

Hello. /We will begin our first lecture on “Criticism of Modern Theology.” /At this time, we will study **1. What is liberal theology?** /The modern church has come face to face with the problem of “changing theology.”

/ “Theology” is the systematic knowledge of the truth of God. /Many modern theologians have abandoned the traditionally held truths of God that the church believes in and confesses. /We call this “liberal theology.”

/Liberal theology is the result of a **critical study** of the Bible. /How does biblical Christianity differ from liberal theology? /Biblical Christianity and liberal theology are fundamentally different.

/We can summarize the differences between biblical Christianity and liberal theology in the following way. /Biblical Christianity understands Christianity to be a lifestyle and experience based on **proper doctrine**. /**Furthermore, it says that these doctrines are sure and unchanging.**

/However, liberal theology considers Christianity to be separate from doctrine, and it says that when we look at experiences or lifestyles, doctrine can change with the passing of time. /Liberal theology does not hold Christian doctrine to be important.

/From its beginning, liberal theology treated doctrine lightly. /Schleiermacher, who is called the father of modern liberal theology, said that the core of religion is not rational proof or debate, but emotion. He said that God is a kind of experience, a living entity.

/Albrecht Ritschl also said that religion mustn't be theoretical, but that being saved means living a new life. /Harnack claimed that only the religions people experience can be made into confessions, while all other creeds or confessions of faith are, in Jesus' point of view, hypocritical and destructive.

/Schleiermacher, Albrecht Ritschl, and Harnack are pioneers of modern liberal theology. /In this way, liberal theology, from the beginning, attempted to find the fundamentals of Christianity in experiences or lifestyles that are separate from doctrine.

/According to them, Christianity's traditional doctrine is not important, and doctrine can change with modern philosophic and scientific challenges. /**However, biblical Christianity values doctrine.**

/We believe that Christianity is a lifestyle and experience based on proper doctrine. /Doctrine is the expression of truth in words. /Doctrine is a fundamental part of Christianity. /We find this to be true when we observe the origin of Christianity.

/The original propagators of Christianity did not preach an experience or teachings regarding lifestyle, but they spread truths about Jesus Christ. The explanation of truths is doctrine. /Jesus Christ's death on the cross is a historical fact.

/The fact that he died for our sins is a doctrinal. /It is the doctrine of atonement. /Proof that doctrine is a fundamental aspect of Christianity is found in the Bible's teachings that tell us to maintain proper doctrine and reject heresy.

/Moreover, **Christian doctrine is sure and unchanging.** /The Bible proclaims the sureness and unchanging nature of the gospel truth. /Galatians 1:8,9 says, "But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed."

/Then what is the nature of liberal theology? /Liberal theology does not accept the Bible as the word of God. /In short, liberal theology considers the Bible to be a book written by man, a mythical book with many errors.

/Let us take a look at a relatively conservative modern liberal theologian by the name of Karl Barth. /Karl Barth declared the story of Adam's creation and his fall to be false.

/He also said, "Whether figures like Abraham and Moses are products of later myth-making is of little relevance." /Furthermore, he stated that the Bible has errors.

/Let us take a look at C. H. Dodd. /C. H. Dodd said that the Bible's external authority isn't absolute and that God's revelations are not given in objective form.

/He even said that claiming the Bible's inerrancy is a threat to religion and public order. /However, this idea is completely different from the Bible's testimonies.

/What does Psalm 19:7-8 say? / "The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;"

/In this way, the Bible itself bears witness to its completeness and validity. /The New Testament in Luke 1:1-4 reads, "Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

/Matthew 5:18 says, "For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished." /Jesus himself testifies about the verbal inspiration of the Bible.

/John 10:35 says that Scripture cannot be broken. /Jesus himself proclaims the Bible's divine and absolute authority.

/2 Timothy 3:16 says that all of Scripture is inspired by God. /The verse not only testifies to Scripture's inspiration, but also to the Bible's divine origin and authority.

/2 Thessalonians 2:15 says, “So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.” /This message bears witness to the Apostles’ authority, that is to say, the divine authority of the New Testament Bible.

/Revelation 22:18-19 says, “I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.”

/The Lord, in his divine authority, says that no one can add or take away from the New Testament revelation. /Therefore, the Bible is a reliable book, and it is the word of divine authority that is the standard of our lives of faith.

/This is the basic, commonly held belief of all Protestant, Reformed, and Lutheran churches. /A proper view of the Bible is the most basic element of the Christian faith. /Believing that the Bible is the accurate, inerrant, and only law that governs our faith and lives is a basic part of the Christian faith.

/Thus, Christianity cannot tolerate liberal theology. /They are like the Sadducees who during the time of Jesus did not believe in Scripture or the power of God. /They are heretics. /We need to believe in this Bible and reject heresies.

