

TRUTH B-P CHURCH
Adult Sunday School

DOCTRINE OF THE VERBAL PLENARY PRESERVATION
OF GOD’S WORD IN THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGES

LESSON TWELVE: VPP & BIBLICAL SEPARATION

I. INTRODUCTION

We are standing on solid ground when we hold fast to the doctrine of VPP. Such a position honours Christ and His most blessed name. We believe the doctrine of VPP is not a theory. It is one of the foundational doctrines of the Bible, given to every child of God to live by it. Not only we believe by faith in doctrine but also in practice. And one such important practice is biblical separation.

We, as a church, has been called out of this world, to be God’s children. We are no more children of the devil. Though we are still in the world, we are not of the world anymore. As such, we are to separate ourselves from all unbelief and disobedience that are found in the world. Specifically, we separate from those who had openly and officially declared their position as non-VPP or anti-VPP. In this course, we will learn why we must separate from them and how to separate from them.

II. SEPARATION IS BIBLICAL

What is biblical separation? It is a separation that is biblical. The doctrine of biblical separation is twofold: Primary Separation (2 Corinthians 6:14-17) and Secondary Separation (2 Thessalonians 3:6,14-15).

A. Primary Separation

1. Biblical separation is the doctrine which acknowledged that God has called believers out of the world to maintain a personal and corporate purity while still living in this sinful world and spiritual darkness. This is primary separation.
2. The Bible clearly teaches that the child of God is to separate from the world. “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God. As God hath said: I will dwell in them and walk in them. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord. And touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you” (2 Corinthians 6:14-17).
3. The world that is based on this passage, is represented by “unbelievers”, “unrighteousness”, “darkness”, “Belial”, “infidel”, and “idols”. These are terms that describe the world and its dark activities.
4. In contrary, true believers are represented by “righteousness”, “light”, “Christ”, “he that believeth” and “temple of God.” Because they are contrast to each other, there must be no “unequally yoked together”, “communion”, “concord”, “part” and “agreement”. These are terms that indicate closeness and oneness. And it is God’s command for believers to prevent this closeness and oneness from happening.

5. The action obedient believers must take is to “come out from among them, and be ye separate.” It is a clear command to separate. This separation is spiritual. Physically we may be found in the same place, but spiritually speaking, we are “separated.” This could be found in common environment such as home, school or office when you are the only believer. Physically you may be there, but because you have become a Christian, you no longer follow the rest who are following worldly philosophy, sinful activities or anything that can cause you to compromise your faith and testimony for Christ.
6. We must always maintain primary separation at all time. The reason is because we are now children of a holy God. And as children of God, we are living in the world though we are not of the world. We must not confuse the world by the way we live, and the words we say. As God’s children, we must separate from the world and not be easily influenced by worldly thoughts, words and deeds. Let us be wise, and not be gullible or foolishly deceived by the god of this world, the devil who desired to destroy our holy testimony and witness for our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

B. Secondary Separation

1. According to 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15, not only the church is commanded to separate from unbelievers, she is also commanded to separate from disobedient believers. “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. ... And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.”
2. Apostle Paul commanded the believers to “withdraw yourselves.” This withdrawal speaks of avoidance and shunning. In other words, we are to cut off from a fellow Christian who “walketh disorderly.” This “walketh disorderly” refers to all manner of behaviours and practices that are against the clear teachings of God’s word. We are to cut off from those who deliberately disobeyed the Bible. Those who believe that the Bible has mistakes fall under this category of “walketh disorderly”. Therefore, we are to separate ourselves from those who believe the Bible has mistakes.
3. This act of separation is a message itself. Apostle Paul told the church to “note” that erring individual and “have no company with him ... Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.” The purpose of separation is to correct the errant believer so that he might repent of his sin, and be restored to the fellowship of like-minded brethren of the same faith and love for the Word of God. The disciplinary act of separation is thus constructive and not destructive. That is the desired end when we exercise secondary separation.

III. SEPARATION IS AN ACT OF LOVE

1. According to 1 Corinthians 13:6, Apostle Paul taught that our Christian love “rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.” Obeying the doctrine of Biblical separation is an act of love. Therefore, our earnest contention for the inerrancy and infallibility of an extant Bible in the original languages is not an act of schism but of love for both God and man. We are intent on teaching “all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27); we can do no less.
2. The doctrine of VPP promotes God and glorifies Him. God means what He says, and says what He means. “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My WORDS shall not pass away” (Matt 24:35). And this is the truth we all must believe in. If there is anyone who does not believe, then we ought not to fellowship with him or her. This would include splitting the church or breaking the fellowship for the cause of obeying God’s truth in love.

