

Sunday, January 4, 2025 am

**2026 Theme**  
**WHAT GOD HAS (AND HAS NOT) JOINED TOGETHER (1)**  
**Matthew 19:6**  
**Pursuing Sound Doctrine**

Today, being the first Sunday of this year, we begin a new theme – What God has (and has not) joined together. This is going to be a little different from the past few years of themes. Last year we preached through the Calendar. Prior to that we presented themes about Prayer and Bible study (2024), Drawing Closer to God (2022-23), The teachings of Jesus (2020-21), Lights in a Dark world (2019), etc. Much of these themes addressed our personal growth as Christians. This year, we will be examining doctrine and addressing errors being advocated by our religious friends and others.

The following are some subjects I plan to address this year:

***God has joined together:***

- Man and woman for life – Matthew 19:8-9 – our theme text
- God and Christ
- Faith and works
- Attitudes and actions
- Water baptism and salvation
- Christ and His church
- Christ and the apostles (their teachings)
- The gospel and the doctrine of Christ (some want to make a distinction between what Jesus taught and what the apostles taught)
- Grace and Obedience (what did Paul mean when he said we are not under law but under grace? Romans 6:14-15)
- The blessings of God and obedience – is obedience necessary to receive the blessings of God?

***Some things that God has NOT joined together***

- Creation and general evolution
- Fellowship with unbelievers (and error)
- Denominations – the denominational concept of the body of Christ
- Church leadership and women (including women leading in worship)
- God and mammon (materialism, worldliness)
- Light and darkness
- Man-man/Woman-woman (same sex marriages, homosexuality, transgenderism)
- The Local church and benevolence – what can a congregation do and NOT do
- Human and divine wisdom
- The Lord's return and the reestablishment of Jerusalem (premillennialism)
- The old and new covenants
- Completed revelation and ongoing revelation

IF you have others that fit into this theme, let me know and I will consider them. Because of the nature of some of these, I might present some of them at the evening service.

**I. Why this study?**

- a. ***To give an answer for our faith and hope.*** 1 Peter 3:15 – Sanctify and be ready to give a defense. As Christians, we need to be grounded in God's word so that when others ask us why we believe what we

- believe, we can turn to scripture and show them. Or at the very least have some understanding of WHERE to find the answer. Hebrews 5:12-14 – by this time you ought to be teachers.
- b. ***It can also help to ground us in our search for truth.*** What we believe matters. Ephesians 4:11-16, when we are properly grounded we will not be *tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine.*
  - c. ***There is much false doctrine being advocated today.*** And while it has always been so, we are seeing the gospel of Christ watered down by far too many, even among brethren.
    - i. Some teach things outright contrary to scripture. These are false teachers (cf. 2 Peter 2:1-3ff).
    - ii. But others may not teach error, but they simply AVOID addressing certain doctrinal issues. Usually, these doctrines are “hot button issues” that affect the way we live (e.g., modesty, moral issues, etc.) and who we can/cannot have fellowship with (e.g., MDR, salvation, etc.). An example of this was Corinth that was ignoring an adulterous relationship (1 Corinthians 5:1-8) and the churches of Pergamos (Rev. 2:12-17 – tolerating those practicing error) and Thyatira (Rev. 2:18-29 – tolerating those practicing/teaching error).
  - d. ***Our theme is going to address SOME of these doctrines.*** My approach will be to notice some subjects that in scripture God has joined together. These are matters of doctrine of which many in the religious world, and even among brethren, disagree or reject. Our goal will be to examine what God’s word actually says. The second half of our study will notice some common teachings that are NOT compatible with God’s word, though many think they are.

