

Sound Doctrine, p.1

By Jeff Noblit

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Bible Text: 1 Timothy 6:3-5
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Anchored in Truth Ministries

1915 Avalon Ave.
Muscle Shoals, AL 35661

Website: www.anchoredintruth.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/anchoredintruth

Grab your Bibles and let's go to 1 Timothy 6. 1 Timothy 6:3-5. The Apostle Paul writing this letter to Timothy who he has left in charge of getting the church in order. We've called this exposition "Beautifying the Bride" because that's God's goal. He wants his bride, his church, to be like him, to reflect his beauty and his glory to the world, and that involves a lot of things. That involves believing the right things and functioning the right way and for the right motives, or with the right, um, uh, reasons in our hearts, and I call this "Beautifying the Bride," her fashion, the way she's to be structured, and her function, the way she's to function and carry on, and we've learned a lot about this. I, I, I'm certain that, uh, in the future my exposition of 1 Timothy will be a course for pastors because there's so much here.

Now we come to 1 Timothy 6:3-5 that I've simply entitled the unpacking of this text "Sound Doctrine." Sound doctrine. 1 Timothy 6:3 Paul writes,

3 If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, 4 he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, 5 and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.

Wow, a lot there. Paul gets to this point in writing to Timothy and, uh, says, "Alright, there's gonna be people who aren't gonna follow what I'm teaching and if they're not following what I'm teaching you, Timothy, and what I'm building the church upon, then they're not follow Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ either."

So I come to I., and I call it sound doctrine, its ground and source divinely inspired Scripture. Ground and source is somewhat redundant but I like being redundant. The Bible's quite redundant. What is the, the ground, uh, the foundation stone for sound doctrine, or you could say the truth? What is the source? Where does it come out of? Well, Paul gives us good insight here.

Let's unpack it beginning in verse 3 with the two words "sound words." That's where I get the phrase "sound doctrine." Literally the word "sound" there means "wholesome." Then he says, "those of our Lord Jesus Christ." So it's interesting that he talks about the words of Jesus Christ though it's Paul who's writing the words. It's Paul who's writing this doctrine. So is it Paul or is it Jesus' words? It's both. Paul's words are Jesus' words.

When he says "those of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, or our Lord Jesus Christ," I think he means more than just exact quotations from Jesus. He means the doctrine and the instructions that Christ taught himself, and now this includes the words of Paul, that is, the instructions in his epistles that we have in the New Testament. Paul was fully aware that he was writing divinely-inspired texts. The Scriptures have often been viewed as the same as saying these are Jesus' words. For example, in Colossians 3:16 Paul writes, "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you," now that doesn't just mean the words again of quotations that Christ made, but the word about Christ, the true doctrine of Christ. When you receive the true doctrine, biblical doctrine, you're receiving Christ's word. You could amplify that on out, God's word, of course.

"Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you." What does that mean? Let the Bible richly dwell within you. It's the same thing. You see, God has spoken to us his last revelation until his Second Coming. God has spoken to man his final revelation until he unveils himself in the person of Christ and appears on earth the second time.

Hebrews 1:1-2, "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world." God's final word to man is Jesus Christ and the revelation of Jesus Christ and, of course, we hold that the words and the revelation of Christ have been mediated to us through the early apostles as they penned and completed the New Testament and gave us the 66 books of the Bible. That's God's final word.

Now I think that's something that jumps out to us. Now, of course, the flow of what Paul's saying in chapter 6 in those early verses is about false teachers creeping in and teaching, uh, false doctrine. But in doing, in, in, in confronting those false teachers, he brings out this statement that there are sound words, the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Paul himself are writing those words so he gives us a strong statement on the authority and the infallibility of the word of God in this, in this, uh, overall argument, if you will, of exposing and, uh, opposing false teachers, which is my next point in just a few minutes.

Uh, another insight. Ephesians 2:19, "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens," now that's Christians. We used to be strange to God and alienated from God but no longer. "But you are fellow citizens with the saints, and we are of God's household." Verse 20, "having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets," and that's an interesting phrase. You're built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Wait a minute, I thought we were built on Jesus Christ? Well, he goes on, "Jesus Christ Himself being the corner stone." Now notice that. Jesus is the corner stone but the foundation for

our faith is the apostles and prophets. What does he mean? He means, "I have used men who were very aware of what they were doing to write My perfect revelation of Myself and My Gospel to mankind. It's, it's built on them, the, the apostles and prophets because they communicated through writing the remainder of the Scriptures, the New Testament, the truth of God to man, that is, the truth about Jesus Christ."

