

“Believe”

Idea: The first and foremost thing God has required of man is to believe Him.

Intro: The Christian life is not difficult, yet at the same time it seems to be impossible. The Christian life can be summed up in one word...believe. This past week as our team was in Barcelona, we were there to spread the gospel message and invite them to believe it. Victory and power come through belief and trust in God and His Word.

Inquiry: At the very beginning of time, God created Adam and Eve and gave them one simple instruction. They were free to eat from every tree in Eden, but they were forbidden to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:16-17). God told them that if they eat of the forbidden tree, they would “surely die.”

Some time later, as the first two humans were enjoying God and the creation He had made, the serpent came and cast doubt on God’s Word by asking a simple question (Gen 3:1-5). He said, “Did God actually say?” Eve questioned whether or not God could be trusted and concluded that He could not. The Bible says that she ate from the forbidden tree and gave some also to Adam. Immediately, both of their eyes were opened to the reality that their disbelief brought upon them (Gen 3:7).

Several hundred years later, God called to a pagan man named Abram and told him to leave his country and go to a place to be shown (Gen 12:1). God promised Abram that he would make of him a great nation through whom the nations would be blessed. God changed his name to Abraham to reflect the promise (Gen 17:5). The Bible says that Abram believed God (Gen 15:6). But that is not all that the Bible tells us. It goes on to say that Abram’s belief in God’s Word resulted in

righteousness. In other words, Abraham was made righteous before Holy God through His belief and trust in God and His Word.

Abraham believed God. He believed God when the Lord told him to take his son Isaac up on Mt. Moriah and to sacrifice him. He told his servants to stay with the supplies, while he and Isaac went up on the mountain. He also told the servants that both of them would return (Gen 22:5). The author of Hebrews points out it was Abraham's faith, which caused him to believe God would resurrect Isaac and return the boy to him (Heb 11:19).

Moses believed God. The Lord told him to go to Egypt and demand Pharaoh to let God's people go. Moses believed and obeyed. God delivered Israel from Egypt, and Moses believed that God would bring them into the Promise Land. Therefore, when the Pharaoh charged against them at the edge of the Red Sea, Moses stood confidently in his belief in God's Word. He believed the Lord would fight for them (Ex 14:14). That day God delivered the Israelites from the Egyptians.

King Hezekiah believed God. The Assyrians had gathered their troops to attack and conquer Judah. They mocked the Jews and threatened them. The king took this threat against his people to God. He prayed (2 Kings 19:15). God's responded by saying that the king of Assyria would not enter Jerusalem or even shoot an arrow there (2 Kings 19:32). That very night the angel of the Lord went out and struck down 185,000 Assyrians in their camp. The enemy was defeated before the battle even began.

We serve the God of the impossible. We serve the God who can do anything. Nothing is too difficult for Him. Nothing is too big or too small. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. He is before all things, and in Him all things are held together. Do you believe the Lord? Do you believe God?

The Bible tells us that God is a worker of miracles. From Genesis to Revelation the Bible declares the great works of God. It is a story about God and His activity among men. Of all the miracles in the Bible, the greatest is salvation. The Bible tells us that God the Son was born into this world in order to take our sin upon Himself and offer Himself as a sacrificial substitute for man on the cross.

Jesus was crucified and buried in a tomb. For three days He lay in that tomb, but on the third day, the Bible tells us that Jesus got up. God the Father resurrected the Son. Through His death, burial, and resurrection Jesus is able to offer forgiveness of sin and eternal life to everyone who believes. All we must do is believe. Romans 10:9-10 says, *“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.”*

Have you believed on God? Have you trusted in Jesus Christ for forgiveness of your sin?

As a Christian, do you believe God in your everyday life? Why do we believe God for forgiveness, but fail to believe Him in every other area of our lives? Do you believe God’s Word when it comes to your family, finances, and future? Our God can do anything!

The first and foremost thing God has required of man is to believe Him. That is really all He has ever asked of us...just to trust Him. In fact Jesus left us a beautiful picture of trust in the Lord’s Supper. When He had that last meal with the disciples, He instructed them to continue to eat it in remembrance of Him (Luke 22:19). It was an instruction for them to continue to believe. This morning, as we observe the Lord’s Supper, this is an opportunity for us to remember and believe God and His Word...to confess our belief in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

The Bible tells us that this meal is reserved for those in relationship with Christ, who are baptized members of His church, and whose lives are worthy of partaking of the meal (1 Cor 11:27). If you are not in relationship with Christ, if you have not followed the Lord in believer's baptism, or if you have unconfessed sin in your life as a believer, when the elements are passed, let them go by you. Our goal is not to hurt your feelings. Our goal is the same as the Bible's. As you watch others observe the Lord's Supper, we pray you would be overwhelmed by the grace of God and seek out the forgiveness and life He desires to give you. We want you to see that Jesus became sin for you, so you could experience His forgiveness (2 Cor 5:20).

Conclusion: Before we partake of this meal, we are going to have a time of response to the Word. This is a time to respond in belief to God's Word. Are you in relationship with Jesus Christ? Have you knowingly and willingly repented of your sin and placed your faith in Jesus? If not, what would hold you back from doing that today?

Have you identified with Jesus through baptism? Some of you might have been baptized as a child and then later became a follower of Jesus. If you have not been baptized post-conversion, then you need to follow the example of the early church and be baptized. Baptism always follows salvation. It never precedes it.

Are you in fellowship with Jesus? Is there sin that you are holding onto? Why not confess it, forsake it, and receive forgiveness? Come just as you are today.

Give an invitation.

We are a covenant body of Christ that takes both our relationship with Jesus and community with one another seriously. We celebrate all that Jesus has done in us, and we celebrate the covenant we share with one another. We don't believe we are here by chance. Instead, by grace, God has

brought us together so that we might express the life of Christ before a watching world. If you agree with that say, “Amen.”

Fence the table for the Lord’s Supper. If you are in relationship with Jesus Christ, you have been scripturally baptized (immersion), and you are not holding onto unconfessed sin, then I invite you to participate in the Lord’s Supper this morning. However, if you are not in relationship with Jesus Christ, or if you are unwilling to confess and repent of some sin, then I encourage you not to participate.

Observe the Lord’s Supper

Pass out the elements.

Read Luke 22:19. – Take a moment to contemplate and thank the Lord for His body that was given for you.

Read Luke 22:20. – Take a moment to contemplate and thank the Lord for His blood that was shed for you.

As we depart, let’s declare in song that Christ is all we have and need.