

# *“Enduring Sound Doctrine”*

## **Special Presentation**

Various Scriptures

C. Michael Rush

May 19, 2023

**Michael:** Is there a mike? Can everybody hear me?

**Brave Men:** Yes.

**Michael:** I have a tendency to talk low. I don't like to holler because—

**Don Maurer:** By the way, Roger thought that you were with the Steelers, that you played for the Steelers. *(laughter)*

**Michael:** Roger?

**Don:** Roger Myers, one of the guys here who sets up.

**Michael:** Oh, really? Well, who's Roger? You're Roger. You thought I played for the Steelers? Well just to give you some background, when I graduated from high school I was five feet 11 and 155 pounds.

**Don:** Okay.

**Michael:** So I might have stolen a couple things. *(Laughter)* But I've never been a Steeler in that regard. *(Laughter)* I'm not a stealer, either.

**Ted Wood:** He might have played jazz for the Steelers.

**Michael:** No, I'm just a fan like everybody else. So how are the men doing today? Good. I was sad to hear about Harry Reeder. I don't know if you guys—

**Don Maurer:** Oh, you knew him?

**Michael:** I've heard him preach.

**Don:** Oh, has, at Ligonier.

**Michael:** At Ligonier, yes. Also yesterday evening Tim Keller went into hospice; I don't know if you guys knew that. I believe he's been dealing with pancreatic cancer. So that's a sad thing.

Let us pray and then we'll get into our lesson today. Heavenly Father, we thank You this morning. I thank You for bringing me here today safe and sound to stand before your saints. And Lord, I pray to fort to Your holy Scriptures, Lord, according, which is at a premium these days. Lord, I pray that Your Spirit would just permeate this room, that people might be blessed, that knowledge might go forth, and that the men may be edified and that You may be glorified. And we ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

**Brave Men:** Amen.

**Michael:** Is this mike hand held?

**Mike Davis:** Yes.

**Michael:** I'm kind of a soft spoken guy.

**Don Maurer:** Just like the Chiffons, huh? *(Laughter)*

**Michael:** Is that a song? “Soft Spoken Guy?” I didn't know that. You learn something new every day.

**John Gratner:** That's before your time. *(Laughter)*

**Michael:** All right. I'm here to talk about “Enduring Sound Doctrine.” Is doctrine important to anybody here today? Let's see some hands. That's good to know. I see John Gratner back there. I know doctrine is important to him because of the question he asked last week. But doctrine is important. And I have a burden for just the word of God in general. The way the Lord has led me in my walk with Him is that I've run into Him a

## ***“Enduring Sound Doctrine”***

lot. He has led me into a lot of places where untruth goes forth, where a lack of truth goes forth.

And then on top of that, being in churches, you would be surprised—maybe you wouldn’t!!—at how little people know Scripture. Amen? But we’re advocates for the word of God. My man here and partner in crime, Jay Batch, he and I, we hold this thing (*the Bible*) very high.

Bruce Bickel, when he used to be up here, he was an advocate for telling people to study the Word for themselves, to have the Berean mindset. It’s one thing to tell people that; it’s another thing for them to do it. Amen?

**Brave Men:** Amen.

**Michael:** And what I found—and this is not a criticism of the Brave Men; it is just an observation—is that what happened, when Brave Men used to meet here and fellowship over here, (I used to like those couches by the way; they were kind of comfortable), (*Laughter*), Bruce would be over there. (*up front*) And he had droves of men—I think sometimes 80 to 100 every week, right? And they would be there and Bruce would be teaching, and it was great.

As time went on, through the Bible study that Jay Batch runs on Saturday mornings up in Robinson, a few of the guys from Brave Men would come. And what I found was that Bruce used to have these acronyms you guys might remember; he had a lot of them. “Think, act, feel”—the card, remember? I use that a lot. And I found that some of the guys knew those acronyms more than they knew the word of God. (*Laughter*) That’s okay, but that’s not the purpose. And that was not his purpose. This is one of the reasons why sound doctrine suffers. It’s because the church itself does not know the word of God. Amen? And when you don’t know the word of God you can’t portray the word of God. And you can’t live the word of God. You can’t really share the word of God, because chances are that you’ll be off, okay?

So we’re going to go to this first passage that I have on the paper here. And it is out of 2 Timothy chapter 4, verses 1-5. Many of you will know this; some of you may not. But it is one that is very familiar to you of course. And I will read it. And what I want this to be this morning is that I want it to be somewhat interactive. I want you to ask questions if you have them. I’m going to ask people to read some of the verses on the page. But we’re going to start here in 2 Timothy chapter 4, verses 1-5. This is a section of Scripture that some of you may know as some preach the Word, amen?

But it speaks on something here. It says: *“I charge you in the presence of God and of Jesus Christ, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the Word. Be ready in season and out of season. Reprove, rebuke and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching. But having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded. Endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist; fulfill your ministry.”* Amen?

