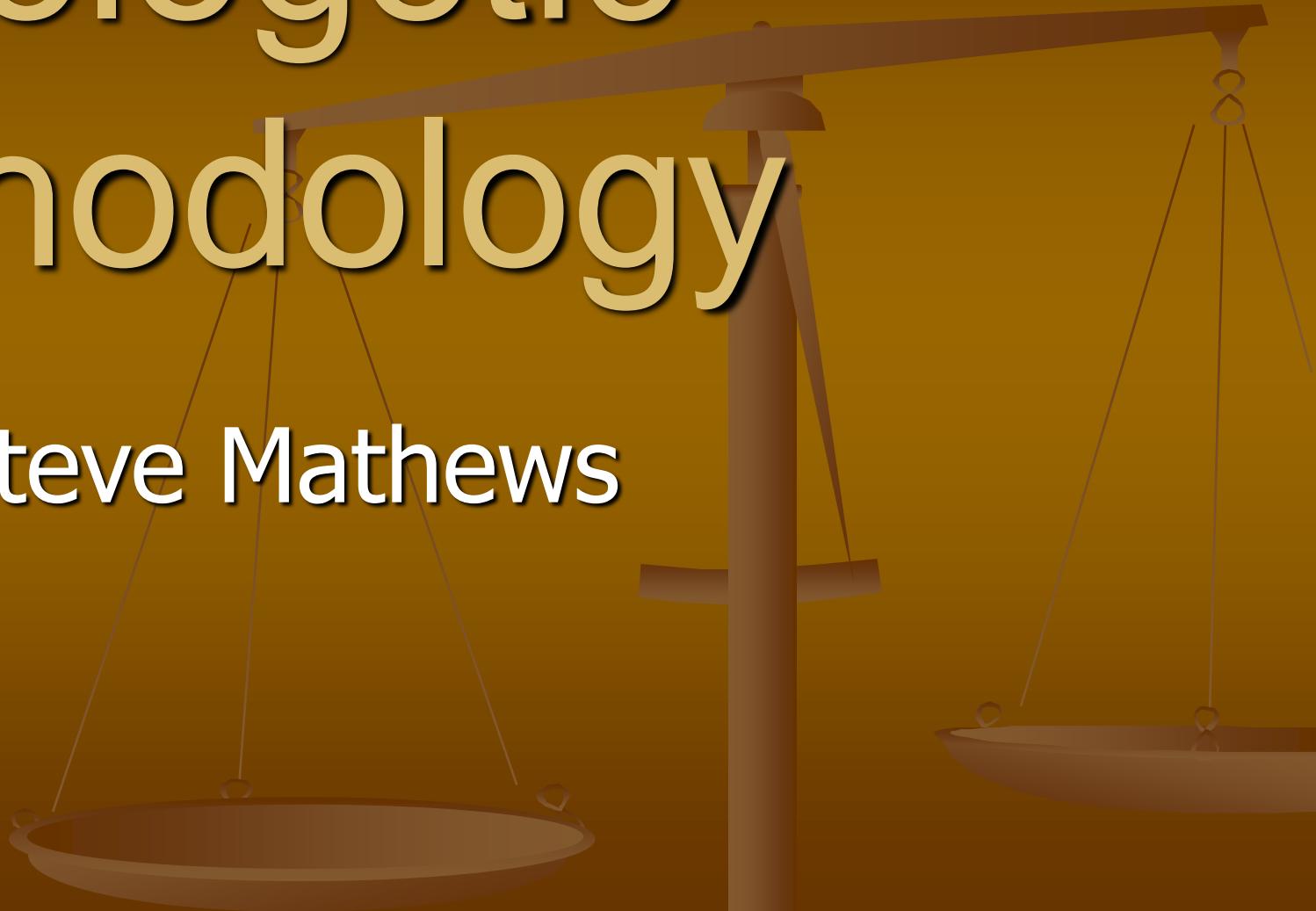


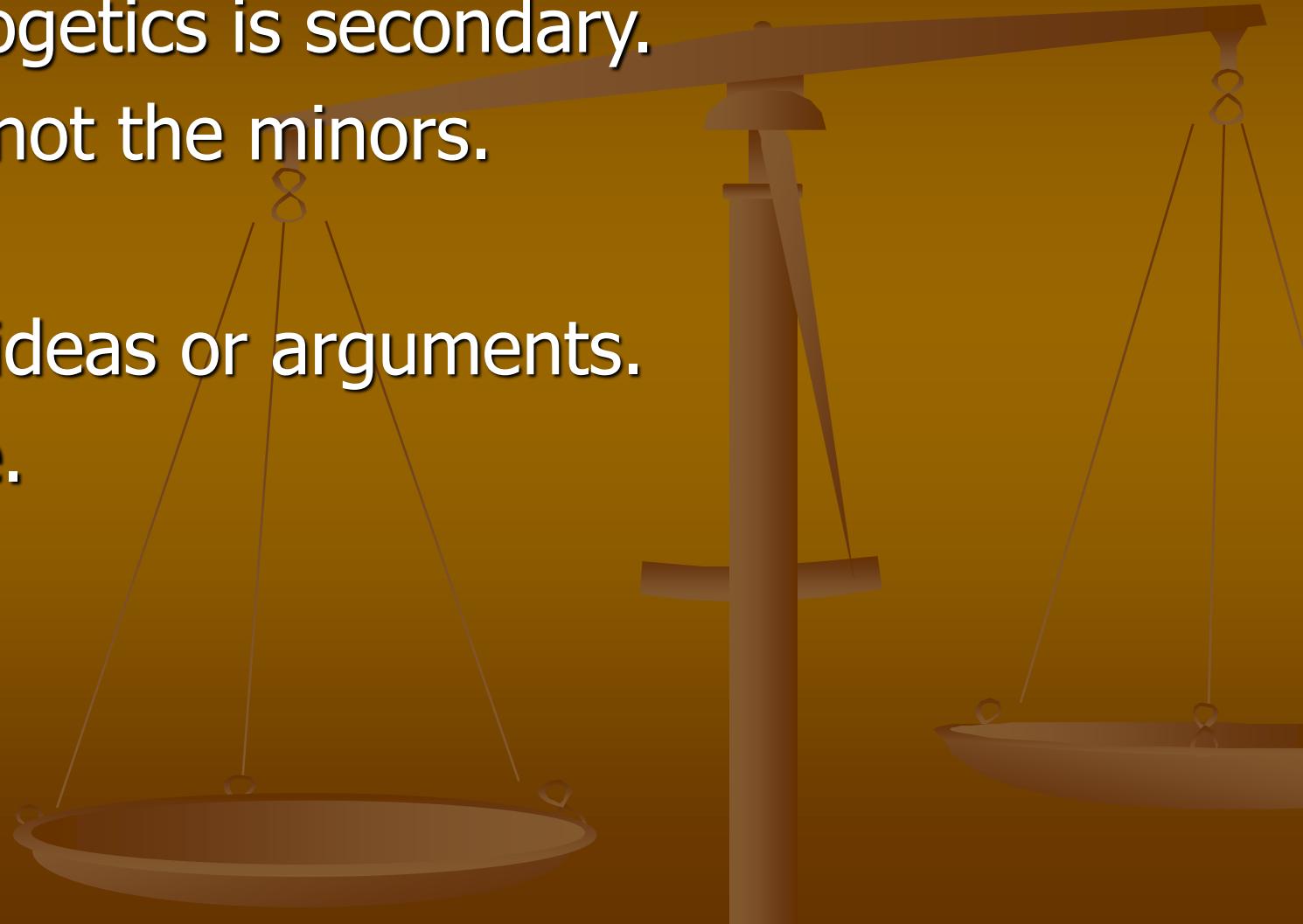
Apologetic Methodology

Dr. Steve Mathews



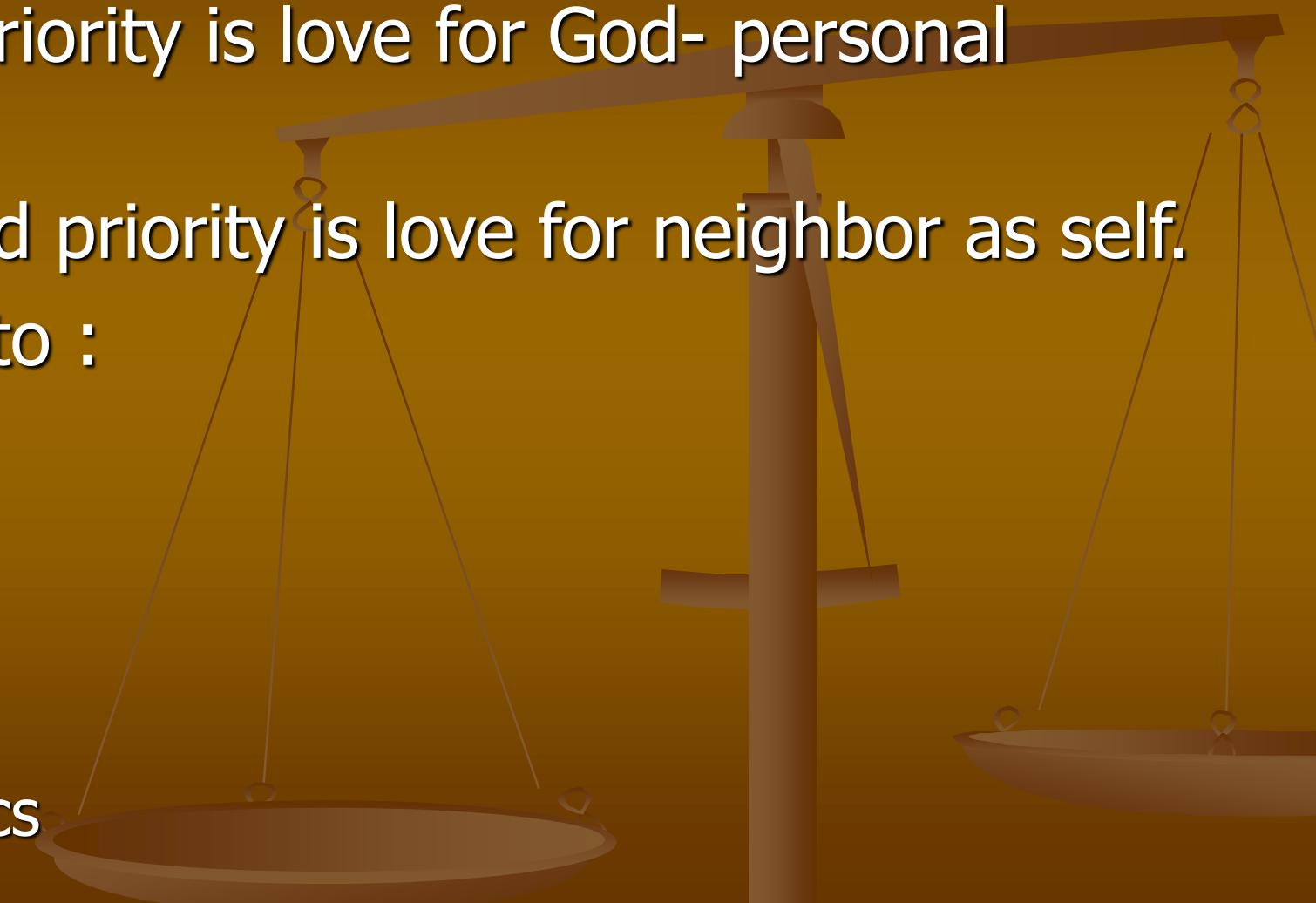
How Do We Do Apologetics?

- First things first- apologetics is secondary.
- Major on the majors, not the minors.
- Choosing our battles.
- Focus on people, not ideas or arguments.
- Let all be done in love.



First Things First

- The Christian's first priority is love for God- personal holiness.
- The Christian's second priority is love for neighbor as self.
- These priorities lead to :
 - Worship
 - Holy living
 - Spiritual development
 - Ministry
 - Evangelism/apologetics



