

Sermon Mark S. Aites  
**GETTING BACK TO THE BASICS**

**INTRODUCTION:**

1. One of the greatest needs in the church today is the need to *Go Back To The Basics*.
  - 1) Let me clarify what I mean by *the basics* -- I am speaking about the doctrines which were given by God, that we are to follow and uphold.
  - 2) I am speaking of the elementary rudiments of the Gospel.
  - 3) I am speaking of the first principles (**Heb. 5:12**).
2. As some have left the faith, we want to take steps to prevent a further departure from the Word of God.
3. In such an effort, we must first realize that the church needs to get beyond the practice of making assumptions concerning the members of the body of Christ.

**DISCUSSIONS:**

**I. MAKING ASSUMPTIONS.**

- A. Webster simply refers to the usage of the word *assumption*, in this case, as to taking something for granted.
- B. You might wonder, in what way is the church given to make assumptions?
  1. Answer: in assuming( or taking for granted) that everyone already understands the basic truths of Scripture.
  2. It is assumed that everyone already understands:
    - 1) Why would don't use instruments of music in worship.
    - 2) Why we partake of the Lord's Supper every first day of the week.
    - 3) Why we meet on Sundays for worship and not on Saturdays.
    - 4) Why the church of Christ is not just another denomination.
    - 5) Why it is necessary for someone to be baptized in order to be saved.
    - 6) Why the preacher is not referred to as reverend or pastor.
    - 7) Why we make a distinction between the old and new covenants, etc.
  3. Actually, the list of things is quite extensive.
- C. Departures begin when the assumption is made that everybody already knows the answers to these things, and the other basic first principles.
  1. People become restless, and they say, "I've already heard this so many times, can't we move on to something new; something different."
  2. So someone comes up with the idea: "we already know the doctrines, so let's preach more about love, more about relationships, more about families, how to feel good about yourself, etc."
  3. So we then succeed in bringing up a generation of young people who know nothing about the doctrines of the Lord.
  5. Franklin Camp used to say that we are "only one generation away from apostasy."
    - 1) If we fail to teach our children, then obviously they will not be teaching their children the fundamentals of the Word of God.
    - 2) It only takes then one generation to break the cycle of biblical instruction!
- D. *Train up a child...* (**Prov. 22:6**); *Fathers provoke not your children...* (**Eph. 6:4**).
- E. **Rom. 15:4**: consider the principle that is taught in **Deut. 6**.
  1. **Deut. 6:4-9** *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:*  
**6:5** *And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.*

**6:6** *And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:*

**6:7** *And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*

**6:8** *And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.*

**6:9** *And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.*

- F. What Israel was taught, the importance of loving God and obeying His statutes, God wanted them to retain in their hearts.
1. The heart is a reference to the mind (**Prov. 23:7**).
  2. In the recesses of our thoughts, God must be retained, and to such an extent that they could be taught diligently to their children.
  3. When we take something to heart, and it is of great importance to us, we retain it in our minds -- i.e. we memorize what is important to us.
- G. What was given to Israel was important enough that God wanted it taught to the children diligently. And it was to be done with repetition.
1. Those who teach know the value and importance of repetition; because through repetition comes the greater ability to retain what one is taught.
  2. These statutes were to be taught to the children when sitting in their house, when out for a walk, when it was evening and time for bed, and when they would awake.
  3. The picture drawn is that every opportunity was to be utilized to teach the statutes of God.
  4. God even foresaw questions that children would ask (**6:20-25**).
- H. The same is true today: if we want our children to retain the statutes of God, the laws, principles, and things that are necessary for salvation, then we must continually teach them and answer their questions.
1. Friends it needs to be a combined effort of the home and the church.
  2. Certainly we are aware of the responsibilities in the home (**Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:4**).
  3. The church is available then to reinforce what the children learn in the home.
  4. Likewise the home reinforces what the children learn at the assembly of the saints.
  5. If the home neglects its duty, there will be consequences; and if the church neglects its duty, it will weaken the efforts of the home.
  6. Together, both entities can reinforce to the children the importance of loving God and keeping His commandments.
- I. If the home and the church does not take that responsibility seriously, then we are going to have a generation which does not know God.

