

# THE FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

## Review:

We looked at the key Scripture of **1 Thess 5:23-24 -May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.**

The importance of strong and healthy foundations cannot be over-emphasised in the context of one's personal life especially as related to the spirit and the soul and the body. We must be committed to maturity in our spiritual and inner lives – spirit and soul, as well as our physical lives – our bodies. In application we spent some time allowing the Holy Spirit to search our lives bringing sanctification to our spirit, soul and body.

<b>SPIRIT</b>	<b>KNOWLEDGE</b>	<b>CONSCIENCE</b>	<b>WORSHIP</b>
<b>SOUL</b>	<b>MIND</b>	<b>WILL</b>	<b>EMOTIONS</b>
<b>BODY</b>	<b>FLESH</b>	<b>BONE</b>	<b>BLOOD</b>

I am reminded of two Scriptures that relate to sanctification – the process of being made holy and into the character of Jesus. Firstly, John 16:13 tells us, **“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.”** Next **John 17:17** states, **“Sanctify them by your truth, your word is truth.”**

## Introduction:

This morning we will look at the church as a foundation for society. We looked at this Scripture several weeks ago as related to the church. **1 Tim 3:15 – “you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.”** There are many names for the church, literally and figuratively, within the Scriptures:

- The identity of the church in the New Testament although similar to the People of God in the Old Testament, has some significant distinctions brought about by the Christian belief that Jesus was the expected Jewish Messiah. So the church was established upon the chief cornerstone and foundation of Jesus Christ.
- God's household, local and universal (Catholic) church, Body of Christ or the assembly (of believers).
- Jesus gathered a group of disciples who followed him about and whom he sent to preach and heal as he himself did. These followers of Christ became his body and with Jesus its head.

- The church is the bride of Christ, taking up another Old Testament image in which Israel is seen as the wife or bride of God.
- Christ is the vine and we are the branches.

All of these phrases draw Christians closely together and closely to Christ, giving them a deep sense of identity with him and with other Christians.

### **The Church and Society:**

The church of Jesus Christ is to have a profound affect upon the Society in which we live. The Body of Christ is to be salt and light at a grass-roots level of society and to spread its influence to the highest echelon of State or Government. The church is the foundational pillar of truth in the world, whatever society and state it affects. In other words, the church offers truth to a world lost in turmoil and uncertainty. The foundation of the Church in affecting society and government has been questioned for centuries. Some believe the church is to be highly proactive in reaching into society and state. Others believe in a more passive approach where the church enjoys the goodness of God and some day the world around us will see the brightness of God's light. Both views have significance, but none-the-less there is some confusion about how to do it.

- Orthodoxy – the theological beliefs of Church.
- Orthopraxy – the practices of our beliefs... Orthodoxy in action.

### **So how does the church influence the society and state in which we live?**

In one sense the answer is simple, by how we live for Jesus. And yet it is not that simple trying to influence the world in which we live by describing the Kingdom of another world in which we live. The kingdoms of this world are in direct conflict with the Kingdom of God. I have listed several examples where the foundation and pillar of truth – the church – opposes the idols of the world. Idolatry is prevalent in our day and age just as it was in the time of Moses or even in Jesus' day. Idolatry is not simply failure to obey God; it is giving us over to someone or something else besides God.

Identifying our idols is as important as repenting of them. Here are several simple ways to discover where we need to allow the God of peace sanctify idols out of our lives.

- Where do I spend my money? Materialism is a huge idol in our society and it has affected the church as well. The pursuit of money has been equaled to the pursuit of happiness. My missionary travels quickly proved this wrong. I saw people, young and old, who had very little and yet were profoundly happy – many of whom were believers in Jesus.

Last week I reminded us to lay up treasures in heaven not on earth. Timothy exhorted the church of Ephesus to lay up a firm foundation for the coming age.

- What do I do spend my time? Bill Hybels wrote a book called, Who are you when no one's looking. The premise of the book is quite straightforward; our identity in Christ is often confronted by our idols and what we do and think when there is nothing demanding our attention or our time.

In light of these thoughts, the church constantly confronts the loose foundations of the world. Idols are exposed, false truths are challenged and ungodly behavior brought into the light.

- Abortion is one example. Women's choice or Right to Life of the unborn. Margaret Sanger who started Planned Parenthood was not a moral person. She wanted to make abortions available mostly to Blacks and Hispanics in America because of her racist views. God desires people from every race and tribe and colour to be given life...
- I have already mentioned materialism. The need for greed is prevalent in our society. God desires generosity to be seen among his people not greed.
- Sex, sex and more sex. This idol has so gripped our society that even the young have become desensitized. Whether it is advertising or what we wear, much of what we see and hear has been stained by this idol. The church is to live up to a different standard. We are to look and act as aliens when it comes to this sin, because we are from another Kingdom.

An offshoot of this idolatry is the same-sex issue. Men and women, under the influence of this idol, exchange the truth of God for a lie. All kinds of evil behavior result from these idols.

**“Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.”**

**“For God so loved the world...”** In spite of all this sinful idolatry, God still radically loves you and me...

- The pursuit of power has become an idolatrous goal for many people; government officials, actors, sports figures etc. There are those who seek to influence the world through their power, some for good and some for bad.

The church responds by serving and not seeking to Lord it over...

- Another area where the foundation of truth, the church, confronts society is in the area of evolution. Evolutionists spout the Big Bang becoming a Big Blob – evolving in a Big Mess...

God's truth is intelligent design and the creation of mankind...

### **In conclusion:**

The foundation of truth, in other words, the church, is meant to stand firm in the midst of the corruption that is in the world. The Bible tells us he has given us everything we need for life and godliness through his divine power and promises (**2 Peter 1:3-11**). The result is that we might partake of his divine nature and be bright and glorious and pure lights in a dark world.

From the beginning of the church in Jesus' day, we have had a mission. **“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,<sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt 28:19-20).**

We are to be ministry minded, within the church and without.

- We are to serve one another as believers with our various giftings and to make disciples of those who do not know Jesus personally as Lord and Saviour.
- We are to follow the leaders that God has appointed within the church, local and abroad, as we all seek to make known the good news of the Gospel.
- The church is the light of the world, the salt of the earth, and the leaven that leavens the whole lump (**Matt. 5:13-16; 13:33**).
- The members are a royal priesthood, set to declare to the world the wonderful deeds of God (**1 Pet. 2:9**).

We must understand that the church is not a perfect body. In Jesus' day religious rulers lead people astray. Paul rebuked a man who committed incest. Believers were taking believers to court. Some members of the church in Corinth were drunk during the celebration of the Lord's Supper. There was almost a church split over the Jewish and Gentile issue.

The same is true in our day. We fight and bicker denominationally. We find ourselves caught in sin just like the world. We struggle with. . .

Despite all the challenges within the church, God Almighty is committed to fulfill his purposes on earth through Body of Christ. The church still remains to this day God primary way of revealing His Son to mankind. He celebrates the saints who are his godly ones on earth.

### **In Application:**

We have a Saviour who is committed to sanctifying us through and through, thereby establishing the church as a foundational pillar in society. His church and His Kingdom is growing and increasing throughout the earth. We are a part of history being made.

What is our part to play?

- Let Jesus work his will and ways into our lives; embrace the process of being made holy (sanctification). Getting rid of our idols.
- Let Jesus fill us with his courage and boldness as we walk as salt and light in the world; embrace the call to bring people to Jesus (justification). Sharing our faith.
- Let Jesus fill us with wisdom and patience as we disciple new believers in the ways of God's Kingdom.