

1. Lies we believe about God.
2. Joke:
 - a. Art Linkletter was watching a young boy drawing a picture. He asked him what he was drawing and the boy said, "I'm drawing a picture of God." Art replied, "you can't do that because no one knows what he looks like." To which the boy answered, "They will when I'm finished."
3. We often base our beliefs on our experiences.
 - a. For instance, when a child is small, he does not understand about fire, that it is hot and that it will burn. When your children would try to help you out in the kitchen you probably would say to them, "Don't touch, it is hot!" Maybe you would get there too late and they would have already touched the oven and found out for themselves that it was hot. They would pull their hand back quickly and burst into tears. That would teach them that, "Ovens are hot. Hot things burn my hands. I don't want to go near the stove."
 - i. You would not have to convince them that the oven was not hot, because what they have just experienced has proven the truth to them.
 - ii. Life is a teacher, but sometimes not a great one.
 - iii. Sometimes we get the wrong message, sometimes when things happen to us we can draw the wrong conclusion.
 1. A professional carpet-layer stepped back to survey a newly installed carpet. Reaching into his shirt pocket for a cigarette, he realized the pack was missing. At the same time he noticed a lump under the carpet in the middle of the room, about the size of the missing cigarette pack.
 2. There was no way to retrieve his cigarette pack from under the attached carpet without ripping everything up and starting over. Finally, he decided to beat the object flat, thereby destroying any evidence of his mistake.
 3. Gathering his tools, the carpet layer walked out to his truck. There on the seat of his truck was the mislaid pack of cigarette. As he lit one up, the homeowner hurried out of the house and asked, "Hey, have you seen my son's gerbil?"
 - iv. It is possible to believe something is true when it is not.
 - b. It is for this reason that we are looking at some of the lies we believe.
 - i. Last week, I laid the foundation for this sermon series, because from the very beginning, we are tempted by Satan to believe lies about God, ourselves, our world, our friends, and our family.
 - ii. It is vital that we build our lives upon the foundation of truth.
 1. A building will stand or fall based upon the security of its foundation.
 2. We just had the 100th anniversary of the Great San Francisco Earthquake. I watched a documentary about it. It seems that about 1/3 of the city was built over an old lake bed that had been filled with debris. As a result, the homes that were built on that lake bed had the illusion that they had a good foundation. But unseen, 60 feet below, was a water saturated subsoil that once shaken would multiply the effect of an earthquake by 10 times. Everything that once stood on that filled in lake bed collapsed, like this building blocks on jello.
 3. That is the danger of building a life on a lie.
 - a. Everything else, so matter how well constructed, how true or how strong will collapse if the first things are not true.
 - iii. What we believe about God is foundational to our entire belief system.
 1. If we have wrong thinking about God we will have wrong thinking about everything else.
 2. What we believe about God determines how we live.

4. It is for this reason that all theology courses begin with the study of God.
 - a. Karl Barth said that there are **two ways to attain knowledge of God**.
 - i. One is to **begin with ourselves**.
 1. What we end up with however, is making a god in our own likeness.
 2. *“Everything in your spiritual life depends upon the sort of God you worship, because the character of the worshipper will always be molded by the character of what he worships. If it is a cruel and vengeful God, the worshipper will be the same. If it is a tender, loving and unselfish God, the worshipper will be transformed slowly but wonderfully into this likeness.”* (Hannah Whitall Smith [The Unselfishness of God](#).)
 3. When we start with ourselves, we make a god who is fallen, sinful, or angry, because that is exactly what we are like. .
 4. As a consequence, our entire belief system will be flawed because our first thing, our premise is wrong.
 - ii. The other way to attain knowledge of God is to **begin with God**.
 1. All of the other religions of the world besides Judaism and Christianity start with man seeking God.
 - a. They are seeking ways to find God, as if God is playing a game of hide and seek with mankind.
 2. But the bible begins with God seeking the man who has walked away and hidden himself because of shame.
 - a. The bible is the record of God seeking mankind, of God revealing Himself to men and women, of Jesus coming to “seek and to save the lost.”
 3. So we begin this morning with the lies we believe about God. Let’s build our lives on the right foundation!

