

JESUS STRONG IN DOCTRINAL DISCERNMENT

Part 8 of Jesus Strong. Philippians 3:15-4:1.

Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. November 10, 2024.

GOD'S SENTRIES

God has appointed sentries or guards to protect his church.

- The Bible calls them pastors, shepherds, elders, or overseers.
- They keep God's people safe from false teachers and teachings.

Acts 20:28-31 (CSB) Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood..

Titus 1:9 (CSB) (An elder must be) holding to the faithful message as taught, so that he will be able both to encourage with sound teaching and to refute those who contradict it.

This is why the Cornerstone has safeguards in place such as:

- We make Bible teaching a serious priority
- We recite ancient Christian Creeds in our worship services
- We have a statement of faith that builds a fence around us

HOW TO BE JESUS STRONG IN DOCTRINAL DISCERNMENT

1. Discern good models of the Christian Faith and follow them - 3:15-17.

Philippians 3:15-17 (CSB) Therefore, let all of us who are mature think this way. And if you think differently about anything, God will reveal this also to you. 16 In any case, we should live up to whatever truth we have attained. 17 Join in imitating me, brothers and sisters, and pay careful attention to those who live according to the example you have in us.

- Paul's message was:

- Verse 15: receive my teaching.
- Verse 16: apply my teaching.
- Verse 17: imitate me and other role models.
- Gain a basic understanding of the Christian faith and apply it.
- Find mentors and role models such as our pastors and elders.
- Use the Book Table.

2. Discern unhelpful models of the Christian Faith and reject them - 3:18-19.

Philippians 3:18-19 (CSB) For I have often told you, and now say again with tears, that many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 Their end is destruction; their god is their stomach; their glory is in their shame; and they are focused on earthly things.

- Judaizers infiltrated the church to oppose the Christian faith. They were “enemies of the cross” and committed to Judaism. They put:
 - Kosher food laws above faith in Christ - “god is their stomach.”
 - Circumcision above faith in Christ - “glory is in their shame.”
 - Status and approval above faith in Christ - “focus is on earthly things.”
- Their “end is destruction.” At the final judgment, those who have ignored or rejected Jesus Christ will be sent away:

2 Thessalonians 1:9-10 (CSB) They will pay the penalty of eternal destruction from the Lord’s presence and from his glorious strength 10 on that day when he comes to be glorified by his saints and to be marveled at by all those who have believed

- The greatest threat to Christianity today is “casual Christianity:” claiming Christ without committing to Christ, his teachings, his church.

3. Discern the goal of the Christian Faith and embrace It - 3:20-4:1.

Philippians 3:20 - 4:1 (CSB) Our citizenship is in heaven, and we eagerly wait for a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ. 21 He will transform the body of our humble condition into the likeness of his glorious body, by the power that enables him to subject everything to himself. 4:1 So then, my dearly loved and longed for brothers and sisters, my joy and crown, in this manner stand firm in the Lord, dear friends.

- The goal of the Christian faith is to be with our Lord Jesus Christ forever.
- We want to be with him when he returns:

Matthew 25:31-32 (CSB) “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him...

- When we embrace this goal, we’ll do whatever it takes to “stand firm in the Lord.” We will:
 - Reject casual Christianity
 - Commit to Jesus, his saving work, teachings, and church
 - Embrace true doctrine, reject false teachings
 - Live like a believer and never back down
 - Love the return of Christ

That’s how we grow Jesus Strong in doctrinal discernment.

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Review

- Review the November 10 study guide (<https://www.famousgod.com/study-guides>).
- What were the highlights of the passage or Peter's teaching?
- What questions do you have about the passage or Peter's teaching?
- Use the S.P.E.C.K. method to reflect on and apply the teaching:
 - S: Sins to confess
 - P: Promises to claim
 - E: Examples to follow
 - C: Commands to obey or Christ to rest in
 - K: Knowledge or insights to consider

Discuss

- Read Revelation 19:11-16. How does this vision of Christ's glorious return to reign on earth affect you? In what ways does it encourage you to stand firm in the Christian faith?
- Who or what, in your opinion, are the significantly unhelpful teachers and teachings that threaten Christians today?
- What would you suggest to someone who wants to learn more about their Christian faith and how to live it out?
- Who are some reliable Christian teachers accessible in print or online?

Prayers

- Pray for the entire Cornerstone family to grow Jesus Strong in doctrinal discernment attaining to unity and maturity in the faith.