/2. A Situation of Apostasy. /Up until the early 20th century, liberal theology was a weak force. /However, towards the end of the 20th century, it grew more powerful. /Nowadays, the problem of liberal theology has gone from being a problem of a few theologians to being a problem of many pastors belonging to large denominations.

/Churches of Europe gave in to apostasy early on, while churches in America became more tolerant after the 1920’s. /Today, many churches have embraced liberal theology.

/It seems as though there aren’t many churches that believe in the word of Scripture and reject liberal theology. /However, true Christianity is biblical Christianity. /Let us take a look at a few examples. **First, we will take the example of theologians.**

/In 1985 in the United States, approximately 125 Protestant and Roman Catholic theologians gathered at the “Jesus Seminar.” /I looked through the newspaper reports on this seminar, newspaper reports published up to early 1994. This is what I found.

/First, they believe that Jesus only said 20% of the words that are ascribed to him, and they say that only one verse in the Gospel according to John is Jesus’ actual words. /Second, they say Jesus never publicly claimed to be the Messiah. /Third, they say Jesus was very close to God, but he did not believe he was a divine being. /Fourth, Jesus did not die and rise from the dead. /Fifth, Jesus himself did not promise his second coming.

/These are all astonishing, heretical beliefs. /In 1999, Robert Funk, who played a leading role in the “Jesus Seminar,” gave this presentation at a United Church of Christ in the United States of America.

/(1) God does not exist beyond the physical world. /(2) Charles Darwin’s idea completely destroyed the doctrine of creation. /(3) Divine miracles are an insult to God’s justice and perfection. /(4) Prayer to a god who is out there is meaningless. Prayer is meditation.

/(5) Jesus isn’t a divine being. /(6) The idea of Jesus as Redeemer is an outdated belief. /(7) Saying that Jesus was born of a virgin is an insult to modern intelligence and an affront to women. /(8) The doctrine of atonement isn’t rational, but is sub-rational and sub-ethical. /(9) Jesus did not resurrect from the dead. /All of these ideas constitute extreme apostasy and are heretical ideas.

/Let us take the example of **seminary students**. /In 1976, a student by the name of Noel W. Hollyfield presented his United States Southern Baptist Masters’ thesis in theology. /In his thesis paper were the results of this survey.

/When asked the question “Do you believe in the existence of God without any suspicion?” 74% of first year seminary students, 65% of third year seminary students, and 63% of Th.M and Ph.D. students said they do believe without any suspicion. /When asked the question “Do you believe the miracles happened as the Bible say they did?” 61% of first year students, 40% of third year students, and 37% of Th.M. and Ph.D. students said “Yes.”

/When asked the question “Do you believe that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin?” 66% of first year students, 33% of third year students, and 32% of Th.M and Ph.D. students said “Yes.” /How can someone who doesn’t believe in the existence of God attend seminary to become a pastor?

/How unbelievable is it that as people further their studies in seminary, their faith becomes worse? This is the reality of the influence of liberal theology.

/Now let us take a look at the example of **church leaders**. /There is a man named Bishop John Spong of the United States Episcopal Church. /John Spong said that the personal God does not exist, and that God, as an object of prayer, is dead.

/According to the 1999 April 26 issue of the New American magazine, John Spong said, “For Christianity to survive, it must first get rid of its doctrines of Jesus Christ’s divinity, incarnation, virgin birth, resurrection, ascension, and miracles.” /A Bishop of the United States Episcopal Church adheres to these liberal beliefs.

/We will look at the example of **historically large denominations**. /Liberal theology can be found in the historically large denominations of the United States, such as the United States Presbyterian Church. /The Presbyterian Church of the United States of America has a long history of apostasy.

/On December 26, 1923, North Presbyterian pastors of America announced something called the Auburn Affirmation. /What is the Auburn Affirmation? They went against the 1910, 1916, and 1923 general assembly declarations.

/The 1910 general assembly came up with these details. It said that the five doctrines of the inerrancy of the Bible, Christ's virgin birth, the atonement of Christ, Christ's bodily resurrection, and the factuality of Christ's miracles form the essence of Scripture and the Westminster confession of faith.

/However, the Auburn Affirmation claimed that these doctrines are not essential but are merely theoretical. /But the Auburn Affirmation was adopted at the 1924 general assembly.

/This was the beginning of the Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A.'s apostasy. /Then what happened in 1981? /The United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. general assembly court came to a decision regarding the case of Pastor Mansfield M. Kaseman who was affiliated with the United Church of Christ and was serving in the general assembly.

/Pastor Mansfield M. Kaseman denied the divinity of Christ, the sinlessness of Christ, substitutionary atonement, and the resurrection of the body. /The presbytery to which Mansfield M. Kaseman belonged supported his opinion and the case went to the general assembly court.

