

Elementary truths of Christianity – Christ

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- There's no denying the fact that we all must learn the elementary truths of anything before we can become perfect
 - For instance, a baby learns to crawl before walking
 - A young baseball player learns to hit off of a tee before live pitching
 - A math student learns algebra and trigonometry before the calculus curriculum
- The Bible is no different
- In Hebrews 4:14-5:10, we learn about how Jesus is our great high priest
 - He is not unable to sympathize with us, rather he was tempted as we are – yet was without sin (vs 4:15)
 - Because of Him, we can approach the throne of grace with confidence so that we may receive the mercy and grace we so desperately need (vs 4:16)
 - He is the son of God (vs 5:5)
 - He offered prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears and was heard due to his submission to the Father (vs 5:7)
 - A reference back to Matthew 26:36-46 when Jesus was praying in the garden of Gethsemane shortly before His arrest and crucifixion
 - He learned obedience, was made perfect, became the source of eternal salvation to the obedient, and was made high priest forever in the order of Melchizedek by God (vs 5:8-10)
 - Melchizedek was a priest of God Most High during the time of Abram (Genesis 14:18-19)
- And the Hebrew writer wanted to keep this thought going, but he was unable to (Hebrews 5:11-6:3)
 - Because in vs 11, we're told that the audience was dull of hearing
 - By the time this letter was written, they should have been teachers – but they were in a position to where they still needed someone to teach them the basics (vs 5:12)
 - They needed milk vs solid food because they were still infants who were not acquainted with righteousness (vs 5:13)
 - So true righteousness is more than just being a good person apparently
 - Consider the rich young ruler in Matthew 19:16-22 – he did not murder, commit adultery, steal, lie, he honored his parents, and loved his neighbor as himself
 - He would be a good moral person by today's standards – but he was not righteous because he did not know the elementary truths
 - He was not in a saved state
 - Vs 22 tells us that he was unable to part with his wealth
 - Also, consider the Ethiopian eunuch

- He traveled a long way to worship at Jerusalem (Acts 8:27)
 - And on his way home, he was studying from the book of Isaiah (vs 28)
 - By today's standards – he would also be considered a good, moral man
 - But he was not in a saved state either – he was not righteous at this point
 - It would appear that the eunuch did not even know who Jesus was – which he was probably one of the few who had any ties to Jerusalem whatsoever that could say this
 - He needed Philip to teach him and that's exactly what happened
- The Hebrew writer goes on to say that the mature need solid food – they no longer need milk because they already know the elementary teachings (vs 5:14)
 - Because they have trained themselves by constant use
 - We all know how true this is
 - We often say “if you don't use it, you lose it” academically speaking, physically speaking, etc.
 - When I was in college – there were not many math problem you could give me that I couldn't solve
 - Now it's the exact opposite – I would be surprised if I could solve a basic calculus problem without first looking at some of my old college notes
 - I was also at one point in my life fairly athletic – this is also no longer true
 - These are things I no longer do, I have not been in constant use with these things, therefore if I wanted to get back into them, I'd have to start with the basics
 - This is not how the mature Christian should be though – we should be in constant study, constant use of the Bible and its teachings – so we can distinguish good from evil (vs 5:14)
 - 2 Timothy 2:15 – *“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”*
 - One approved of God is the one who is not ashamed (much like Paul in Romans 1:16 – he was not ashamed of the gospel) and the one who correctly handles the word of truth
 - We have no chance at correctly handling the word of truth if we do not know it
- 6:1 states *“Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity...”*
 - We are all to be mature Christians
 - But we cannot get there until we understand the elementary teachings
 - Again, one cannot learn calculus without the basic foundations of algebra and trigonometry
 - A baseball player does not make it to the major leagues until first learning to hit the ball from a tee when they were younger and playing tee-ball
- 6:1 also tells us that these elementary teachings are about Christ

