

SERMON NOTES:

Perilous Waters | *Navigating the Dangerous Currents Shaping the Church*

Part 1: When Doctrine Feels Optional

BIG Idea: A faith unwilling to define what it believes eventually loses the ability to recognize what is false.

Application: Know what you believe and why. Learn to distinguish truth from error, conviction from preference, essential doctrine from legitimate disagreement—and become a lifelong student who can faithfully live and pass on the faith you have received.

Join us as we read the Bible together in 2026.

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Churches can feel alike without believing alike.

What are we supposed to believe?

Does it really matter whether we know?

What do you believe about Jesus?

1. Doctrine isn't extra credit – it is part of Christian maturity.

Ephesians 4:11-16 (NIV)

¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.

¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Doctrinal stability → Christian maturity.

You don't have to consciously reject truth to lose it. Sometimes you only have to stop caring whether something is true.

Hebrews 5:12-14 (NLT)

¹¹ There is much more we would like to say about this, but it is difficult to explain, especially since you are spiritually dull and don't seem to listen. ¹² You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God's word. You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid food. ¹³ For someone who lives on milk is still an

infant and doesn't know how to do what is right. ¹⁴ Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong.

We don't have to choose between knowing God and knowing about God. The more deeply we love someone, the more we want to know what is true about them.

2. We didn't invent the faith – we received it, and now it is ours to guard and pass on.

2 Timothy 1:13-14 (NLT)

¹³ Hold on to the pattern of wholesome teaching you learned from me—a pattern shaped by the faith and love that you have in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ Through the power of the Holy Spirit who lives within us, carefully guard the precious truth that has been entrusted to you.

2 Timothy 2:1-2 (NLT)

¹ Timothy, my dear son, be strong through the grace that God gives you in Christ Jesus. ² You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.

Know what you have received before you exchange it for something else.

3. Doctrine matters – but not every doctrine matters in the same way.

I can love you, worship beside you, serve Jesus with you – and disagree with you.

Galatians 1:6-9 (NLT)

⁶ I am shocked that you are turning away so soon from God, who called you to himself through the loving mercy of Christ. You are following a different way that pretends to be the Good News ⁷ but is not the Good News at all. You are being fooled by those who deliberately twist the truth concerning Christ.

⁸ Let God's curse fall on anyone, including us or even an angel from heaven, who preaches a different kind of Good News than the one we preached to you. ⁹ I say again what we have said before: If anyone preaches any other Good News than the one you welcomed, let that person be cursed.

Mature Christians learn both what is worth standing for and what is not worth fighting over.

4. A mature church knows how to disagree without drifting from the truth or dividing over what doesn't require division.

Titus 1:9 (NIV)

⁹ He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

Ephesians 4:15 (NIV)

¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

Doctrine doesn't replace love – it tells love where to stand.

What to do when we disagree:

- 1. Know what deserves a closed hand—and what deserves an open one.**
- 2. Let Scripture form your conviction—not somebody else's outrage.**
- 3. Don't interpret the Bible alone.**
- 4. Hold your conviction as tightly as Scripture warrants.**
- 5. Never turn a preference into a principle.**
- 6. Disagree like you're talking to someone Jesus died for.**