**Brave Men:** Amen.

**Michael:** It says here that *“the time will come when people will not endure sound doctrine.”* And I think the time is here. There were a couple of different things that I was going to speak on today. The Lord just kept hitting me with this.

## ***“Enduring Sound Doctrine”***

There’s a church down the street from Christ Church—Triumph. It’s the church I grew up in; (not that particular building; it’s down in Sewickley.) I grew up in that church from the time I was little all the way to age 21. And then I worked on Sundays and I was gone for fifteen years and kind of Prodigal Son-ish. And at some point in fifteen years I came to the end of myself, and the Lord brought me back.

**Jay Batch:** Amen.

**Michael:** Praise be to God for that. And when He brought me back, after a few years I was put on trial. I didn’t do anything wrong. I was put on trial to be a deacon. And there’s a process where they watch you. And in that process you have to study pretty diligently. And you have what’s called “covenant ordination.” A catechism is what it is. You have to learn a lot of Scripture and a lot of doctrines—you know, the doctrines of regeneration and justification; I could go on and on and on. Once that process happened and I was ordained, I continued studying till now.

And in the midst of that I was able to disciple some other brothers, Jay Batch being one of them. I wasn’t his only disciple, but I was one of them. And now he discipled people, and he’s powerful too. If you don’t know Jay Batch, I mean, come on; you’re missing something.

But all that being said, last week a friend of mine who goes to Triumph was talking to another woman at Triumph about a church. And what she said was that the other woman was interested in attending this church. But my friend said, “I wouldn’t recommend that church because they endorse same sex marriage.”

I know this woman. She sits in the pews week after week after week. And she said, “Well, you know, that’s just opinions.”

So my friend said, “No, no, no, no, no. It’s not opinions; it’s the word of God.”

And she said, “Well you know that was written by Paul”—the part she was talking about. So you know this whole thing. You know Paul; he’s the male chauvinist; and you know the whole line.

And so she goes to the Scripture. She reads “the Scripture was not given under private interpretation. But men of God moved by the Holy Spirit.” You know it, right?

And I just bring that up to say that this particular exchange which is good—because it says here that we’re supposed to “reprove and rebuke,” right?—this is very common. That exchange should be more common.

But here’s why it isn’t: because we don’t have conversations, right? So my first question was: is doctrine important to you? Is truth important to you? Because there may be some here with the statement I just made—hopefully not!—but there might be somebody here that says, “Well, what’s wrong with same sex marriage?” Hopefully nobody in this room. But if you do, see Mike Davis. *(Laughter)*

So this is why I’m up here this morning, because I talk to a lot of people. And I talk to a lot of people at church. I’m in a worship band over here. And I will tell you that it is sometimes troubling. And I’m not talking about baby Christians now. I’m talking about people who have been in the church for many, many, many years who don’t know the difference between sound doctrine and false doctrine; amen? They don’t know the difference between what a Christian is to believe and what somebody in the New Age believes, or maybe what a Jehovah’s Witness might say, or maybe what a Mormon might say.

**Ted:** Or a Methodist might say. *(Laughter)*

## ***“Enduring Sound Doctrine”***

**Michael:** Exactly. Secondary issues there. *(Laughter)* So this is what I want to go over this morning. So let us start this thing off; this 45 minutes kind of goes quickly. So the first question I have is: does anybody know what doctrine is? This is a simple question. Somebody, anybody: what is doctrine?

**Don Bishop:** Teaching.

**Michael:** Right; simply teaching. What is sound doctrine?

**David Miller:** Truth.

**Michael:** Truth. Elaborate.

**David:** Truth that is found in the Scriptures.

**Michael:** Amen.

**Ted:** I believe the Greek word there for “sound” is “healthy.”

**Michael:** That’s right.

**Ted:** So doctrine is going to make you healthy in your soul and in your spirit.

**Michael:** Amen; that is exactly right. So it’s twofold; it has a benefit, right? It’s not only a thing, but it has a result. Amen? And how do we measure truth? How can we talk about truth? We don’t talk about error, right? So there’s truth and there’s error. So this is what makes the difference between sound and unsound, right?

There’s a guy that I know here, and we’ll go over these issues. And sometimes he’ll say this to me. He says, “You know, Michael, everybody doesn’t believe that.” And the way he says it, it’s kind of like he doesn’t really believe it. But what’s more troubling about the way that he puts it is that it’s all right that people won’t believe it and don’t believe these things, right? And I’m not talking about secondary issues. I’m not talking about the issues that the Bible calls secondary. We’re talking about the main and plain things, right? We have to be sure and set on the main and plain things.

