

Progressive Christianity

Welcome, mens conference

We've been spending our summer looking at false teachers, false prophets, and heresies

It is important for us to know what heresy is and how to spot it

One of the hallmarks of good heresy, is that it sounds good, pleasing, nothing challenging

The fact that it sounds good is what makes it dangerous

The other hallmark of good heresy is when you see anything that takes a lower view of God and exchanges it with a higher view of man

These are things we must constantly be on the look out for

Elders in scripture are encouraged to protect the flock from wolves - Acts 20:29-31

Some have said, "I don't think its nice to call names".....I hope that throughout this series it has been presented in a caring and thoughtful way when names have been mentioned....

But again, as elders and caretakers – we see examples and exhortations in scripture to do that very thing...Paul himself named the names of 2 heretics/blasphemers of the church in 2 timothy 2:17-18

I think one of the reasons it is so very important to call this to attention is that heresy has the potential of carrying not just one or 2 individuals away from faith – but entire generations

What we are seeing in the culture of the American church is being felt in our youngest generations

We have seen declining baptism numbers for years, we developed a very low view of the church....

The effects of taking a low view of the church are being felt in drastic ways

-we have for years existed as a church culture that says "let me just check my box of church attendance"

-ill get to church when I can

-bible study, fellowship among believers, have all suffered

-the things I believe are more about making me feel better, me feel encouraged, me feel righteous

And what we have been left with is a feckless American church that is more concerned with whether or not our church services end on time, are the chairs comfortable enough, the coffee hot enough, the a/c

Than we are whether or not people are reached with the gospel

But let me sound the alarm concerning the effects of taking a low view of church...b/c of our low view of the church....we have begun to suffer in our theology and doctrine

-in our theology we have taken a lower view of God

-in our doctrine, we have adopted ungodly views of the world that are inconsistent with scripture, and dare I say, most believers cannot even defend why they believe what they believe

The bible speaks to us about what happens when we leave the teachings of scripture Romans 16:18

our minds are deceived and we are led astray.....this morning I want to warn you about the movement known as progressive Christianity

progressive Christianity has had many names throughout history – liberal Christianity, universalism, agnosticism,

the modern movement of progressive Christianity has presented itself in the advent of social media

at the core of progressive Christianity though is the heresy of inclusivism, and acceptance

and there in lies the problem.....inclusivism and acceptance should be something we want, it sounds good

the problem is not inclusivism and acceptance – the problem in progressive Christianity is inclusivism and acceptance without the regenerative power of the gospel

this is a warning for both sides of the argument – inclusivism and acceptance without the gospel distorts the cross

also....a rejection of inclusivism and acceptance without the gospel is harsh, cold, and ungodly

what we must strive for is how to lovingly, firmly, and unashamedly share that the gospel is the most powerful tool for transforming our schools, our churches, our politics, and our families

so...when it comes to progressive Christianity, we must know how to spot it....

How to spot – doesn't need all 6, in fact any single one of these is dangerous

1. Inclusivism, acceptance, a man centered pursuit of justice
2. The way they view Jesus – not divine, but rather a moral example, big brother, even flawed
3. Moralism – emulating Jesus, just be a good person – moralism is good behavior absent gospel
4. Low view of scripture – not authoritative, merely a historical book
5. Acceptance of other religions, buddhism, Jehovah's witness, Mormon
6. Low view of sin – not really that bad, we are good people at the core

When you wrap all of this together what you end up is a cross that doesn't save

You end up with trying to be a good person

Lets be clear, that being a good person isn't bad....but the problem arises when we take away the gospel, the work of Christ in our life we are left with the worst news and that is....that its all up to us to be better

The biggest difference between progressive Christianity and orthodox Christianity is this....that as believers, we believe in the regenerative work of the gospel

It is the gospel that transforms us, not our desire to be better

A desire to be better without the regenerative work of the gospel leaves us hurt, confused, and depressed when we realize that none of us really are that great of a person
What is this regeneration – what are we talking about....

When the gospel takes hold of us, when we profess Christ as Lord, when we believe that Christ died for our sins was buried and resurrected

Then a work begins within each true believer that changes us to the very core of our being

We begin to understand sin, we begin to understand that we pursue the righteousness of Christ by denying ourselves

We begin to love others the way Christ did, we begin to detest sinfulness and confess it and repent of it

In short, regeneration means we are made new - 2 Corinthians 5:17

Any attempt or claim to righteousness that does not include the regenerative work of the gospel is nothing more than moralism

Without the gospel we are left to hope we are good enough.....and the book of Romans tells us how good we are without the gospel.....Romans 3:10-12

Can I just challenge you with 3 points of application this morning....

1. Develop a high view of the church – how do you know
 - a. Do you love the building or the people....the people make up the church
 - b. Make attending church important, prepare for it, get here early, STAY AFTER,fellowship
 - i. How do I know if sports/athletics is important.....preparation, enthusiasm
 - c. Show grace in the midst of frustration, bear with one another, we are the bride, if your mad at my wife, your mad at me.....
2. Develop a high view of scripture
 - a. Study, look into it, start reading – book of James
 - b. Trust it, don't be afraid to question it will withstand your doubts and curiosities
 - c. Seek it for answers

musicians

3. Trust the gospel to change you

You don't have to change yourself, the gospel will work in you and through you to regenerate