- So, at minimum, the following is all involved when teaching/learning about Christ
 - Repentance from acts that lead to death (vs 1)
 - Faith in God (vs 1)
 - Instructions about baptisms (vs 2)
 - The laying on of hands (vs 2)
 - The resurrection of the dead (vs 2)
 - Eternal judgment (vs 2)
- We can see this throughout the Bible as well
- For instance, baptism
 - Acts 8:35 (Philip teaching the eunuch from Isaiah) – *“Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.”*
 - The very next thing that the eunuch says that’s recorded for us in vs 36: *“As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, ‘Look, here is water. Why shouldn’t I be baptized?’”*
 - Philip taught him the good news about Jesus – many of the details of the specifics that were taught are omitted, but we know for a fact that baptism was a part of that based on the eunuch’s reaction to seeing water
 - How else would the eunuch have known anything about baptism had Philip not preached it to him as he was teaching him the good news about Jesus
- Another example – eternal judgment
 - Matthew 3:11 (John the Baptizer is teaching people and baptizing them) – *“I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.”*
 - No doubt this person he is speaking of is Jesus (John 1:30 proves that if there is any doubt)
 - We’ll talk more about this a little later, but by definition – baptism means to immerse
 - So to be baptized in fire is to be immersed in fire – how is it possible to be immersed in fire?
 - **Revelation 20:14-15** describe a lake of fire for those whose names were not found written in the book of life – this would immerse someone in fire
 - Baptism by fire is a reference to eternal condemnation – and who is the judge?
 - You may say God, and you’d be right – but more specifically, it is God the Son (Jesus) who will be our judge (2 Timothy 4:1)
- So we cannot teach someone about Christ without teaching them all of these subjects – they all revolve around Christ
 - Think about it: Christ is our Savior (**Romans 5:6-11**)
 - We deserve to die in our sin (Romans 3:23 & Romans 6:23)
 - But through Christ, we have received reconciliation (Romans 5:11)
 - Without Him, there would be no reason to repent – because the first time we sin, we’d be lost

- Similarly there would be no point to have faith in God
- Baptism would be useless because when we're baptized – we're spiritually mimicking Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (**Romans 6:1-11**)
 - If Jesus hadn't lived a perfect life, becoming our perfect sacrifice – and died, been buried, and resurrected so that we may do the same – what's the point in this baptism?
- The laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, the eternal judgment – this all revolves around Jesus
- We're going to spend the next several lessons talking about each of these elementary teachings
- This lesson will talk about Jesus Christ – our Savior
- All of these teachings revolve around Christ – so let's learn about our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation (Romans 5:11)
 - This world cannot contain the amount of sermons that could be written on this topic
 - In fact, every Biblical sermon (that is every sermon that is sourced from the Biblical truths) is about Jesus
 - The entire Bible points to Jesus
 - Jesus can be seen in every book of the Bible
 - The OT points to the coming of a Messiah
 - In the gospels, we find out that Jesus is that Messiah and He is currently here
 - The remainder of the NT reminds us that we must heed His teaching and be obedient to it
- We read of what Jesus was doing before he became flesh in **John 1:1-5, 10-14**
 - He was with God in the beginning – at the creation, Jesus was there (this aligns with Genesis 1:26 of course, amongst other passages)
 - Through Him were all things made
 - The world was made through Him, however the world did not recognize Him
 - He came from the Father and was full of grace and truth
- In Matthew 1 and Luke 3, the earthly genealogy of Jesus is recorded for us
 - Take a look at the list described for us in Matthew 1:1-16
 - Some of these men were very righteous men: Abraham for instance, also David
 - Some were very wicked: Manasseh and Amon (Manasseh did repent at the end of his life according to 2 Chronicles 33:12, but you can read of all the wicked things he did before that in 2 Kings 21)
 - Some we have no other Biblical record of
 - But God had a Messiah to deliver – and He was going to do so despite man's weaknesses
- We read of His earthly birth in Matthew 1-2, Luke 1-2
 - How Mary declared herself as God's servant when approached by the angel Gabriel telling her of her pregnancy
 - How Joseph was a righteous man and stayed with Mary, though according to the old law – he didn't have to