First Things First

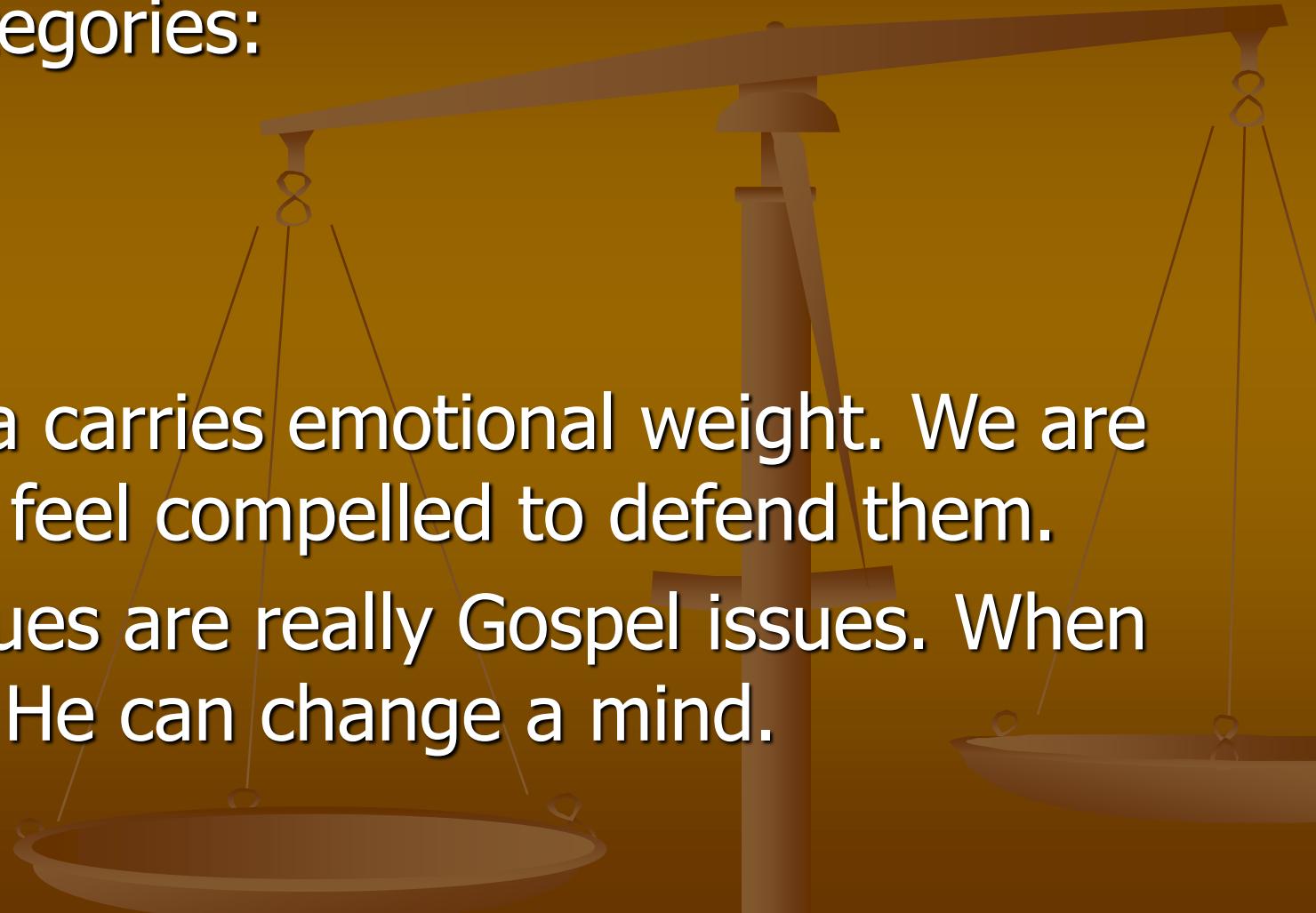
- Apologetics is a fine servant, but a terrible master.
- An apologist who is not a holy Christian- loving God and others, worshipping, serving, and growing- is just a philosopher dealing in ideas.
- We are more persuasive through our example of holy living and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit than in our reasoned arguments.

Major on the Majors, Not the Minors

- The “major major” is the Gospel. People must repent and believe or they will be damned. For those in hell, nothing else matters.
- Arguing about creation vs. evolution, cultural and political issues, moral issues may become a distraction from the Gospel.

