

East Cooper Baptist Church

August 28, 2016

## That Which Awakens Awe: Devotion to the Apostolic Teaching

Acts 2:42-43

*<sup>42</sup> And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. <sup>43</sup> And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.*

Awe is to be transfixed/gloriously overwhelmed by the greatness, goodness and mercy of the triune God; ultimately expressed in the cross of Christ.

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Baptist Faith and Message 2000, Article I, The Scriptures

We confess that both our finitude and our sinfulness preclude the possibility of knowing God's truth exhaustively, but we affirm that, enlightened by the Spirit of God, we can know God's revealed truth truly. The Bible is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it teaches; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; and trusted, as God's pledge, in all that it promises. As God's people hear, believe, and do the Word, they are equipped as disciples of Christ and witnesses to the gospel.

Gospel Coalition Confessional Statement, Article II, Revelation

Spiritual insight consists of three things:

1. Knowing God.
2. Knowing his fatherly favor in our behalf, in whom our salvation consists.
3. Knowing how to frame our life according to the rule of his Word. (Calvin, *Institutes*, 2-2-18)

"Whoever is utterly cast down and overwhelmed by the awareness of his calamity, poverty, nakedness, and disgrace has thus advanced farthest in knowledge of himself. For there is no danger of man's depriving (despairing) himself of too much so long as he learns that in God must be RECOUPED what he himself lacks.

John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II-ii-10

"For who am I to myself without Thee, but a guide to my own downfall."

Augustine, *Confessions of Augustine*, 4-1

"To be happy by his own power without superintendence, belongs to God only."

Augustine, *Confessions*, 4 (footnote)

**Why we should be devoted to the apostles' teaching (i.e. the scriptures):**

1. The humble reception and application of scripture produces a life of love.

“The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.” 1 Timothy 1:5

- The heart is the seed of the mind, emotions, and the will.
- A clear conscience is the inner awareness of the moral quality of personal actions.
- Sincere faith means we constantly listen to the truth and make adjustments.

2. This devotion allows us to fight the good fight of faith.

“This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare.” 1

Timothy 1:18

“<sup>11</sup> But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. <sup>12</sup> Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”

1 Timothy 6:11-12

- Living out a life of proper speech and relationships. (Jm 1:19-20, Prov 10:11a, Col 4:6, Prov 16:32, Eph 4:29)
- Self worth (Ps 139:13-14, Jer 9:23-24, 2 Cor 5:17, Rm 8:1, Mt 7:11)

3. If we are constantly nourished on the scripture, it will produce sound teaching and living. (1 Timothy 4:6)

4. Devotion to the scriptures produces a life of joy, peace, and usefulness which leads to human flourishing.

“<sup>4</sup> And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. <sup>5</sup> And he shall be their peace.”

5:4-5a

Micah

“<sup>10</sup> For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God. <sup>11</sup> Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name.”

Psalms 86:10-11

“Avenging conscience explains the remark of G.K. Chesterton: “Men may keep a sort of level of good, but no man has ever been able to keep on one level of evil. That road goes down and down.” Purposed by the Five Furies [which are remorse, confession, atonement, reconciliation, justification], a man becomes both more wicked and more stupid: more wicked because of his behavior becomes worse, more stupid because he tells himself more lies.” **J. Budziszewski, *What We Can't Not Know*, p. 159**

“From Christ do they receive the Spirit to dwell in them; from Him the new principle of life, which is the root of all of their obedience; and from Christ have they actual assistance for every duty that they are called to do. In waiting and expectation and receiving of these blessings, do they spend their lives and their time with Him. In vain is help looked for from any other mountain; in vain do men spend their strength in following after righteousness, if this not be centered in Christ. Fix your soul in Christ and you

shall never be ashamed. This is the way, the only way, to obtain full, effectual manifestations of the Holy Spirit's dwelling in us; to have our hearts purified and consciences purged, our sins put to death, our graces increased, our souls made humble, holy, zealous, and believing – and to be like Him..."

*The Works of John Owen, Communion with God, Vol. 2, pp. 206-207*