- We read of how the heavenly host appeared with an angel and praised God upon His birth (Luke 2:13-14)
 - If the quantity of angels is anything like that of what is described in Revelation 5:11 (describes thousands upon thousands, and then thousand times ten thousand encircled around the throne praising the lamb that was slain – Jesus), then I can't imagine what these shepherds in Luke 2 must have seen in this instance
- And we read in Matthew 1:21 how Jesus was going to save His people from their sins
- God's plan of salvation was complete from the beginning (Hebrews 4:3)
 - This is proved for us in Genesis 3:14-15
 - *"So the Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.'"*
- On the seventh day of creation, God rested from all His work (Genesis 2:2)
- We do not know much of Jesus' childhood, but we do know that He was very strong and devoted to God's Word
 - In Luke 2:46-47, we read that Jesus was sitting amongst the teachers asking questions and listening to their teaching
 - Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and His answers
 - We also read in Luke 2 of how Jesus even in His earthly youth was centered on serving His Father
 - A point that is proven in His entire life, but for example here – in Luke 4:16-31
 - When in the synagogue of Nazareth, He was given the scroll of Isaiah and He navigated to the place that is today known as Isaiah 61:1-2
 - But in the middle of His reading, He refers to *"to release the oppressed"* which is found in Isaiah 58:6
 - So it's possible that Jesus read the first part of Isaiah 61, paused and turned to Isaiah 58, and then went back to Isaiah 61
 - Now these scrolls did not have book, chapter, and verse notes as we do today
 - Think of how familiar with the Scriptures Jesus would have had to have been to do this
 - From what we read in Luke 2:46-52, it is apparent that Jesus was a very good Bible student, which shows His devotion to His Father and the plan He came to execute
- We read of Jesus' baptism by John in Matthew 3, Mark 1, and Luke 3
 - How John was a little nervous about baptizing Jesus
 - He says: *"I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"*

- Jesus response: *“Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.”*
 - With that, John consented
 - Again, we’ll talk more about baptism in a few lessons, but you can see here that even Jesus was baptized by John to fulfill all righteousness – if it was proper for Jesus to be baptized, then why is there any question at all as to whether or not we need to be baptized? This alone should prove that
- Next, we read of some temptations that Jesus faced at the hands of Satan in Matthew 4, Mark 1, and Luke 4
 - Based on the beginnings of the accounts of this set of temptations, it appears that Jesus very likely was tempted the entire time He was in the desert here (Mark 1:13)
 - But we have 3 temptations recorded for us at the very least
 - Satan tempts Him with bread (He had fasted 40 days and 40 nights at this time)
 - Satan’s play: can’t make it to the cross if you die of hunger first
 - Satan tempted Him to throw himself from the top of the temple
 - Satan’s play: God says He will protect you – prove it
 - Satan showed Him everything this world has to offer – it’s kingdoms, it’s riches
 - Satan’s play: no need to go to the cross, I can give you the entire world and you don’t have to suffer
 - To every one of these, Christ responds with Scripture
 - 1 – Satan knows Scripture
 - It obviously isn’t enough for us to know Scripture today
 - We must live it and be obedient
 - Even the demons believe, and shudder (James 2:19)
 - How many times in the gospels is it recorded for us that demons are confessing the name of Jesus – yet they are still demons. Why?
 - They believe and confess – they apparently know enough of the Scripture to know that Christ is Lord
 - They are simply not obedient – you can believe God’s Word and confess Christ’s name all you want. But you must follow the full plan of salvation as we discussed in our last episode if you want to receive God’s gift of eternal life
 - 2 – Christ proves that an excellent way (probably the best way) to fight temptation is to do so by using Scripture
 - *“You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.”* – Deuteronomy 6:16
 - *“You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.”* – Deuteronomy 6:13
 - *“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”* – Deuteronomy 8:3
 - Christ was familiar with these Scriptures and refuted Satan’s temptations by using them – we have the same opportunity to do so
- Next, we can read of the ministry of Jesus

