

Building Your Life On A Solid Foundation

Psalm 119:105

We are doing a series of messages that I have entitled “Living the Christian Life Today and Tomorrow.” We have been talking about the essentials for living the Christian life with commitment and consistency. We have looked at the first essential which is *we need people we can live with, people we can count on in our life.*

This week we are going to look at a second essential of living the Christian life. I need some principles that I can live by. I not only need *people* I can *count on* but *truth* I can *stand on*. In this world where there are so many ideas about what the truth is, there are so many ideas about what to stand on, I need something that I can build a solid foundation on in life. Where are you going to find that in this world?

2 Timothy 3:16 says, “The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and helps us do what is right.” I need that. I need something that shows me what is true in this world where everybody says “**this**” is true or there is no truth. I need something that is honest enough with me to say, “You’re heading in the wrong direction.” The Word of God *straightens me out and helps me do what is right and gives me the strength and the power to do the right thing in life.*

Ever so often you will hear me say that the Bible is the inerrant, infallible Word of God. What does that really mean? In its simplest term, it means that from Genesis to Revelation, the Word of God itself is without error and holy men of God wrote, as they were inspired of God to write. Every week I stand before you to read passages from the Bible. Why? Because there are *questions that needs answers, issues that need to be addressed, and wounds that need healing!*

How do you know the Bible is true? Maybe you have asked (or you have thought it), “How do you know the Bible is true?” And someone gives you this answer, “Because it says it’s true.” Now that sounds real good, but there is a problem. **If you don’t already believe it’s true and it says it’s true how do you know that it’s true?** Ultimately this is a question of faith, but there are also external evidences that it is true. Therefore, in today’s study, I want to share with you three evidences behind the truth of the Bible that support our faith.

There, first of all, there is the evidence of history. The Bible is a book that is rooted in history. The Bible is not about made up people and made up places. **The Bible has real people and real places and real things that really happened.** Again and again people have tried to say that the things that happened in the Bible didn’t really happen but through the years it is proved itself true.

For example, there was a group of people in the Bible named the Hittites. For thousands of years, up until about 1900, we didn’t know anything about these people. People said it was just a made up group of people. **They said that the Hittites were just a name that was used for illustration.** But then early in the 1900’s a group of archeologists digging in Turkey found the capital city of the Hittites and once again the Bible was shown to be an historical book.

Early in this decade in 1990 a book came out saying that David and Solomon that lived in the Old Testament were not really people. They were nice stories but they never really lived. It was an unfortunate time for that book to be published and placed in Bookstores because three years later some archeologists digging in the capital city of an ancient place called Dan unearthed a stone from 831 B.C. that talked about the House of David of Israel.

Again and again the Bible has shown itself to be rooted in history. We count our history by it. Every time you write down a date, you write down the date from Jesus' appearance on this earth. So it is a book that's rooted in history.

Second, there is the evidence of consistency throughout the Bible. Not only do we have external evidence but we also have internal evidence. As you read through this book, you find what a unique book it is.

When you pick up the Bible you are looking at a book that was written over about a 1500-year span, which covered more than 40 human generations; it was written by more than 40 different authors from every walk of life (fishermen, poets, shepherds, kings, tax collectors, scholars, military leaders, doctors, political officials, and others). Yet all these authors who wrote on three different continents (Asia, Africa, and Europe); in three different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek). It was written from numerous perspectives (history, law, poetry, didactic, treatises, parable and allegory, biography, personal letters, memoirs, and prophecy); and it covers a multitude of subjects, many of which could be considered controversial. **The themes that go all the way from the book of Genesis in the beginning to Revelation in the end are incredible.** Yet, with all this diversity included in its composition, each part of the Bible contributes individually to one unfolding story: God's redemption of mankind.

The Bible is one story, God's love for us and how He wants to call us back to Himself. No human being could have sat down and planned such a book. The uniqueness of this book.

Third, there is the evidence of changed lives. Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the word of God is living, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and

intents of the heart.” We could go around this room today and hear literally hundreds of stories about how this book, the Bible has changed somebody’s life. The fact that the Bible has the power to make a difference in my life is one of the proofs along with its consistency and history.

We could talk about all morning about the Bible being the Word of God, but that is not the pressing issue. The issue is this: *How am I going to take the truth that is in the Bible and build it into my life?*

Jesus said this in Matthew 7:24, “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.” Jesus says, “Do you want a foundation for life? Do you want something you can stand on when the tough times come? My words to you are like that.” How can I hear what God has to say and put it into practice so it makes a difference in my life?

1. You have got to hear God’s Word. Bible says in Romans 10:17, “So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.” There are lots of people that talk about faith, but there is no base for faith apart from the Word of God. So we need to hear the Word of God. **There are lots of ways to hear God’s word.** You can hear it in messages at church. You can hear it on the radio, tapes, television, etc. **Every time you hear God’s word it raises your faith, it enables and empowers your faith.** That is incredibly good news.

But I have some bad news for you too. The experts tell us that we tend to forget about 95% of what we hear after about 72 hours. That is kind of disappointing. **To think that after three days you are going to forget 95% of everything that you have heard today!** You hear a message and you think, “I am going to do something about that.” But before you even get out of the parking lot, the truth slips away. How do you get a firmer grip on some truth so it lasts in your life?

2. You need to read God's Word. I need to start to read it for myself, let it make an impact in my life. This book, the Bible, is the best selling book in human history. **It is filled with the kind of stories that we like to read.** There are stories about sin and sex and violence right in this book. There are stories about God's compassion. **And about how God reaches out to people who felt like they could never find God.** And about God working miracles in people's lives. The Bible is an incredible book. **It is filled with stories of people who fought against giants and won, who were swallowed by whales and rose again from the dead.** The Bible is a cornerstone of our entire civilization. This book, the Bible, inspired the art of Michelangelo, the plays of William Shakespeare, and the books of John Steinbeck. **It still inspires the films of Hollywood today.** Across this world there have been incredible numbers of freedom movements inspired by this book and changed the geographical and cultural center of our world.

