

Calvary's Cavalry

THE BATTLE FOR THEOLOGY NEVER ENDS

Southern Baptists, for years, have touted the Conservative Resurgence as the Battle for the Bible. The idea behind the “fight”, was that robust Bibliology is always a fight worth having.

Sadly, too many Christians who stand at our current time in history, have neglected their place at the front lines of the fight for Scripture and theology in general. Be it through: ignorance, apathy, or general inability; too many Christians, in too many churches do not have the necessary knowledge to defend or even understand the basic tenets of their professed faith.

I do not mean to suggest that the average pew sitter (if the majority of our churches even still have pews) should be able to parse Hebrew or even delineate between infra and supralapsarianism; but I will never forget the sense of pity I had when I received a questionnaire from a church asking my opinions on the Calvinism vs. Armenianism debate. Yes, it was spelled that way, and if you do not see the problem, this journal is for you. As disciples of the King, we must aspire to be better; whatever better may be.

With that, we have to do some work. Christianity is a thinking religion (Romans 12:1–2), and demands that we reorient our lives around the work that God is doing in and through our daily lives (Galatians 5:22–23). We must be prepared to be: challenged, provoked, and learned when it comes to our theological positions.

That is why we think these resources are so important. We do not think that anything we write in this publication each week is the final or definitive word on any of these subjects. They are however, a means by which the deep truths of Scripture can become the plain truths of Scripture. Where the deeply theological and “up there” ideas and thoughts can become the day to day “how I live my life thoughts”. This is our contribution to a battle that is taken up anew in every generation; and answer to the question: “Did God really say?”; because we believe the answer is yes. He did say, and He did teach, and He has revealed Himself, and He has not forsaken us, and He has provided for us to be the workers of His Kingdom that bring Him glory and honor and praise.

The charge for every Christian is to be prepared and engaged in the building up of our faith (Colossians 2:6–7), so that we may stand firm against this world and her general (Ephesians 6:10–17). And that preparation starts with knowing the doctrines of the faith as God has revealed them (Psalm 1:1–3), and knowing how they relate to my life so that I may live them out in a faithful, God-honoring manner (Luke 6:46). In order to do that, we must know.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Church History Spotlight2
- Practical Theology 101.....4
- Darrell's Recovery Room.....5
- Careful Covenants.....6
- Kat's Korner7
- Walking through the Word.....8
- February's Final Words 10

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

- Michael Labate
- Lou Savalla
- Darrell Birmingham
- Kameron Labate

OUR HOPE

For All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work



AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CHURCH FATHERS

As Protestants, we typically have a difficult time with the next designation; Early Church Fathers. Because so many church goers react so strongly to the idea of a church father, we hate the idea of them historically; we shouldn't. As Christians, Biblically grounded and faithful to the Gospel as shown in Scripture, we should rejoice whenever we encounter faithful men in history who have done the same.

And that is something we should be better connected to, the history of salvation by grace, through faith; handed down through the generations by faithful believers even unto the present day. God has always had a remnant (Romans 11:4), and that is vividly seen in the history of the Christian church.

The names preserved to us are familiar to anyone who has looked at church history; names such as: Polycarp, Justin, Origen, and Athanasius. And while they all deserve a profile at a later date, we cannot go through all of them in this time. Instead, we will examine some of the overarching theology that is preserved for us; where-in we can celebrate God's preserving work in history.

God has always had a remnant (Romans 11:4), and that is vividly seen in the history of the Christian church.

When looking at history we have to wary of 2 things that are of particular danger. The first is the idea that everyone who does not believe exactly (note that word) as I do, on every (note that one too) issue is automatically a heretic. We have the benefit of looking back through history and learning from the success and failures of the past; that is not the case for those living within them. The second idea is that of 100% certainty. When we read a modern history or science book, we demand excellence and accuracy; and we should. We want to know what we know about whatever it is beyond a shadow of a doubt. That is not the case when it comes to ancient history. We have thousands upon thousands of manuscripts of the New Testament because God ensure their preservation. God is more concerned with His Word than with our church history. As we dive into the ancient past, we have to be careful not to lionize or condemn too quickly, and to be content with some fuzziness of understanding about the men we study and the beliefs they espoused.

