

I Choose to Remain a Fundamentalist

Recently I received a warm and thought-provoking letter from a young Bible instructor at a well known college, rich in Christian orthodoxy roots. He was commenting that he had noticed in one of my sermons in which I spoke this summer that I had made a decision early in my ministry to remain a fundamentalist. In the letter he asked me what were the reasons I chose to remain a fundamentalist.

In the days in which we live, I have sensed a need to clarify what we mean when we say “fundamentalist” and in answer to this young man’s question I would like to provide you with a short list of reasons I remain a Christian fundamentalist. In the 1958 edition of *The World Book* (the encyclopedia I read while growing up) the definition of *fundamentalism* is “a movement in Protestant churches of America, which teaches “fundamental” or “old-time” religion. It holds that the Bible should be interpreted literally, and that all the miracles of the Scriptures should be accepted as true. Fundamentalists are ultraconservative, and bitterly oppose modern or liberal tendencies in religion. They often demand allegiance to a creed, or statement of faith.” Although this may be a harsh definition of a Fundamentalist, we understand that the definition is fairly accurate from the world’s point of view. A more Christian world view could perhaps be better phrased: A fundamentalist is one who believes and adheres to a personal relationship with the Lord, a strict belief in the inspiration of Scriptures, a belief in moral absolutes, and a belief in eternity as revealed in the Bible.

The young instructor was correct; I did choose to remain a fundamentalist in my youth. I did so not because we are perfect, but because I personally believe it is the stance of our Lord, the Apostles, His Church, and all of the orthodox, ancient church fathers.

I choose to remain a fundamentalist, because it is a committed faith that is life-changing! I refer you to Tertullian. When he was an old pastor, some of his church members were making and polishing idols to Jupiter, Diana and other heathen deities for their livelihood. Some of the fundamental brethren were complaining of the compromise. *"Little children, keep yourselves from idols"* (I John 5:21). The church members who were into the idol business approached Tertullian and said, “We don’t worship these idols; we only do this to make a living...and we have to live, don’t we?!” Old Tertullian said, “Must ye live?” The application was obvious; we may have to take up our cross and die, but we do not have to live! Today we hear so much about being “user friendly” that we have overstepped the boundaries in the evangelical world and have (to a degree) stopped being God-friendly. We have become so practical that we have become pragmatic in approach to Christian experience and service. Today’s evangelical seems to crave the crown without the cross, the throne without the thorns. We affirm ourselves while our Lord says, deny yourself (Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23).

I choose to remain a fundamentalist because of a literal acceptance of God’s Word and a strong belief in His ability to preserve it. The Bible says, *"Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him"* (Proverbs 30:5). *"Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away"* (Mark 13:31). *"For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven"* (Psalm 119:89). If we do not hold to the inspiration of the Scriptures, we have opened the door for unbelief. It is very important to point out, this is the teaching of the Bible itself: *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:"* (II Timothy 3:16). If we do not have the anchor of the Word, we do not have the anchor that holds us to the Rock, Our Redeemer Himself the Lord Jesus Christ. *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* (Romans 10:17).

I choose to remain a fundamentalist because of the message of separation from the world. We are not to have martyr complexes, but we are to be in, yet not of the world. *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him"* (I John 2:15). We have a

message permeating our churches to mold with the world. To become “culturally relevant” is a phrase I hear popping up amongst our brethren. Yet as we examine the Scripture we see this is as a lapse into a Laodocian lack of love (Revelation 2:4) that eventually will end up eclipsing into the doctrine of Balaam (Revelation 2:14). There is still the call to “...come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord...” (II Corinthians 6:17).

I choose to remain a fundamentalist because I believe the mandate of the Lordship of Jesus Christ demands nothing less in my life, “...that in all things he might have the preeminence” (Colossians 1:18). In this world there is right and there is wrong. In discipleship, there is no room for middle ground. Dedication to the Lord Jesus Christ demands it. Toward the end of Harry Emerson Fosdick’s life, the most influential modernist of the twentieth century spoke a message to his fellowship of unbelief. He did much to steal the innocent faith of young believers and stand in the way of potential believers. But in his message entitled: “A Fundamentalist Sermon by a Modernist Preacher,” he declared:

“You see, we modernists have gotten at our faith by a negative process. We do not believe this. We do not believe that. We have given up this incredible idea or that obsolete doctrine. So we pare down and dim our faith by negative abstractions until we have left only the ghostly remainder of what was once a great religion. Then seeing how few our positive convictions are and how little they matter, we grow easy-going about everybody else’s convictions, and end in a mush of general concession. Then a crisis falls upon the individual soul, upon the family, upon the world at large, where a religion that is going to amount to anything must have deep conviction in it. ‘The rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock’- how much we need that!”

I submit to you his own words betray the remorse for the abdication of the “...faith which was once delivered to the saints” (Jude, verse 3).

Allow me to say in closing, I hold to these biblical convictions. I also hold to the conviction that we, as God’s people must not be hateful about the way in which we present our convictions. By the way, as a historic fundamentalist, I believe in being fundamental to Scripture such as in John 13:35, where our Lord said the way the world would know we are His disciples would be by the love we have for one another! We must always be aware that when our Lord dealt with seekers, He was ever more loving them with infinite, pure love, as expressed in the encounter with the rich young ruler, “Then Jesus beholding him loved him,” (Mark 10:21). Being a fundamentalist does not give any of us a license to be unkind; we of all branches of Christianity should be the ones who express the highest form of unconditional love.

- Pastor Pope -

[Back to Pastor's Word](#)