So let’s go into some of this. Let’s go into this first section here. Can somebody grab me Matthew 11:25-27? And then can somebody else grab me 1 Corinthians chapter 2, verses 10-12? We’ll read those; we want to draw up the case here for truth and sound doctrine. Hopefully today there might be somebody here who when they leave this place will have a greater understanding and maybe a greater purpose in being able to witness not only to the lost, but also to encourage and edify other saints. Whoever has the Matthew Scripture can go. Okay.

**David:** *“At that time Jesus answered and said, ‘I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things have been delivered to Me by My Father. And no one knows the Son except the Father, nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.’”*

**Michael:** Amen. All right, the 1 Corinthians passage.

**Ted:** I’ll do that.

**Michael:** All right.

**Ted:** I’ll start with verse 9 because that leads into that.

**Michael:** Yes.

**Ted:** *“But as it is written: ‘What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love Him.’ These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of*

## ***“Enduring Sound Doctrine”***

*God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person which is in him? So no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.”*

**Michael:** Amen. So with the Scripture that Ted just read, I want to caveat that. *“No eye has seen, nor ear has heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for those who love Him.”* A lot of people think that is a Scripture about heaven. It is not. That is a Scripture about all the things that God reveals to us while we're still on this side. That's important because of the fact that just like the Matthew Scripture, these are Scriptures about the fact that God has been gracious by His Spirit and by His sovereign grace to reveal Himself to us as believers, amen? We take that privilege lightly.

And here's what else we do, though we know better. Sometimes we assume that the world—the lost world—has had it revealed to them as well, in the same way. But it hasn't. And He uses us as agents to spread His truth, amen?

Now we know in Romans 1 that it talks about how God has revealed Himself through creation; that's general revelation. But these Scriptures talk about how He has sovereignly spoken and revealed Himself to believers. That's one thing we have to deal with when we're talking about sound doctrine and truth.

The next thing is that I have two more Scriptures here; let's get to the first one first: 2 Timothy 3:16; everybody should know this one. Go ahead, Mike.

**Mike Davis:** *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”*

**Michael:** A-men! Does everybody believe that?

**Brave Men:** Amen.

**Michael:** Glad to hear it; that's good. Because I know people in the church who kind of believe that, right? They pick and choose. It's like Olive Garden, you know? “I like that part, but I don't know about that part.” But Mike read that *“all Scripture is God-breathed,”* and it's profitable; Amen. And it went through a list. But then at the end of the list he gave the reason: “so that the man of God is thoroughly equipped” for what?

**Mike:** Every good work.

**Michael:** Every good work, amen. All right, now let's go to this other Scripture that I have here: mark 7:7-8. Does anybody have that?

**Don Bishop:** *“In vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”*

**Michael:** Amen. This is a Scripture about what happens when you teach things that aren't of God, amen?—the doctrines of men. One of the things that we have a habit of doing—and this is what you do when you don't really know Scripture—Jay Batch and I have a word; it's called “holding the Scriptures high.” This is what we need to do. I don't know where I got that term from; I might have gotten it from R. C. Sproul or somebody; I don't know. But it's important that we hold this very high, that we look at this reverently, right?, because it's the very word of God.

And when you don't know the word of God, guess what you're going to do. You're going to substitute other things for it, right? How many know that anything that isn't of Christ is what? Antichrist, regardless of how good it sounds. It might sound like a good idea. But if it ain't that, it ain't right.

## “Enduring Sound Doctrine”

And once you start on a path, you can start at the same point. But once you start deviating and you carry that out, the chasm is going to be like this: (*wide.*) And you’re going to be as far from truth as the east is from the west. So just keep that in mind. If you have any questions as I’m going along, definitely feel free to jump in.

**Ted:** Mike?

**Michael:** Yes, sir?

**Ted:** Just to follow up on your analogy, I once figured out that if you departed from Pittsburgh, and your plane flying is off one degree, by the time you go around the world you would be in Jacksonville, Florida.

**Michael:** Wow!

**Ted:** So by one degree, as you’re sitting in the airport in Pittsburgh, that’s nothing; you can’t hardly even discern that.

**Michael:** Amen.

**Ted:** But given enough time—

**Michael:** Right. Here’s another thing I want to throw out. This is not on the paper, but this is very key. Genesis chapter 3 is a very powerful Scripture. And it starts off with these words. It says: “*Now the serpent was more crafty than the other creatures in the garden.*” Amen? We’ll start right there; always remember that. As smart as you think you are, and as wise as you think you are, always remember that the serpent was more crafty than the other creatures of the garden. You might think you have a better idea, and he’s laughing all the way to the bank, amen? So keep that in mind.

Now we have a call to sound doctrine. Mike mentioned the book of Titus. Can somebody turn to Titus 2:1-10 and read that?