With that said, we can be certain of God; and God has preserved His Word and His work through the ages.

Let's start with Polycarp (69–155) and his letter to the Philippians....

Let us therefore without ceasing hold fast by our hope and by the earnest of our righteousness, which is Jesus Christ who took up our sins in His own body upon the tree, who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, but for our sakes He endured all things, that we might live in Him.

One of Polycarp's pen-pals, Ignatius of Antioch (35–108)

Be thou more diligent than thou art. Mark the seasons. Await Him that is above every season, the Eternal, the Invisible, who became visible for our sake, the Impalpable, the Impassible, who suffered for our sake, who endured in all ways for our sake.

Let's continue our early church tour with Clement of Rome (d. 99) and is "claimed" as Pope Clement 1 (he isn't')

Let us look steadfastly to the blood of Christ, and see how precious in the sight of God is his blood, which having been poured out for our salvation, brought to the whole world the grace of repentance.

Listing similar quotes from each of the men listed above (and in the chart on the next page); as mentioned before, the difficulty is that most of these men have quotes that would seem to indicate a belief in a salvation aided by works, or sacrament.

Names to Look up for Study

- Papias
- Polycarp
- Irenaeus
- Clement of Rome
- Clement of Alexandria
- Cappadocian Fathers
- Origen
- Athanasius
- Justin Martyr
- Ignatius
- Polycrates

And while I would debate that premise, and hold these men to be more orthodox than not, we must grant that these faithful men did have to work through much of the theology we take for granted.

This is where we get to the point of this article. Ultimately as Christians, we must be able to celebrate our heritage; it is rich and it is God honoring. But it is not, the end all be all of our faith. Athanasius stood “contra mundum” (against the world) because there were more Arian (heretic) pastors and bishops than there were orthodox teachers and leaders. Does that make Athanasius perfect? No, no it doesn’t. What it does make him is an excellent example of who we are to be in Christ.

God has equipped His church (Ephesians 4:11–13); and He did not do this work so we would pat ourselves on the back. He did this work so that we would be about the business of making disciples (Matthew 28:19–20). That charge starts with us. Once we have wrapped our minds around the truth of God in Christ and the salvation He has brought, we are to be steadfast in our adherence and devotion to that Gospel (Ephesians 4:14–16). These men through good and bad theology and hermeneutics, demonstrated a firmness in grounding and a preservation of the truth.

In our podcast (available on our website and iTunes) (yes that was a shameless plug) on the doctrine of Scripture, we mentioned how the manuscripts that have been preserved guarantee we can know what was originally written in the New Testament. Our manuscript evidence is like having a 1000 piece puzzle, for which we have 1200 pieces. The same is true of church history. We have amazing examples of faithfulness (Polycarp, Justin), and tremendous declarations of early orthodox theology (like those quoted on the previous page). We also have really bad hermeneutical arguments about Jesus age (Irenaeus) and the birth of the damaging allegorical interpretation (Origen); and the long-tenured history of monasticism (which was both a blessing and a curse upon the church and society).

Jesus warns us not to read the “tea leaves” and understand the world will be a tumultuous place (Matthew 24:4–8). The beauty of that understanding is that every: catastrophe, pain, struggle, etc. is not a cause for defeat but of joy. Those things are meant to remind us that Jesus is coming back (Acts 1:11), and that His reign will be eternal (Daniel 7:13–14). Church history, and the flawed men contained therein, remind us that God has not forsaken us. Rather He has preserved His truth in Scripture and it has been faithfully taught by believers down through the ages. It also reminds us to rejoice in God and not the men who hand things down to us, no matter how beloved they may be.

I encourage you to dig a little and read the writings of the men listed in the chart above; they loved the God who saved them. They worshipped and served the Savior who died for them. They persevered in the Spirit who empowered them. Just as we do today, faithful Christians have so done down through the ages.

