

KEEPING THE DOCTRINE SOUND (2 Timothy 4:1-4)

I. In the presbytery.

- A. As you hopefully know, elders are referred to in different ways in the New Testament.
 - 1. Bishops/overseers (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-2; Acts 20:28).
 - 2. Shepherds/pastors (1 Peter 5:2-4; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11).
 - 3. Elders/presbyters (Acts 14:23; 1 Timothy 4:14).
- B. Therefore, the presbytery refers to elders (1 Timothy 4:14).
- C. Keeping the doctrine sound begins with the eldership.
 - 1. It is this group that the Holy Spirit gave the command to feed God's flock (Acts 20:28).
 - 2. It was from this group that Paul warned grievous wolves would emerge, taking away saints (Acts 20:29).
- D. Notice three things about Acts 20:28.
 - 1. It was the elders that were charged with being overseers - this refers to watchmen or superintendents.
 - 2. It was the elders that were charged with taking heed unto themselves and the flock - heed means to pay attention to, to care for, or watch for.
 - 3. It was the elders that were to feed the flock of God - feed means to shepherd, tend, to care for, provide for.
- E. It is easy to see from one verse that as overseers, heeders and feeders, elders play a vital role in keeping the doctrine pure.
 - 1. Elders are the first line of defense when it comes to keeping the local congregation sound.
 - 2. They are to be on guard for false doctrine.
- F. Just as a shepherd was to keep the flock from feeding on poisonous weeds or drinking from contaminated bodies of water, an eldership is to tend to God's flock in the local congregation.
- G. In Titus 1, Paul focuses on elders and their responsibility to keep the doctrine sound: notice verse 9.
 - 1. Holding fast means to hold firmly cleave to.
 - 2. Able means strong and powerful.
 - 3. Exhort means to call upon someone to do something.
 - a. They are to call gainsayers to repent.
 - b. If they refuse after two attempts, they are to be rejected (Titus 3:10).
 - 4. Convince means to prove one in the wrong and thus to shame him, to convince of error, refute.
 - a. The mouths of false teachers must be stopped.
 - b. They need to be rebuked sharply (Titus 1:13).
 - 5. Notice that this is all to be done with sound doctrine.
- H. Elders must be sound in the faith before being put into the eldership and then they need to fulfill their God-given roles.
- I. Much unsoundness today falls on the heads of negligent elders who did

not and do not now heed sound doctrine.

II. In the pulpit.

- A. Preachers and teachers of God's word must also be sound in doctrine (1 Timothy 4:16).
 - 1. Take heed means to pay attention.
 - 2. Continue means to remain in, abide in or stay in, to be constant and persevere in..
 - 3. Save means to preserve safe from danger or destruction.
- B. The second chapter of Titus deals with sound doctrine (2:1).
 - 1. Speak means to teach.
 - 2. What Titus taught had an effect on all age groups.
- C. Notice 2:7.
 - 1. Pattern means an example, a pattern to be imitated.
 - 2. Uncorruptness means purity.
 - 3. Gravity means seriousness - teaching God's word is serious business.
 - 4. Sincerity means integrity or truthfulness.
- D. In verse 8 Titus was told to use sound speech that could not be condemned.
 - 1. When we use God's word only there is no condemnation.
 - 2. We get into trouble when opinions and vain babblings are preached (1 Timothy 6:20-21).
- E. Unsoundness today can also be traced to preachers who either were not grounded or had left the ground of the gospel.

III. In the pews.

- A. Many times the responsibility of soundness in the membership is downplayed.
 - 1. We place emphasis on the eldership and preacher.
 - 2. But there is emphasis placed by God on the members.
- B. Acts 17:11 is an example of students being sound.
 - 1. There needs to be more members like the Bereans.
 - 2. How could the early church send out so many preachers: because the members could and did preach.
- C. Notice Titus 3:8 - careful means to take care, to concentrate upon, be careful.
 - 1. Maintain means to care for something, to be diligent to practice.
 - 2. This shows members have a role in keeping the doctrine sound.
- D. What the presbyters hold fast (Titus 1), and the pulpit teaches (Titus 2), the pew must heed (Titus 3).
- E. Some of the blame for unsoundness in the Lord's church is to be laid at the feet of those in the pews.
 - 1. We have allowed those who are unsound to be placed in the eldership.
 - 2. At times, we have allowed unsound preachers to remain in the pulpit without standing up and being counted.
- F. It is vital that members voice concerns about the necessity of sound

- doctrine coming from both the eldership and the pulpit.
- G. Members play a vital role in keeping the doctrine sound.

From articles written by Wade Webster