

Pains and Gains of Doctrine

Adapted from Erickson & Heflin, *Old Wine in New Wineskins*, 20-57

In your small group discuss the factor in your section below most relevant in your own ministry experience. Appoint one to share with the class specific examples how this issue makes preaching doctrine difficult (stories, Scripture, etc.).

I. Pains of Doctrine

Why is it so Tough to Teach and Preach Doctrine Today?

A. General Cultural Factors

1. Evolution
2. Relativism
3. Visually-Oriented Generation
4. Distrust of Old Ideas
5. Specialization
6. Theological Terms Replaced with New Terms

B. Religious Factors

1. Competition from World Religions
2. Pseudo-Religions
3. Belief that All Religions are the Same
4. Pluralism

C. Christian Factors

1. Pragmatism
2. Stress on Unity (Feeling Doctrine is Divisive)
3. Move Towards Generic Christianity
4. Feeling-Oriented Christian Faith
5. Indifference to Theological Differences
6. Distrust of Any Kind of Learning
7. "Prophetic Approach" to Determining Truth
8. Tradition
9. Proof-Texting
10. "Sloganism" (confidence in a word or phrase as a test of orthodoxy)
11. Self-Centred Christianity
12. Overemphasis on Psychology & Mental Health
13. The Bible Doesn't Always Explicitly State Doctrine

- D. Clergy Factors
 - 1. Difficulty Teaching What People Aren't Clamoring For
 - 2. Conducting Ministry Without a Theological Basis
 - 3. Difficulty Abstracting Doctrine from the Bible

II. **Gains of Doctrine**

Why is it so Beneficial to Teach and Preach Doctrine Today?

- A. Christianity is Doctrinal by Definition
 - 1. Prominence in the Bible (Gen. 1:1; Gal. 1:8-9)
 - 2. Prominence in Church History
 - 3. Essential to One's Relationship with God
 - 4. Foundation of Behaviour (Christian Living)
 - 5. Effects Emotions
 - 6. Being is More Important Than Doing
- B. Doctrinal Beliefs Influence the Christian's Relation to Society
 - 1. Many Issues in Society are Doctrinal in Nature
 - 2. Doctrine is the Basis of Applying Scripture to Today
 - 3. Christians are Being Exposed to Many Viewpoints
 - 4. Liberals are Redefining Theological Terms
 - 5. Christians Grasp Doctrinal Meanings Only Superficially
 - 6. Pluralism and Relativism Affect the Church
- C. Doctrine Has Practical Effects
 - 1. Doctrine Influences the Nature of Our Ministry
 - 2. "Trendy" Ministries are Short-Lived

Getting Doctrine from Didactic Passages

Adapted from Erickson & Heflin, *Old Wine in New Wineskins*, 97-114

I. What are didactic doctrinal passages?

These texts are not stories (narratives), such as:

- Statements from God—“Thus says the Lord...”
- Writer’s personal testimony—Ecclesiastes
- Sermons
- Letters
- Christ’s formal teachings
- Editorial comments
- Prophecies
- Psalms
- Proverbs

II. Why is it hard to teach from didactic doctrinal passages?

These texts pose some problems as they...

- A. Deal with a specific problem that likely isn’t our problem (e.g., Colossian heresy).
- B. Address a cultural setting (e.g., head-coverings at Corinth).
- C. Precede progress in revelation (e.g., “Do not take your Holy Spirit away...”).
- D. Are viewed by us who bring our historical setting into exegesis (e.g., post-Luther).
- E. May not be fully doctrinal themselves (e.g., historical, ethical).
- F. Use language that is not always literal (e.g., “God-breathed”)

III. How can I preach doctrinal sermons?

Erickson’s method is very similar to ours (pp. 27-28)...

- A. CPT: Central Proposition of the Text (Exegetical Idea): Determine the meaning and application of the original teaching in that culture and to that audience. How can you do this (cf. p. 27, steps 1-3)? Decide if you want to preach just the doctrinal portion or the whole text (e.g., Phil. 2:1-30 or just the doctrinal portion, 2:5-11).
- B. Systematic Theology: Assess the place of this particular teaching in the whole of the doctrine. (I have assumed that theology from other texts will be used to determine the CPT so it will not contradict other texts.)
- C. CUP: Central Universal Principle: Isolate the underlying permanent or eternal basis of the CPT. (This is an assumed idea fitting between the EO and the HO which I never required. Maybe this is also similar to the Purpose Bridge, p. 27, step 4.)
- D. CPS: Central Proposition of the Sermon (Homiletical Idea): Place the passage in the present time and context by saying what the biblical writer would say to our audience if he were here (cf. p. 27, step 5).

IV. One Doctrinal Sermon I Preached...

Romans 1:4**Structural Outline of 1:1-4**

Paul,		1
a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for [the purpose of proclaiming] the gospel of God— the gospel he promised beforehand		2
through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son,		3
who was a descendant of David, as to his human nature		
4d and who was declared to be the Son of God		4
4a through the Spirit		
4b of holiness		
4c with power		
4e by his resurrection		
4f from the dead		
4g Jesus Christ		
4h our Lord.		