5. Truth:

- a. John 14:17 (NLT) *He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world at large cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you do, because he lives with you now and later will be in you.*
- b. John 16:13 (NLT) *When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not be presenting his own ideas; he will be telling you what he has heard.*
 - i. This implies that when we begin our walk with Christ, that we have misconceptions about God.
 1. Otherwise we would not need to be guided into truth.
 2. So all of us begin in error, and possess a propensity to gravitate toward error unless guided by the Holy Spirit..
 - ii. But these promises tell us that our walk with Christ is going to be aimed at bringing us into a true knowledge of God, and the resulting freedom He brings.

6. **What are some of the Lies we believe about God?**

- a. **God helps those who helps themselves**
 - i. George Barna, the famous researcher found that 8 of 10 Americans believe the statement that “God helps those who help themselves” and that it is in the bible somewhere.
 - ii. The truth?
 1. The statement so often blamed on God is from the writing of the ancient Greek pagan writer Aesop, who actually said, *“the gods help them that help themselves.”*
 2. He was followed by the Greek philosopher Euripides you said *“try yourself first and after, call upon the gods.”*

3. Benjamin Franklin, a deist who believed that God didn't play a personal and active role in human lives, continued the myth when he wrote "God helps those who help themselves"
- iii. The bible teaches something entirely different. God chooses the helpless, the weak, the insignificant of this world to display His strength and glory.
 1. Romans 5:6, 8 "*For while we were still helpless, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*"
 2. Proverbs 28:26 "*He who trusts in his own heart is a fool.*"
 3. Jeremiah 17:5 "*Cursed is the strong one who depends on mere humans, Who thinks he can make it on muscle alone and sets GOD aside as dead weight.*
 - a. We cannot save ourselves.
 4. Jesus said, "*Apart from Me, you can do nothing.*" (John 15:5)
- b. **There are many ways to God:**
 - i. A.W. Tozer has said that *what we believe about God is the most important thing about us.*
 - ii. The phrase "I Believe In God" is one of the most meaningless statements a person can make today.
 1. Take for example the phrase "**I believe** in God." It can mean many things.
 - a. It can be intellectual assent, like the way that someone believes that the grass is green or the sky is blue.
 - b. It can be a desire to believe as people say "I believe that being free of debt is a good thing", but in fact, they are up to their ears in debt.
 - c. And it can be the kind of belief that rests its entire weight upon a truth.
 - iii. Let me illustrate a few of these:
 1. **If you don't live it, you don't believe it**
 - a. It is easy to say you believe a rope to be strong as long as you are merely using it to tie a box.
 - b. But suppose you had to hang by that rope over a cliff.
 - c. Wouldn't you then first discover how much you really trusted it?
 2. "The Law of the Pendulum."
 - a. A student spent 20 minutes carefully teaching the physical principle that governs a swinging pendulum. The law of the pendulum is: A pendulum can never return to a point higher than the point from which it was released. Because of friction and gravity, when the pendulum returns, it will fall short of its original release point. Each time it swings it makes less and less of an arc, until finally it is at rest..
 - b. He then attached a 3-foot string to a child's toy top and secured it to the top of the blackboard with a thumbtack. He pulled the top to one side and made a mark on the blackboard where he let it go. Each time it swung back he made a new mark. It took less than a minute for the top to complete its swinging and come to rest. When he finished the demonstration, the markings on the blackboard proved my thesis.
 - c. He then asked how many people in the room BELIEVED the law of the pendulum was true. All of his classmates raised their hands, so did the teacher. The teacher started to walk to the front of the room thinking the class was over. In reality it had just begun.
 - d. Hanging from the steel ceiling beams in the middle of the room was a large, crude but functional pendulum (250 pounds of metal weights tied to four strands of 500-pound test parachute cord.).

- e. He invited the instructor to climb up on a table and sit in a chair with the back of his head against a cement wall. Then he brought the 250 pounds of metal up to his nose. Holding the huge pendulum just a fraction of an inch from his face, he once again explained the law of the pendulum the teacher had applauded only moments before, "If the law of the pendulum is true, then when I release this mass of metal, it will swing across the room and return short of the release point. Your nose will be in no danger."
- f. After that final restatement of this law, the student looked him in the eye and asked, "Sir, do you believe this law is true?"
- g. There was a long pause. Huge beads of sweat formed on his upper lip and then weakly he nodded and whispered, "Yes."
- h. The student released the pendulum. It made a swishing sound as it arced across the room. At the far end of its swing, it paused momentarily and started back. You never saw a man move so fast in his life. He dove from the table.
- i. The student asked the rest of the class, "Does he believe in the law of the pendulum?"
- j. The students answered, "NO!"

