

UNTO THE END

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“BUT HE THAT SHALL ENDURE UNTO THE END, THE SAME SHALL
BE SAVED” (MTH. 24:13)

Essentially a Liar

By Bro. Jim

There is a popular radio host that talks incessantly about “Essential Christianity”; that is to say, things that are a “must” within the “Pale of Orthodoxy” as he likes to call it. (This host likes to use big words, phrases, and made up acronyms to dazzle his listeners with his command of the English language, garner laud and honor for his intellect, and generally loves to be revered and praised as a scholar of the Holy Bible). He has even taken the title “Bible Answer Man”; given his wrestling of scripture and teachings that lead God’s people into sin, this title is dangerous at worst and bad comedy at best. Although this liar, and that is what he is, a liar has many false teachings (as False Teachers do), the one we are going to focus on today in this edition of Unto the End is this notion of “Essential” vs. “Non-Essential” Christian Doctrine. This is the very platform this False Teacher’s entire ministry is built upon. The whole idea behind this way of thinking is that there are certain things that all Christians should agree on and thus are Essential to the Christian walk. Conversely, there are also “Non-Essential” things that are open to debate among Christians with the end result being that it doesn’t matter who is right or wrong on said issues since they are “Non-Essential” to salvation anyway. Another way of stating this is agreeing to disagree on doctrines. The reason this radio host has taken this stance is because he correctly sees the division in the so called Body of Christ with all the denominations, doctrines, etc. and so to bring all of Christendom together as some sort of Grand Peace Maker, he has come up with this neat little “Essential vs. Non-Essential” way of looking at things which basically allows for Christians everywhere to maintain some sort of cohesion and

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common identity while at the same time it allows for vast differences in doctrines everywhere. In the carnal way of thinking, this is a really great idea. In the spiritual however it is a train wreck. It’s of the devil and is false doctrine at its core. Now, there are indeed “Non-Essentials” among Christians for sure and these items will be covered but as you will soon see, true “Non-Essentials” and the “Non-Essentials” The Bible Answer Man talks about are worlds apart. It is my hope that by the end of the article you will see that there is no such thing as Essential and Non-Essential Christian Doctrine (Bible Answer Man’s terminology) and you will thus see this liar for what he is and cease listening to his smooth talk and lying tongue in Jesus’ mighty name, Amen.

Let’s start by listing what is considered “Essential Christian Doctrine” by The Bible Answer Man as copied from the Bible Answer Man webpage:

“First, we believe in **the authority of Scripture**, which is another way of saying that the Bible is God’s inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word. It’s the ultimate source for knowledge about God, as well as the definitive guide for our daily lives.

Next we **affirm the existence of a triune God** or one God in three distinct persons - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This God is self-existent, eternal, unchanging, omnipotent, omnipresent, holy, righteous, and loving. God created the universe from nothing and He rules over His creation sovereignly including both human and angelic beings.

We also hold that **man is a physical and spiritual being** who is created in God's image. But because of his sin or transgression, man has lost his fellowship with God. The extent of sin is so great that its effects continue to this very day in the form of cruelty, suffering, and death.

By God's grace, **Jesus Christ - Who is fully God and fully man - was sent to save us from our bondage to sin.** We believe that Christ was born of a virgin, died for our sins, physically rose from the dead, and will one day return to judge the world and deliver His people. Faith in Christ is the only means by which mankind can escape eternal damnation and judgment.

Finally, we recognize **the church as God's ordained institution** headed by Christ. The church is composed of all believers, and is organized for worship, for fellowship, for the administration of the sacraments, for spiritual growth and support, and for evangelizing the world."

Obviously things not listed above then are, by default "Non-Essentials". When talking about the so called "Non-Essentials", The Bible Answer Man Says "As believers, we can debate nonessentials without dividing over them." Well, again, this all sounds really intelligent, scholarly, and great, to the natural mind. But to those with the mind of Christ it is a lie and utter nonsense mishmash! **And I find it both curious and amazing that the first thing he lists is "Authority of Scripture" yet then has to admit that there are things contained IN the scripture that are Non-Essential?!?!?** He says that the Bible is without error, infallible, divinely inspired, and the guide for the life of man and yet then has to turn around and say this Inerrant, Infallible, God Inspired Life Guide contains things that are Non-Essential for man. Does this make sense? Is it logical coherent thought? Further, The Bible Answer Man says he believes in the Final Authority of Scriptures on all matters but in practice, if you believe in "Essential" vs. "Non-Essential" doctrine then as each person decides for himself or herself what is Essential and Non-Essential then man becomes the final authority. I happen to agree with the Final Authority of Scripture and I think it's time we turn to the Word of God and shed some light on this big old lie. Amen.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." 2Tim. 3:16-17.

