

A couple of weeks ago we began a series on Church Doctrine. Now, that term bears a little explanation, I think. The idea of Church Doctrine might seem to imply that there might be other doctrines, if you will, that are acceptable. That is how the world thinks, but that is not the case. The passage we started with is...

Eph 4:4-6

1

4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;
5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

We started our discussion by looking at the difference between judgment and doctrine. Doctrine is what God has established, is establishing here in Eph., and is not open for discussion. For example...

Acts 20:7

2

7 On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread,

That is doctrine. We see through the dynamic of approved example that Christians in the first century Church gathered together on the first day of the week to take the Lord's Supper. That is not open for discussion, at least not by anyone who is truly seeking to worship God in accordance with His Word. But when, on the first day of the week, is open to judgment. At the beginning of services, at the end, God doesn't address that, so it is left up to man's judgment. That is the point we were making just a moment ago, God has established His Doctrine, and it is that Doctrine that governs not only His Church, but every other religious organization that there might be as well, whether they accept it or not. This is a vastly important point. God's Word is His Doctrine, and just because someone or some group decides to do something different has virtually no effect whatsoever on that fact. God's Word is what will judge all. Therein is the real impact of the passage from Eph. There is but one God, which we looked at last week, and that one God has established One Doctrine that is to rule all. One Doctrine that all will be judged by, regardless of how they might try to justify or excuse the changes that man makes to God's Word. God's Word is to be respected and revered. The following is an excerpt from an article from the Edmond J Safra Synagogue website...

3

The Shulchan Aruch (141:1) rules that both the one who reads the Torah and the one called to the Torah must stand during the reading. It is forbidden for them to sit or even lean upon a wall or piece of furniture during the reading. The reason is that just as the Torah was given to Am Yisrael at Sinai amidst awe and trepidation, so must our Torah reading reflect the experience of awe. One must therefore ensure to stand fully erect as an expression of awe and reverence. The Mishna Berura adds that this applies even when one does not lean all his weight on the wall or piece of furniture. Even leaning casually, without supporting oneself entirely on the given object, is improper while reading the Torah or receiving an Aliyah

Jewish tradition demanded that the proper respect for God's Word must be shown, to the extent that the reader was not even supposed to lean on the table in front of him. To be honest, while maybe the specifics in the traditions are not something necessarily to be observed, the principals involved in those traditions are most definitely things that need to be thought about in how we approach our reading, studying, and listening to God's Word. Are we showing the proper respect for it in our attitude towards it?

Last week we looked at the Doctrine that there is...

4

ONE GOD

That One God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is the Creator and Savior of all men. We discussed some different views of that trinity. We ruled out the thought of **Tritheism** **5** immediately. This is the idea that there are in fact three Gods who all happen to agree, at least for the

time being, to work towards the same goal and purpose. That denies the passage from Eph. and cannot be accepted. Is God three distinct personalities, as the **Trinitarians** 6 believe, that all work towards the same purpose, with one intent or is God one entity, as the **Modalist** 7 believe, and He manifests Himself in various ways;

- 8 A) As the all-wise divinity, the source of all Wisdom, Love, Grace, and Mercy
- B) As man, in the form of Jesus, taking the form of humanity, His creation
- C) As the all-powerful, through His Spirit, showing His power and love in the things He has done for man.

Personally, I don't see a lot of difference in the two. In the final analysis, regardless of how you choose to get there, there is only One God.

Eph 4:4-6

9

4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;
5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 **one God** and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

This week, as we continue our discussion on Doctrine we are going to look at the Doctrine that there is only... 10

One Lord / One Spirit

Interestingly, the idea of One Spirit is not nearly as controversial as the ideas of One Lord or One God. Now for the purposes of these discussions, I am viewing the idea of One Lord as being Jesus the Christ, our Lord and Savior, which is how Peter describes in the last thought in his 2nd epistle that he closes with in...

2 Peter 3:17-18

11

17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

So as we begin to discuss the idea of the One Spirit, I think first we need to recognize that the term is a generic term that is defined by the context of how it is being used. The word comes from the Greek...

Pneuma (pneu=ma, NT:4151)

12

Primarily denotes "the wind" (akin to pneo, "to breathe, blow"); also "breath"; then, especially "the spirit," which, like the wind, is invisible, immaterial and powerful.

This is the word used in...

Acts 18:24-25

13

24 Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. 25 This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John;

The spirit under discussion here is not the Holy Spirit but is rather the spirit of Apollos, his passion, his zeal. Then in...

Acts 2:4

14

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

Again, this is the Greek "Pneuma" to describe the Holy Spirit. The context of the discussion being what defines the "Spirit" in the context. This is seen in...

Acts 19:21 15

21 Now after these things were finished, Paul purposed in the Spirit to go to Jerusalem

The context of the discussion here is that Paul was being led by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem. That is the Holy Spirit. This same thing is said in...

Acts 21:4 16

4 After looking up the disciples, we stayed there seven days; and they kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem.

Here the brethren were being inspired by the Spirit to tell Paul not to go. The context clearly indicates that this is the Holy Spirit. This is the same Spirit that Christ promised that they would receive...

Acts 1:4-5 17

4 Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me; **5** for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

This Holy Spirit was given to the Apostles for a couple of purposes, one being...

John 16:12-13 18

12 "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. **13** "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.