Starting next month we will celebrate their work by looking at the Councils and Creeds they produced that helped to streamline the teaching of the universal Church.

Bibliology Basics

- 66 Books
- 40+ Authors
- 1500+ years of writing
- 3 languages & continents
- Inspired by God
- Inerrant in composition
- Infallible in teaching
- Sufficient in practice
- Solitary rule of faith

PRACTICAL THEOLOGY 101—SUFFICIENCY

Now that Scripture has been defined, we can dive into the process of explaining what Scripture is. We have a litany of historic creeds that you can research to get a one-time look; I have a book containing over 40 just Baptist (not to mention other orthodox denominations) confessions. And yes, other denominations have orthodox, Christians confessions of faith. When it comes to Scripture, I think the simplest, and most all-encompassing, summation in describing the orthodox/faithful understanding is to say the Bible is: inspired, inerrant, infallible, and sufficient. This month we will take a short look at the idea of inspired.

Inspired means that while written by the hands of men, (peak the chart on the left there for some Bible stats on composition) the power behind the words of Scripture is the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20–21). While it has some merit, we do not want to hold to the dictation model, for the entirety of Scripture. Having a text dictated by God, while most likely used for the Pentateuch and certain direct prophecies; is not the primary method of God's revealing work. For the majority of Scripture we hold to the Dynamic model; as we believe it best explains what is theologically known as the Phenomenon of Scripture.

.....these men chose the: words, wording, and style of the writing of their work; but were: guided, directed, and aided by God throughout the process.

The Dynamic Model understands Scripture to utilize the human authors, under the guidance and steering of God through the Holy Spirit. In simpler terms, these men chose the: words, wording, and style of the writing of their work; but were: guided, directed, and aided by God throughout the process. That means God, through the work of the Spirit (John 14:25–26), has ensured that the message He intended to proclaim was in fact proclaimed by the Biblical authors. But because there are human authors behind the writing we can discern their: style, personality, thought processes, etc. That is why Paul sounds like Paul, and not like Peter, or James; and yet all of these men consistently explain the same theological message and system. That is why the Psalms can be poetic in nature, while the historical narratives of the Old Testament can be separated by: genre, place, and 1,000 years; and yet still proclaim the same one-story of Scripture.

While this may seem counter-intuitive for a book ultimately written by the action of God; this actually is a blessing from God, as it aids us in: understanding, interpreting, and applying the various styles and genres we find in the Bible. As mentioned above, I am not bound by the rules of history or biology when understanding the poetic wording of psalms and songs. I do not assume God has feathers (Psalm 36:7). I do not believe God the Father, bears any resemblance to Father Time in need of soothing eye drops (Daniel 7:9). I read those figurative words and I understand them, in light of the rest of Scripture, as communicating truths about God that are commensurate with His character and nature from a perspective that is not historical in nature.

This literary understanding is a tremendous blessing from God as it allows us to follow the unfolding revelation of the Old Testament and into the New from a human perspective. We are not removed from the understanding of who God is because of our finite weakness and sinful separation. Instead, God has condescended to us and shown Himself to His people, in words and phrases and ideas that make sense to us. His love is poured out through His work in those authors as they communicate the infinite truths of God and His work, to us lowly misunderstanding creatures.

That is why we rejoice at the inspiration of Scripture, it is a part of God's gracious and needed provision to us, His people (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

Next month we will look at the idea of inerrant.



RECOVERY ROOM WITH DARRELL

Welcome back; last month we talked about how our problem is not what we do, but why we do it. It is the way we think and the condition of our hearts.

This month I would like to talk about why addiction is sin.

Addiction can be anything that controls us, or anything we put before God. That could be drugs, alcohol, food, etc., anything.

The Bible tells us in Exodus 20:3: You should not have any other Gods before Me. When we allow other worldly things to control us, we are allowing these things to replace the spot in our hearts that is there only for God. Any and all the other things we put before God do not satisfy us. God is the only One who will satisfy our hearts and complete us.

Proverbs 3:5–6 says: trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths,.

Turn your life to God, you have nothing of value to lose, but everything to gain.