3. You never know how much you really believe anything until its truth or falsehood becomes a matter of life and death.

- iv. "I believe...**in God.**"
- v. We have been talking about that people say they believe in God, so we understand how the term "believe" can be misused.
- vi. Let's look at how the term "god" can be misunderstood.
 - 1. Although public opinion polls tell us that 92 % of Americans believe in God, the God of the Bible is not who they have in mind.
 - 2. Today's generation often believe in a god of their own making, they have combined fragments of Christianity, Buddhism and any number of notions derived from personal experience and have come up with a god that bear little resemblance to the God of the Bible.
 - 3. They believe that a supreme being, an "other" existence, "something cosmic" exists. But if you poll the religions of the world, you will find that every one of them has a different view.
 - 4. I had a conversation after Roy Johnson's funeral with a relative of his about this very thing. He said, "don't you think that every religion in the world is seeking the same god?"
 - a. I had to reply, "no."
 - b. No other religion deals with the problem of sin and God's requirement of perfection and holiness on God's terms.
 - 5. And Jesus, said, "*I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except by Me.*" (John 14:6)
 - 6. Jesus, the greatest teacher in the history of the world declared that they weren't equal and that there was only one way to know God...that was through Him.
- c. Let me digress...
 - i. Truth, by definition, is exclusive. When Jesus claimed to be the truth, he was declaring that He is exclusive.
 - ii. Look at what truth is:
 - 1. Is a lie the opposite of truth, or is truth the opposite of lie?
 - a. It cannot be both. It is one or the other.
 - b. A lie can be defined as that which is opposite of truth but a truth cannot be defined as the opposite of lie.

- c. Why? Because truth is singular and exclusive, but lies can be infinite.
 - 2. If I am describing an object made of wood, then the truth that I am declaring is that it is made of wood.
 - a. To say it is made of anything else would be a lie.
 - b. **What it is made of is an exclusive truth.**
 - c. It excludes all other materials. To say an object made of wood is made of metal or brick would be to state a falsehood. In fact, the possibilities of what it ISN'T are almost endless. Those are the possibilities of the lies.
 - 3. When Jesus declares that He is the ONLY way to the Father, he is either telling the truth or a lie.
 - a. We have two views: One that there are many ways to God, and the other from Jesus' own words, that there is only one way to God.
 - b. But both cannot be correct, since both of them contradict each other.
 - c. And both cannot be wrong, because then we are left without a way to reach God.
 - d. This leaves us with just one choice-that only one of the above views is correct
 - 4. If you believe then, that Jesus is a great moral teacher, the best moral teacher in history...if he were to lie, then that would negate his all of his moral teaching. If he is telling the truth, then He is the only way to God.
- d. **God is not really good, (if He were, He would...)**
 - i. We might not think we believe this, but deep in our hearts sometime we hide a suspicion that God may not be really good, or at least, He hasn't been good to me.
 - ii. When life doesn't go as we plan, Satan tempts us to wonder, "is God really good? If He were, how could He let this happen?"
 - iii. We hear these complaints from atheists all of the time:
 - 1. How could a good God let the holocaust happen...least of all, to His people?
 - 2. How could a good God let a famine happen.
 - iv. The truth is that God is good, even when His choices and will doesn't *seem* good to us.
 - v. Irregardless of whether we feel it, He remains good.
 - vi. Psalm 119:68 "*God is good and everything He does is good.*"
 - 1. You may miss a loved one. But God remains good.
 - 2. Faith sits down before mysteries like these and waits patiently for an explanation in God's good time. It may be when you go home to be with the Lord that you understand.
 - 3. But our limited understanding does not change the goodness of God.
 - vii. **Some of you may have heard of Corrie Ten Boom. She survived a concentration camp, but watched her entire family perish either at the gas chambers, or from disease or starvation. Yet she clung tenaciously to the belief that God is good even if the world is not. Her life stands as a testimony to who God is and His amazing grace. If you are struggling with coming to grips with the goodness of God, I encourage you to read her biography.**
- e. **God is mellowing in His old age.**
 - i. Those who believe this lie believe that somehow God has become more tolerant of us and of our sins than He used to be.
 - 1. They look at the Old Testament and compare its laws to the mercy of Christ and say, "everything has changed!"
 - 2. They view God as a benevolent grandparent who spanked His children harshly but spoils His grandchildren.

