

Amy: Welcome to A Word Fitly Spoken, a podcast about Jesus, His Word, and our joy in following Him. I'm Amy Spreeman.

Michelle: And I'm Michelle Lesley. In this episode we are wrapping up our podcast series on Doctrinal Distinctives, which we've titled, Who do you think you are? Doctrinal distinctives are those beliefs that you have as a Christian that are above and beyond our basic must-have doctrines in order to be a Christian. We've been talking about where we land on certain doctrinal issues, not so that you have to align with everything we do, but so that you can start thinking about your own doctrinal distinctives.

Amy: We've got Episodes one and two linked up in our program notes. In our first episode we talked about what it means to be a Calvinist/Reformed Baptist, and what it means to be a Cessationist. Those are two things Michelle and I align with. In fact we're finding out that the two of us align on a lot of things! Our second episode was dedicated entirely to the topic of Complementarianism and how we view our roles as women in the Church. We touched on the word patriarchy, and we talked about feminism as something we definitely do not align with. Tonight we are going to discuss our third and final area of doctrinal distinctives, as we both identify as Christian Conservatives. What does that mean? Are we right-wing kooks trying to force people into a theocracy? Nope, that is NOT what it means, and I'm sure you are all relieved to hear it! Now before we talk about this, I missed defining something very important when we discussed our core beliefs, and I guess it's because I often think it goes without saying. It shouldn't go without saying and that's why we need to talk about the Protestant side of our faith. Understand that being a Protestant is not a distinctive, but a core, must-have belief if we are to call ourselves Christian.

Michelle: True, and we need to clarify what it means to be Protestant only in that we have been set apart from all other religions by what are called The five *solas* of the Protestant Reformation.

These are five Latin terms you may have heard of that were clarified 500 years ago as a strong corrective to the faulty practices and beliefs of the time held by the Roman Catholic system, and they remain relevant today. The word Sola means alone or only. So briefly, here is what all Christians believe in these five Solas:

Sola scriptura means Scripture alone is the source of authority for Christians. Not the authority of the Roman Catholic Pope, not in tradition, and definitely not from a still small voice that you think you heard audibly. Only the Bible is "inspired by God."

Sola fide means Faith alone. Salvation is a free gift by faith, NOT purchased by indulgences, tithing, good works, sacraments or any other human effort.

Sola gratia means we are saved by Grace alone. Ephesians 2:8-9 teaches, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

Solus Christus means Christ alone. It is through His shed blood on the cross that we are saved. Jesus is the One who offers access to God, not a human spiritual leader.

Soli Deo gloria means we seek the glory of God alone.

As Christians we are called to focus on Scripture, accept salvation by grace through faith, magnify Christ, and live for God's glory.

Amy, this is a great lead-in to what we are talking about in this episode, and that is our doctrinal distinctives concerning how we are living in this world as Conservative Christians. That term has gotten such a bad rap in the last few decades,

Amy: It has indeed. So let's define what Conservative means in terms of our faith. Conservative simply means that we hold to an unchanging view of God through Scripture; that we don't shape our theology in view of the current social/political/insert-the-trend season of life. Our almighty God has not changed through the generations, and will continue to remain steadfast long after this generation has passed away. He does not evolve. He does not change His mind about what is and is not Holy, or what is or is not Sin.

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Isaiah 40:8 The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. We have what you may have heard called "a High View of Scripture." Michelle just explained Sola Scriptura. We get our beliefs and our doctrines about God's nature and character from Scripture alone. We believe all Scripture is breathed-out by the Holy Spirit. It is without error. So if you have a problem with Scripture, you have a problem with God. Scripture is also SUFFICIENT, as 2 Timothy 3:16 says, is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

What is the opposite of Conservative Christian? Michelle I think it's perfectly fine when defining our terms to also bring in opposites so that people are clear not only what you Do stand for, but what you do not. The opposite of Conservative Christianity is Progressive Christianity and that is a real thing.

Michelle: It is, and this movement has been diminishing ALL 5 of the Solas we just talked about for more than 100 years. We think of Conservative Christianity as having always been the biblical norm. It used to be that you didn't have to define it! But it really has grown out of the liberal-fundamentalist controversies in the first half of 20th century.

