

What comes to mind when you hear the word “sound” used in a religious context? How about “sound church” or “sound preacher”? Too often, we tend to associate “soundness” only with congregational practices particular to our fellowship and the preachers who affirm them in their teaching. But I want to pose a question this morning: Is this all that the Bible means by “sound”? Or have we, perhaps unintentionally, overlaid our interpretations onto this important concept? This morning, we’re going to delve into Paul’s letters to Timothy and Titus, where the word “sound” frequently appears, to discover the full breadth of “soundness” as it applies to us today. And we might be surprised by what we find.”

1. Breaking Down the Term and Use of “Sound”:
 - a. “Sound” - *hygiainō* healthy; sound in health (origin of the word – hygiene)
 - b. Used to denote physical health. | Luk 5:31; 7:10; 15:27; 3 Jhn 2
 - c. Paul uses it to modify:
 - i. Doctrine – 1 Tim 1:10; 2 Tim 4:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1
 - ii. Words – 1 Tim 6:3; 2 Tim 1:13
 - iii. Faith – Tit 1:13; 2:2
 - iv. Speech – Tit 2:8
2. Sound Hearts, Sound Church:
 - a. A church is only as “sound” as the hearts of the individuals who comprise it.
 - i. Singing the right way, but with the wrong spirit, is a clashing noise in God's ears.
 - ii. Decrying institutionalism, while neglecting the poor, is a misplaced stewardship.
 - iii. Speaking out against fellowship halls, but not showing hospitality, is hypocrisy.
 - iv. Taking the Lord’s Supper faithfully, while neglecting forgiveness and reconciliation, is a mockery of the Lord’s death.
 - v. Supporting foreign missions, while ignoring the lost in our own community, is a distorted vision of outreach.
 - vi. Correctly identifying false doctrine, while failing to examine our own hearts, is spiritual blindness.
 - vii. Defending doctrine, with a spirit of arrogance, undermines the truth we proclaim.
3. A Sound Heart...
 - a. Is marked by holiness in conduct and speech. | 1 Tim 1:3-11; 2 Tim 4:3; Tit 2:1-10
 - i. A sound heart, transformed by God’s grace, naturally expresses itself in holy living. This isn’t about legalism; it’s about a heart that desires to please God.
 - ii. Our actions and words, flowing from a sound heart, become a testament to our faith.
 - b. Avoids divisive discussions and controversies. | 1 Tim 6:3-5; 2 Tim 4:3-4; Tit 1:9-16
 - i. Like cancer, devotion to myths, controversies, and irreverent babble metastasizes, poisoning the heart and, consequently, the church. | 2 Tim 2:14-18
 - ii. As Paul urged Timothy, we are called to contend for the faith, but with a sound heart rooted in love and truth, not division. | 1 Tim 4:1-16; 6:2b-16

The Bible's use of "sound" points to something much deeper, much more personal than its common usage. It speaks to the health and vitality of our hearts. A sound heart cultivates holiness in conduct and speech, anchoring itself to the truth of God's Word while avoiding the quicksand of divisive discussions and controversies. A sound heart is one that reflects the very heart of Christ. And when we have sound hearts, we naturally build a sound church – a church marked by love, unity, and a shared commitment to God's truth. So, I ask you today, is your heart sound? Not by the world's standards or even by the standards of our traditions, but by God's standard? Examine your heart, words, and actions. Where do you need to grow in holiness? Where do you need to rein in your tongue? Where do you need to let go of cancerous controversies? Let's commit ourselves anew to cultivating sound hearts, knowing that as we do, we will build a sound church, to the glory of God and the health of our souls.