Addiction = Dependence = Craving = Need = Habit = Weakness = Slavery

Salvation = Release = Life = Freedom = Joy = Completeness

1 John 1:8–10

If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

The Problem

Psalm 51:1–4

Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. 4 Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge.

The Cure

2 Corinthians 5:20–21

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.

The Promise

John 10:27–30

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. 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."

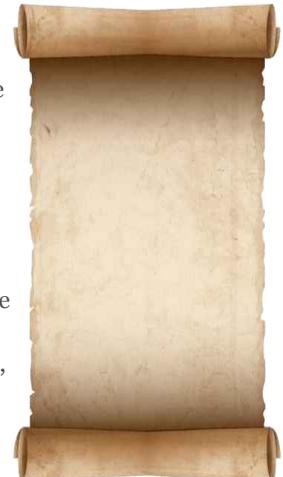
CAREFUL COVENANTS

OLD TESTAMENT COVENANTS

- The Covenant with Creation
- Noahic Covenant
- Abrahamic Covenant
- Mosaic Covenant
- Davidic Covenant
- New Covenant

The first article discussed what a covenant was; it was learned that a covenant is an agreement between parties, and a legally binding contract (e.g. marriage). The Hebrew word for covenant בְּרִית (*b'rit*) is first seen in the Hebrew Scriptures in Genesis 6:18 and refers to the covenant that God made with Noah. However, there is an earlier covenant that is commonly known as the Adamic Covenant.

The Adamic Covenant has also been referred to as “The Covenant with Creation,” and “The Covenant of Works.” Before discussing the Covenant with Creation, it is essential to recognize that amongst Biblical scholarship, that not all agree that a covenant is entailed in the creation narrative found in (Genesis 1-3).



Williamson, the author of “Sealed with an Oath,” for example, argues that “a divine-human covenant is introduced for the first time in the flood narrative in Genesis 6:18.” His premise is that before the Noahic Covenant, Scripture does not in any way imply that a covenant has been established. However, as will be shown, the absence of the Hebrew word בְּרִית in the creation narrative (Genesis 1-3) does not exclude the possibility of a covenant before Genesis 6:18. To demonstrate this, the reader needs to go no further than that of the Davidic covenant found in 2 Sam 7. This section of Scripture never references the word “covenant” yet all Biblical scholarship concedes that it is indeed a covenant. Therefore, Gentry correctly states that “The absence of the word for “covenant” (b'rit) in Genesis 1–3, then, is no argument at all against the notion that a divine-human covenant is established at creation, if exegesis can demonstrate that the idea is there.” Finally, those who believe that covenant is only necessary after the fall, fail to recognize that the marriage covenant preexists the fall.

Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, Second Edition (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 211.

Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, Second Edition (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 212.

Historical Catechism for Children

Not some bizarre, unheard of concept; a catechism is simply a way to systematically instruct through questions and answers. This method of teaching has been used for centuries and is sadly a lost art in the world today.

Question 1: Who made you?

Answer: God

Question 2: What else did God make?

Answer: God made all things

Question 3: Why did God make you and all things?

Answer: For His own glory

Question 4: How can you glorify God?

Answer: By loving Him and doing what He commands

Question 5: Why are you to glorify God?

Answer: Because He made me and takes care of me

Question 6: Is there more than one God?

Answer: No. There is only one true God

Question 7: In how many persons does this one God exist?

Answer: In three persons

Question 8: Name these three persons.

Answer: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

Question 9: What is God?

Answer: God is a Spirit and does not have a body

Question 10: Where is God?

Answer: God is everywhere

KAT'S KORNER

What exactly does it look like in everyday life to be a Biblical woman?

When searching the scriptures for text on womanhood one of the most common passages used is Proverbs 31:10-31, the Virtuous Woman. Looking at the first half of these verses we being to see not just what she does, but most importantly, her heart for doing these things.

