

Often imbalanced in understanding & use of Bible & its teachings - 1
emphasizing only 1 as part of a truth or relying ^{distorted} & holding more, to do so such imbalance
is doctrinal insanity.

President Davey, Dean Millheim, board, faculty, students, and friends of
Shepherds Theological Seminary.

Thank you for asking me to return for another convocation. However, I assure
you this will not be a replay of my other convocation message.

First, I want to remind you what a convocation is. It is an assembly of
members of a college or univ (seminary today) for deliberative purposes
including an authoritative summons. Not a sermon but matters about which I
think (since I'm the speaker) we should ponder and give careful attention to.

My *When imbalanced in understanding & use of Bible ~~and~~ its teachings we exhibit*
In conclusion: Walking around all sides of a concept or doctrine keeps us from
being unbalanced and being unbalanced is doctrinal insanity. Doctrine of joy
must include joy in heaviness. Holiness is not only the absence of sin but is
positive purity. Love reins in freedom for service to others. Sound doctrine in
often clarified by heresy. Errant/inerrant. Barren/productive.

No, I am not finished. Sorry about that. Now we back up and apply this
idea of balance/imbalance to some contemporary imbalances.

(1) God is Sovereign. Today we have domesticated God diluting or
denying His sovereignty. Open theism (that God does not know all the future
until He see what choices we are going to make), and books like What Love Is
This? (that Calvinism, at least as the author defines it, cannot be true since it
violates the love of God) have put the spotlight again on the sovereignty of God.
[When I was an immature Christian in college I went to hear a very famous
preacher. I wanted to ask him some questions, and he, unlike some important
Christian leaders today, was very willing to talk to me. The first one was
"Explain to me the sovereignty of God." His reply to my question to tell me
about the sovereignty of God was simply "If God be God He must be
sovereign." I do not remember any other questions, but I remember that
response and I have mulled it over and over in my mind.]

Of course, God to be God must be sovereign. However, we often think a
sovereign God means a dictator Better to think of Him as the architect of all
things. He uses contractors, & sub-contractors, He expects workers to wear hard
hats. Sovereign means #1. It is related to the word soprano. Queen Eliz is #1 in
the UK but she exercises little or no political power.

God is #1 in the entire universe, but He chooses to execute His plan which (acc
to Eph.1: 11 includes all things) in a variety of ways. Sometime He directly
intervenes (as with the deaths of Anan and Sapp). Sometimes He gives up on
people who reject natural revelation (Rom1:24,6,8). In some circumstances He

tell us to do whatever we wish (1 Cor. 10:25). He opened Lydia's heart at Philippi (Acts 16:14); yet He invites us to open the door of our hearts (Rev. 3:20). Faith is the gift of God (Eph. 2:8-9, yet our faith is counted for rtes (Rom 4:5). His unchallenged^{falls} sovereignty includes using our human responsibilities. Day die? Why eat? No one can harmonize all the facets of this doctrine. Rather than saying He elects, He decrees, He chooses, we should put the emphasis on HE. And there is where I rest my questions. When I do not understand I trust Him. When I do understand I try to obey Him. .Need balance between our sovereign loving God's all-inclusive plan and our constant need to exercise our human responsibility.. To keep this impt doctrine in balance we need to tell all sides of it even if we can't put it altogether.

(2) The Bible is Inerrant and Authoritative. But, in practice, we make it only selectively authoritative. I do not need to defend the doctrine of inerrancy to this audience except to say something about the definition. We usually say inerrancy means the original autographs were without any errors. Good definition. Let me suggest we use the flip side and simply say inerrancy means the Bible always tells the truth. When it records approximations, or exact figures, how things appear or how they actually are, or when it records biography or areas of science. Moses was a highly educated man who knew the meaning of "day" (in creation) as well as he knew the meaning of "ten" (as in commandments.).

But my concern is that we inerrantists effectively deny or at least unbalance the doctrine when we use the authority that accompanies inerrancy selectively and usually on the basis of what we want to use. A syllogism many follow today goes like this. God wants me to be happy etc. Think of some commands we often adjust or ignore to suit our convenience. The golden rule. The 2 greatest commandments. The Great commission. Eph 4: 32; 4: 29 "no unwholesome word procede from your mouth, but only what is good for edification." 5:1 "immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you" 5:16 redeem the time. 5:20 always giving thanks for all things. 5:21 be subject to one another in the fear of X. A common cop-out for not submitting to the authority of Scripture is to say some commands were cultural and not applicable today. But none of the above can be dodged on that basis. Not to believe in authority results in substituting my experiences, preferences, prejudices for what God has said in His Word. Ignoring or disobeying turns the inerrant Word into a selectively errant Word. The balance is total inerrancy, total authority, total obedience.

