christian (1 Cor. 2:16).
2. The correct understanding of scripture, God’s will, is also dependent upon...
 - A. Desire and Diligence.
 - B. Muscle and a Shovel.
 - C. Focus and Faith.
3. When scripture is ignored or denigrated, a false teaching is being sought.
4. If we would be saved, pleasing to God, we must imitate the blessed man of Psalm 1: meditate day and night on the word of God and not be a companion of the unrighteous. We should seek the whole truth honestly with those who are seeking the whole truth honestly. We must submit to that whole truth no matter if any others do so or not.