- 10. An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels.*
- 11. The heart of her husband trusts in her, And he will have no lack of gain.*
- 12. She does him good and not evil All the days of her life.*

In the first three verses we are seeing that she is trustworthy of her husband and she thinks of his well-being. Why; out of love for her husband. You see marriage is an earthly representation of Christ and the Church. Christ provides salvation for the church out of his love for the church; the church, out of love for her savior, loves and is obedient and wants to please Christ. Wives, our husbands may not have saved us from some terrible fate, but they do provide for us.

They do not provide for us just physical needs of: house, food, water, and electric; but also someone to confide in, someone to lean on, and work with in life. The things we say about our husbands to other people reflect our hearts toward our husband. In doing these things, we are honoring God.

For women who are not yet married or who are called to singleness, when we leave our fathers and mother's home, we still have a calling to God. The way we act, talk, live, and work all reflect our love for our savior and what he has done for us through the cross.

- 13 She looks for wool and flax And works with her hands in delight.*
- 14 She is like merchant ships; She brings her food from afar.*
- 15 She rises also while it is still night And gives food to her household And portions to her maidens.*
- 16 She considers a field and buys it; From her earnings she plants a vineyard.*

In the next four verses we see the virtuous woman works with delight, provides for her household, and is wise in her spending. God created us to work and when we are working for his glory we are delighted in our work. All women are called to work, but our joy is in doing our work as an act of worship of God. Through that worshipful attitude, we find delight. Whether we are traveling to the grocery store or out to our garden, whether we order clothes on-line, or make them from scratch; we are providing for our families and loved ones. Everyone who walks through our door, either at home or office; when we share what God has given us, we are providing for our household. It may simply be our time, or listening, or a meal, or a place to sleep for a foster child.

That also means she prepares. She is wise in spending her money so that she has means to provide and help her family and friends. The virtuous woman invests in things that last and that provide a return for her household. The field provides a place to grow food for selling and eating, furniture made of solid wood that lasts for generations saves money in the future as well as provides for the next generation. She takes care of what she has.

- 17 She girds herself with strength And makes her arms strong.*
- 18 She senses that her gain is good; Her lamp does not go out at night.*
- 19 She stretches out her hands to the distaff, And her hands grasp the spindle.*
- 20 She extends her hand to the poor, And she stretches out her hands to the needy.*

These four verses show how she cares for herself and others. She exercises in order to stay strong for her tasks that she must complete day to day. She also cares for others. She sees the poor and needy and helps them. It may be through collecting blankets, volunteering at a soup kitchen, buying extra milk for a family she knows, or making an extra plate for an elderly couple down the street.

In these first verses of the Virtuous Woman from Proverbs, we are seeing that she is mindful of her calling as a woman who loves her Savior and her God. She shows her love by being a good steward of her time, money, and health that God has given her through her care and concern for the people God has put in her life.



WALKING THROUGH THE WORD BIBLE STUDY

COLOSSIANS 1:3–8

AUTHORSHIP & DATE

- Written by Paul
- Between 60–62 A.D.
- Prison Epistle

COLOSSAE

- In modern day Turkey
- Founded by Epaphras
- Encountering Gnosticism
- Not visited by Paul

We continue our walk through chapter 1 with verse 3. Paul gives thanks to God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This designation shows Paul has great theology (duh), because he recognizes who Jesus is; God in flesh. And that isn't something Paul, or the other disciples invented; everyone understood the claims Jesus was making (John 10:33), because Jesus had demonstrated His power throughout the earthly ministry (John 5). All of which is in keeping with Jesus' divine nature (John 1:1–3).

Secondly, Paul is praying for these people (who he does not know). Why is Paul doing this? Because they are fellow believers in Christ. This is how we are supposed to react to one another in Christian com-



munity (John 13:34–35). And yes, all of those of faith are a part of our new, God-wrought community (1 Peter 2:9–10). And we function in that community, by the power of the Holy Spirit, for the benefit of one another (1 Corinthians 12:4–7).

This becomes part of how we demonstrate Christian growth, we actually show the love of God, as poured out in us; to other believers in our lives (2 Peter 1:2–4).

