

Main distinctives summary

What are distinctives?

They are vital biblical truths that sit at the heart of what is most important to us. They are not what we have decided to make most important, they are what God's word makes most important.

Distinctive 1- God's purpose in all things.

God's word shows us that the reason God does all that He does is for His glory. But we believe that He is seeking to glorify Himself in one specific way in regard to His church- by showing them that He is a great Savior. God wishes to display to His people, who were His enemies, dead in sin and damned to hell, how great His mercy is by making a way to pardon those sins at the cross of Christ. And so, since this is God's purpose in all things, our desire is to join God in this work to glorify Himself in this way, by seeking to both see more and more how great a Savior He is, and show more and more how great a Savior He is. All of life and ministry for us becomes this seeing and showing.

Why is this important? It guides all that we do as individuals and the church, answering the question "why" concerning all we do.

Distinctive 2- The Law Gospel distinctive.

Seeing that all that God is doing in the world is showing this glorious truth about Himself, the scriptures reveal this work of God through one central story. We believe the entire bible is a story that can be summarized in two parts. The first part of the story is called "the law", and tells of how man has failed to do what God has commanded us to do. All those parts of the Bible that tell us what God has commanded us to do, and commands us to do what His law requires, or speaks of the consequences of keeping or not keeping those commands, whether in the Old or New Testaments, these are all part of the law. The second part of the story is called "the gospel", and it tells of what God has done for us in light of the first part of the story. This part of the story is also found in both the old and new testaments. For those who are His church He has made a way for us to escape the consequences of not keeping His law. He did this by the life, death, and resurrection of His perfect Son on our behalf.

Why is this important? It helps us understand what the Bible is saying, since we can ask of each part of the Bible, "what part of the story does this belong to, law or gospel?" It also helps us not mix works into the good news of what God has done for us.

Distinctive 3- The way God brings change to us.

We believe that God initially saves us, and then continues to sanctify us, by the same method. The means God has chosen to do this is with more and more sights of Himself as a great savior in the gospel. When we hear the gospel, the good news of what God has done for us, and the Holy Spirit works in our hearts, we see the depth of God's love for us in how much He has forgiven us. When we realize the depth of His love and forgiveness, we in turn are changed more and more into creatures that love Him in increasing measure.

Why is this important? Because it will prevent us from seeking to institute other means of change in the church, things that seem practical or wise, but cannot really produce any God honoring change in us.