At that time, many churches and pastors abandoned the fundamentals of the faith while others remained true. And ever since, long-standing Conservative churches have experienced internal struggles for control of leadership and direction. And we see this trend decimating churches today.

Yet those who call themselves Progressive Christians are still considered by many to be true

believers. But are they really? Let's take a look at what is influencing this movement. I like to go right to the source, and many progressive churches say they get their mission statement from a website called Progressive Christianity.Org. Here's what that website has on its home page. They start by asking three questions:

Do you find more grace in the search for meaning than in absolute certainty, in the questions rather than in the answers?

Do you have religious interests and longings but cannot accept the beliefs and dogmas you associate with Christianity?

Are you repelled by claims that Christianity is the "only way"?

We believe that following the path of the teacher Jesus can lead to healing and wholeness, a mystical connection to "God," as well as an awareness and experience of not only the Sacred, but the Oneness and Unity of all life.

Not All progressive Christians are the same - and we don't want to lump everyone together. But the result of casting doubt on the basic tenets of our faith even by just a few degrees will change your entire path from the narrow way Jesus spoke of to the wide road that leads to destruction.

And we see that in some of the cultural/social issues about sin that has now become the main focus of these progressive churches: The acceptance of abortion, euthanasia, LGBTQ leaders and lifestyles for its members, women pastors and elders, and the list goes on. These are not simply social or political issues, these are Biblical issues. We'll get into these in a moment.

Amy: First, let's talk about three major beliefs of Progressive Christianity that are flat-out lies from the pit of Hell:

1 God saves everyone, and that there is no Hell, and a loving God would never send anyone there.

This is the lie of Universalism. That everyone goes to heaven.

Along with this one is the idea that we all go to heaven because basically, we're all decent loving people at heart. The Bible says our hearts are wicked, and no one is without sin - not one. Jesus says I am the way and the truth and the life, and no one comes to the father except through Me.

Only those who put their faith in Christ to forgive their sins through what He has already done - are saved.

2 the Second Lie: There is no such thing as propitiation, or substitutionary atonement - The idea that Christ had to die as a sacrifice for our sins is cosmic child abuse, invented more than a thousand years after the cross.

That's what the emergent church movement taught a couple of decades ago- and while that movement is largely over, the emergent ways have shape-shifted and are popular today in progressive churches.

The truth: If you do a search for the word Propitiation, it pops up all over the old and new testament. Here's one: 1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

3 The third lie - The Bible is not relevant for today.

Progressive Christianity is all about relevancy. Keeping with the times, the trends, the social constructs. We need to make God's Word inclusive, because we want everyone to feel included.

This is why we see growing number of Christian churches who have women preaching on Sunday morning, and/or are Gay Affirming. The Truth is, Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away" (Luke 21:33).

If you are a conservative Christian, you know these are lies, and you are NOT inclusive, but Exclusive. And today if you are not about inclusivity, there is a price to pay. If you speak the truth, or even if you don't affirm sin, your punishment might be losing your job, your reputation, losing your friends, having your family turn away from you. You might even be faced with legal action, fines or jail time. It is part of the persecution to come, and that is already here. Christians around the world are being tortured and murdered for their beliefs. Just going to church could cost you your life. That kind of persecution most of us haven't experienced yet. But following Jesus as the exclusive, only way, who does NOT affirm sin is costly, and there will be a price to pay one way or another.

Michelle: Most people associate Conservative Christianity with Conservative politics, and Progressive Christianity with Liberal or Progressive politics. And most of the time you do see those divisions or distinctions at play when it comes to social issues. The reason for this is that these are actually BIBLICAL issues. God is very clear in His Word about the sin and wickedness of Abortion and Homosexuality. As conservative Christians, we believe what God says about the value of life and about marriage being between one man and one woman. We believe that there are not 50-plus genders, but only two-God made them male and female. This is not hate speech, but biblical truth. Yet in our world and yes, in so-called churches that are progressive, believing and expressing these biblical truths are hate crimes. And I believe we are heading into a time when we will be forced to declare our stance--do you believe these things or not. Will you affirm sin or not -- and there will be no skirting around these issues or trying to fly under the radar. These days of trying to play nice and not share your opinions about where you stand on these issues are -- I believe -- coming to an end.