## II. THE DIET.

- A. With the assumption that everyone understands the basics, the new thrust is to emphasize love.
1. Now it is certainly true: Love is extremely important.
  2. **John 13:34-35** *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*  
**35** *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

3. **1 John 2:9-10** *He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.*  
**10** *He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.*
- B. While love is extremely important, it was not meant to be a replacement of doctrine, but in fact was meant to compliment it.
  1. God never intended for one to be without the other.
  2. A child of God, out of a deep love for God, obeys His will (**John 14:15; John 15:14** *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*)
  3. **Heb. 5:8-9** *Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;*  
**5:9** *And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;*
- C. The diet of *just preach love* is not good for the church
  1. **Illus.** My children love candy (generally most do); but it is not good for me to give them that to eat all of the time. (they need a balanced diet)
  2. A number of yrs ago, the late Andrew Connally said that the church is suffering from a case of “synthetic diabetes” --i.e. too much sugar in the diet.
  3. Lessons are designed to be non-offensive, so that no matter who hears the lesson, regardless of whether they are living in sin, or are something religiously other than God’s design, they can leave comfortable in their situation.
  4. Earlier in the week I mentioned the problem of *agreeing to disagree* (you believe what you want, and I’ll believe what I want, but we will accept one another on the basis of love).
  5. But as I mentioned, that is not unity, but in fact is union.
  6. I submit to you that truth needs to be preached and upheld, not to achieve union but unity.
  7. That we might be *of the same mind, and of the same judgment* (**1 Cor. 1:10**).
- D. Despite what my brethren think, people need to hear the truth.
  1. **Acts 2:36** *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*
  2. **Acts 3:13-15** *The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.*  
**14** *But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;*  
**15** *And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.*
  3. It is a good thing that Peter doesn’t preach in the 21st century; some of my brethren would pull him aside and chew Him out for not being more loving.
- E. Consider for a moment the Sermon on the Mount, hailed by many as the greatest sermon ever delivered.
  1. Even those who clamor for more preaching on love hail this sermon as a great text.
  2. Many people who know little about the Bible, have read or at least have heard portions of the sermon.

3. But are you aware that there are more negative things said by our Lord than positive?
- F. Now I am not suggesting that we become negative, or overly blunt and harsh in our presentation of the truth.
  1. Paul makes it clear that we are to *speak the truth in love* (**Eph. 4:15**).
  2. But what I am suggesting is, that we need to be more balanced in our lives and in our approach to others.
- G. **Illus.** Washing machine -- makes a terrible noise when out of balance (so do brethren).
  1. It makes the excellent point, that when the machine is out of balance, it is not functioning properly.
  2. When Christians are too positive, or even too negative, then we are not in harmony or in balance with the teachings of God.
- H. Now having said that, let me clarify something, so that you don't leave with a misunderstanding after this lesson:
  1. True we can be too positive and just preach love, and sugar coat religion.
  2. And we can be too negative that everything about us is so sour that no one wants to be a Christian if that is what Christianity is.
  3. But I want it understood, that it is important that we be positive in our approach.
  4. **Phil. 4:4** *Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!*
  5. We have every reason to rejoice (**cf. John 10:10**).
  6. We rejoice in the gift of God's Son that we have the blessing of the promise of eternal life through Him.
  7. Understand: a person can be positive and happy in his Christianity without sacrificing doctrine!
  8. It is said of the early church: *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.* (**Acts 2:42**).
- I. Consider again children for a moment: we want them to eat a balanced diet, and they may not necessarily like it when we have them eat vegetables or fruits.
  1. Does our concern for a balanced diet make their lives such that they are miserable.
  2. Oh, they might tell you that; grumble at the dinner table, and say things like, "I don't like that"; but that which they claim to not like is actually good for them.
- J. It's ironic, I hear the same things about the Word of God.
  1. Some years ago I preached a lesson on the necessity of church discipline, and one of the sisters, (whom I loved dearly and has since passed away), said: "I know we needed to hear that, but I didn't like it."
  2. Doesn't that remind you of the child with the vegetables? I know that I need them, but I don't like it.
  3. Sometimes there are things in the doctrine of Christ that we indeed don't like, but does that mean that we avoid them just because we don't like them?
  4. I pointed out in that lesson on church discipline, that despite what some have come to believe, that church discipline is actually an act of love!
  5. Paul told the Corinthian church that it was necessary that the *leaven would not leaven the whole lump* (**1 Cor. 5:6**).
  6. He also said that it was done *that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord*