4. Exercising biblical separation is an expression of our love for God and His Word. If we love God's truth, we will certainly not tolerate those who keeps attacking and twisting God's Word. All those passages that defend the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, do they not also defend the divine preservation of the same Scriptures? To believe otherwise is tantamount to twisting the Scriptures to their own destruction (2 Pet 3:16).
5. Both truth and biblical love unite believers together in the same Lord (1 Cor 13:6). Every Christian should be a defender and contender of the same faith that was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3). A good, faithful and true Christian must separate himself from all forms of unbelief, apostasy, false teachers and heresies.
6. Let us remember that Satan is still the master of all deception and falsehood. He hates the church to unite together in love and in truth. As such, he continues to undermine God's Word since the beginning in the Garden of Eden against the first man and woman. Today his cunning method used is remarkably a 'fool-proof' plan that has turned even conservative fundamentalists unknowingly to his side and attack the doctrine of VPP. But God's Word stands unwavering, "for we can do nothing against the truth but for the truth" (2 Corinthians 13:8). We must hold fast to the faithful Word! (Titus 1:9).

IV. SEPARATION IS NOT ISOLATION!

1. Probably the most difficult kind of separation is still secondary separation. This is separation from disobedient Christians. Some have classified this separation as separation that involves grey areas. Because of that, they say that it is difficult and impossible to draw the line! In the end, they chose to blur the line, for love and unity's sake.
2. Some others also called this separation a sour doctrine because it has caused fellowship among brethren to become distant. In short, it has divided brethren who are supposed to be united in Christ. Have they forgotten the meaning and purpose of separation? Separation is not isolation. It is faithfully bearing a living testimony of purity and holiness required by God in His Word.
3. Secondary or ecclesiastical separation involves the separation on the church level with other churches or Christian organizations, when there is different stand on theology and practices. Separation is implied in the very word "church." The Greek word "ekklesia" means "a called-out assembly." The church is to be separate, and must break ties with those who taught heretical and false teachings (see Revelation 2:14-15).
4. Biblical separation does not mean Christians are to have no more contact with unbelievers and false believers. That would be isolation. Isolation is unbiblical! Did not the Lord Himself continued to reach out to unbelievers (eg. publicans, prostitutes) as well false believers (Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes and chief priests) while He was on earth? Therefore, we can also reach out to disobedient believers without partaking in their sins (Luke 7:34).
5. The act of separation is a meaningful exercise. We do not offer the right hand of fellowship to those who chose to disobey God's word. Yet at the same time, we separate with a message against the disobedient brother and his sin of disobedience. The door of fellowship may be close, but the door of reaching out to them in love and in truth must continue to be opened. Just because we separate against someone who continues to sin, it does not mean you ignore him when you see him in need. Whenever we can, we should still help him, love him and pray for him that he will repent and return to the Lord.

6. The Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan provides a wonderful example of biblical separation: Christian and Faithful travel through Vanity Town, where a sensual fair is held, because "the way to the Celestial City lies just through this Town . . . he that will go to the City, and yet not go through this Town must need go out of the world." At the fair, the men of Vanity marvel at the pilgrims' speech, clothing, and values. The fact that they were "strangers and pilgrims" (Hebrews 11:13) separated them from the worldly crowd.
7. Christians are in the world, though they are no longer of the world. Yet their fashion, dressing, conduct and behaviour must reflect that of a holy and godly nature as befitting that of a child of God, and not that of a child of the devil. Such a separation must be clearly identified, not confused.
8. The ultimate aim of separation is for restoration, not destruction. It is done by testimony, not isolation. It is only when there is no repentance, then we can only leave the erring brother to be judged by God by delivering him to Satan for the destruction of his flesh (1 Corinthians 5:5).
9. Once a church or an individual declared either publicly or privately that he/ she is anti-VPP or non-VPP, biblical separation has to be exercised against them. No fellowship of any level will be extended to them, though friendship may remain for the sake of reaching out to them.

V. SUMMARY

Biblical separation is not an option but a command. It is a command to separate not only from unbelief but also disobedient brethren of God's Word. Therefore, the doctrine of VPP is certainly a just cause for biblical separation.

We conclude with J C Ryle's warning to the churches, 'False doctrine does not meet men face to face, and proclaim that it is false. It does not blow a trumpet before it, and endeavour openly to turn us away from the truth as it is in Jesus. It does not come before men in broad daylight and summon them to surrender. It approaches us secretly, quietly, insidiously, plausibly, and in such way as to disarm man's suspicion, and throw him off his guard. It is the wolf in sheep's clothing, and Satan in the garb of an angel of light, who have always proved the most dangerous foes of the Church.'

What then is the false doctrine of our time today? Is it not the belief that the Bible has mistakes that resulted in the rejection and denial of the doctrine of VPP? Since God has warned and called us to separate from false teachers which certainly include those who believe the Bible has mistakes, let us do so in love and in truth in order to keep the purity, peace and unity of the church for Jesus' sake. May God help us. Amen.