Paul celebrates with this church because he has heard of their faith. We should celebrate this, for once, good news traveled. This is not unique to Colossae; the growing Christian community celebrated and proclaimed the good news of good works and faith of other congregations (Romans 1:8). The question we have to answer (and then internalize that answer) is why? If, what we say about ourselves is true, we are Spirit-born, regenerated believers. We are living in Christian community; seeking to mirror the faithful life of Christ (John 14:1–4). Then should we not, mirror the joy of fellow believers the same way God does. The angels in heaven rejoice over the repentance of one sinner (Luke 15:7 & 10); should we not rejoice over the faithful lives of other believers? Regardless of where they are from, or if we have ever met them before.

The great sadness for 21st century Americans, is we are often Christian, Americans; as opposed to American Christians. We have more in common with the pagan down the street, than with the believer on the other side of the globe. Our lives and world have been too determined and defined by our culture than by our God. Paul is demonstrating a fellowship with people he has merely heard of; and he rejoices in them and with them.

Paul can do this with confidence because verse 4b proves their faith. Just as James explained to the church (James 2:14–17); our Christian believing should manifest in Christian living. In Christ, we have been indwelt by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19–20), and God will accomplish His work (Philippians 1:6), and that work will manifest itself in our lives (Galatians 5:22–23). We should rejoice in this reality because it becomes a basis for joy in the midst of struggling (Romans 5:3–5); we can look back at the growth that God has bought and wrought and rejoice that our faith has been strengthened and confirmed.

This is the argument from Hebrews 11 and James 2. How do we know that Abel trusted God? He offered the appropriate sacrifice to God (Genesis 4:4). How do we know that Noah trusted God? He built the Ark (Genesis 6:22). How do we know that Abraham trusted God? He took Isaac up the mountain to offer him as sacrifice (Genesis 22:10). How do we know that Rahab trusted God? She sheltered and protected the spies (Joshua 2:12–13).

Faith in God moves people, because God moves in and with faithful people. This reality is a cause for joy and celebration because God will not and cannot forsake or forget the work He is accomplishing (Isaiah 14:24).

Now all of this is true, because of what God has promised to those who trust in Him. We've just mentioned God's success rate, He cannot fail; therefore any hope placed outside of God is a waste of time and energy (1 John 2:15–17). However, any hope placed in God and His promises, is eternally secure (Romans 5:1–2). And this is what is supposed to be the attitude of the Christian, we are not the same as the rest of the world, therefore we should not think as the rest of the world things (Romans 12:1–2).

That continues with the focus of our hope; hint, it isn't in this world. Our salvation is reserved in another place (1 Peter 1:3–5); because our residency in Christ has been relocated (Philippians 3:20).

Faith in God moves people, because God moves in and with faithful people.

Now this is all easily demonstrated from multiple Bible verses, because it is the singular, truthful hope of the Gospel. We only have one message (Galatians 1:6–9), and that one message is the only hope for salvation (John 14:6 & Acts 4:12). Therefore, we should rightly exult in the hope and promise of that one Gospel message (Romans 1:16–17), because it is the only means of averting the wrath of God (Romans 5:1).

This singular Gospel has spread throughout the world. Just as God has promised (Isaiah 55:6–11). And this accomplishment has been done according to the means God has said He will use (Matthew 28:19–20). God has promised and delivered, therefore we should (and do) expect that He will continue to do so. Therefore, this Gospel bears fruit and is increasing; just as Jesus promised (John 14:12), and just as the Word of God is capable of doing (Hebrews 4:12–13).

This worldwide work is the same as the local work, being done in and amongst the Colossians day in and day out. Why is this the case? Because it is the truth of God in action (1 Corinthians 1:20–25). This is why, as Christians, our first job is to be faithful stewards of the message God has given us (1 Timothy 6:20–21). There is much “empty philosophy” of the world; and a great deal of it has made its way into the church throughout the years.

Our call as Christians is to be centered upon Christ (Colossians 2:6–8); so that we will be steadfast in a world of tumult (Luke 6:47–49). Our hope is in Christ. As revealed in Scripture. As promised by God. In cure of our condition. So that we may be the people of God. Anything that loses that message or distorts it in any way; must be immediately and thoroughly routed out of the church and our Christian lives.

