

**Why Such Differences?
II Tim.3:16-17; I Cor.2:14-16; Eph.4:1-6**

0.0 Introduction

- 0.1 Sermon request on why believers come to such different conclusions on doctrine & life
- 0.2 Samples range widely: modes of baptism, political positions, types of worship...
- 0.3 Aiming to steer b/n two poles: post-modern indifference vs. modernist argumentative

1.0 The Common Body of Christ

- 1.1 “One holy, catholic (universal) church”
- 1.2 The many “ones” of Eph.4:3-6 = Spirit, body, hope, Lord, faith, baptism, God-over-all
- 1.3 The common core of Scripture (II Tim.3:16-17): God-breathed and multi-relevant
- 1.4 God’s eternity and truth are our foundation, *not* our own understanding

2.0 The Common Experiences of Believers

- 2.1 Centered around our Creator & Redeemer
- 2.2 Knowing “the mind of the Lord...the mind of Christ” (I Cor.2:16)
- 2.3 Contoured around our calling(s) and purpose(s) – of which we have an imperfect grasp

3.0 The Common Causes of Difference

- 3.1 *Semper reformanda*: we are ‘always reforming’
- 3.2 Needing balance and careful attention to God’s Word
- 3.3 Needing to listen more attentively to the Spirit (Eph.4:30; I Thess.5:19)
- 3.4 Needing a more wholesome hermeneutic (guide for interpretation)
- 3.5 Needing some humility & restraint (we have *degrees* of understanding)
- 3.6 Needing to see how culture can guide & protect us, but also can skew perception
- 3.7 Needing patience to pursue the peace of God wholeheartedly

4.0 The Importance of This for Us Today

- 4.1 Everybody lives by faith...in something
- 4.2 Doctrine is “faith seeking understanding” (Anselm of Canterbury), and its goal is “love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith” (I Tim.1:5)
- 4.3 When differences press, keep the bigger realities in clear focus
- 4.4 The most important commands: “love God...and your neighbor” (Matt.22:34-40)

June 26 – That Mysterious Man – Gen.14:17-20; Ps.110:1-7; Heb.5:1-10; 7:1-3
July 3 – Civil (and Uncivil) Disobedience – Ac.4:1-22; Rom.13:1-7