

# The Backbone of the Church

## Introduction

1. **When we say that someone has “backbone” we are usually saying that the individual is not afraid to stand up for what he or she believes to be right.**
  - A. **The opposite of that is when one knows what is right but does not take a stand against the wrong – they have no backbone.**
  
2. **When we think about the “backbone” of the church we may think of several things that the church should stand up for that shows she is not afraid to be heard concerning these things.**
  - A. **Such as firmness, moral courage, standing for the truth of the gospel. This is in fact the very spine – the backbone of the church.**
  
3. **When the church begins to lose its “backbone” then we should be alarmed. When things that are evil no longer are dealt with or preached on, then the church’s back will be broken.**

**W. T. Sherman:**

**I would define true courage (backbone) to be a perfect sensibility of the measure of danger, and a mental willingness to endure it.**

- A. **What are some of these things that can and will break the church’s back?**

## **Sin Is Ignored**

- 1. When worldliness is not rebuked and lukewarmness is prevalent within the church then there is no “backbone” present.**
- 2. In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul rebuked the Corinthians because fornication was among them and they were not alarmed.**

1 Corinthians 5:2 And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.

- 3. One will not gain an entrance to heaven who has only been lukewarm in their service to God. Lukewarmness is not to be tolerated.**

**A. God certainly will not tolerate it.**

Revelation 3:16 So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

- 1) There are many who just “go through the motions” of being a Christian but who really are not living the Christian life on a daily basis being truly devoted to God.**

## Lack of Conviction

**1. Men either act from conviction, because they believe a thing with all their heart, or from convenience, because a thing is as easy to do as not to do and there is an advantage to be gained from doing it.**

**A. Think about it – Why do you attend the assemblies?**

**1) Is it because you want to worship God?**

John 4:24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

Psalms 122:1 I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go into the house of the LORD."

**2. Could it be that it is a matter of conviction?**

Hebrews 10:24-25 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

**A. Or, could it be that there are other things more appealing because they are more convenient?**

**1) Have we really obeyed the gospel from the heart?**

Romans 6:17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

**B. Conviction is illustrated in the decision of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego as they spoke to king Nebuchadnezzar.**

Daniel 3:14 Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up?"

**1) These three responded with:**

Daniel 3:18 ....let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

**C. These three men were determined to do what was right regardless of the consequences! We need men like this!**

## **Changes in Preaching**

- 1. Efforts are being made to change our preaching, re-model the gospel and modernize the church.**
  - A. A faithful gospel preacher was in the audience at one time when a young man spoke disparagingly of those who would preach on such things as "adultery, instrumental music and institutionalism."**
    - 1) The young man stated that "these things are not relevant to salvation anyway."**
  - B. I personally have heard it stated that "God does not expect us to be completely, doctrinally correct."**
  - C. Brethren, statements such as these emphatically illustrate the truthfulness of the apostle Paul's statement to Timothy:  
**2 Timothy 4:2-4****

## The Cause of Dangerous Tendencies

1. **So, what is the cause of such dangerous tendencies?**
  - A. **I believe the cause can be attributed to any number of things.**
    - 1) **Possibly it is success which makes it easy to outgrow our plea for simple New Testament Christianity.**
    - 2) **Maybe it is that we have less opposition.**
      - a. **It was once hard to be a Christian because of the great hardships and persecutions which apparently strengthened the early church**

Romans 5:3-5 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

- B. **There is little indoctrination and that is certain to result in tragic consequences.**
  - 1) **The church is filled with people who know little about the doctrine of Christ and thus fail to abide in his doctrine.**

2 John 9 Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.

- 2) **Maybe compromise with our religious neighbors in attitudes toward doctrine and morality has shared in causing these modern trends within the church today.**

## What Is the Solution?

1. **The solution is to have a greater respect for the authority of the Scriptures and more firmness in practicing New Testament Christianity.**

A. **Please consider the following passages of scripture:**

**Jude 3**

**Ephesians 4:14-15**

**Titus 1:13-14**

**Galatians 1:6-9**

1) **From these passages, it is evident that truth is fixed, unalterable and unchangeable.**

B. **Preaching truth is certain to disturb some people. Paul asked the Galatians:**

Galatians 4:16 Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?

1) **Genesis 1:1 disturbs the atheist.**

2) **Exodus 20:3 disturbs the heathen.**

3) **Hebrews 11:6 disturbs the moralists.**

a. **Yet Paul told Timothy to preach the word!  
(2 Timothy 4:2)**

C. **Paul commanded the Ephesians to “stand!”**

**Ephesians 6:13-14**

2. **One cannot stand for something and not stand against something. Truth stands against error.**

## Conclusion

- 1. There is a valuable lesson to be learned from the past.**
- 2. Apostasy soon came in the first century church as was prophesied.**

1 Timothy 4:1-3 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

- 3. What has happened in the past can happen again if we allow too many worldly "things" to collect on the backbone of the church.**
- 4. Stand up with firmness and moral courage for the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ! Show "backbone" for Christ and His church!**

