

I STILL Believe (Part 3)

Sunday, August 23, 2020

Key Texts:

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?"

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.

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.

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.

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.
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.
3. I Still Believe that sin separates us from God and that the result of that sin is death or eternal separation from God in Hell
4. I Still Believe that God's remedy for Sin is Salvation by grace, through faith in Jesus and His work upon the cross.
5. I Still Believe that we are called to walk, by that same faith, in relationship with Jesus Christ, allowing the presence of His Holy Spirit to transform us into a new creation

6. **I Still Believe** that The Bible is God's Holy Word. That the Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, are verbally inspired of God and are the revelation of God to man, the infallible, authoritative rule of faith and conduct.

Let's continue to build upon these statements of belief...

1 Corinthians 3:10

¹⁰ By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care.

7. **I Still Believe** that the Baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues is the gift Jesus promised to all who believe

- a. Ask, Seek, Knock

Luke 24:49

⁴⁹ I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

Acts 1:8

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Luke 11:9-13

“So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

¹¹ “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for^[a] a fish, will give him a snake instead? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

- b. Receive Him by faith

- i. This gift is for you...

Acts 2:38-39

³⁸ Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized,^(A) every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.^(B) And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.^(C) ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children^(D) and for all who are far off^(E)—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian Church. With it comes the enduement of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry.

This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth.

With the baptism in the Holy Spirit come such experiences as:

- an overflowing fullness of the Spirit,*
- a deepened reverence for God,*
- an intensified consecration to God and dedication to His work,*
- and a more active love for Christ, for His Word and for the lost,*

- c. Let him flow through you
 - i. Practice your gifts regularly and continue to ask God for more
 - ii. Sometimes we get so scared that we are going to do something wrong, that we end up doing nothing. We allow our fear to fill us with doubt and quench the moving of The Spirit

8. I still Believe in The Church

- a. Globally and locally

The Church is the Body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfillment of her great commission. Each believer, born of the Spirit, is an integral part of the General Assembly and Church of the Firstborn, which are written in heaven.

- 1. To be an agency of God for evangelizing the world.*
- 2. To be a corporate body in which man may worship God.*
- 3. To be a channel of God's purpose to build a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son.*
- 4. To be a people who demonstrate God's love and compassion for all the world.*

- b. I will build my church

Matthew 16:18

¹⁸ And I tell you that you are Peter, ^{[a](A)} and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

i. The Gates of Hell

To the pagan mind, the cave at Caesarea Philippi created a gate to the underworld, where fertility gods lived during the winter. They committed detestable acts to worship these false gods.

Caesarea Philippi's location was especially unique because it stood at the base of a cliff where spring water flowed. At one time, the water ran directly from the mouth of a cave set in the bottom of the cliff.

The pagans of Jesus' day commonly believed that their fertility gods lived in the underworld during the winter and returned to earth each spring. They saw water as a symbol of the underworld and thought that their gods traveled to and from that world through caves.

To the pagan mind, then, the cave and spring water at Caesarea Philippi created a gate to the underworld. They believed that their city was literally at the gates of the underworld—the gates of hell. In order to entice the return of their god, Pan, each year, the people of Caesarea Philippi engaged in horrible deeds, including prostitution and sexual interaction between humans and goats.

When Jesus brought his disciples to the area, they must have been shocked. Caesarea Philippi was like a red-light district in their world and devout Jews would have avoided any contact with the despicable acts committed there.

It was a city of people eagerly knocking on the doors of hell.

ii. I have always believed the church was called to exist in every condition no matter the cost. That's why men and women through the centuries have given their very lives to establish the work of the church in places where it was violent, unsafe, dirty, and diseased

iii. I am glad for the Mother Theresa's and The Mark Buntain's... For the Jim Elliot's and so many others who gave of themselves in the most difficult of situations because Jesus said he would build his church and the very gates of hell would not prevail against it

c. Assembling Together

Hebrews 10:25 (New Century Version)

²⁵ You should not stay away from the church meetings, as some are doing, but you should meet together and encourage each other. Do this even more as you see the day coming.

- i. There is great strength and encouragement in coming together

Psalm 42:1-4

¹As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God.

²My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with

God? ³My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me all

day long “Where is your God?” ⁴These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go to the house of God under the protection of the Mighty One with shouts of joy and praise among the festive throng.

- ii. I have prayed about this and struggled with a word that I feel The Holy Spirit has laid on my heart. I have felt the conviction of this word for some time and I know that there will be some who disagree with me, and some who will get angry with me for sharing these thoughts but please hear my heart. I don't share this in condemnation but to encourage you in these times that Gods Word is still true, and He has a path forward for us as we trust in that Word
- iii. Would we tell those in places of persecution they should not meet because it might be dangerous
- iv. Neither would we encourage them to take unnecessary risks
- v. God's word doesn't change based on our circumstances
- vi. There is a great difference between fear and caution. We need to use wisdom. We need to practice safe measures
- vii. I just don't want us to get in a mindset that says the physical coming together of the church is not important
- viii. One of the things that has come out of this pandemic is a defining by some that the church is essential (thank you President Trump. Thank you, Arizona Attorney General. And thank you other voices who have raised up and declared church is an essential service)
- ix. I have always been taught and experienced the truth of the importance of going to church. In fact, I think that a desire to be with Gods people is a fruit of our salvation
 - 1. It's where we grow
 - 2. It's where we are taught the principles of God's word
 - 3. It's where we are strengthened and encouraged
 - 4. It's where we can pray corporately together
 - 5. It's where we celebrate the ordinances of communion and water baptism
 - 6. It's where we get married, dedicate our children
 - 7. It's where we have relationship and learn to live in community
 - 8. It's where we combine our resources and do more together than we could alone

- 9. It's where we are sharpened by other believes
 - 10. It's where we learn to live in unity
 - 11. It's where we bear each other's burdens
 - 12. It's where we learn patience and practice forgiveness
 - 13. It's where we comfort one another in times of loss, celebrating life and reminding each other of our eternity in heaven
- x. There have been a couple of times in my life where I have slacked off and I felt the results. But when I have made the effort God has blessed me more than I can tell you. Yes, there have been challenges. Yes, there have been times I have been hurt. (When you are a part of a family you will invariably have disagreements, arguments and not always like each other). But that's part of how we grow. We learn to forgive each other and love each other more deeply) Yes there have been times when it is not convenient. Yes, there have been times it has cost me something. Where I had to make a choice. But it is more than worth it!
 - xi. That's why I have worked hard to instill that attitude in my children
 - xii. Society has shifted greatly in the last few decades in its attitude toward the church. Slowly the priority of attending church has been replaced by other things, work, school activities, sports, leisure, and entertainment.
 - xiii. Don't forget that the devil will take every opportunity to try to dissuade us from practicing the truths of God's word. He doesn't want you to attend church

9. I Still Believe in The Ministry and its offices as given by God to the Church

Ephesians 4:11-13

¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

- a. Apostles - the Establishment, organization, and Governance of the church
- b. Prophets - speaking forth the word of the Lord
 - i. Lot of abuse in this area but doesn't disqualify the office
- c. Evangelists - spreading the good news and bringing people into the kingdom of God
- d. Pastors - shepherds of the flock
- e. Teachers - rightly dividing the word of truth