**Don Maurer:** I have it, Mike.

**Michael:** You have it? All right, Don.

**Don:** Titus 2. Which verses?

**Michael:** 1-10.

**Don:** 1-10, okay. “*But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderous, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—that they admonish the younger women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.*”

*Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.*

*“Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.”*

**Michael:** Amen; thank you, Don. So we are called to sound doctrine. So as believers, sound doctrine is not something that’s negotiable; it is a necessity, which the next section says.

But we are all called to sound doctrine. One of the things that sound doctrine does, other than proclaim truth, is that it has benefits in our behavior and how we treat one another, amen? It’s really important. And one of the things which we often see, if you go

## ***“Enduring Sound Doctrine”***

into books like 2 Peter, and you see the characteristics of false teachers, and you see their fruit, it’s pretty rotten, right?

But you see in situations like what Don read, the way that we’re supposed to act. And we only know that by the Spirit of God and by cleaving to sound doctrine, amen?

Let’s go into the next one, which is Deuteronomy 6, verses 4-9. Does anybody have those?

**Harvey Hinch:** I have it.

**Michael:** Okay.

**Harvey:** *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is One. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be upon your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk on the way, and when you lie down and when you rise. You shall bind them as signs on your hands; they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”*

**Michael:** Amen. So this is the Old Testament; this is way back thousands of years ago. And there’s a parallel between the facts that doctrine and truth are important. Not only are they important, but you’re supposed to share them with your children, amen?

As I said, I grew up in church. It’s a funny thing. Not only did I grow up in church, but we had to attend Sunday school every Sunday. But I had grandmothers. And so sometimes we’d go to their churches in the afternoons. Sunday was just no fun. *(Laughter)* At the time it got to the point where you didn’t hate it; you just knew it was going to be. It’s like going to school. You don’t even argue about it; you just go.

And for whatever reason I remember seeing these Sunday school books, and these gowns and these long robes, and these animated pictures. I’d look at them and I’d hear the names: Moses and David and Abraham. And it was almost like stuff was bouncing off my head, you know?

**Ted:** Yeah.

**Michael:** And I don’t know if it meant anything. When I came back to church after about fifteen years I did not even know the Scripture *“Jesus wept.”*, believe it or not. And that’s pretty short. I didn’t know it.

But when the Lord called me back and I started reading His word, amazingly what I thought was bouncing off my head wasn’t. It was hidden and being implanted. And God revealed it so that when I read the Word and started really studying the Bible for the first time, the things that I had been hearing as a child, they all came back. So God does supernatural things in that regard. His word will not return void, amen?

The Bible says that *“God has chosen the foolishness of preaching to save some.”* Amen?

**Ted:** Yeah.

**Michael:** So this is another problem that we have in the church today. And oh, it drives me crazy! How many know that God doesn’t need any help? *(Laughter)* He don’t need no help!

**Mike:** Amen.

**Michael:** So many of our ministers—sometimes I use that term lightly, loosely. How many know that this *(the Bible)* is sufficient? His word is sufficient; God doesn’t need help. He doesn’t need self-help. Self-help is no help. If I try to help myself, which I did

## ***“Enduring Sound Doctrine”***

for fifteen years or more, it’s no help. We need to cleave to the word of God. Go ahead, Don.

**Don Maurer:** Michael, I think this is where our culture is. Mike Davis pointed out last Friday that we Americans think we can do it all ourselves. Not only that, but we operate—certainly as a culture and more and more unfortunately in the church--not on the basis of sound doctrine, but on the basis of emotions. Instead of “think, act, feel,” it’s “feel and act.” And there’s no thinking.

**Michael:** A-men.

**Don:** Not just to single out homosexuals, but “what’s wrong with gay marriage? They love each other.” And so it’s how does it make you feel, not is it right or wrong? And unfortunately the church in many circles has adopted that philosophy rather than because God says it’s right or wrong; sound doctrine.

**Michael:** Mm-hmm. Amen.

**Don:** And so in some churches you have pastors who will preach, as it says in 2 Timothy, to people with itching ears, preaching what they want to hear, rather than what they need to hear.

**Michael:** Exactly; amen. You know, I remember a few years ago that Don Maurer said, “Michael Guess what? I’m listening to rap!” (*Laughter*) Do you remember this, Don?

**Ted:** He’s trying to forget. (*Laughter*)

**Michael:** I don’t remember if he said it directly to me or if he said to Jay that he was listening to rap. So It was interesting.

**Don Maurer:** Chai Lin.

**Michael:** Yes, Chai Lin. I don’t know if you guys know who Chai Lin is. Chai Lin is a rapper. And with some of you I can see the frowns; rap! (*Laughter*) Hey listen: I’m from pre-rap, so I get it. (*Laughter*) So with Chai Lin, here’s a group of rappers who are trained in theology, believe it or not. They are ministers, and their material is excellent. And I don’t think the record label they were on exists anymore, but they have some material. Chai Lin is one of them.