So when you say God's revealed himself through Christ, that's true. Equally so, God's revealed himself through his word, that's true. They're equally true and that word was superintended through men who were God's early apostles in the early church. Now after God closed the Canon of Scriptures, the church is no longer being built in a sense on prophets and apostles, it's now built on those early apostles and prophets who pen for us the doctrines, the faith that we stand upon forever. Okay? There, there's no one that's gonna be able to say, "Hey, I'm a new prophet. I've got a new book that we need to add to the Bible. I wrote this, let's add this book to the Bible." Not gonna happen. It's built on the writings of the early apostles and that is the authoritative word of God. They're the foundation, Christ the corner stone.

It was held in the early church that the apostles' writings were indeed divinely-inspired. Listen to how Peter says this in 2 Peter 3:16 and in 2 Peter 3:16 Peter is referring to the writings of Paul. Paul wrote these letters and they're being circulated around, many of them, and here's the way Peter says or what Peter says about Paul's writing, "as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction." He said, uh, Peter said, "Have you noticed as when the Apostle Paul wrote these things for the church, we know they're God's divinely-inspired writings and notice people trying to distort them and misuse them just like evildoers have always done God's Scriptures." He equates the holy Scripture with the writings of Paul. That was the conviction of the early church. So as Paul is writing to Timothy and he writes about the doctrines and instructions he's given Timothy, he says, "These are also the words of Jesus Christ. These are divinely-inspired words as if Christ Himself were giving it to you."

Now conservative Bible scholars. Let me, let me qualify that phrase, that is, Bible scholars who study the Bible with the conviction that they have God's word and they want to understand it better. Liberal Bible scholars are those who approach the word of God as if it's just another ancient writing like Homer or Shakespeare, and they want to dissect it and cut it up and tear it apart and be the final judge of it. Conservative Bible scholars say they're not the judge of the Bible, the Bible is authoritative, we just want to understand it as thoroughly and as well as we possibly can. So it's the predisposition of the heart that matters greatly when you talk about "a Bible scholar."

Conservative Bible scholars tell us that the New Testament is by far and away the best attested document of all ancient literature. You take all the ancient literature known to mankind, Homer, Shakespeare, whatever you want to pick out, and they'll tell you that the New Testament is far far more attested to by ancient fragments and manuscripts than any other ancient literature. For example, in the works of the Greek author Homer, uh, uh, scholars have only a few copies of his ancient writing yet they say, "Since we have

those few copies and they're all practically identical, we believe we have the truth of Homer. We have Homer's true writings. We know we do because we've got these manuscripts and they all agree." But now compare that, that to the New Testament. When it comes to the New Testament, there are 2,000 ancient manuscripts or fragments that researchers have found. 2,000. And you know what happens when they lay all 2,000 together and read them all together? They find almost no contradictions whatsoever. You could say they're practically identical and where there is a little difference here and there, the scholars say it absolutely has no bearing on any essential doctrine of the Christian faith. So if you just want to go from a scientific perspective, there's no ancient document known to mankind that comes close to the authentication that the scholars have found for the New Testament.

But laying that aside, must more importantly is the truth – now listen to your pastor this morning – that the word of God, the 66 books of the Bible, is self-authenticating. It needs no scientist. It needs no scholar. It needs no professor. It needs no high up, muckety-muck somewhere in an ivory tower to tell us, "Well, we think you can trust it." No, the word of God is self-authenticating. It, it, it's like Spurgeon says, you, you don't have to, uh, defend it, just, just let it loose. It, it, it'll defend itself. You don't have to, to, uh, help it along and that's what we're seeing in a lot of churches today. We've got all this fanciful stuff to help the word of God. You don't have to help the word of God. Matter of fact, when you help the word of God, you hurt the word of God. Study it, pray over it, preach it in its grammatical, historical and systematic context and let God's Spirit do his work through his word.

It's self-authenticating. What do I mean by that? You sit here under my preaching, you hear me preach the word of God and every one of you who knows Christ would leave and be able to say, "God spoke to me today." Where's that come from? You can't find that under a microscope. You can't view that through a telescope. You can't, uh, discover that through a scientific investigation. It's beyond that. It's spiritually revealed and spiritually confirmed. It's self-authenticating. You see, anyone who will open the Bible with humility and ask God to show him the truth will find the truth. Did you hear that? If they'll open this book and say, "O God in heaven, I need to know You. Show me, show me Yourself through these words." They will find God. He will show himself to them.

