

Adorning the Doctrine

The alarming trend of denigrating doctrine and sound teaching in favor of a "feel-good-about-yourself" mentality can be cut off at the pass by properly "adorn[ing] the doctrine of God our Saviour" (Titus 2:10). Paul, the first century apostle to the Gentiles and chief Christian apologist, penned this line to Titus, one of his Greek converts and co-laborers. His letter to Titus abounded with exhortations to focus on doctrinal teaching. He emphasized his protegee's duty to protect and proclaim pure apostolic doctrine. But it didn't stop there—not only was he to faithfully preach doctrine, he was to identify and silence false teachers (1:10-11).

Paul seemed to understand that it would take the failure of only one generation to pass the faith along to lose the doctrinal absolutes he had fought so desperately to uphold. He implored the believers to be loyal to their employers, pleasing them in all things. They were to be scrupulously honest, not pilfering or embezzling but manifesting a trustworthiness deserving of praise. The motive for such attitudes is "that they may adorn [kosmeo, to embellish with honor] the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." No master would be impressed with an employee's Christian testimony unless it was substantiated by faithfulness and loyalty. The gospel would be unattractive to the unbelieving master unless the believing slave exemplified its principles in his life. Even in the lowly duties of a slave, it was possible to glorify God with a pattern of behavior beyond reproach.

The apostle was saying that truthfulness, faithfulness and loyalty to the doctrine were adornments that made the gospel attractive and appealing. Should we say that the doctrinal imperatives are not essential, that they are optional or debatable, we would strip that adornment away.

This may be why Paul told the Ephesians to grow up—"Be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Ephesians 4:14)...

(Adorning the Doctrine by J. R. Ensey, Kindle, 1 of 42; From Foreword)