

## 21T10 Bewildering Christian Terminology

Hello my friends. Thanks for joining me at the PUNLA Coffee Table. So, get your coffee or tea. Get comfortable and let's talk. If what I say is nonsense, then it's definitely from me. If anything I say brings you wisdom, then that's just God using me.

Have you every sat in church and heard your pastor use a Theological term and wondered what is that. I doubt you are alone. Have you ever asked why.? Why so many terms, doctrines, theologies. Aren't we just Christian, period?

I've asked these questions. In fact, I've wondered if there is any purpose in these labels.

Now I work professionally as an engineer. In my field we used all kinds of terms and anacronyms. SIL, SIS, AICHE, ISA, ANSI, NFA, Tribology, cut-sets, functional safety, etc. In my field these made up terms and anacronyms are used as a kind of short-hand for writing and recording. Most of these are only understood by those in my field.

So, what about Christian terms, doctrines and theologies. What is their purpose? Terms like Dispensationalism (dividing history into discrete periods or dispensations), Prolegomena (Study of preTheology), Dogma (Study of Theology), Exegesis (interpretation of the Bible), Hermeneutics (Literal texts), Homiletics (applying theology for preaching), Apologetics (defending faith against non-Christian worldviews), Ecumenical (comparing doctrines)

Then you have the ologies; Eschatology (study of end times), Ecclesiology (study of the Christian Church), Christology (study of Jesus Christ), Soteriology (study of Salvation), Mariology (Study of Mary mother of Jesus), Missiology (study of Missions), Pneumatology (study of the Holy Spirit), Protology (Study of First Things), Hamartiology (study of Sin), and it goes on and on.

I think you get my point. We have made the very simple very complicated. And these subjects are hotly contested by Christians, Scholars and Theologians. They often cause divisions in our churches and anger between fellow Christians. Why?

My view, the Christian Engineer perspective, is three things are happenings in the modern Christian Church,

Vanity. Terms make us feel smarter or superior. I know from my work, we toss around terms wildly. You are thought to be learned or smart if you know these. This is the Danger of "Intellectual Superiority" which appeals to our vanity. Now terms are sometimes needed for communication of points in a consensus way. But too often they are used as hammers to silence the uninformed or unschooled.

Division. These terms, doctrines and theologies divide Christians into groups. You approve of this or that or you disapprove of this or that. It puts us at odds with our fellow Christians. Why?

Distraction. All these can distract us from the main things. For the most part, all of these terms, doctrines and theologies deal with fringe or gray areas. They typically do not impact core tenants of our faith. So Why?

I fear the devil is chipping away at the Church and Christians. Turning us against each other. These terms, doctrines and theologies in themselves are not the problem, but the people who so vehemently defend them or criticize those that don't.

I suggest that the Christian Church, The true Church. Needs revival. We need to refocus on the big picture, not these side-show issues. Unfortunately for us in the Western Modern World, we have lots of leisure time. And this time breeds these debates. That's why all of these terms, doctrines and theologies are modern concepts. Most of these terms are barely 100 years old. Yet Christ died for us and the Bible was written nearly 2000 years ago. So for 1900 years of the Christian Faith these terms, doctrines and theologies were not the focus of Christians.

I'm not suggesting we dump this stuff. Quite the contrary. I suggest to you, my fellow Christ Follower, to focus on following Jesus. What was His purpose? What did He tell us to do? We should spend the vast majority of our time focused on what Jesus wants from us, and leave these peripheral issues on the periphery. Discussion is good, obsession is bad. If Christians spent more time reinforcing our core tenants and common essential beliefs, we would be more united. Instead we compete with each other for membership, money and influence on the basis of these side-show issues. If I believe I am saved by the Grace of God through Faith in Jesus Christ as my savior, does it really matter if I am Covenantal or Dispensational, or if I believe in a Pre-Tribulation Rapture or a single 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ.

So in closing. Christian brothers and sisters, please don't throw these words around like "hand grenades". Let's keep the main thing, the main thing. That's Jesus. Let's allow discussion and debate on these side-show issues in away that glorifies God and shows the broken world Christ. We are not called to be robots and agree on every issue, But we are called to be part of one body of Christ. Love, Hope and Assurance.

And I know I did not use a single Bible verse in this conversation. But I will leave you with one from Paul in Ephesians 4:29-32 (ESV). *<sup>29</sup>Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. <sup>30</sup>And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup>Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. <sup>32</sup>Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

**Let me close with a prayer.**

**Lord Jesus, we apologize for being the source of division in your body the Church. Help us to focus on what you wish us to focus on. Help us to be kind to each other as you have shown us how.**

**Thank you for your word the Bible. It is our rock in times of trouble. But guide us in its use. Help us not to use you words as a weapon against our fellow Christians but rather as our weapon against the darkness of this world as a light that points toward you. I pray these things in your name Jesus. Amen**

Thank you for joining me at the PUNLA Coffee Table. If you liked the message, please click like. And Please Subscribe to our channel. Leave comments here, or our website or email me. I want your feedback so let me know what you think

Until next time at the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.