77 [(3) Legalism, liberty, license, and law. Much misunderstanding exists concerning legalism. Saw a physician I hadn't seen for years and inquired where he was going to church. He said he changed churches because the one he left was too legalistic. Translated He was saying his former church had some standards which he did not want to follow, so he went to a different church so he could feel free to do things he wanted to do. For some legalism means imposing law on others, but if that were true than church leaders would be legalists because they are to rule (impose laws) on the flock (Heb. 13:7, 17). Too, legalism is not the opposite of liberty. Slavery is the opposite of liberty, and liberty is a position into which we have been brought as sons of God. It is freedom from the penalty and power of sin. Legalism is basically a wrong attitude toward whatever law is in effect at the time. Legalists keep, not violate, the law. Under the law of Moses an Israelite could keep its regulations in order to please God or he could keep them to show off or various other wrong motives. Isa 1:13 bring your worthless offerings no more. Christians are not without law to God but under the law of Christ. We are expected to keep that law of X which consists of all the commands, principles and exhortations of this church period. We can do that because we love Him and want to glorify Him, or we can keep the commands of grace in order to show ourselves off. That's legalism. So here's a definition: legalism it is a sinful, self-righteous motive or attitude that conforms to the code under which a person lives for the purpose of glorifying self. A legalist conforms but from a wrong motive. Athlete, dorm, food, discipline, but can play the game to promote the team or to promote himself (which would make him a legalistic athlete.)

. 1 Cor 4:5. Balance is our motive of love to obey the law of Christ.]]

(4) Gifts are for serving. Natural, acquired, spiritual, 1 Cor., 4:7 did not rec, and if you received it why boast as if you had not recd it? Natl, strong body, musical talent, work with hands, IQ. Acquired, learn lang, other skills like computer, music, teach. Spiritual, Rom 12, v 7 serving, v.8 giving, v. 8 showing mercy. Use—Stephen and Philip both deacons (servants), then evangelists. Some want to be leaders, expecting, even demanding, that others serve them. That's an imbalance since that kind of leader is often not much of a servant. Others relegate service to so-called full time service and thus exempt themselves from any kind of service. But every gift we have ought to be exercised as servants. Thus every gift should be hyphenated with the word servant. Not just servant-leader and reversed. Giving servant/ servant giver. Teaching-servant/ servant-teacher. Who is a leader? Anyone who has a follower. In that sense all of us are leaders, and as Christians all of us should be servants.

Balance is to use all our abilities as slaves of Christ. Do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but by love serve one another Gal 5;13.

(5) Eternal punishment is not eternal, ^{even tho} but eternal life is. An obvious imbalance, and one can never balance heresy against truth. Alleged support for no punishment or only age long punishment is: universalism, that is all saved now or after a period of punishment. Or annihilationism which can mean no existence after physical death. Or extinction eventually. But no everlasting punishment in lake of fire. "I find the concept of eternal, conscious torment intolerable." Stott. God will allow wicked to perish (Pinnock). Hell is the outer rim where being fades away into nonentity (CSLewis).

No simply age long, then so is eternal life, Jn 3:16. So is God (Rom 16:26). No way to balance eternal life and damnation except to say both are eternal., Mt 25:46. No way to balance this because no eternal punishment is plainly heresy.

(6) Not only can there be doctrinal insanity but also insanity in living. End product of right knowledge is right living. ^{from text} Col 1:9-14. v. 9-10—filled with knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding so that you will walk worthy of the Lord to please Him in all respects. Worthy= comparable. In worthy is idea of weight. Weight of

our walk should come as close as possible on one side of scale to God on other side of scale. Should balance (tho never will in this life). (1) Please Lord. How? 4 present participles. (1) being fruitful. Here fruit is good works. Elsewhere it is character, Gal 5, faithful witness, Rom 1:13; praise from lips, Heb. 13; giving money, Rom 15:28. (2) increasing in knowledge of God, v. 10. Know revealed specifics. Know person and what He would do or like. Acts 18:5 pressed by the Word. (3) Strengthened not for spectacular, mighty heroic acts but for endurance and longsuffering (no retaliation). (4) giving thanks with joy for what He had done for us. That's balanced living. (1)

To sum up: Be sane in thinking and living. ^{now} And that is the conclusion.
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