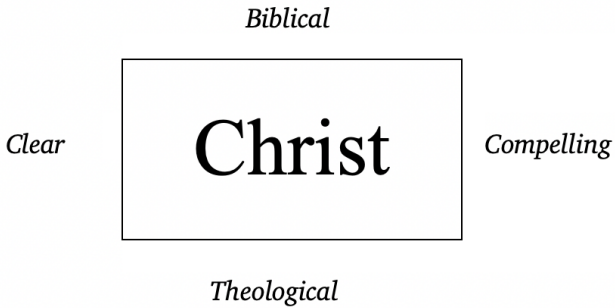


Pragmatic Christianity



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1 Thessalonians 5:21

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If you will recall in last Sunday's message I told you that even though we have new leadership in our nation capital, that leadership from the Whitehouse alone would not be enough. The church must step up and do its part to right the wrongs of the past turbulent administration. And the only way to do that and be successful is to focus on being the Church that Christ called us to be. The Church that can relate to where the people are without compromising its moral

character. The Church the practices
Pragmatic Christianity.

Pragmatic or Pragmatism is defined as:
Dealing with things sensibly and
realistically in a way that is based on
practical rather than theoretical
considerations. I mention this not only as
a way of defining the topic of our
discussion, but to give some perspective
on the writer of our text who could
rightly be called the father of Pragmatic
Christianity.

The writer of our text today is the Apostle
Paul, formerly Saul of Tarsus. Paul
became a follower of Christ as a result of
what is commonly called the Damascus

Road experience. It was there that Saul, perhaps the most aggressive persecutor of the first Christians, was challenged by Christ Jesus and blinded by the heavenly light of truth: ¹And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, ²And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. ³And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: ⁴*And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou*

*me?*⁵ And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, **I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: *it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*** ⁶ And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord *said* unto him, ***Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.*** ⁷ And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. **And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought *him* into Damascus.**” Acts 9:1-8

It was there that Paul became a convert and as a result, he is renowned as the

most prolific writer of the New Testament.

How does this background relate to him being a Pragmatic Christian? Well, as we research his Epistles we find the essence of Pragmatic Christianity in his writing.

In 1Corinthians 2: 1-5

1 “And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

4 And my speech and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Paul understood that if the challenges that faced the church were to be overcome, regardless of the location, and for that matter regardless of the time, impressing people with fancy words would not be the way to victory. You see, then as well as now, sin was the great enemy. And sin having taken hold of the masses as it has, requires a more practical approach in order to confound and defeat

it. How do we accomplish this arduous task? Well to answer that we must now turn to our scripture text for today; Paul says in 1Thessalonians 5:21 “*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.* At the time of the writing of this text there were many false prophets leading many astray. They would mix in a little truth with the big lies that they were telling in order to convince their followers of their authority, which may have seemed right, but were the ways of death and destruction. Does that sound familiar? So Paul wrote this letter warning them to not allow themselves to fall prey to this corruptible prophets and their dangerous

prophecies but to prove all things and hold fast that which is good.

So, how do we prove all things and hold fast to that which is good? John tells us

1 John 4:1 *“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”* So then how do

we try the spirits? How do we prove all things? There are four test I would recommend that should be applied:

First, is it **Clear** what your spirit is telling you? Can you relate it to your everyday living? Is it wholesome? Is it practical? Is it based in facts? What is its potential for longevity?

Second, Is it **Biblical**? Is its base taken from holy Scriptures? Is it being rightly divided?

Third is it **Compelling**? Not just thought provoking, but does it draw you to the inescapable conclusion that it is Christ centered and therefore worthy of following?

And Finally is it **Theological**? Note that I did not say theoretical, which is no more than guessing, but **Theological** meaning that it reveals the very essence of God. If you can apply these four test to your spiritual challenges you can Prove all things and you will be able to hold fast that which is good. Not to apply these test

will leave you like a double minded man, unstable in all of his ways. And as you know an Unstable mind can be tossed hither and yonder , to and fro, by any wind that blows. In stability is not the nature of God, nor is it His will for his children. Christ wants us to be Pragmatic Christians, believers who are not afraid to put our faith to the test. We are believers who Walk the walk and Talk the talk. We are living proof of what it means to be followers of the One true and Living God. We practice **Pragmatic Christianity!**