Yet with all that, the incredible thing is how little we really read this book. Statistics across the U.S., not just people who come to church but everybody in the United States, say that 91% own a Bible. The average is we have three Bibles in our home. **And 80% of the people, when they were surveyed, said that they believe the Bible is the most important book ever written, 58% of Americans say they think everything in the Bible is true.**

If all of that is true, and it is, why don't we read it as much? Why do we struggle to read it? Maybe we don't understand why God wants us to read it. Revelation 1:3 says, "Happy is the one who reads the words of God's message." **God wants you to read his book because He wants to make you happy.** He wants to bring joy to your life, the joy of knowing which direction to go next, the joy of finding a solution where it didn't seem like there was one possible, the joy of finding hope where there is nowhere else to find hope. That is why He wants you to read this book.

Deuteronomy 17:19 says, “The scripture shall be his constant companion. He must read from it every day (notice the words “every day”) of his life so he’ll learn to respect the Lord his God by obeying His commands.” **God wants all of us to read from His book on a daily basis.** This verse was originally written particularly to the king of Israel which tells me the more responsibility you have, the busier your life gets, the more important it is that you read from this book. Why don’t we?

I think one of the reason is sometimes we have a hard time understanding the Bible. For example, have you ever watched Ice Hockey on TV? I have sat in my Living Room and watched two teams from the National Hockey League play each other. **I have tried to watch it on more than one occasion, but I still have no earthly idea what they are doing out there.** I don’t understand about the lines or the rules of the game, but I do understand about the scoring and the fighting. When the whole thing is over, I know that one team won but I have no clue what the game is all about.

I think a lot of people read the Bible like that. We know there are winners and losers, but we really do not understand all of the things that we read about. So let me give you two suggestions about how to read and better understand the Bible.

1. Read the Bible in a translation that you can understand. Now I realize a lot of you have been taught that you were not supposed to read anything but the King James Version Bible that was written over 400 years ago, in King James English. **I am not knocking the King James Bible, and I want to say to you that I have no doubt in my mind that it is the best translation for any of you who are over 400 years old.** **But if you happen to be born a little bit later than that, why not get a modern translation?** Not that the King James Bible isn’t beautiful, because it is. But many people have a hard time understanding King James English. Therefore, I suggest that you get a

translation that is easy for you to read and one that you can understand.

2. Read the Bible systematically. That is, read it book by book. Don't use what we call the Skip and Dip method of Bible study or the Pray and Point – you pray, “God, what do You want me to do today?” **You open the Bible up, point.** That has the potential for some very bad results. For example, what if you are having a bad day and looking for some help and your Bible fell open to Matthew 27:5 that says, “...and he went out and hanged himself.” So the Pray and Point method can be rather risky!

My advice to new Christians is to start with the Book of John and read through it from start to finish. When you have finished the Book of John, I would suggest that you read the Book of John again. Then you are ready to read through the New Testament from a translation you can understand. **If you will discipline yourself to turn off the television and read about fifteen minutes a day you will be able to make remarkable progress in your Bible reading.** And I promise you that the more you get to know this book it change the way you live and look at life.

3. You need to study God's Word. Not just read it but begin to really dig into it and study it. Acts 17:11 says, “They accepted the message eagerly and they studied the Scriptures everyday.” **What is the difference between reading the Bible and studying?** The difference is you take notes when you study. You write down something. **You learn something for your own life from it.** Take the notes that you are making during the sermon home with you and sit down with your Bible and go over the sermon. **Find out how today's sermon impacts your everyday living.** **Does it answer any of your questions?** Does it meet any of your needs? **Does it impact your faith in any way?** **All of these are questions that you need to ask yourself as you take the time to study your sermon notes.** In other words, make today's

sermon much more than just a trip to church; make it a vital part of your life!

But more than anything else, I want you to see that this book, the Bible, is given to us to help us develop a relationship with God. I don't want you to see it as a cold list of rules and regulations. It really is God's love letter inviting us to have a relationship with Him. When you sit down and read the Bible it's not as if you're reading a list of laws. It is the revelation that God loves you with an unconditional love. It is the revelation that God wants to make you life better, your relationships pure, and your eternity secure.

4. I need to memorize God's Word. Right away some of you are thinking, "I just can't memorize."

The truth is we can memorize one category of things. You have your phone number, your Social Security number, your children's phone number, your Driver's License number, etc. In other words, we memorize those things that are important to us. **The Bible says in Proverbs 7:2-3, "Guard My words as your most precious possession. Write them down and also keep them deep within your heart." Psalm 119:11 says, "I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You." I am not talking about just a mental exercise of memorizing God's word.** I am talking about getting a better grip on life, on truth, to build a stronger foundation for life.

5. I need to do God's Word. What is the use of getting God's Word in your hand and in your mind if you are not going to do something with it? **James 1:22 says, "Do not fool yourselves into just listening to the word. Instead, put it into practice." James is saying that if you hear the Word and do nothing about what you have heard, you are only fooling yourself into thinking you have done something worthwhile.** James said don't fool yourself.

The question is, What will you do about what we have talked about today? What are you going to do about God's word? **The value of**

doing His word is that it builds a foundation that lasts for the rest of your life.

If you have never received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, that is your first step.

Everyone please stand for prayer.

Father,

I want to make a commitment to reading Your word. I want to make a commitment to spending time with You. Help us to get to know You better. Help us to find in You the foundation that we really need. In Jesus' name. Amen.