## II. **Our need for sound doctrine**

- a. The word doctrine (διδασκαλία, didaskalia) means teachings. Bullinger elaborates, “teaching. Esp. the substance or result of teaching.” Doctrine addresses what does God’s word say about a given subject. It is teachings that ground our belief on a given subject. And our goal is always to be grounded based upon what God’s word actually teaches. To do this we need to be aware of what is truth and what is not. When two doctrines teach contradictory things, we need to be able to discern between what is right and what is wrong.
- b. ***We are called to be discerning.***
  - i. Discern - means to evaluate a teaching and determine whether or not it is true and to be applied. Related words are examine (1 Cor. 9:3) and even “judge” (cf. 1 Cor. 2:15, 4:3-4)
  - ii. Hebrews 4:12 – the word of God is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Hebrews 5:14 – the mature are able to discern between good and evil. Philippians 1:9, Paul prayed that the brethren abounded in knowledge and discernment. 1 Corinthians 2:13-14, the spiritual man is able to discern spiritual things.
  - iii. Acts 17:11 – like the Bereans, we need to search the scriptures to verify truth. This is the same Greek word as discern in previous verses.
- c. ***Sound doctrine –***
  - i. The expression is found 4 times in the New Testament – 1 Timothy 1:10, 2 Timothy 4:3 and Titus 1:9 & 2:1. It implies sound teaching which is rejected by many and to be championed by us.
  - ii. The word for “sound” is ὑγιαίνω (hygiainō) is the word from which we get our English word for hygiene. The word means to be healthy. Luke 5:31 – Jesus spoke of those who are well have no need of a physician. 1 Timothy 6:3 speaks of wholesome words; 2 Timothy 1:13 speaks of holding fast to the pattern of sound words; Titus 1:13 speaks of being sound in the faith, etc.
- d. We need ***sound doctrine.***
  - i. It is teachings that come from God.
    1. John 7:16-17 – Jesus noted that His doctrine was from the Father.

2. 1 Timothy 6:3 describes the words of our Lord as wholesome (healthy) words and the doctrine which accords with godliness.
3. John 14:25-26 notes that what the Holy Spirit, the Helper, would reveal would be what they taught.
  - ii. Acts 2:42 – what the apostles taught was His doctrine. 1 Corinthians 2:13, Galatians 1:11-12.
  - iii. Romans 6:17 notes that doctrine can deliver us from our sins. We also see it as something we are to obey from the heart.
  - iv. 1 Timothy 4:11 – it is something to be taught and commanded.
  - v. 1 Timothy 4:13 – it is something we can give attention to (though the text was directed to Timothy, as a young evangelist).
  - vi. 1 Timothy 4:16 notes it to be something to take heed to (something we need to be doing) and to continue in.
  - vii. 2 Timothy 3:10 – it is something to be carefully followed.
  - viii. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 – all scripture inspired of God is profitable for doctrine... and can make us complete.
  - ix. Titus 2:1 – Titus (and preachers/teachers) are called to speak things which are proper for sound doctrine.
  - x. Titus 2:7 – doctrine can be applied with integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, etc.
  - xi. Titus 2:10 – It can be adorned (worn, become a part of us).
  - xii. 2 John 9-11 – we are to abide in the doctrine of Christ
  - xiii. Acts 5:28 – the doctrine of Jesus was spread by the apostles and others, even in hostile times. IT is something to be shared with others.
  - xiv. In passages like these, we can see the importance of doctrine. And that is why, if we are seeking to declare the “whole counsel of God”, we must study what the Bible says about doctrine. In scripture we find doctrines related to:
    1. Our salvation – cf. Acts 16:30, Romans 1:16-17
    2. Our worship – John 4:23-24
    3. The church – 1 Timothy 3:15
    4. Matters of morality – Titus 2:11-12

### III. Can we know what God wants in matters of doctrine?

- a. Romans 16:17 – yes. We can learn it and note those who reject His doctrine.
- b. 2 Timothy 4:2-3 notes that it is through preaching in season and out of season that we can keep some from not enduring it.
- c. John 7:16-17 again, Jesus noted that if anyone WILLS TO DO HIS WILL, he shall know concerning the doctrine... The question is, do you REALLY want to know what He desires for you to do?
- d. John 8:31-32 – Jesus taught that we can know the truth and it can make us free.
- e. 2 John 9-11 – notes that we can identify the doctrine of Christ. Cf. 1 John 4:1, 1 Thessalonians 5:21 – we are to test it.
- f. 1 Timothy 1:3 – a command (directly to Timothy) to teach no other doctrine. This emphasizes that doctrine IS important.

It ought to be the goal of everyone here to get to heaven. In John 14:6 Jesus noted that He is the ONLY way. If that be true, then what He teaches us through His word and inspiration ought to be carefully considered. While we might not have perfect understanding, as we mature in the faith, we ought to understand His will better in all things. THEN we will be more prepared to defend our faith to others and live with greater assurance. Are you firmly grounded in the doctrine of Christ? Think about it!