For Verse 4 Fill in These Four Steps (Using the Structural Context)

- A. CPT: Central Proposition of the Text (Exegetical Idea):
- B. Systematic Theology (may be already included in the CPT above):
- C. CUP: Central Universal Principle:
- D. CPS: Central Proposition of the Sermon (Homiletical Idea):

CPT (and Exegetical Outline)

Prologue: In this introduction to the book of Romans Paul has already noted in verse 1 his person: that he was commissioned by God to preach the gospel. In verses 2-4 he notes two aspects about his message, the gospel: (1) it was prophesied in the Old Testament, and (2), it concerned Jesus Christ. But what does the gospel say about Christ? Here in verses 3-4 the different language seems to indicate that Paul is quoting a confessional statement. After noting in verse 3 that the gospel includes the human side of Christ, in verse 4 he notes a second characteristic of the gospel.

Exegetical Idea (CPT): The content of the gospel *which Paul shared included* Christ's deity proved in his powerful resurrection caused by the Holy Spirit.

- I. (4a-d) The content of the gospel which Paul shared included the fact that the deity of Jesus Christ was shown by the *powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit*.
 - A. (4a) The agent of the powerful ministry was the Spirit.
 - B. (4b) The nature of the Spirit was holy.
 - C. (4c) The nature of the Spirit was powerful.
 - D. (4d) The result of the Spirit's ministry was the revelation of Christ's deity.

- II. (4e-h) The content of the gospel which Paul shared included the fact that the deity of Jesus Christ was shown by the *Spirit's power in raising Jesus from the dead*.
 - A. (4e) The means by which the Spirit declared Christ's deity was through raising Christ.
 - B. (4f) The sphere from which Christ was raised was the realm of the dead.
 - C. (4g) The identity of the one raised was Jesus.
 - D. (4h) The authority of Jesus is ultimate as He is sovereign over all.

Systematic Theology

The focus of Romans 1:4 is the resurrection, a doctrine central to the NT. So this is not the first or the last word on Christ's resurrection. However, it does appear that Paul is emphasizing the *power* of the resurrection here to show Christ's deity. As this point is rarely preached and is exegetically sound, I chose to also emphasize it in my sermon.

Central Universal Principle (CUP)

CUP: The content of the gospel *every Christian should share includes* Christ's deity proved in his powerful resurrection caused by the Holy Spirit.

CPS & Homiletical Exposition (cyclical inductive form)**Title: “Because He Lives”**Introduction

1. Faruk: What do I say to this non-Christian who sees no uniqueness to Christianity?
2. Maybe you can relate...
3. We need the gospel, but what’s the gospel? (bad examples)
4. Subject: How do you know what to say when you want to share the gospel?
5. Romans 1:1-7

I. Tell them that God’s power was on Jesus through the Spirit (4a).

- A. We live in a power hungry age (PowerBook, power tie, power breakfast, power sermon, Power Supply, Hindu idols drinking milk, holy laughter, etc.)
- B. But what about *holy* power like that of the Spirit?
 1. The phrase “Spirit of holiness” is used only here in Paul’s writings. It emphasizes the pure nature of the Spirit’s work.
 2. Here is power to do good (miracles of healing/changing nature, greed obliterated in Zacchaeus vs. Turf Club, present Jesus as narrative, etc.).
- C. Paul noted that the Spirit’s holy power proved his deity (4a).
 1. “Son of God” indicates deity (cf. John 10:25-33).
 2. Who does the “declaring” here? The Holy Spirit!

(So what should you say when sharing the gospel? First, tell them that God’s power was on Jesus through the Spirit. Second, tell them that the greatest show of power occurred with Jesus...)

II. Tell them that Jesus proved to be God by defeating death itself (4b)!

Power may be one of our greatest aims, but...

- A. No human has defeated the power of death (death rate, Alisa Bonaparte, medical advances, etc. but no one can give eternal life—ask your doctor for it and see what he says!)
- B. Christ proved his deity in the resurrection (4b; broke up funerals, de Talleyrand-Périgord).
- C. The apostles proclaimed the resurrection (cf. refs. in Acts and 1 Corinthians 15:1ff.).
- D. No wonder so many see Jesus as “just another religious teacher.” We need to get back to proclaiming the resurrection! (He can change lives because he’s alive.)

Conclusion

1. MI: How should we share the gospel? Tell how Christ must be God because He’s alive and powerful! [Restated: Share the gospel’s power to show Jesus as God in the resurrection.]
 - a. Recognize that people today are obsessed with power.
 - b. Share Christ’s resurrection: his power over our greatest foe—death.
 - c. Share your testimony: the power of your changed life.
2. What would the Apostle Paul say to Faruk? (Power in the resurrection and in his own life.)