The first part of the above passage says that ALL scripture, NOT some, most, etc. but ALL scripture is given by inspiration of God. Since ALL scripture is given by inspiration of God, would He list anything that is "not essential"? Would men, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit actually write down doctrines that are not essential or unimportant? Do you think God works like this, listing things for the "fun of it"?! God would be an imbecile to do such a thing. Praise God, He's no imbecile! The passage goes on to say, that since ALL SCRIPTURE is given by inspiration of God it is then profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness. Again, if ALL scripture is given by inspiration of God and thus ALL scripture is profitable for doctrine, reproof, etc. then do you see an allowance that SOME scripture then is basically non-essential? I don't see it like that at all. Furthermore, the passage indicates that ALL scripture is given by inspiration of God and ALL scripture is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness so that Christians can be perfect and equipped unto all good works. I don't see how then SOME scripture could be listed as "non-essential". Amen.

"The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever." Ps. 12:6-7.

"The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations." Ps. 33:11.

“For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.” Ps. 100:5

“Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.” Mk. 13:31

The above passages all say that same thing: namely, that God’s Word will stand forever. Why would God go through all that trouble to preserve His Word if SOME of it is “non-essential” or not important? What’s the point in Non-Essential Words standing forever? Does this make logical sense? Do you go through great lengths to save things or preserve things that are not important or essential to you? I don’t. Is God some sort of cosmic pack rat, just keeping some non-important words around forever “just because”?

The problem when we start getting into Essential and Non-Essential words rather than just saying that everything contained in the Bible is the Word of God and is Essential since God took the time to communicate it to us and preserve it for all generations is this: if we conclude that some passages are non-essential we all end up with different Bibles. If we conclude that there are non-essential doctrines, words etc. in the Bible then the things I say are non-essential are going to differ from what you say are non-essential. When all the smoke has cleared we all end up picking and choosing what we want to believe and do as contained in scriptures and then there is no standard. Only division can come from this. Men have done this and, the end result is what we call denominations. Jesus Christ isn’t divided (1 Cor. 1:13) and so since denominations are nothing more than division, they are NOT from God. Get out of them! It is beyond the scope of the particular issue of Unto the End but to finish this thought, God did say in Revelation (Rev. 18:4), “Come out of her my people”. Take some time and think about this for a moment. What is the “her” that God’s people are in? Who are God’s people? Are Hindu’s? Are Muslims? Buddhists? No, God’s people are Christians. What are Christians in that God is telling them to come out of? Is God calling Christians out of Hinduism? No. Is God calling Christians out of Buddhism or Islam? No. So apparently there is something God’s people (Christians) are in that He is telling them to come out of. I will leave it there and the rest is for you to ponder and pray about. Amen. Let’s continue:

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” 1 Cor. 1:10.

Can this really be achieved if we all pick and choose what we want to believe and obey from the Bible? It would be impossible. The Bible Answer Man has his set of Essential vs. Non-Essentials. I would have my own set. You would have your own set and on and on. But we are to be of the same mind, speak the same thing, and in the same judgment. This cannot happen if we decide that the Bible has essential vs. non-essential doctrine/passages. Amen.

Now that we have established that EVERY/ALL scripture is given by God, Who preserves His Word forever; Now that we have seen we are to be of the same mind and NO divisions, let’s turn to the Holy Scriptures and see the expectation of God for His people as contained in His Word the Holy Bible:

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.” Ecc. 12:13.

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” Mth. 7:21.

“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;” Jn. 8:31.

“For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.” 1Jn. 5:3.

God’s expectation for born again believers is to read His Word and keep His commandments and continue in His Word. Not read His Word and then decide what is and what isn’t essential or necessary. **IF IT’S IN THE BIBLE, GOD WANTED YOU TO KNOW IT AND OBEY IT. IF IT’S IN THE BIBLE, IT’S NECESSARY.** Amen. I recall one pastor in Ohio I was in email correspondence with one time and his wrestling of scripture. I had visited his website after hearing him on the radio and noticed that his wife was wearing jewelry. I emailed him with the passage out of 1 Timothy 2:9 where it clearly says that holy women of God are NOT to put on jewelry or costly array but their adorning should be of the inward type, with shamefacedness and sobriety. I will list the passage I sent him:

“In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.” 1Tim. 2:9-10.

