Things Most Surely Believed Among Us

Text: Luke 1:1: “Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us.” Jude, verse 3: “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

If the Lord is willing, I hope to begin a discipleship series, majoring each week on things important to Christchurch Baptist Fellowship and, even more importantly, to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the founder of the Church. This morning, I want to touch on just a few beliefs that we hold dear. Our faith is not a religion built around our opinions. We are patriots, very happy to be citizens of the United States of America, but our faith is not isolated to our culture. The same Gospel we preach here is the same Gospel our missionaries preach in the remainder of North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Africa and the islands of the seas. The Gospel is our worldview. And that worldview is much more than a religion. It is a faith built on and around the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here are a few of our core beliefs.

I. <u>WE BELIEVE IN GOD.</u>

Our God is one person, expressed in three personalities. Deuteronomy 6:4: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.” Genesis 1:26: “And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness….” I John 5:7: “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these Three are One.” We see the majestic moment when the Holy Trinity is observed in Christ’s baptism as recorded in Matthew 3:16, 17.

A. We believe in God, the Father. Ephesians 1:2: “Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 15:6: “That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” No less than twenty-eight times in the New Testament we find the phrase, “God, our Father” or “God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

B. We believe in God, the Son. Jude, verse 25: “To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.” After the resurrection. Our Lord revealed Himself to Thomas, who was having a problem believing. But when he at last saw the risen Lord of

Glory, he gave one of the strongest testimonies to the Deity of Christ. John 20:28: “And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.”

C. We believe in God, the Holy Spirit. Luke 1:35: “And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee….” John 14:16: “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever.” Christ uses the Greek word *allos* to describe the Comforter, which means another of the same kind, instead of *heteros*, which would mean another of a different kind. A remarkable place illustrating the Deity of the Holy Spirit is found in Acts 3:3, 4 when Peter said to Ananias in that he lied to the Holy Ghost, he lied to God.

II. <u>WE BELIEVE IN THE INSPIRED INERRANCY OF THE BIBLE.</u>

Proverbs 30:5: “Every word of God is pure: He is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.” II Timoty 3:16; II Peter 1:21: “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” I Thessalonians 2:13: “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.” Psalm 119:89: “For ever, O Lord,
thy word is settled in heaven.”

III. <u>WE BELIEVE IN ETERNITY, HEAVEN AND HELL.</u>

When our Lord spoke of the coming judgment, He said in Matthew 25:46, “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.” We see here two eternities; one is everlasting punishment, the other Is eternal life. Hebrews 9:27: “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”

Jesus said in John 14:2, 3: “In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” Acts 1:11: “Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.”

Luke 16:22, 23 records Jesus’ parable: “And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.”

Revelation 20:14, 15: “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

IV. WE BELIEVE IN SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH ALONE.

Ephesians 2:8: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” Romans 11:6: “And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.”

By grace through faith versus works for salvation is one of the most outstanding differences between not only our faith compared to the other religions of the world, but also between us and many other denominations of Christianity. For instance, many believe that water baptism and partaking of the Lord’s Supper is merit-based means of grace. They go further and say you must maintain good works to keep yourself saved.

Many wrongly believe that because we believe in the free grace of salvation given to the believer, along with the eternal security of the believer as that which would promote a license to sin. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Bible teaches a changed nature in conversion. II Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” James 2:18: “Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.” We are not saved by works; we are saved by grace, but faith works!

God’s Word follows up Ephesians 2:8, 9 with verse 10: “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

V. WE BELIEVE IN THE CHURCH.

After Peter’s confession, Jesus spoke to him, “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18.) It has been estimated that 92 out of 112 times church is mentioned in the New Testament it is referring to a local assembly. The word church is translated from the word *ekklēsia*, which means “called out assembly.” Notice in I Corinthians 11:18a it says, “For first of all, when ye come together in the church….” Hebrews 10:25: “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

I Timothy 3:15: “But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” The Bible here speaks of behaving inside a group of assembled believers. As our pulpit illustrates, the local New Testament church is the pillar and ground of the truth.

Christ refers to the church as His bride. John 3:29: “He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.” People who say they don’t need the church and yet claim to be spiritual, are greatly deluded. You cannot ignore and despise the bride and get along with the Bridegroom.

The church is assigned to carry out the Great Commission and take the Gospel “… in (our) Jerusalem, and in all (our) Judaea, and in (our) Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1: 8b).

We support the church with our tithes and offerings. I Corinthians 16:2: “Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.” And as we see in this verse, the early church, as do we, meet on Sunday, the first day of the week. The church of the Lord Jesus Christ is more than an organization; it is an organism. And it is God’s will that all who know Christ as Savior are all members.

-Pastor Pope-