**Ted:** Chai Lin.

**Michael:** And he’s fantastic. He has two albums. One is called “Lyrical Theology 1,” and the other “Lyrical Theology 2.” And this is what Don was listening to.

And I’ll always remember that there was a song called “False Teacher.” And of course it got a lot of flak from false teachers, because he called out some people’s names.

**Brave Man:** Pronouns.

**Michael:** Yes, he called out names. He had Biblical precedence for that. And one of the things he said was that he was talking about the prosperity gospel. There was a line in one of his songs that I loved. Its aid:

*“Why would the Lord tell you to pursue as a goal  
The very one thing that He said would ruin your soul?”*

He was talking about the pursuit of money, right? And so when we talk about sound doctrine we have to know it to the point to where we hear certain things and we say, “I know that’s not God,” right? Go ahead.

**Don Maurer:** Michael, just to digress, a couple years ago I was with the friend who had me listen to Chai Lin and another friend at a Bible study. And I started to try to imitate Chai Lin. (*Laughter*)



## ***“Enduring Sound Doctrine”***

**Michael:** Oh my goodness! Let me bring the mike over. Hold on a minute.

**Don:** Oh, no, no, no! *(Laughter)* No, I’m not going to do that; I’m not going to imitate him.

**Michael:** Okay.

**Don:** But after I was finished my friend Fred said, “Don, do an encore!” *(Laughter)* And my friend Dan who had me listen to Chai Lin said, “Fred says ‘Encore’; Dan says ‘No more.’” *(Laughter)* I digress.

**Michael:** I like it, I like it. So I have something here: *Sound doctrine never changes.* It’s as binding as it was 2,000 years ago. Not only 2,000 years ago, right?, but before the foundation of the world, amen?

It’s wholesome. This is what Ted Wood alluded to earlier; it’s wholesome. It instructs us not only about the Person of God and the work of Christ. It’s reminding us that God’s word has something to say about what we think and what we do—instruction combined with Christian ethics. And then can somebody get Titus chapter 2, verses 11-15? Okay, Mike.

**Mike:** *“For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say ‘no’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, to redeem us from all wickedness, and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good. These then are the things you should teach, encourage and rebuke, with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.”*

**Michael:** Amen. That’s beautiful. So God has raised up a people of His own unto Himself. You know, in Ephesians 2 it starts talking about the unholy trinity; that’s what I call it: the world, the flesh and the devil. And I think what happens a lot of times as I thought about this thing is that like many believers, we get duped. We talk about this world like it’s the kingdom of heaven, right?

Now God has given us this world and things to enjoy in this world. But this world is not our home; amen? We’re going to someplace else. As a matter of fact, heaven and earth will pass away. And what we have to realize is that these systems that we’ve come to love we elevate higher than believers should. Those are part of the world system, amen? People get mad at me when I say this, but I don’t care. And I don’t mean to be harsh; I really don’t. But I know that when you don’t have a true knowledge of God’s word and sound doctrine and a love for the Word, you’re going to substitute other things for it, and try to elevate them and deify them.

We don’t want to do that. We want to understand that though we are to be involved in the world—the Bible says that “we are in the world but not of it”—but we still are ambassadors of Christ who are supposed to be bringing good news of the kingdom of God, amen?

**Don Bishop:** Amen.

**Michael:** And when we get too comfortable in this world, the Bible says, *“Love not the world,”* nor what? *“The things of it.”* Don’t love it; don’t love this place.

**David:** Two things that our culture probably loves too much are democracy and free will.

**Michael:** Mm-hmm. That’s right, democracy and free will. And the list could go on. I mean, it would stretch as wide as I-79, amen?

## ***“Enduring Sound Doctrine”***

So let me give you some background into one of the reasons why this is my subject matter for today. And I have a guy here. Do you have something?

**Jay:** Yes, I do.

**Mike:** Go ahead.

**Jay:** So I just wanted to say that whenever Don said what he said before about love, recently here, about a month ago, there was a sermon from Vodi Bacham. It was in regard to how amazing it is that God’s word is alive; you can read it. So even in that regard he was just talking in his sermon about “do not love.” God commands us, “do not love a certain way.” So I’m here at this particular passage; you just said it. It says, “Do not love the world or the things in the world.”

So for example, when you tie that back in, for example, he used the example of homosexual relationships. God tells us not to love that way. So whenever we say that love is love, it’s not God’s love. It’s our own imagination of what that love is and our selfish desires of what we want.

**Mike:** Right. Amen; thank you. And Don just mentioned about how people say that they love each other. We have to be careful about that, because as Jay said, God tells us certain things we don’t want to love, that we’re not to love. Amen? You know, Bruce Bickel used to say this. He said, “Is it the God of Biblical revelation or the God of your own imagination?” We want to have the one and forsake the other. Amen.

