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Neo-Sectarian Words by John T Polk II

The only preaching endorsed by the Holy Spirit in the churches of Christ was of "sound doctrine." All sin is condemned for being "contrary to **sound doctrine**" (1 Timothy 1:10). Christians are in apostasy when "they will not endure **sound doctrine**" (2 Timothy 4:3).

1. An Elder should be: "... Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by **sound doctrine**, both to exhort and convict those who contradict (Titus 1:9), [and face corrupt false teachers to] rebuke them sharply, that they may be **sound in the faith**" (Titus 1:13).

2. The obligation for a Gospel Preacher to set churches in order with Elders is to: "Speak the things which are proper for **sound doctrine**" (Titus 2:1).

3. Heeding sound doctrine should cause "older men" to be "**sound in faith**, in love, in patience" (Titus 2:2), and "young men" to have: "... **Sound speech** that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you" (Titus 2:8).

"**Doctrine**" is either "sound" or "unsound," and there are no degrees in between. There is no such thing as "sound, sounder, soundest," as these invoke comparison that God doesn't make. Since "sectarianism" is making divisions and separations that God hasn't given, then degrees of doctrine would be "sectarian" in its very nature.

What is "balanced preaching?" "Balance" is a word never used of "doctrine" or "preachers" in the New Testament. To "balance" something means to "compare it with something else," or to "equalize it with another thing." With what is "doctrine" or are "preachers" to be "equalized?" **Paul appealed** to Timothy to not be "balanced" with false "knowledge:" "O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and

contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge-- by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace be with you. Amen" (1 Timothy 6:20-21). **Jesus said** there is a difference between ignorant worship and "true worshipers:" "You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:22-24). What "balance" can there be between these two kinds of worshipers? **Peter appeals to Christians** to not "balance" our "good works" with worldly works: "Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Peter 2:11-12).

If the doctrine we should preach is "sound," with what should it be "balanced?" If preaching "sound doctrine" produces "true worshipers," with what does our worship need to be "balanced?" If we heed "sound doctrine," with what should our Christian living be "balanced?" Unfortunately, those in the church of Christ who demand "balanced" Preachers and doctrine: "... Will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables" (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

So-called "balanced preaching" tilts the scale toward false doctrine, and is "sectarian!" Gospel Preaching is not a "balancing act," but learning to: "Take firm hold of instruction, do not let go; keep her, for she is your life" (Proverbs 4:13). The churches of Christ should be committed to: "Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end" (Hebrews 3:6).

This does not make us a "mainstream church of Christ," for that would mean there are tributaries or lesser streams connected that would be acceptable. There is no other stream!

When Paul wrote, "To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in **Colosse**" (**Colossians 1:2**), what other "brethren in Christ" were there in Colosse? Paul wrote: "To the church of God which is at **Corinth**, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours" (**1 Corinthians 1:2**). What person "sanctified in Christ Jesus" was not in their assembly when they came "together in one place" (**1 Corinthians 11:20**)? Jesus built "His" church (**Matthew 16:18**), and Paul pleaded: "... With you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (**1 Corinthians 1:10**). Since Jesus built His church, and Christians should have "no divisions among" them, there is only the church of Christ or it is not! There are no partial churches of Christ in Scripture, and it is "sectarian" to try to make it so.

"Sound doctrine" should not be "balanced" in order to support a "mainstream church of Christ!" We should:
 "... No longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ" (**Ephesians 4:14-15**).

"Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. Let all that you do be done with love" (**1 Corinthians 16:13-14**).

-----**John T. Polk II** published in the **Gospel Gleaner**,
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Salted Speech Colossians 4:6

- ~ "Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you're right."
 - Henry Ford
- ~ "Yesterday is history; tomorrow is a mystery; today is a gift of God, which is why we call it the present." - Bill Keane
- ~ "You miss 100% of the shots you don't take." - Wayne Gretzky
- ~ "It is during our darkest moments that we must focus to see the light." - Aristotle
- ~ "Do not let making a living prevent you from making a life."
 - John Wooden

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