You know, the skeptic says and they've been saying it for generations and generations, "Well, I can't believe the Bible is God word, God's word because the Bible contains errors or the Bible contains contradictions." And I will say to you there are difficulties in the Bible. There are things we read and we can't understand, we don't know how does this fit? What is this? There are difficulties in the Bible but there are no difficulties discerning the major doctrines of Scripture and even the difficulties are inerrant, even the difficulties are divinely-inspired because over time sometimes God allows us to see what the difficulties actually meant. So there's no basic doctrine even the seeming errors that men think they find or the seeming contradictions they think, think they can find tend to be cleared up as we understand more and more about the word of God.

Let me give you an example. I'll never forget studying this years ago. The Bible has a whole lot to say about an ancient empire called the Hittite people, the Hittite empire. Matter of fact, the Old Testament references a great empire called the Hittites 46 different times. That's a lot. Forty-six different times in the Old Testament refers to an ancient kingdom about 4,000 years ago called the Hittites and during the 19th century, agnostics, atheists and Bible skeptics had a field day pointing out that with all the anthropological and archaeological work that's ever been done, there hadn't been one tiny fragment of anything that pointed to there ever being a people called the Hittites. So they'd just say, "That's one of many many examples that this book is not correct. This book can't be the book of God, it's got a clear error and they talk over and over and over again about the Hittite people and they don't even exist." But then an Irishman, William Wright, in the early 1880s discovered some ancient writings and over a little time they deciphered and began to interpret those writings and lo and behold it was the writings of a people who are called the Hittites. So excavations began to commence and they began to excavate vast areas of that part of the Middle East and they began to find fragments and tablets and stones and potteries and foundations and on and on, all inscribed with the Hittite Empire on them, so much so that just a couple of years after, uh, this, this Irishman made the discovery, the Encyclopedia Britannica had to change their whole section on the, on the Hittites. It went from a couple of sentences about, "This is believed to have been a people spoken of in the Bible," to two full pages documenting all the truths that this people existed. And the excavations continue today, brothers and sisters. There are whole museums filled full of Hittite Empire fragments and artifacts.

The Bible wasn't wrong, it just takes science a while to catch up with the word of God and, but here's the thing, I'm not waiting for science to give me their blessing, I'm gonna tell you the Spirit has already told me. I've read the word, I've studied the word, I've preached the word, I've taught the word, I've heard it taught, I've heard it preached, and God makes it clear to me this is his word. So when the skeptic says that he can't trust the Bible, really what he means is, is he opens the Bible not to find God, he opens his Bible to find error. And trust me, when a man opens the Bible to find mistakes or error, God will never reveal to that man the truth. He'll never reveal the truth.

Listen to Jesus in Luke 10:21, "At that very time," this is Jesus, "He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit." Now what's Jesus rejoicing greatly about? Now this is gonna throw a kink in your version of Jesus unless you have a biblical version of Jesus. "He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, and said, 'I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent.'" Jesus says, "Father, I thank You that You hide the truth from those who think they know it all. You hide the truth from those who are not humbled and those who think they have the answers, and those who think they can dissect and distort and, and place themselves as authority over Your word." I'm amplifying here, okay, but that's where the Lord is coming from. "I praise You that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and revealed them to infants." That is, those who would come to the Bible and say, "I'm just like a baby. I need to learn, God, open Your word to me and let me see." Then Jesus goes on and says, "for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight."

So listen to me. The next time you hear some atheist or skeptic or agnostic scoff and ridicule and today just get in your face and revile and rant, you need just need to say to yourself, "I praise you, O Father, that You have not revealed these things to those who think they've got the answers but revealed them to us babies, us who know we don't know anything." You see, for you and I to come to the settled conviction that the 66 books in the Old and the New Testament is the word of God requires the Holy Spirit and faith. I apologize not one bit, I back up not one bit from saying to you this is not a scientific conclusion, this is a spiritual conclusion: it is faith by the working of the Spirit of God in my heart. And you know what's interesting? Are you listening to me? The more you open this book, the more you read this book, the more you memorize this book, the more you meditate on this book, the more you study this book, the more you believe it's true. It's just that's the way it works. Some of you are a little, little, little, uh, amateur skeptics right now. Some of you have your little doubts going right now and do you know why? You haven't been in the word of God. You haven't approached it with humility and prayer. Watch God reveal himself.