*Jesus (1 Cor. 5:4).*

7. I submit that it is more unloving not to do what is necessary to save the soul, than to let them continue in sin, and risk infecting the whole church.
- K. Recently, I was in Knoxville, Tennessee, where I was speaking on a lectureship on the Book of Leviticus.
  1. I mentioned the subject of church discipline, and the reaction of members in the Lord's body.
  2. Then I gave an illustration: When I was a boy, when I got a cut on my body, my mother would get out the methiolate.
    - 1) If you have never felt its sting, take my word for it, count yourself blessed.
    - 2) I was naive as a child: my father used to tell me after my mother applied it, to blow on it and it would feel better. (It didn't and now I know why he laughed at the time.)
    - 3) I used to think that my parents using methiolate was the height of cruelty, but in reality it was not an act of hatred; but of love.
    - 4) I remember distinctly one time as a boy having worn boots which rubbed one of my ankles till it bled.
    - 5) It became infected, and my mother stayed after it with the methiolate.
    - 6) Infections are not something inconsequential as people die from them.
    - 7) Thankfully my parents cared enough to nurture and help me.
- L. When it comes down to the diet: I truly wonder how many of our pulpits are preaching about sin and its consequences?
  1. It seems that so many are concerned with philosophy, and seek to do counseling from the pulpit rather than preaching.
  2. And then we add to it our problem of our own time: the need to be entertained.
- M. We have become spoiled by the technology of the time.
  1. What we see on TV is the product of carefully edited video tape.
  2. Shows about the bloopers which occur in the filming of episodes make us aware of the number of takes that is sometimes necessary before the final product is completed.
  3. Further, what generally is found on TV is the best singers, the best orchestras, the best bands, etc.
  4. Then we it comes to worship services, we become disappointed.
  5. Our singing doesn't measure up to the perfected product that we hear.
  6. And as we listen to the man in the pulpit, we get his bloopers live.
  7. When a preacher is in the pulpit, you get his mistakes or blunders live.
  8. What happens is that people are so accustomed to being entertained with top quality, that they expect it in the worship service.
  10. And when they don't get it, they become dissatisfied, so they go after the preacher and tell him that his lessons are dry and boring.
  11. Even though the man may preach a Scriptural lesson, they are not entertained and so they leave disappointed.
- N. Now understand, there are times in our diet that a little levity can help make a point.
  1. An occasional story or illustration helps us to remember a truth that we find in Scripture.
  2. For example, I gave the point about the washing machine to help illustrate the

- point of how unbalanced we can become if we are not careful.
3. However, if I spend all my time in the pulpit telling jokes and stories to entertain my brethren, and fail to teach the word of God, then I am starving my brethren!
  4. **Hos. 4:6** *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...* (indictment against the priests).
  5. Without a sound diet of Scripture, *there is a famine in the land.*
  6. In the days of the prophet Amos, God told the people of a punishment for their sins: **Am. 8:11** *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.*
- O. When you carefully look at what the apostle Paul wrote concerning Scripture, you can begin to see the importance of preaching the Word of God.
1. In **2 Tim. 3:16-17** *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*  
**3:17** *That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*
  2. Paul told Timothy that his responsibility was to *preach the word (2 Tim. 4:2)*, and with that Word then he could *reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*
- P. The diet which we consume makes all the difference in our spiritual growth.
1. Based on **2 Pet. 1:5-7**, How can you *add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge;*  
**6** *And to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness;*  
**7** *And to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity (love), if you consume in your spiritual diet something other than Scripture?*
  2. After giving these graces, Peter then draws a contrast that makes the point relative to the diet:  
**8** *For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*  
**9** *But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.*
  3. If one gets away from the Word of God, then he is in essence spiritually blind!

### III. APPLICATION.

- A. I believe you folks in this congregation are exemplary. Even so, I lovingly warn you, that if you choose to have anything other than the word of God for your spiritual diet, you can and likely will die.
1. Yes, churches can and do die.
  2. Jesus told the church in Sardis, *I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead (Rev. 3:1).*
  3. There are churches in our own brotherhood that think that they have names (great reputations for being great churches), and they are dead.
  4. You know why: Because the Word of God is not being preached in the pulpit! And the shepherds are not overseeing the flock!
  5. Again **Isa. 8:20** sounds forth: *To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*

- B. People wonder why churches quit growing.
  - 1. They run to bookstores and read the books of the various denominations looking for ideas.
  - 2. And the power to have a living and dynamic church is right under their noses!
  - 3. Paul said, *For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power (dunamis) of God unto salvation... (Rom. 1:16-17).*
- C. If you want to excel for the Lord in this community, I encourage you to preach the basics, and you will see growth.
  - 1. **Isa. 55:11** *So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*
  - 2. *Preach the word* and let God's word work in the souls of men; don't rely upon your own human frailties to save souls.

**CONCLUSION:**

- 1. Friends, it is that kind of preaching that will force you to look for a bigger place to assemble.
- 2. I implore you, don't seek to get away from Scripture.
- 3. Don't expect your preacher to be your entertainment; and don't expect him to preach what you want to hear, but what you need to hear!
- 4. If we are to restore New Testament Christianity, and uphold the simple truths of Scripture, it has to begin with ourselves.
- 5. How is your relationship with Christ?