Part of the reason why I believe the Lord gave me this topic today is because of part of my journey. So when I came back to church it was a weird kind of thing. I had no thoughts of God whatsoever. It wasn’t robbing banks or committing crimes, or anything like that. I was just a working bachelor. And I say “bachelor” because I was doing bachelor things, you know? I had certain habits that are okay according to the world; I liked pretty girls. And I liked playing sports with my friends and all that kind of stuff.

So I was doing well. I wasn’t in this pit. So when people tell you that God has to get you to this really low place and this and that, He can use that. But guess what? He can get you when you’re high, too.

I was in a really good place; I was happy. But one day in my apartment He just broke me down and I started crying because of the fact that I didn’t understand it; everything was cool. But it really wasn’t, because even though everything was cool, I was just so unsatisfied. There had been a process to this too; it didn’t just happen. But it was just as powerful as you would read about Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road, right? It was that kind of thing; I got knocked off my high horse.

And through the process of the years He introduced me to this guy named Deepak Chopra. Have you ever heard of him?

**Ted:** Yep.

**Michael:** Oh, my goodness! I saw him on Oprah—you know, the prophet Oprah. *(Laughter)* This was on the Oprah Winfrey show. I was watching this guy. He’s saying a lot of good things. Wow, he’s talking about God, right? And I’m listening. He has this book; it’s a bestseller. It’s #1 on the New York Times bestseller list. I can’t remember right now, but it was called something like *The Seven Laws of Spiritual Success*. And he’s talking, and the things that he’s saying sound so good. So I thought, I need to get this book.

So I got this book and I’m reading it; I’m eating it up, right? I’m carrying it around with me. And I remember mention it to my pastor. I mentioned it to him, and he didn’t

## ***“Enduring Sound Doctrine”***

make me feel bad or anything; he didn't shoot me down. He just said, “Oh, okay. I have some good books, too.” *(Laughter)* Yes, he said that.

So what happened was this. Somewhere around that time one of my childhood friends was preaching a sermon at my former church. He was a pastor somewhere else. And the weird thing about my neighborhood when I was growing up in Sewickley, in one square mile there were about five pastors who came out of that. I think it was because they were hanging with me. *(Laughter)* So we had about five pastors. Trust me; I'm not a pastor. We would always say, “What is it? It's something in the water,” right? And there's a guy sitting back there who was in Boy Scouts with me—Tom Benedict. We were in Boy Scouts together; that's a whole other story.

But he's preaching this sermon, and I'll never forget it. He's preaching, and it was something dealing with forgiveness. And I remember that I'm listening, I'm walking. And whatever he said was different from what Deepak Chopra said. And so I was sitting there, and I'm thinking, wow; he's saying this. The book is saying this. And I liked what the book said. But then I'm saying, “He said something different.” And literally the Holy Spirit spoke to me and said, “That book is not Me.”

I don't even remember what happened to that book. *(Laughter)* It just vanished; I don't know what happened to it. I might have thrown it away or whatever. But I never looked at that book ever again.

So when the Bible says that the Holy Spirit will lead you into all truth, that's true. And I say this to any man here who may struggle with this. God is supernatural, amen? He works by His Spirit through His word; they agree. So if the spirit is telling you something that the Word is not saying, that's a spirit all right, but it ain't the Spirit of God. But yes, He does speak through His word. He'll lead you into truth.

One of the things that Jay Batch and I did early on when we were friends with the staff is that we watched a lot of stuff. And I watched a lot of stuff when I first came to church because you don't know what you don't know. I mean, I watched some guys; I won't mention names here, but some of the usual suspects. There's a station called TBN; you probably know about the Trinity Broadcasting Network. And everything on TBN is not bad; there are good things on there too. But there's a lot of foolishness.

And as time went on, there was one guy who was a very popular preacher; he still is. I watched him; this was back in the '90s. I watched him, and one day it just hit me. Why does he have an orange suit and orange shoes? I hope nobody has orange shoes. Most everybody has athletic shoes. *(Laughter)*

**Don Maurer:** Maybe I do and don't even know it. *(Laughter)*

**Michael:** You get a pass for that. *(Laughter)* Now that might sound funny to say that. But with something little like that the Holy Spirit showed me that he wants to be seen. He's more up for building himself than he is the word of God. So the Holy Spirit will show you little things like that.

So all that being said, Jay and I watched a lot of this stuff over the years. I don't recommend this for everybody unless you're led. But we would watch people just to see the error, just so we could know. There are certain catch phrases when you talk to certain believers that you can hear. And you can say that came out of false teaching. They don't practice sound doctrine, nor do they care about it.

One of the things about false doctrine is that it always has an agenda; amen? Sound doctrine does not.

## ***“Enduring Sound Doctrine”***

Now here’s the caveat. All of us—and I’m the chief amongst them—all of us are sinners saved by grace, amen?

