

Basics – The First Premise

I feel like God has been telling me He is not finished with the subject of complacency, in my life or in yours!

My new sermon series, starting today is dealing with “the basics” of our walk with God. Now for those here who think that you already know the basics, you better fasten your seat belt...we are going to go on a journey that will shake up what you thought you knew.

So, we aren't really going on to new concepts, but rather are going to have a new approach to examining them.

1. What are basics – ?

- a. Basics are the foundations upon which everything else is built upon.
- b. In a class on logic in college, we learned about something called a premise:
- c. A premise is a proposition or idea upon which one bases a conclusion. It is the first step in a process which moves from general truth to specific conclusions.
- d. The word finds its origin in a Latin root meaning “to send ahead.”
- e. **A premise, then, is a "truth" that you send ahead to prepare the way for another "truth" that will follow.**
 - i. The first "truth" is generally accepted by all people; and the second truth depends on the first for its credibility. And if the premise...the core idea was incorrect, then every fact (even if true) laid upon that premise would lead to an incorrect conclusion.
- f. Everyone with me?

2. Every building has a foundation – and if the foundation is bad, the building will be bad.

- a. Every life has a foundation – and if the foundation that life is built upon is faulty, the life will be in jeopardy.
- b. Jesus alluded to this important truth, knowing how our minds build beliefs upon beliefs.
- c. Luke 6:47-49 *“I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete.”*
- d. So it is with us.
 - i. Many of us have built our lives upon shaky foundations. How do I know that? Because I see how many of us react to crisis in our lives. If we had a solid foundation, we would not be so shaken by the storms of life.

3. Why am I preaching on the Basics?

- a. **Many of you have heard the story of the famous Green Bay Packer's Coach Guy Lombardi, who at his first team meeting with his new team. He says, “Men, we are going back to basics.” He pulls out a football and says, “This is a football.”**
 - i. While that might sound really oversimplified, it made its point. A team would not win if they did not do the basics...like block, tackle and catch the football! (makes me think of why the Browns keep losing).
- b. **Do you wonder why you are not experiencing all that the gospel seems to promise?**
 - i. You know what I mean...deliverance from sin and destructive habits, being able to experience joy and peace, being able to experience the supernatural power and presence of God.
 - ii. I do hope you are wondering why your life (as I wonder about mine) isn't more filled with more of what this book says it is supposed to be filled with.
 - iii. If you aren't concerned...then I must accuse you of complacency.

1. **Complacency – is that feeling you get when you feel satisfied with your present accomplishments and have no desire to press on or go further.**
 - iv. The video we watched last week (sorry to you guys who missed it) – dealt with that...it dealt with what happens when God's people get shaken from their complacency.
 - v. Do you like walking around like a Zombie? I know that is a difficult picture to imagine, but that is what the church in America looks like: Complacent, inattentive, people filling pews with unfulfilled lives, who measure their success by comparing themselves to others instead of to the Savior.
4. The writer of Hebrews must have felt like he had to start all over again because of complacency in the church.
- a. Hebrews 5:12 *"In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!"*
 - b. Then, just a few short verses later, the writer of Hebrews says, Hebrews 6:1 *"Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God,"*
 - c. So what came between these passages?
 - i. Hebrews 5:11-14 *"We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is **not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness**. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil."*
 - ii. NAS: *"For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant."*
 - iii. Question: Why would a person still be an infant after years of being A Christian? Maybe because he got comfortable, satisfied... "mmmm good milk" – he gets complacent, satisfied,
 - iv. The babe has no teeth with which to chew, so they can only consume milk.
 1. I have wondered why teachings on walking in the promises of God, of making him Known and demonstrating His love seem so hard to understand.
 2. Could it be that we still struggle with truths that ought to be core to our lives...truths like spending time with Jesus, walking in faith, being good stewards of our time, treasure and talents?
 3. In other words...maybe we too haven't developed the teeth needed for meatier truths of the Word of God?
5. What is the faulty premise that we have been building our lives upon? I believe that for most Christians, it is the belief that we exist to be happy, and that God exists to help make us that way...if not in this life, certainly for the next one...and that is why God sent His Son...to ensure my eternal happiness so I don't have to spend eternity in that nasty fireplace.
- a. If you think I am overstating the case, let me give you some examples.
 - i. When we share the gospel, we say, "If you will invite Jesus into your heart you will go to heaven when you die."
 - ii. Or churches, when trying to get people's attention, put out signs like "Unhappy? Check out "Ifoundit.com"
 - iii. **The core belief of Humanism is that Man exists to be happy.** Man is the center of the universe. And as long as we believe that or allow that belief to influence our thinking, we will miss the power of the gospel.
 - iv. God exists to bring Glory to Himself. You exist to bring Glory to God.
 1. God doesn't exist for you...if that were the case, you would be god and He wouldn't be.