Amy: I agree Michelle. We are seeing Christians in the workplace being forced to agree with very progressive mission statements, mostly based around social justice. Social justice is a major part of Progressive Christianity. Let me make a few points about that, briefly. Social justice can sound like Christ-likeness: Minister to the poor, the orphans, the widows, just as Jesus said. That's Biblical. But true social justice as defined in our world today is the driving force behind socialism and communism. It replaces the true Gospel of Jesus Christ with political activism. The Social Justice Progressive Gospel is shifting the focus from seeking Christ, equipping the saints with Truth, preaching the Word and serving people who are in desperate need physically and financially – and of course spiritually. It is shifting believers away from putting on the full armor of God with the shield of faith. Instead, we are to wield the weapon of political activism to fight the battles of society. What did Paul tell church leaders to do? **2nd Timothy 4:2:** Preach the Word, in and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine."

You don't need Christian doctrine or even Jesus for the social, woke gospel; just a few verses out of context: Some have taken the words of Jesus to love your neighbor as a clarion call to substitute a gospel of activism for the Gospel of redemption.

Michelle, any final thoughts?

Michelle: Yes, just one more thing:

I'm not wild about pairing any adjective with the word "Christian," even though I sometimes do it myself out of necessity.

If you remember your English grammar at all, you'll recall that an adjective is also called a "modifier". Modify means "change". So when you pair an adjective with the word Christian, you're changing, even if only slightly, the meaning of the word Christian. I'm not really comfortable with that, even though, like we said earlier, sometimes the most helpful way to define a word is by saying, "It's the opposite of _____." So, just to clarify, when we say we're "conservative Christians," the heart of what we're saying in our current cultural context is, "We're **not** Progressives."

But in reality, there's no such thing as a conservative Christian and a progressive Christian, just like there's no such thing as being "a little pregnant". You either are or you're not. You're either a Christian or you're not.

And, listen to me carefully: if you **know** what the Bible says about all the issues we've talked about tonight and you **reject** what the Bible clearly says about those issues in favor of being unrepentantly committed to the progressive worldview on those issues, let me say this clearly: you are not a Christian. Even if you think you are. Even if you call yourself one.

As I've said before, that's not Michelle saying that. That's not Amy saying that. That's God saying that. Listen to 1 John 2:3-6:

And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a **liar**, and the truth is not in him, 5 but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: 6 whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

The Bible says that if you say you're a Christian and live in rebellion against God's Word, you're a liar. You are not in Christ.

James 4:4: You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Abortion, homosexuality, unbiblical views of Christ and salvation, all of those things we talked about tonight are worldly ideas. Worldly ways of doing things. And if that's what you're friendly toward, you're an enemy of God. You cannot hold hands with the world and God at the same time. God doesn't allow it.

One more- Matthew 7:23-24:

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' 23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

You can fool other people into thinking you're saved. You might even be able to fool yourself into thinking you're saved. But you will **never** fool Jesus. He **knows** who's saved and who's not.

Amy and I would urge you, if you consider yourself a progressive Christian - go to our website, AWordFitlySpoken.Life and click on the good news tab, and carefully, and prayerfully work through all of the material there, and repent and believe the true gospel of Christ.

When you die, we don't want you to stand before Jesus and hear Him say "I never knew you, depart from me," and consign you to an eternity in hell. Repent, trust in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection to take away and forgive your sin, and be saved."

Amy: I think this is a good place to wrap up this conversation about doctrinal distinctives. subscribe to us and follow us on social media - and don't forget to share what you've heard. Head over to our website, awordfitlyspoken.life, to learn more.

Michelle: And while you're on the website, we'd love it if you'd support us with prayer - or perhaps consider a financial gift to offset the digital production costs.

Thanks again for tuning in, and until next time, be steadfast in your beliefs, align your beliefs to His Word, and Walk Worthy!