This pastor responded that his wife only wears “a little” jewelry and not a lot which is what the above passage was saying. I replied to this lie by saying the passage doesn’t say “a little bit” or “some” or a “modest amount” but rather, “not with”. I asked him in the same reply, if I asked you to bring me a hamburger “not with” ketchup, how much ketchup would you put on the hamburger if you were to fulfill my wishes. His final response was that I should not judge him on an “obscure passage” from the Bible!?!?!?! An obscure passage; this is in line with The Bible Answer Man’s “Essential vs. Non-Essential” doctrine. Whether you want to call things in the bible “none-essential” or “obscure” it’s the same thing. You can see this man’s folly and how, basically just because he didn’t want to obey God, rather than admit he was afraid of his jezebel wife and his disobedience to God’s commands, he came up with this idea of “obscure” passage. Who can decide what is obscure? What if I decide that “thou shalt not commit adultery” is obscure? If you believe in obscure passages, could you really say I was wrong? This is the problem with this way of thinking. Either call God’s Word Holy and obey it in its entirety or call it all bunk, throw it away and go do something else with your life. Half obeying God isn’t going to work. God commands us to obey Him with our whole heart. To do that you have to see ALL of God’s Word as valid and ESSENTIAL. Why? Because He gave it to us and preserved it for us for a reason! Amen.

I had said in the beginning that there were indeed non-essential things in the church among God’s people. I will now list some as examples. I like to eat green beans and you, my brother in Christ do not. I like to wear ball caps and you, my sister in Christ do not. One brother likes to eat breakfast and another brother never eats breakfast. One brother likes to jog and another brother does not. Are you getting the point now? These are not things contained in God’s Word. They are personal preferences that have nothing to do with salvation, doctrine, God’s expectations etc. So yes, there are “non-essential” things among Christians. But NO, NONE of the non-essential things among Christians are doctrines, passages, etc. from the Bible. Amen. If it’s in the Bible, it’s essential. Amen.

In conclusion, we have seen that despite the blathering of the so called Bible Answer man, there really is NO such thing as Essential vs. Non-Essential Christian doctrine. We have seen that the Bible says that ALL SCRIPTURE is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for reproof, correction, doctrine so that God’s

people can be perfect and equipped unto all good works. We have seen that God's Word has been preserved forever and that God would not preserve non-essential or non-important Words. We have seen that if it's in the bible, it's important because God took the time to tell us. We have seen that God expects us to read His word and obey. In fact, obeying the Word of God is the love of God (1Jn. 5:3). I encourage you to start seeing ALL PASSAGES as essential and every word of God important. The next time you hear some Christian say there are essential and non-essential doctrines, passages, etc. from the Bible tell him or her that he or she is wrong. Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, than to trust and obey. Thus saith the Lord. Amen and Amen.

Not for Spectators

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:” Eph. 4:11-12.

“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues;” 1Cor. 12:7-10. (Emphasis mine).

“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortations: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.” Ro. 12:6-8.

“And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” Mk. 16:17-18.

I have listed several passages above that talk about gifts among the body of Christ. It is a true saying that once you are born again and placed into The Church then God has a work for you to do. God equips you with a gift or gifts to accomplish this work. The passages listed here contain some examples of such gifts. Notice that NOT ONE calling of God is called “Spectator”. In other words, just going to a church service, sitting in a pew, singing some songs, listening to a message and then going home! Because of the Roman Catholic Whore (also seen in her daughters the Denominations) the model is one man (Priest or Pastor) doing everything (in Protestant Churches you have assistant Pastors, Youth Pastors, and Worship Leaders) and just about everyone else sits, listens and then goes home. In fact most “churches” don't have any of the gifts listed above save Pastor/Teacher. Have you ever wondered why this is? Did not Jesus say, “And these signs shall follow them that believe”?! Do you think He was lying? Do you see gifts in the church in Acts and throughout the New Testament? Of course you do. It is also this way today among God's TRUE body. If you have been born again and are going to church and being a spectator only you are not doing what God called you to do. If your “church” has no gifts, it is not The Church otherwise, Jesus lied. You can't have it both ways. “And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” (Rev. 18:4). Who is the “her” being talked about here? Are you part of the “her”? May God give you eyes to see and ears to hear in Jesus name. If you are in “her”, God is commanding that you come out!! Thus saith the Lord. Amen.

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