

Defending and Extending the Faith

(Philippians 1:17; Jude 3; Colossians 1:23)

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Introduction

1. There is a strange idea in the minds of many members of the Lord's church that we must choose between defending and extending the kingdom of God.
2. This idea is ridiculous. Both of these things can and must be done in order for us to be pleasing to God.
3. There is the mistaken idea that we can evangelize or live a moral life and be pleasing to God.
 - a. This kind of mindset does not come from God's Word.
 - b. I know of some individuals who think because they evangelize, they can live immoral lives.
 - c. I know others who think because they live moral lives, they have no responsibility to teach the lost.
 - d. Then there are others who think they can live immoral lives and not evangelize and still be pleasing to God.

I. Extending the Faith.

- A. Mk. 16:15, 16; Mt. 28:19, 20; Heb. 5:12-14; 2 Tim. 2:24-26.
 - a. "Apt to Teach."
 - b. Applies to servant of the Lord (vs. 24). See Mt. 6:24.
 - c. How do we become "skilled in teaching?" (1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Tim. 2:15; Acts 17:11).
- B. Acts 8:1, 4; Col. 1:23; Rom. 10:16, 18; Ezek. 3:17-21; 33:7-9.

II. Defending the Faith.

- A. Jesus urges us to beware of and be on guard against false teachers (Mt. 7:15, 20).
- B. We are to use the word of God and test their words (Acts 17:11; 1 Jn. 4:1; Rev. 2:2).
- C. We are not to listen to false teachers and their teaching (Deut. 13:1-5; 18:20-22; Prov. 19:27).
- D. We are to mark and avoid false teachers (Rom. 16:17, 18; Titus 3:10, 11).
- E. We must both oppose and expose false teaching (Eph. 5:11).
 - a. Paul (Acts 17:22-31).
 - b. Elders (Titus 1:9-11).
 - c. Christians (Jude 3; Phil. 1:17).

III. There is Extending in Defending.

- A. Christians in the first century were concerned with defending the faith from attacks that come from within and without (Acts 20:28-31).

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- a. Peter, Paul, Apollos and others stood in the marketplaces and defended the faith against all enemies of the truth.
- b. Through these efforts, people turned their attention to the one who was responsible for this defense - Jesus Christ (Acts 4:10-13).
- B. There are a tremendous number of brethren who have defended the faith time and time again.

- C. Many times a gospel meeting would follow a debate with the result being many, many conversions.
 - a. In defending the faith, they laid the groundwork for the extension of the kingdom.
 - b. What good would it do to extend the kingdom if the kingdom is allowed to be contaminated by false doctrine?
- D. In defending the kingdom, we help to extend it.

IV. There is Defending in Extending.

- A. As every Christian taught their friends and neighbors in the first century, they had to answer the false charges leveled against the faith by false teachers and unbelievers.
 - a. Acts 8:4; 13:6-10, 12.
 - b. 1 Tim. 1:18-20; Titus 1:9-11.
- B. There are some brethren today who think that extending the faith should be done to the exclusion of defending the faith.
 - a. In fact, we have some who think they should help denominations to grow.
 - b. You never saw the apostle Paul or the apostle Peter speaking at “Church Growth” seminars for denominations in the first century.
 - c. False teachers were never invited to speak for the saints in the early church either.
 - 1. Instead, they were marked and avoided (Rom. 16:17, 18).
 - 2. False teachers need to be marked and avoided just as they were in the first century (2 Jn. 9-11).

Conclusion

- 1. Certainly there is an emphasis on numbers in the New Testament church (Acts 2:41; 4:4).
 - A. However, a large crowd is not our goal.
 - B. As we grow numerically we must continue to emphasize doctrinal purity.