

Leadership Training - Session 3 (11/9/13)

Doctrinal Basis c:

The Bible, as originally given, is the inspired and infallible word of God. It is the supreme authority in all matters of belief and behaviour.

This is known as the doctrine of 'inerrancy'. (We discussed this in detail at Bible course in 2011).

What is being claimed about the Bible here?

Bit trickier, what is NOT being claimed about the Bible?

How could you defend this statement?

The Bible as Infallible

We believe the Bible is true. God has left us with a reliable document for us to learn about him and the salvation he offers through Jesus.

However, in the face of science, history and archaeology, some Christians have given up on inerrancy. This has a devastating effect on (amongst other things) our knowledge of God, assurance of salvation, preaching, and evangelism.

Paul Feinberg says if we deny inerrancy, we end up telling non-Christians:

"The Bible has numerous inaccuracies of a historical, scientific ... ethical nature, but it is absolutely without error in all of those wonderful "unbelievable" things about God and heaven."

→ How do think a non-Christian would react to that statement?

Furthermore, if the Bible is a mixed bag of truth and error, *who decides what is true?*

The Bible as the Supreme Authority

- We learn from many 'authorities'– eg tradition, our culture, our families, books, creation.
- But all these must all be subordinate to the Bible. No true fact will ever contradict the Bible, rightly interpreted.
- As leaders in the church, we can have confidence in the trustworthiness of the Bible.
- We therefore need to ensure all we do, and the way we do it, is biblical.

Doctrinal Basis d:

Since the fall, the whole of humankind is sinful and guilty; so that everyone is subject to God's wrath and condemnation.

There was a little girl, Who had a little curl,
Right in the middle of her forehead.
When she was good, She was very good indeed,
But when she was bad she was horrid.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Are humans good, bad or a bit of both?

How do you (or others) go about answering a question like that?

Original Goodness or Original Sin?

Some people have taught that humans are born as a blank slate (tabula rasa) or even morally good, but are then corrupted by the world. The Bible, in contrast, makes it very clear that all humans are sinful.

- Jesus says it's what comes out of our hearts that makes us unclean (Mark 7:21-23).
- Paul says that no one is righteous, and all have sinned (Romans 3:10-11, 23).
- David says he was sinful from the womb (Psalm 51:5).

The Fall

- "The Fall" refers to Adam and Eve's rebellion against God recorded in Genesis 3.
- God created man – male and female – in his image, and very good (Gen 1:27, 31).
- Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit (Gen 3:6). Their inner motivation was a desire for autonomy. They wanted to be God.
- This first sin had far reaching consequences...

Romans 5:12

The 'one man' here is Adam. *What might be odd about saying Adam was the first to sin?*

As a result of the fall, (human) death entered the world. It wasn't only Adam and Eve who would die, but all their descendants after them. Adam was the 'covenant head' of humanity. We sinned *in him*. So when he fell, we fell.

- We don't simply *imitate* Adam's sin, we *inherit* it. This is called '**original sin**'.
- We confirm our nature as sinners with the innumerable **actual sins** we commit each day.

“We are not sinners because we sin. We sin because we are sinners.” RC Sproul

What distinction is he making in this quote?

Do you agree?

Deep Consequences

The fall has much deeper consequences than even physical death:

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him. John 3:36

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Romans 1:18.

Westminster Shorter Catechism: *All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.*

But that’s not fair!!

Romans 5:12-17

How are Adam and Christ compared?

How might this help us think about whether original sin is fair?

Some implications:

- ➔ Non-Christians are sinful rebels, guilty and condemned before God – they need Jesus.
- ➔ This makes our mission as a church all the more urgent.
- ➔ As leaders, we shouldn’t be surprised when sinful people act sinfully.
- ➔ This also shows the importance of an historical Adam and an historical fall.

Thinking Christianly

He who drinks Australian...

Read Daniel 1:1-5

What's Nebuchadnezzar trying to do?

How are we today in a similar situation to Daniel and his friends?

We are living in a world that is constantly bombarding us with a non-Christian way of thinking.

- ➔ Most of us spend much more time under non-Christian rather than Christian influences (TV, media, friends, shops, adverts).
- ➔ We're tempted to abandon, or at least compartmentalise our faith.
- ➔ The world offers us its riches, promising to make us happy – food, possessions, sex, power.

And the more we *drink* Babylonian, the more we'll *think* Babylonian.

The antidote is be transformed to think Christianly. **Romans 12:1-2:**

- ➔ We owe God everything – not just a slice of spirituality on a Sunday.
- ➔ Instead of being conformed to the world, we need to be transformed in our thinking.
- ➔ With the goal of knowing how God wants us to live.

In short: Are we letting the world influence our view of Christianity, or is our Christianity influencing our view of the world?

To what extent do you think you, and other Christians, are in danger of thinking like the world?

How can we start to think more Christianly?

What differences would thinking Christianly (rather than non-Christianly) make to:

Our priorities?

Our use of time?

Our service in church?