Choose Your Battles

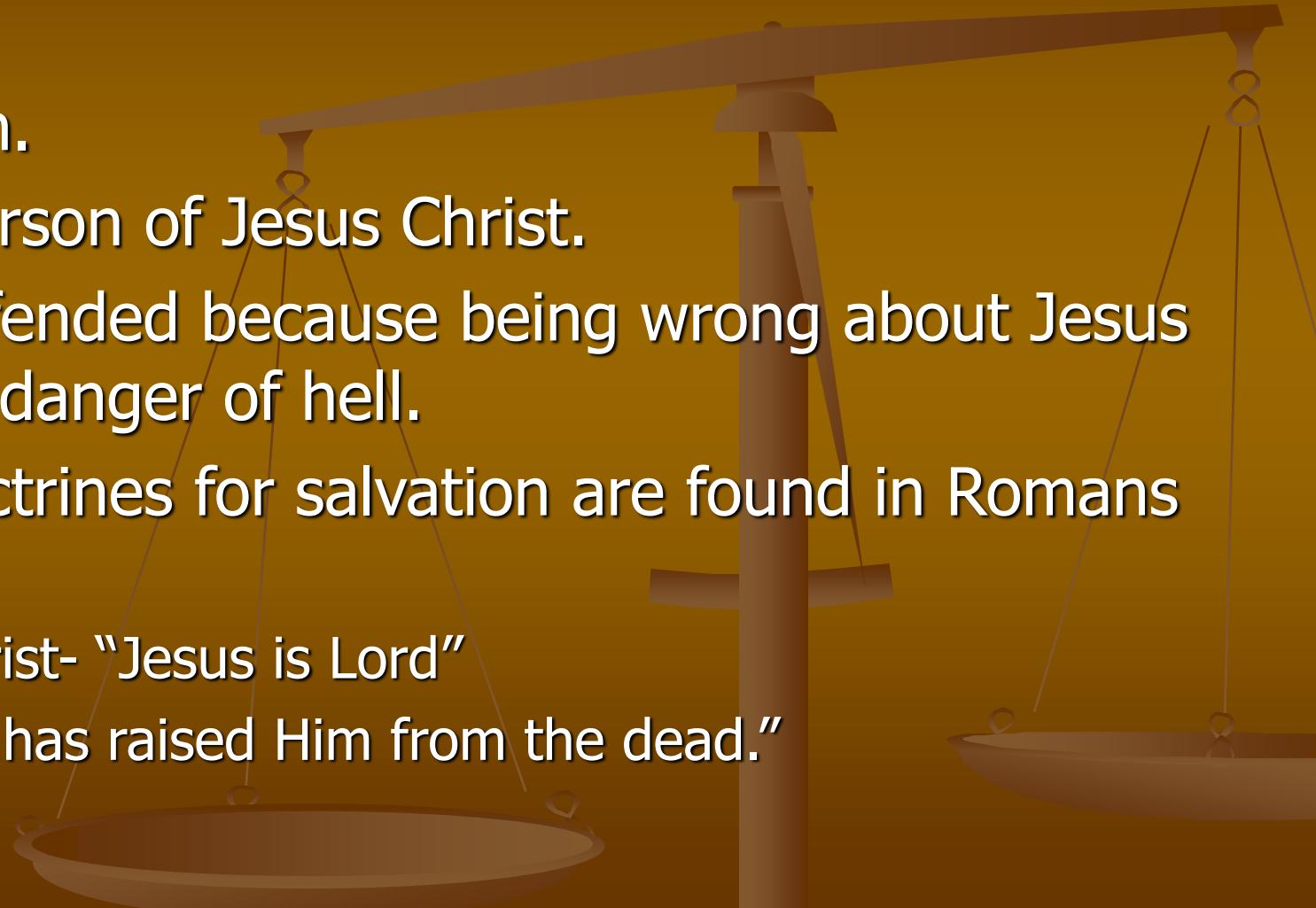
- Arrange ideas into categories:
 - Doctrine
 - Conviction
 - Opinion
- Every deeply held idea carries emotional weight. We are attached to ideas and feel compelled to defend them.
- These deeply-held issues are really Gospel issues. When God changes a heart, He can change a mind.



Choose Your Battles

■ Doctrine

- Necessary for salvation.
- Revolve around the person of Jesus Christ.
- Doctrine should be defended because being wrong about Jesus Christ puts the soul in danger of hell.
- The most essential doctrines for salvation are found in Romans 10:9:
 - Lordship/Divinity of Christ- “Jesus is Lord”
 - The resurrection- “God has raised Him from the dead.”



Choose Your Battles

■ Conviction

- Christians unite around common convictions. Deeply held beliefs about God that are shared within a group.
- Many other Christians may disagree on convictions, but agree on doctrine.
- Practice and teach convictions, but don't fight other believers about them.
- Examples:
 - Baptism- infants or believers?
 - Tongues- for today or not?
 - Church governance- autonomy or episcopacy?

Choose Your Battles

■ Opinion

- Lowest level of thought, but often the most strongly defended.
- Personal views on issues where there is no clear right and wrong.
- Never fight over opinions. Hold them loosely, and give others space to do so as well.
- Examples include:
 - Type of worship music.
 - Bible version.
 - Secular music/movies.
 - Alcohol use.
 - Tattoos.

Focus on People

- We are called to be soul-winners, not argument-winners.
- We can be poor apologists and great evangelists.
- People don't expect all the answers. They don't even have all the questions. They are looking for God's love.
- A Christian's love for others and faith in God are the strongest witness he or she can show.

All in Love

- An ancient Christian formula helps us here:
- In essentials: unity.
- In nonessentials: liberty.
- In all things: charity.