The Spirit was to bring knowledge, knowledge of the truth, the Word of God. Another purpose that the Spirit had was to bring them...

Acts 1:7-8 19

7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; **8** but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

The Spirit would also be bringing to them power, power to perform signs and wonders for the purpose of confirming that what they were teaching, remember the all knowledge that the Spirit gave them, was indeed the truth of God. Many times people ask the question of what the work of the Spirit is. These two passages tell us. The Spirit is the avenue that God uses to reveal knowledge, wisdom, and understanding of His will. The Spirit is also the avenue by which God uses His power to do His will. We receive a little more insight to the workings of the Trinity when John describes for us another part of what the Spirit does. In John 6:52-58, John relates the discussion that the Lord had when people began to question how that anyone could eat of His flesh and drink of His blood.

John 6:53-54 20

53 So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. **54** He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

This confused the disciples who inquired of Jesus how they were to eat His flesh and drink His blood. His answer is found in...

John 6:63 21

63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

This passage is interesting in that it not only answers the disciples questions, which we will get to in minute, but it also illustrates for us the discussion we had on the use of the Greek "Pneuma." The first use of Spirit obviously is referring to the Holy Spirit, God, from whom all life flows. The second use seems to imply not so much the Holy Spirit but rather the results of man heeding the words that the Spirit reveals. When man believes in and faithfully follows those words he receives a spiritual life both in this world and in the reward to come.

So the work of the Spirit is to bring knowledge, power, and life. Now, I am absolutely certain that there are many other things that the Spirit does, and I don't want to seem to be limiting Him in any way. I don't think God has any limits, other than those He imposes on Himself.

The discussion of the One Lord is as closely intertwined with the discussion of the One Spirit as they both are with the discussion of the One God. Regardless of whether we are Trinitarian or modalist, God is one. In any discussion like this there is danger of making too great a separation between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Too great a separation and it becomes easy to find ourselves believing tritheism, that of three different Gods. That isn't doctrine, doctrine is that there is but ONE GOD. So we aren't separating the God-Head as much as we are looking at how God deals with man and accomplishes His purpose, goal, and will among and for man. Isn't that what we saw in the work of the Spirit? God has revealed His love, grace, mercy, and will for man through the Spirit. He has given man all knowledge, wisdom, and understanding in His Word, revealed through the Spirit. He gave the power of the Spirit in order to confirm that the knowledge that was being taught was, in fact, from Him.

So as the Spirit has revealed and confirmed, Jesus is the revelation of God incarnate, in the flesh.

John 10:29-30

22

29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. **30** I and the Father are one."

Jesus shows that the purpose of God is the single greatest thing that there is and that all who faithfully believe and obey are part of that purpose through Christ and nothing can take them forcibly. Then He states categorically, that He is God...

23

"30 I and the Father are one."

John 12:44-45

24

44 And Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me. **45** He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me.

Jesus was God. We saw that in the passage we looked at last week in John 1:1-3. God came to Earth in the form of Jesus to accomplish His purpose and to show to man His Love.

1 John 4:14

25

14 We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

It was God's purpose that He reveal Himself to man as man.

Heb 5:8-9

26

8 Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. **9** And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation,

The perfection, the completion, of Jesus as the Christ, was, according to the purpose of God, accomplished in the life and death that He went through as man. I think that perfection is illustrated in the fact that He lived as a man and did so without sin.

Heb 4:14-15

27

14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. **15** For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

In the spite of living as fleshly man, and remember, all men sin, Jesus lived His life and never sinned. This is vital in the purpose of God to reconcile man to Himself...

2 Cor 5:20-21

28

20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. **21** He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Jesus, having gone through all temptation, just as every man who has ever lived does, without sin, became the perfect sacrifice for man. He had no penalty to pay for His own sin, He had none, therefore, He could offer Himself willingly, to pay the penalty for every other man's.

Heb 2:14-18

29

14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, **15** and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. **16** For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. **17** Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. **18** For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

The Hebrew writer here sums up what we have been talking about. Because man is flesh and blood, God also became flesh and blood, John 1:14, that through His willing sacrifice, as man, He could pay the price, be the propitiation, for all men's sin.

The purpose of God was that only God could pay the price that would bring man back into a covenant relationship with Him. Jesus, as God incarnate, God in the flesh, could ever be the only sacrifice that could accomplish the purpose of God.

This really isn't as confusing as it might sound or as many in the world choose to make it. Jesus is God. He is not just a man that God elevated to do His purpose. He wasn't just another one of the prophets, though a prophet He was. Jesus was God, sent from love and mercy to pave the way for man to come to his creator in humble and faithful obedience.

John 14:5-6

30

5 Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?" **6** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

Therein is the doctrine of the One God, the One Son, and the One Spirit, all working together as one, all being one, so that you and I can have the opportunity to be saved from our sins. God purposed the plan, Jesus the Christ implemented it, and the Holy Spirit revealed it. Eph. 4 tells us there is but One.

That is the doctrine of Eph. 4. There is one God, One Lord, and One Spirit. This cannot be argued, at least not successfully, it is the Doctrine of God that governs His Church.

Philip tells the Eunuch that he must believe that Jesus is the Son of God, the result of the purpose of God. God pleads for man to come to Him for rest in faithful obedience to His Word which the Spirit has revealed.