3. If we look around, it seems as if a lot of people believe this one.
 - a. We tolerate abortion, adultery and sexual perversions that just 40 years ago would have turned our stomachs.
4. How can we think this way? Has God really grown soft on sin?
 - a. The answer is no.
 - b. God has hated sin from the beginning. God's wrath is against sin, which is an affront to His holiness and character. God has not changed. His wrath still burns against sin.
 - c. Malachi 3:6 "*For I am the Lord, I do not change.*"
5. I think that the reason people want to ignore this is that people don't want to bear consequences for their actions.
 - a. They want to be free to do as they please without an outside moral authority telling them what they can or cannot do.
 - b. And at the same time they want a God who will punish those who commit horrendous crimes against humanity.
6. Yet when it comes to sin...all sin is sin to God. **He does not grade on a curve.** The penalty of sin is unchanged...it is death. (Romans 6:23)
7. And God does not change.
8. W. Pink says, "*He cannot change for the better, for He is already perfect, and being perfect He cannot change for the worse.*"
9. **Some people confuse grace with tolerance.**
 - a. Because God is patient with us we think that He will not hold us accountable.
 - b. But He will. All of us will have to account for our actions some day.
 - c. Did we bring our sin to the cross and allow the grace of God to change us?
10. **God's silence is not indifference.** (2 Peter 3:9) "*The Lord is not slow to do what he has promised, as some think. Instead, he is patient with you, because he does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants all to turn away from their sins.*"

f. God is so loving that He wouldn't send anyone to hell.

- i. People who believe this lie cannot fathom that God is holy.
- ii. They view love as the only attribute of God.
- iii. The holiness of God is his "otherness" and distinctness from his creation.
 1. He is the creator and we the creation. We are different as night and day are.
 2. He is not like us, but He made us like Him.
 3. We are not created in His image, but we in His.
- iv. As a consequence, His "otherness" is His perfection and completeness that none of His creation can match.
 1. As a result of the fall of Adam, sin entered the world and every man, and woman stood guilty before Him.
 2. God sent His Son to absorb the wrath we deserve upon our sin on the cross. Jesus took the entire wrath of God, the full punishment of God for sin.
 - a. God does not send people to hell for the sins they do, but rather of the sin of refusing the gift of His only begotten Son who died in our place.
 - i. Everyone of us gets to make a choice...accept God's gift or reject it.
 - ii. That gift is the gift of God's Son, paying the penalty of our sins.
 - iii. To delay it is the same as to reject it.
 3. God will not point a finger at people aiming them to hell, they will send themselves there when they view His holiness and glory and see the sin they have refused to give up unmasked.

- a. We will leave His presence ashamed when we glimpse His perfection and utter holiness and recognize our unworthiness and the reality that we have rejected Him. The truth will overwhelm us. .
 - 4. We will flee His holy presence without the forgiveness of Jesus. We will cast ourselves into hell.
 - a. Hell is not just fire, but the permanent absence of His presence.
 - b. Think about it...if we reject Him here on earth, why would we want to spend eternity worshipping Him? We wouldn't. We would prefer somewhere else.
- 7. As we finish up this morning, you may want to examine yourself, to see if you are in the truth.
 - a. As Paul says in 2 Cor 13:5 *“Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you--unless indeed you fail the test?”*
 - b. See if you are walking by grace in the truth.
 - i. One who has accepted Christ, whose standing is in Christ, is not 'on probation.'
 - 1. As to your past life, it does not exist before God: it died at the cross, and Christ is now our Life.
 - 2. Grace, once given, is not withdrawn: for God knew all the human choices beforehand: God's action was independent of them, not dependent upon them...

Is the truth in you? Will you check your foundation? Are you standing upon grace and truth? Or have you made God in your own image? You will be shaken some day. Don't wait until it is too late. Let's pray.