/The general assembly court ruled that the presbytery was justified in supporting Kaseman's view. /This case clearly showed us that the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. had no willingness to get rid of these heretics. /Is this not apostasy?

/The United Methodist Church (UMC) in the U.S.A., was liberal from an early point. /Let us take a recent example. /UMC Bishop C. Joseph Sprague of Chicago said the following in his 2002 speech at Denver Theological Seminary.

/ "The myth of Christ's virgin birth was not intended to be a historical fact." / "I do not believe that Christ's resurrection includes his body's physical revival." /In this way, a Methodist Bishop holds onto these liberal ideas.

/Let us look at an example from the Church of England. /In London, England, there is a television program that airs on weekends called "Credo." In 1984, the television show reported the responses given by 39 bishops of the Church of England when they were asked certain questions.

/Of the 39, 31 bishops responded. /Only 11 of them responded positively to the traditionally proper doctrine of Christians regarding Christ as God and man at the same.

/The other 19 said, "It is sufficient for Christians to consider Jesus as God's best representative." They had this broad idea. /Furthermore, 15 of them said that the miracles

of the New Testament were later additions. /This shows us the state of apostasy in the Church of England.

/Let us look at the situation with the United Church of Canada. /The United Church of Canada (UCC) was liberal from early on, and the United Church of Canada was the one that brought liberal ideas into Korea. /Pastor Bill Phipps was recently Moderator of the United Church of Canada.

/In his conversation with the Ottawa Citizen newspaper on October 24, 1997, he said, “I do not believe that Jesus was God. I do not think Jesus is the only way to God. I do not believe that he rose from the dead.” /A man with the title of Moderator revealed his unbelief.

/Let us take a look at two pieces of data that show us the **overall situation** of the church of the United States of America.

/First, let me explain to you about a survey conducted by Jeffrey Hadden. /In 1967, Jeffrey Hadden, an American sociologist, surveyed 10,000 American clergymen and received a response from 7,441 of them.

/When asked the question “Do you believe in the virgin birth of Jesus?” 60% of UMC clergymen, 44% of ECA clergymen, 49% of UPC clergymen, and 34% of ABC clergymen said, “No.”

/When asked the question “Do you believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus as a fact?” /51% of UMC clergymen, 30% of ECA clergymen, 35% of UPC clergymen, and 34% of ABC clergymen said, “No.”

/Also, when asked the question “Do you believe that evil spirits exist in our world today?” /62% of UMC clergymen, 37% of ECA clergymen, 47% of UPC clergymen, and 34% of ABC clergymen said, “No.”

/Another question read, “Do you believe that the Scriptures are the inspired and inerrant Word of God in faith, history, and secular matters?” /To this, 87% of UMC clergymen, 95% of ECA clergymen, 82% of UPC clergymen, and 67% of ABC clergymen said, “No.”

/In this way, we see a situation in which many clergymen have an altered theology. /Let me raise one more piece of evidence. /I will talk about a survey conducted by Barna Research Group.

/It is a recent study. /Barna Research Group said in 2004 that 49% of Protestant pastors in the U.S.A. denied the following core biblical beliefs.

/First, there is an absolute, moral truth as defined by Scripture. /Second, the Bible’s teachings are accurate. /Third, Jesus had no sin. /Fourth, Satan exists. /These are all

biblical truths. /However, statistics showed that 49% of Protestant pastors denied these truths. /I cannot describe how shocking this is. /If we look at the ratio of pastors who believe properly, the Methodist Church had the lowest at 27%. /The Southern Baptist Church had the highest with 71%.

/We are able to see how liberal theology has greatly influenced churches in America. /If this is not apostasy, then what is it? /The Lord prophesied that in the end of days, many false prophets will arise. /Matthew 24:11-24.

/Paul prophesied about rebellion, or in other words, apostasy, before the Lord's second coming. /2 Thessalonians 2:3. /The apostasy of theologians and pastors belonging to historically large denominations is a very serious issue.

/Liberal theology, like leaven, is spreading throughout churches all over the world. /This leaven isn't going to be removed. The prophecy of apostasy at the end of days has been fulfilled, and it will be fulfilled in complete.

/However, God's faithful servants must be awake, and they must be aware of the apostasy of the modern church to rebuke it, discern it, and distinguish it to build true churches. /I hope the Lord's true servants discern this age of apostasy, compromise, and confusion. /And I hope that you stay on the proper way.

/I hope you only obey the entire word of Scripture, have fellowship with sincere believers, and be faithful before God. May you hold onto traditional, legitimate, and biblical Christianity.

/This concludes our first lecture on "Criticism of Modern Theology." /Thank you.