**Brave Men:** Amen.

**Michael:** But now the Bible calls us “saints,” right?—not the saints the Catholic Church talks about. But the New Testament does call us “saints”, amen? Why does it do that? Well, we’re new creations. We’re new creatures in Christ.

I was just talking to a guy a couple of weeks ago. He was disagreeing with me over here, because he said to me, “Well I don’t like to look at myself in this high and mighty way.”

And I said, “Well I’m not telling you to do that. But what I am telling you to do is to look at yourself the way the Bible refers to you,” because the Bible tells us that for a reason. The Bible wants us to know that even though we’re here right now, and even though we’re still in this flesh, and even though we still have this flesh that wars against the Spirit and that we’re in a spiritual battle, that also we are “*seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*” right now. Amen? It’s positional righteousness.

So we have these truths that are part of our doctrinal reality. But we need to know so that we can not only live a certain way, but that we can share that other believers might know. It’s hard to get everything from a pulpit on Sunday morning. To meet at a Bible study on a Friday morning at 6:30 is very rare. But at any time, unfortunately it’s rare for the church to hold Bible studies; people don’t study the Word. And with the way the media is now they have so many other options. So it’s imperative for us to be able to convey the word of God.

We’re getting close to the end, so let me close this up. I have two Scriptures here that I want somebody to pull up. Could we do Ephesians 4, verses 1-16?—they’re short verses—and then 2 Timothy 2:14-19?

**John:** *“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of His calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance with one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called into one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

*“But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore it says: ‘When He ascended on high He led a captive of hosts captive, and gave gifts to men.’*

*“Now this expression ‘He ascended,’ what does it mean, accept that he also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who has descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.*

*“And He gave some as apostles and some as prophets, and some as evangelists and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, for the building up of the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith, in the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.*

*As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness and deceitful scheming.*

## ***“Enduring Sound Doctrine”***

*“But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the Head, Jesus Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the power of the working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body, with the building up of itself in love.”*

**Michael:** Amen. Thank you, John. So did you hear that? That passage, which most people here probably know, is very powerful. And the one thing that it represents is the exclusivity of Jesus Christ of our faith, of our body—the body of Christ. And we need to know that. We don’t compare it to anything else. The word of God, Jesus Christ, the one and only true God—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit—all the things that are consistent with our faith are exclusive; there is none like that.

And we need to know that so that what? Like he said, that we’re not tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine.

I remember that there used to be on the radio a guy named Hank Hannegraff who was the Bible Answer Man. He made a statement that I love. He talked about counterfeiters. He said that experts in counterfeit money study the genuine. And that’s what I recommend to people. Get to know the authentic so well that when a counterfeit comes on the horizon you recognize it instantaneously. Amen?

**Mike:** Amen.

**Michael:** You want to be able to know this so well that you know what’s not true. Okay, who has the 2 Timothy Scripture? 2:14-19.

**Ted:** *“Remind them of these things. And charge them before God not to quarrel about words which does no good, but only ruins the hearers. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. But avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness. And their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have swerved from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already happened.”*

**Michael:** That’s fine. It talks about this irreverent babbling. You know, in the last few years the church has been guilty of a lot of foolishness, getting involved, as I said, in things of the world’s system that have nothing to do with this. And I sometimes wonder about people who speak the most and know the least about this. *(Michael pounds the Bible.)*

The Bible says to *“study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman who needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”*

**Transcriber’s Note:** KJV.

**Michael:** Why does it say, *“Who needeth not be ashamed?”* Because you can be ashamed if you don’t know how to rightly divide the Word of truth. It can be embarrassing. And God doesn’t want us to be embarrassed.

Bruce used to say this. He used to say, “Quit trying to figure out the secret things of god because guess what? They’re secret!” *(Laughter)* And folks, with the secret things of God some people will say, “We can’t know this; we can’t know that.”

Well true; there are things that He has not revealed. But He has revealed much, and we can know them.

I have a list here. I’m going to read them, and then we’ll be done. This is really important, and there are a couple of caveats here. So what is on these papers is good for everybody. If you know other people you can give this list to them.

## ***“Enduring Sound Doctrine”***

*Consistently immerse yourself in Scripture.* That’s very important. There’s a lot that you can read. But there is nothing that’s going to be fulfilling to your soul like the word of God, amen?

*Listen to as much teaching and preaching as you can,* which is like feeding on the Word. *Read an excellent systematic theology book.* I have one by Wayne Grudham. There are others; there’s not just one guy.

Here’s what I would say, though. Don’t let that systematic theology book ever supersede the Bible. I do know people who know their systematic theology front and back, back and forth. But they don’t know any Scripture; they hardly know any Scripture. You want to know Scripture.

