

Against Error or for Truth? Contentiously Contending - 6

by Anton Bosch

The sermon emphasizes the importance of standing for truth rather than merely opposing error, advocating for a relationship with Christ as the foundation for discernment.

Scripture: John 8:32

Topics: "Biblical Truth", "Spiritual Freedom"

Description

Anton Bosch emphasizes the importance of standing for the Truth rather than solely focusing on standing against error. He highlights the danger of reactive theology and the need to base doctrine solely on the Word of God. Bosch urges preachers, teachers, and writers to instill truth in the lives of their audience rather than just speaking against what is wrong, emphasizing the power of knowing the Truth, Jesus Christ, to set people free from error and deception.

Transcript

Over the past few weeks we have looked at the motives, manner and methods we need to employ if we are going to stand against error. But maybe the question we should have begun with is whether standing against error is, in fact, a legitimate ministry and whether or not there is any sanction in the Bible for a ministry to be built around standing against error.

Many think that standing against error and standing for the Truth are synonymous. Sadly, they are not. In standing for the Truth, we will of necessity stand against error. But those who stand against error do not necessarily stand for the truth.

There are many who describe themselves in negatives: "We are not ... We do not... We do not believe..." They do not know the Truth other than in terms of what it is not. Some of these dear brothers cannot preach a single message or write a single word unless "inspired" by some error. So, if you are a preacher, teacher or writer, let me ask you this question: When preparing to write or to speak, do you think in terms of what you are going to speak against, or in terms of the truth you wish to instill in the lives of the hearers?

A careful examination of the message the apostles preached in the book of Acts will not reveal a single message designed to disprove any other religion or refute any error, but rather, every message was a very clear and positive declaration of Truth. "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to

teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:42). Jesus did not say that we will see the error and so be set free from it. He did say: "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

Those who stand against error often fall into an equal, but opposite error to the one they oppose. Their theology is reactive since they do not form their theology based on a study of the Scriptures but, rather, their doctrine is shaped by a reaction to what is wrong. Ephesians 4:14 speaks of "children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine". Have you ever noticed a tree or man "tossed to and fro" by the wind? The wind only blows in one direction, yet sometimes the person will fall, not in the direction that the wind is blowing, but they will fall into the wind. Why? Because they over-corrected.

In the same way winds of doctrine toss the immature "to and fro". While some are just "carried about with every wind of doctrine" others will overreact to it and fall in the opposite direction. This just like when the opposing team in tug-a-war suddenly stops pulling and the other team falls down. Thus, people open themselves to be manipulated by the Devil into an opposite but equal, and sometimes greater, error.

Did you know that almost none of the errors of Roman Church came about as a result of a lack of diligence or even commitment to the Truth, but that almost all of their many heresies can be traced back to an effort to stand against some error and to protect the church? Broadbent, in his excellent history of the church titled *The Pilgrim Church* says: "The means adopted to counter these attacks and to preserve unity of doctrine affected the church even more than the heresies themselves" (p.30). There are countless examples of churches and individuals holding to some error because they simply overreacted to a bad experience in their past.

Experiential Theology is wrong because it is based on someone's positive or negative experience and not on the Bible. The fact that someone was healed by standing on his head is not a reason to incorporate head-standing into ones doctrine. We must base our doctrine on the clear teaching of the Word of God. In the same way we cannot allow the many errors and abuses out there to shape our thinking or preaching even one little bit. Our values, doctrine and views must be based on the Word, and on the Word alone.

I am all for pointing out error. By simply preaching against various errors we may well equip people to see one specific error. But people will likely fall for the next error if it has not been defined for them. Sadly, many folk who know everything about heresies do not know the Truth. And they might even categorize pure doctrine as error since they do not know how to recognise the Truth when they come across it.

We must equip folk to know the Truth. If we know the Truth, we will recognise error in every disguise. I'm sure you have heard the story about people who are trained to detect counterfeit money by first being trained to recognise the real thing. Once they know the real they can easily detect the fake. (I did some research and this is true.)

Error is like the viruses that attack our computers. Every day 65 new viruses are unleashed. It is impossible to keep a complete list of the latest threats against your computer, let alone against your soul. A far better approach is for people to know the Truth and, thus, be able to recognise that which is not truth by comparing it to what is truth.

The plumbline (Amos 7:7,8) does not contain a copy of everything that can be wrong with a wall. It simply shows a true vertical line, and when the plumbline is dropped, and the wall compared to it, every flaw in the wall becomes evident.

More than teaching people doctrinal truth, we must bring them into a relationship with The Truth - Jesus Christ. And The Truth (Jesus Christ) will set them free. It is no good collecting various truths, if we do not have The Truth. One of the questions I am often asked is how will we recognize the Antichrist? The answer is simple: Know the real Christ and you will recognise the impostor.

In the past 30 years, millions of people have been caught by many dozens of heresies taught by charlatans who have proliferated in the wake of the Charismatic Renewal. If only the deceived knew the Bible, and knew their God, they would never have been misled. Yet, over the years we have seen many people come to the light and turn from error simply by being taught the whole Truth. The Word is powerful! And if only we will - in humility, with clean hands, break it open and share with the folk, many will be set free and come into true fellowship with the Father and the Son.

The purpose of the Word, and the preaching and teaching of the Word, is "that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2Timothy 3:16). Are we equipping people for good work? If not, even if what we preach is true, we are missing the mark. (To be continued)

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