

I STILL Believe

Sunday, August 9, 2020

In Luke chapter 18 following a Parable Jesus told the disciples about prayer, Jesus poses a telling question about his coming that has long drawn my attention.

Luke 18:8 (NIV)

8 ...I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

The word faith in the Greek is Pisis and literally means to be persuaded or to come to trust, or belief.

Joe & Mary and I were talking the other day, and, in our conversation, Mary said she like the Zapotec word used for faith which translates your heart goes straight or as a free translation believe in your heart.

Jesus seems to be saying in this passage, "will there be a continuation of belief when I return to this earth.

The Gospel of John supports this idea of continuing belief as a condition of our faith. John uses the Greek verb Pisteuo (or believe) which comes from the Greek word pistis (or faith). But as a verb and in the present tense it carries the meaning of continued action. So, to believe or continue to believe.

John uses this verb form more than any other writer in the new testament appearing 98 times in his gospel. We find it at the close of his gospel as he tells us the purpose of his writing.

John 20:31 (NIV)

31 But these are written so that you may believe (and continue to believe) that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Then, by believing, (continuing to believe) you may have life through his name.

Probably the best-known passage in John concerning the action of believing and its intended results is found in John chapter 3.

John 3:14-16 (NIV)

14 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, **15** that everyone who **believes** (and continues to believe) may have eternal life in him." **16** For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that

whoever **believes** (and continues to believe) in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

I also want to point out that John very directly points to the object of our faith (or the WHAT of our belief) by telling us our belief must be directed to "Jesus, the Christ the Son of God." and in John 3 by telling us that we must believe "in him"

Another powerful passage about continuing to believe is found in Galatians chapter 1. Here Paul writes of his disappointment that some in Galatia had not continued in their belief.

Galatians 1:6 (NCV)

6 God, by his grace through Christ, called you to become his people. So, I am amazed that you are turning away so quickly and believing something different than the Good News.

Here we see again that the act of believing is not the only part of the equation of our faith. The Galatians were continuing to believe, but they had begun believing something different. So, we see that WHAT we believe is just as critical to the continuation of our faith as is the act of believing itself.

The early church knew the importance of defining what we believe and continuing in that belief. Commander Jim has done a great job in his Sunday School class over the years of drawing attention to and teaching the great creeds of the church and the meaning in the words of those creeds. *The word 'Creed' is derived from the Latin word credo, meaning 'I believe'. The Creeds, therefore, are summaries of belief.* The creeds helped focus our faith on the correct beliefs as well as giving us a tool for sustaining or continuing our believe in those truths.

Though not necessarily in credal form many modern denominations have formulated a set of truths that define their beliefs and call others into fellowship by agreeing with and continuing in these beliefs. In the Assemblies of God, we refer to these beliefs as our 16 fundamental truths. These truths contain many of the same proclamations as the early Christian creeds.

In this series, I want to draw our attention to several statements of belief that call us to adhere to the foundational truths of our faith, truths that have often come under attack, been forgotten or watered down and weakened through false teaching or lack of basic biblical literacy within the church

Through these statements I want to reaffirm my own commitment to the continuation of my belief in these truths.

1. **I Still Believe** in the **One, Eternal, Self-existent God**, creator of the heavens and the earth, all that is seen and unseen; His love of and desire to reveal himself and have relationship with those whom he has created.

Let's break down that thought...

One

There is no other God, there are not many Gods, there are not smaller Gods. There is only one

Deuteronomy 6:4

4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

Isaiah 43:10-11

10 "You are my witnesses," declares the Lord, "and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. **11** I, even I, am the Lord, and apart from me there is no savior.

Eternal

He has no beginning and no end. For me this is a brain swelling concept. And yet, I believe. He has always been, and He always will be

Psalm 90:2

2 Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Self-existent

No one created him and nothing sustains him. He alone is Omnipotent (all powerful) He alone is Omniscient (All knowing). He alone is Omnipresent (All present - Everywhere present at once).

We sing about it in the words of the song What a Beautiful Name It Is) ...

*You have no rival, You have no equal
Now and forever, God, You reign
Yours is the Kingdom, Yours is the glory
Yours is the Name above all names*

Creator

God is not just an initiator of creation, He is THE CREATOR

Genesis 1:1 (NIV)

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

John 1:3 (NIV)

3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

*if we cannot believe Genesis 1:1, how can we believe the rest of the Word of God

His love of and desire to reveal himself and have relationship with those whom he has created.

God, throughout time has revealed himself to mankind. He walked with Adam and Eve, He spoke with Abraham, He showed himself to Jacob, revealed his glory to Moses, gave revelations to his prophets. He has revealed himself to our hearts, in creation and in his Son, Jesus Christ

Romans 1:19-20 (NIV)

19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. **20** For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

Psalm 19:1 (NIV)

1 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

John 14:9 (NIV)

9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.(A) How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

2. **I Still Believe** in the **Trinity** of the Godhead as being revealed as embodying the principles of relationship and association as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Though we know and believe that God is one we also know that God has taught us that he is three in one.

There is a great article by Matt Perman, "What Is The Doctrine of The Trinity" in which he states...

The doctrine of the Trinity means that there is one God who eternally exists as three distinct Persons – the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Stated differently, God is one in essence and three in person. These definitions express three crucial truths: (1) the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct Persons, (2) each Person is fully God, (3) there is only one God.

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct Persons. The Bible speaks of the Father as God ([Philippians 1:2](#)), Jesus as God ([Titus 2:13](#)), and the Holy Spirit as God ([Acts 5:3-4](#)).

The fact that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct Persons means, in other words, that the Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is not the Father. Jesus is God, but he is not the Father or the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God, but he is not the Son or the Father. They are different Persons, not three different ways of looking at God.

While the three members of the Trinity are distinct, this does not mean that any is inferior to the other. Instead, they are all identical in attributes. They are equal in power, love, mercy, justice, holiness, knowledge, and all other qualities.

Having seen that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are distinct Persons, that they are each fully God, and that there is nonetheless only one God, we must conclude that all three Persons are the same God. In other words, there is one God who exists as three distinct Persons.

If there is one passage which most clearly brings all of this together, it is [Matthew 28:19](#):

Matthew 28:19

19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

The Old Testament is also filled with evidences of the triune God. For instance, Isaiah 48 states

Isaiah 48:12-13; 16-17

12 “Listen to me, Jacob, Israel, whom I have called: I am he; I am the first and I am the last. **13** My own hand laid the foundations of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens;

16 “Come near me and listen to this: “From the first announcement I have not spoken in secret; at the time it happens, I am there.” And now the Sovereign Lord has sent me, endowed with his Spirit. **17** This is what the Lord says— your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: “I am the Lord your God,