There’s a thing that they used to say in a negative sense in some churches. They call some people “Bible toting Scripture quoting.” It was used in a negative sense. And I get it. What they were saying was that there are people who carry Bibles and quote Scripture, but their lives don’t line up. So we get that.

But what it tends to do is to discourage people from toting the Bible and knowing Scripture. Sometimes I’m amazed at churches. It’s a bad thing, I’m telling you. Let’s get used to carrying Bibles again, and owning a Bible.

Service sheets are nice, but guess what they do? They close you into a place where you just look at them. You don’t know where any books are. You don’t know where Major and Minor prophets are, where the Epistles and the Gospels are; you don’t know. They are supplements, but they are no substitute for the Bible.

*Take good notes and ask questions about what you’re reading.* There are no dumb questions in the kingdom of God. If you don’t know, ask somebody. So hitch yourself to sound Biblical preaching and teaching. There is a way to know what is sound. How do you know? Ask somebody. Study the Word and ask somebody.

The Bible is talked about in one of the passages that we read earlier out of 2 Timothy, about how they would heap up teachers according to their own desires, right? So if you just want preachers who will tell you what you want to hear, you might not be saved. But you definitely aren’t on the right track.

When you come into a sermon, you don’t want to come with a mindset of “I wish they were here so they could hear this too.” No, it should be convicting to you. It should be convicting to us. When I’m sitting here I want to be convicted. So many times I’m sitting here and it’s like wow, he’s talking about me. And so we want to be in sound preaching and teaching.

*Never avoid the profound things of Scripture.* Don’t avoid the profound things of Scripture. Don’t avoid things that may take a little more study, a little more effort, to understand. God has been gracious to reveal them, amen?

**Mike:** Amen.

**Michael:** We ought to put our time in. We do it for anything else. We’ll read a whole big thing on the Steelers draft and what this guy’s time was. But we won’t do that at all with God’s word.

*Organize a small group of friends to discuss Scripture and theology.* It’s a good thing to do.

Now I’ll say this, and I’ll give a really quick story here. I had a friend who actually used to go to this church. She called me one time, and she was distraught. She said,

## ***“Enduring Sound Doctrine”***

“Michael, Michael, I was reading about Lot. Those men from Sodom, were they homosexual? Were they trying to have sex with Lot?” And I said, “Yeah.”

And she said, “Oh, Michael! I thought the Bible was a good book!”

And I said, “Yes, it is. It’s about sinful man and faith in a holy God.” A few years after that she was telling me that she was having a Bible study with her daughter. And I said, “Who is doing the teaching?” And she said, “I am.”

If you have a group going over Scripture and theology, make sure that somebody there knows what he’s talking about. *(Laughter)* Seriously, have another person, two or three people, “*so that every matter might be established.*” Amen?

Jay and I have a Bible study. And I’ve been beside him for years, and it’s been going on for a lot of years. What, eleven years now? Twelve?

**Jay:** Twelve.

**Michael:** Twelve years, yeah. And man, our Bible study has been like the waves of the sea. We’ve had a full room. And then somebody said something, and we were down to two. *(Laughter)* And then it built up again, and then it was down again.

We had a situation years ago where a lot of guys came out of false teaching. Early on in the study they seemed like good guys. But they didn’t like the stuff that was being taught from here, because they came out of another kind of thing. You know what I mean? Some came back; a few came back. So that’s important. If you do meet, have somebody there that has some kind of training.

And then lastly, *pray that God will keep your mind and your heart grounded in sound doctrine.* This is important. We always want to pray that God will keep our minds and hearts. Humility is important. The Scripture says that “*God opposes the proud, but He gives grace to the humble.*” Amen? And one of the things that derails so many of us is arrogance. We can get arrogant in our knowledge of the Word. The Bible says that “*knowledge puffs up.*”

Knowledge for the sake of knowledge is not good. Some of the things that we went over today concerning sound doctrine were not only for our knowledge and our own edification, but also for the edification of others and also for our conduct, that the doctrine and what might come out of that is to be able to be instructed in righteousness, so that what? “*The man of God might be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*”

**Transcriber’s Note:** KJV.

**Michael:** So I’m done. I thank you for your time. Let us pray. Heavenly Father, Lord, we thank You today. Lord, I thank You for Your word and I thank You for Your Spirit. Father, I thank You for Your Son. I thank You for the fact that while we were yet sinners, You died for us. Lord, You lived a perfect life that the sacrifice might be acceptable. And You shed Your blood for the forgiveness of our sins. And on the third day You rose again in newness of life, that we might have newness of life. And You are right now seated at the right hand of God, interceding on our behalf.

Lord, I thank You for these men. Lord, I ask that You would just continually bless them. Lead and guide them by Your Spirit, Lord. “*Keep them in Your truth; Your word is truth.*” We ask all these things in Jesus’ name. Amen. *(Applause)*