Battle lines have already been drawn (James 4:4), and it is up to us as individual Christians to do the hard work of disciplining and discipling ourselves to be faithful followers of Christ. That does not forsake the one-anothers (James 5:19–20), but rather focuses on them even more as the fruit-bearing of a Christian life. We must be diligent and hard at work in order to walk in Christ in this world (2 John 7–8). But the reward is a fellowship and communion with God and one-another that the world cannot provide or even comprehend.

OUTLINE

- Paul's greeting (1:1–2)
- Thanksgiving (1:3–8)
- Pray for the Church (1:9–14)
- Exaltation of Christ (1:15–23)
- Sacrifice for Christ (1:24–29)
- Unity with Believers (2:1–5)
- Grounding in Christ (2:6–15)
- Freedom in Christ (2:16–23)
- Sanctification by Focus (3:1–4)
- Sanctification in Living (3:5–11)
- Born-again Living (3:12–17)
- Relationships (3:18–4:1)
- Testimonial Living (4:2–6)
- Commendations & Greetings (4:7–18)

PRACTICAL THEOLOGY MINISTRIES

A ministry of Calvary Baptist Church in Rockford, IL; we are a teaching ministry with the goal of making Biblical Theology make sense to the everyday Christian.

We are Pastors and laymen, formally educated in theology and trained in the school of life. We have had success and failure, joy and heart-break, faith and doubt. And through all these things we have had a secure salvation in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

FINAL WORDS FOR FEBRUARY

We have a charge as Christians; we are to make disciples (Matthew 28:19–20); and that charge starts with us and our households first and foremost (Deuteronomy 6:4–9). We do not do this work merely because we have been commanded, or because we think it looks good to the outside world. In reality our discipleship looks ridiculous and stupid to a lost and dying world (1 Corinthians 1:18). Our faithful discipleship is one of the means that God uses to build us up (Romans 8:28–30); but God accomplishes this many times by slowly removing our worldly status, not adding to it (Philippians 3:7–11).

This is good news for the faithful Christian. It means that God has not forsaken you or your journey of sanctification (Hebrews 12:7–11). And it gives us the opportunity to rejoice in the work that God has done (John 19:30), and is doing (Acts 5:40–42) in and around us day by day.

Peter, (1 Peter 1:6–7), James (James 1:2–4), Paul (Romans 5:3–5), and Jesus (Luke 12:11–12), all warned of the difficulties that believers will face in this world. We cannot let the fear of man or loss of standing be the thing that keeps us from discipleship. Rather we must use our discipleship to grow our: knowledge, love, and faith; so that we are equipped (as best we can) to stand firm for the name of Christ we claim.

That is the lesson of our history and the promise of our Gospel.

Practical Theology Ministries
www.practicaltheologyministries.com

Email us
michael@practicaltheologyministries.com
lou@practicaltheologyministries.com

Connect with us
on Facebook @PracticalTheologyMinistries
on Twitter @P_T_MTweets

Worship with us
6286 Linden Rd.
Rockford IL 61109
Sundays @ 10:30 AM

FUN FOR THE BRAIN

N A E L Z K W D U L V S H A L
X E F X B M S Z G E E K Z B X
S Z H D O X L E I L I U P J A
E D P E K D N C C N P P M L B
G Y O E M E U I G A Q B D A Z
D M S K S I N S U H T U R Q S
U O F I A O A H E S T H E R Q
J N S R R C S H N D N O C E S
T O U H O O R L U S A Z V W F
X R C J J S H O M A Z K S A I
S E C B T F S F B O R E W W R
R T B D T C R Q E E J Z P T S
O U L E C N Q H R W D H E D T
H E F E H M C P S B H Q K A U
H D L E V I T I C U S H X O T

CHRONICLES
DEUTERONOMY
ESTHER
EXODUS
EZRA
GENESIS
JOSHUA
JUDGES
KINGS
LEVITICUS
NEHEMIAH
NUMBERS
RUTH
SAMUEL