2. You exist for God – and God loves you. Your fulfillment and happiness is found IN God.

6. This belief that the purpose of man is to be happy and fulfilled has resulted in lives of inferior construction, and a powerless, self-focused church in the world.
7. I would like to tell you the story of two young teenagers who felt the call of God to go to missions. They didn't believe they existed to be comfortable and happy. They believed something greater, more powerful and eternal.
 - a. “Two young men of the Moravian movement (Huss) heard of an island in the West Indies where an atheist British owner had 2000 to 3000 slaves. And the owner had said, ‘No preacher, no clergyman, will ever stay on this island. If he’s ship wrecked we’ll keep him in a separate house until he has to leave, but he’s never going to talk to any of us about God, I’m through with all that nonsense.’ Three thousand slaves from the jungles of Africa brought to an island in the Atlantic and there to live and die without hearing of Christ.
 - b. These two young Moravians heard about it. They attempted to sell themselves to the British planter and used the money they received from their sale, to pay their passage out to his island. As the ship left its pier in the river at Hamburg and was going out into the North Sea carried with the tide, the Moravians had come from Herrnhut to see these two lads off. They expected to never return again, for this wasn't a four year term, they had sold themselves into lifetime slavery. They believed that if they could get close to the slaves by being slaves, then they could win them to Christ.
 - c. Their families were there on the pier weeping, for they knew they would never see them again. And they wondered why they were going and questioned the wisdom of it. As the gap widened and the housings had been cast off and were being curled up there on the pier, and the young boys saw the widening gap, one lad with his arm linked through the arm of his fellow, raised his hand and shouted across the bay, ‘MAY THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN RECEIVE THE REWARD OF HIS SUFFERING!’”
 - d. Where is this type of Christianity today? Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5 that the love of Christ compelled him. **Does it compel us? Is the reason we are so stunted in our devotion to the Lord because we have come to believe that the chief end of God is to make men happy.**
 - i. Our happiness is our end goal and we use God as a means to an end.
 - ii. That is humanism, not Christianity.
 - iii. Instead, our lives should be focused on living for God's glory, not our happiness.
8. I found out some interesting things about these two missionaries...their names were John Leonard Doper and David Nitschman. Nitschman actually had a wife and young children when he answered the call of God. They thought that they would never return home and that they would indeed, sell themselves into slavery. But, God had a different plan. What God wants from us is to be a yielded vessel because as it turned out, neither man had to actually sell himself into slavery. The Governor of the island would not have let them. His attitude towards the black slaves there was such that to allow a white man to be enslaved would have been too much for him.
 - a. The missionaries arrived in St. Thomas in December of 1732. At first, Nitschmann supported the two of them with his carpentry vocation, but he only stayed at St. Thomas for four months. Dober tried to make a living as a potter, but there wasn't any good clay to make pots. He did, however, get a job as the steward of the Governor's household, and later as a watchman, which allowed him to be closer to the slaves. By 1734, a contingent of 18 missionaries arrived to help out and to spread the missionary work to the neighboring islands of St. Croix, St. John and others.
 - b. Conditions for the missionaries were difficult, and many of the early missionaries died. In fact, **Moravian missionaries leaving Europe to go to the Caribbean missions always took two things with them: A Bible and their own headstone.** There isn't any rock to speak of on those islands, and the missionaries knew that most of them wouldn't come home. And yet, they went in droves! Talk about fully committed to God's work!

- c. And here's an interesting tidbit: On the voyage over, their ship encountered a hurricane (February 5, 1736). As you can imagine, there was a great deal of panic onboard, except with the Moravian group led by Nitschmann. Instead, they sang hymns and were calm. One of the non-Moravians (an Anglican, actually) was very impressed by this. He stayed with the Moravians, and later studied with them in England. This was none other than John Wesley, who later went on to form the Methodist Church and be used in one of the most powerful revivals of the industrial age.
- 9. Many of the original Southern Baptist missionaries to Africa packed their belongings not in trunks as was the custom at the time but in wooden caskets, anticipating that they would not survive their term of service.
- 10. "May the Lamb that was slain receive the reward of his suffering".
- 11. May the Lamb who was slain get what He paid for!
- 12. Will you give God what He paid for in full? You and I aren't here to be made comfy and happy, and neither is that God's purpose to ensure you fulfillment and happiness. We were made to bring Him glory! '
 - a. Will you examine what you are living for...and the premise, the underlying purpose of your life...and ask God today to change that to His purposes instead of your own?