

## **RETAIN the Faith!**

We live in interesting and adventurous times as far as the Christian faith goes. We are told that we cannot hold to uniqueness of Jesus (that He alone is through Whom salvation comes), and that Biblical moral standards are outdated and bigoted.

Yet, a careful student of the Bible and of Church history shows that these things have always been under attack. Hardly sooner had Jesus ascended into Heaven did the attacks on the faith come. The truth of the Gospel was being undermined from within and disparaged from without. The Apostles Paul, Peter, and John were constantly encouraging Christians to shore up the foundations.

This is, of course, sound Bible doctrine. I came up with an acrostic to illustrate my points for this column:

R-E-T-A-I-N.

The "R" is for retain. This word means that we are to guard or keep. We have been given a wonderful heritage as Brethren and as "people of the Book." But it is always a struggle to keep doctrine from being subverted or from being eroded over time. 2 Timothy 1:13 says, "Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me." We are to hold to the standards which God has revealed to us in His Word—whether in the face of friends, co-workers, or changing standards of people.

"E" stands for example. Not only must we believe what is right, we must live what is right. Christians are to live the life of our faith in Jesus Christ. The world is rightly tired of nominal believers. What a change could be wrought in this country if those who say they are Christians would live consistently according to the New Testament, as God gives the grace to do so.

"T" means train. Paul reminds Timothy, "the things you have heard from me. . . commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2). 2 Tim. 3:16 tells us that the Word of God is given for instruction (what is right), for reproof (what is wrong), for correction (how to get right), and for training (how to stay right). Churches can lose all semblance of what they were because they do not faithfully pass on the truths of God's Word and the New Testament doctrines.

"A" is for "Don't be ashamed." 2 Tim. 1:8 reminds us to not be embarrassed for the Lord's testimony. A study among the Brethren

tells us something many of us have suspected over the years--we are very good at doing, but not very good at talking about it. We go about our business of following the Lord, but sometimes we don't tell why. We should not be ashamed of any of the Scriptural doctrines and practices, nor any of the Scriptural applications our church makes of Bible teachings.

The letter "I" is for involvement. Two means for continuing the truth of the Bible are a) being involved ourselves, and b) involving others. Titus 2 speaks of every group in the church being active in the work of ministry. If we let "good old Sam" do everything, we wonder why "Sam" no longer allows his name to go on the ballot, or why he doesn't come to workday anymore. Everyone has a gift and ought to try to cultivate that gift. We also try to actively invite others into the work of the church.

"N" means never give up! The road is at times hazardous and bumpy, but 2 Tim. 3:10-12 and 4:5 remind us that it is nothing new, and in fact should be expected for living faithfully in Christ. And just because someone else has taken the easy way out does not mean that you can do so. The end of the road and the completion of the struggle are only sweet to those who have labored long and endured much for it. If this life is easy, why in the world should we desire Heaven?

2020 lies ahead. At the end of it (should the Lord not return this year), will you and I be as faithful or more so than we are now? Will we have held the standard high to honor our Lord in the battle?

Friends, let's RETAIN our Christianity, holding the standard and guarding the treasure.

*Pastor Craig Alan Myers*