Billy Graham tells the story early in his ministry and, you know, when Billy Graham just started, um, the hired, the German higher textual criticism of the Scriptures had floated across the oceans and had settled on our universities and in many of our graduate schools and our seminaries where we try to train pastors, and, uh, German higher textual criticism, again, was that approach that you come to the Bible and you critique it, you hold yourself in authority over it, and they began to discuss, "Well, this can't be the word of God and that can't be the word of God, and this can't be trustworthy and that must be an error, and that must not be historically accurate." And Billy Graham was struggling because that became the cool popular thing, and by the way, that viewpoint has killed many old denominations that used to be solid, the Methodist among them, many of the Presbyterians, quite a few of the Baptist.

Billy Graham tells the story that he was out in the woods just praying to God and struggling about his faith and struggling about, uh, what he's gonna believe and he knelt down and I think he said he knelt over a stump and he said, "God, I've settled it in my mind this is the word of God," and that's why the rest of Billy Graham's ministry he said something over and over and over and over in his preaching, "The Bible says. The Bible says. The Bible says. The Bible says." What made Billy Graham come to that conviction was some new scholar, some new theologian, some new brilliant man had an insight? No, God brought him there.

You see, men do not believe the Bible, now let me just put it this way, men do not disbelieve the Bible because it has contradictions, men disbelieve the Bible because it contradicts them. You open the Bible, you're gonna get corrected. You open the Bible, you're gonna get convicted. You open the Bible, you're gonna get humbled. And only the Spirit transformed heart likes that. The proud man doesn't like that. They do not reject the Bible because it ain't, it contains error, they reject the Bible because they can contain the error and God points it out. The Bible is divine light that exposes them. In John 3:19 Jesus said men love the darkness rather than the light because their deeds are evil. Men know their hearts are evil and black, they know their deeds are evil, and when the Bible is

opened it just magnifies the truth of that and they want to run from it and to cover themselves. They use pseudo-intellectualism, "Oh, but it has error. Oh, it has contradictions." No, it contradicts you. It shows you your error and you won't humble yourself before God and that's why you throw the Bible out. The skeptics and the unbelievers cannot find God the same reason a crook can't find a policeman. They're not looking for it. It's not their heart passion and their joy to find him.

In John 5:39-40, Jesus said, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that testify about Me." Getting back to our point, sound doctrine and divinely-inspired Scripture, here we have Jesus again saying, "You search the Scriptures, you find Me. You find Me through the Scriptures." Shows the divine inspiration that Jesus held in the Old Testament text. He himself said it was true.

Um, John 5, uh, 46-47. Is that the one you just put up? No, okay. "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me." Well, who's Moses? Well, he wrote the first five books of the Old Testament. Isn't that interesting? Jesus said, "If you believed the Bible, you'd know I'm God's Son. We're, We're equal here. As far as the revelation of God, I've come to reveal God to you but the Scriptures reveal God to you."

"If you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me." Now notice this, verse 47, "But if you do not believe his writings," the Scripture, "how will you believe My words?" Wow. These people say, "Well, if Jesus was just here and He would speak to me, then I'd know it's right." Jesus said, "No, you wouldn't. If you won't believe the book I've given you, you won't believe if I'm standing in front of you speaking to you." What a great and high place the early apostles and Jesus ourselves gives to the written word of God.

So here when we come to our text in 1 Timothy 6:3, here the Apostle Paul states that his writing was sound doctrine. How does he word it there in verse 3? "If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with," here it is, "sound words." Well, what words is he talking about? He's talking about the words he's written and the words he's taught to Timothy and through Timothy to the whole church and churches. He says, "These things are true. They're divinely-inspired." And then he says, so much so, he says sound words, next phrase, verse 3, "those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness."

So Paul states that his writing was sound, it was Christ's doctrine as well, it has divine authority. Sound doctrine, source and ground is one person Jesus Christ. There's one fountain that all truth flows out of and that's Jesus Christ and he has ordained in his wisdom that he would use regular men to write the balance of biblical truth, complete the 66 books of the Bible, and therefore the Bible phrase would be so our faith, what we believe is built on the foundation of the prophets and the apostles. They wrote it down for us. As Jude said, it's the faith once for all delivered to the saints. We can trust the word of God. Brothers and sisters, this church will never ever ever ever hold to any other conviction other than the absolute authority and full infallibility of the word of God, the Scriptures. That's where we're gonna be.