- All the parables, all the teachings, all the miracles that He did
- We have 4 books recorded for us on the time that Jesus spent while on this earth – most of these books are comprised mostly of select events of His ministry
- The fact that we have 4 books on this should tell you how important Christ is
- Jesus did so many things worth recording over the course of His life and His ministry that if everything were recorded, the world itself could not contain the amount of books that would be written (John 21:25)
- Jesus committed no sin while on earth (Hebrews 4:15) – but He did make enemies
 - So living a righteous life does not mean that everyone will like you – I think the world gets confused on this sometimes
 - It is our responsibility to live at peace with everyone as far as it depends on us (Romans 12:18)
 - But Ephesians 6 describes the armor of God that the Christian must wear (Ephesians 6:11)
 - You are not wearing that armor to look tough – this armor is for you to defend yourself and even attack when necessary
 - The truth must be taught and defended when adversaries challenge it
 - Jesus did this – and ultimately, in the earthly sense, it is what led to His death
 - 2 Timothy 3:12 – *“Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,”*
 - You are going to face persecution as a Christian – you cannot be a Christian and a people pleaser – all people are not going to accept the message, but you must be ready to stand up for the truth
 - If not, Christ will deny you at the judgment (Matthew 10:33)
 - How many times did Christ reprimand the Jews (Pharisees, Sadducees, etc.) in the form of parables or even directly (read Matthew 23 – Jesus was not mincing words)
- We know that Jesus did not come to abolish the old law, but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17) – and He did just that
- He is our Messiah
- Finally, we read of the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus
 - The single most important set of events in human history – and sadly many people do not realize it
 - He was crucified alongside 2 criminals as if He were a criminal Himself
 - He was mocked, spit upon, ridiculed, beaten, amongst the other cruel treatment that He endured before finally being crucified (Matthew 26 & 27)
 - His body was placed in a tomb guarded by a large stone (Matthew 27:57-61)
 - But luckily for you and I, the story does not end there
 - *“Death could not hold the King of Kings”* (song lyric that we sing often)
 - Death was powerless of our Lord
 - That is the God that we serve, that is the God that we use as our example – the God who has full omnipotence even over the grave

- Christ overcame the world (**John 16:33**)
- And through Him, we can too
- This is just the first lesson in this series, but it is the thing that the other topics are centered around
- 1 Corinthians 15:17 – “*And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.*”
- Christ has been raised – and you can too
- The plan of salvation is simple and will never change
 - **Step 1: Hearing the gospel** – *Romans 10:13-17*
 - Gospel = Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried, arose, and appeared to many – *1 Corinthians 15:1-8, Romans 1:16*
 - **Step 2: Believing the gospel** – *Mark 16:16, John 3:16*
 - **Step 3: Confession that Jesus is Lord** – *Romans 10:8-10, 1 John 1:9*
 - **Step 4: Repentance of sins** – *Luke 13:3, Acts 2:38*
 - Repentance: a turning away from sin, disobedience, or rebellion and a turning back to God. Change of mind that produces a change in action.
 - **Step 5: Baptism into Christ** – *Galatians 3:27, Acts 2:38, Romans 6:1-10, 1 Peter 3:21-22*
 - Before you can be raised with Christ, you must die – I’m not speaking in a physical sense, but a spiritual sense
 - Your old self full of sin is crucified with Christ in the form of baptism according to Romans 6:4
 - Romans 6:4 also states that when we rise out of the waters of baptism, we arise into newness of life just as Christ was raised from the dead
 - **Step 6: Live faithfully** – *Revelation 2:10*