

The Fundamental List - Week 3 - What We Believe About Jesus

Discovering the Essentials of our Faith

Video

What you believe about God and what He has done will determine how you live your life.

This isn't just a philosophical question, but a practical question, because what we believe has practical applications to our everyday life and how we will live that life.

Understanding what we believe requires curiosity and humility because curiosity leads us to asking even the hardest questions and humility causes us to realize we haven't arrived, I don't have all the answers.

When we are humbly curious, we will work to find the answers to the questions about what we believe.

Last week we answered the question: What do we believe about the Bible?

This week we are going to answer the question:

What do we believe about Jesus?

Matt 16:13-14

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi,, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

Even today, if you ask people, who do you think Jesus is, you might get answers like:

Jesus was a good man.

Jesus was a prophet.

Jesus was a fraud.

Some will say He was a lunatic.

And still, others will say that He is just a fairy tale.

Then Jesus looks at His disciples ...

In Matt 16:15-17

15 “But you,” he asked them, “who do you say that I am?” (Jesus is asking you the same question today.)

16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

17 Jesus responded, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father in heaven.

I told you last week that the Bible is unique in every sense. There is nothing like it.

In the same way, Jesus is unique. There never was and never will be anyone like Him.

The message of Buddhism does not rest on the Buddha and the message of Islam does not rest on Muhammad, but as Paul Little says in his book, “Know What You Believe”,

“Christianity owes its life, substance, and character in every detail to Christ. He was

- the author of its teaching
- the object of its doctrine
- the origin of its salvation
- the fulfillment of its hopes
- the source of its power
- the founder of its church
- the one who gave the Holy Spirit as a legacy to those who believe.”

We do not follow a religion, denomination, movement, we follow Jesus. And because we follow Jesus, knowing what we believe about Him is pretty important.

C. S. Lewis in his book Mere Christianity writes this:

“I am trying here to prevent anyone from saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him [Jesus Christ]: ‘I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God.’ That is the one thing we

must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with a man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon; or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that option open to us. He did not intend to.”

Most religions accept that Jesus was a good man; many say He was a prophet. Even religions like Mormonism, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Islam recognize Jesus as significant, but not God. The Bible clearly show us that

Jesus is fully God.

Jn 10:30

I and the Father are one.

Jn 10:31-33

31 Again the Jews picked up rocks to stone him.

32 Jesus replied, “I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these works are you stoning me?”

33 “We aren’t stoning you for a good work,” the Jews answered, “but for blasphemy, because you—being a man—make yourself God.”

The religious leaders, in part, hated Jesus because He claimed to be God.

Look at what John writes in his introduction to his gospel:

Jn 1:1

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Who is the Word that John is referring to?

Jn 1:14

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We observed his glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Look at how Paul refers to Jesus in

Titus 2:13

while we wait for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Peter also refers to him in this way in the introduction of his second letter

2 Peter 1:1

To those who have received a faith equal to ours through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Even before Jesus was born, the Bible declares that He is God

Isa 9:6

For a child will be born for us, a son will be given to us, and the government will be on his shoulders. He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

The Bible says very clearly and concisely that Jesus is fully God, but it also says **Jesus is fully man.**

Even though Jesus' conception was supernatural, that is, He was born of a virgin; He was also born like any other human baby with a human mother.

He grew up like any other child.

Luke 2:40

The boy grew up and became strong, filled with wisdom, and God's grace was on him.

Paul Little, again, points out:

Like any other man, Jesus

- got hungry and thirsty (Matt 4:2, Jn 19:28)
- got weary from traveling (Jn 4:6)
- needed sleep and refreshment (Matt 8:24)
- experienced and expressed love and compassion (Matt 9:6)

- was angry at those who defiled His Father's house (Matt 21:13)
- denounced those who refused the truth of God (Mk 3:5)
- wept at the tomb of a dear friend (Jn 11:35)
- was troubled within as he faced the cross (Jn 12:27)

So, what was Jesus? Was He mostly God or mostly man?

The answer is yes. You see, the dual nature of Jesus transcends what we, fully humans, will ever understand.

Christian theology has a big word for this. It is referred to as the **hypostatic union**.

The hypostatic union explains that Jesus has two distinct natures—divine and human—united in one person without confusion, change, division, or separation. This union is an unfathomable mystery that goes beyond the limits of human comprehension.

Both parts of Jesus' nature are equally important to the work that He did.

Jesus had to be fully man or he could not die in our place; he could not be our representative on the cross.

Jesus becoming fully man reassures us that God fully understands the suffering and struggles and temptations of His human family.

Heb 2:17-18

17 Therefore, he had to be like his brothers and sisters in every way, so that he could become a merciful and faithful high priest in matters pertaining to God, to make atonement, for the sins of the people. 18 For since he himself has suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted.

Not only does God love you, He knows you. He understands you. Anything you have ever gone through or will ever go through, God experienced before you.

We all want someone who knows us. We want someone that understands us and still accepts us and won't turn their back on us when they discover who we really are. We want someone who knows us.

Have you ever met someone that you had a connection with because of a shared experience?

Maybe it was someone who shares a common interest, or someone from the same town as you or maybe it was someone who went through a similar traumatic experience you went through.

Because of his human nature and what He experienced, Jesus is the ultimate connection

But His divine nature empowered him to live a sinless life.

1 Peter 2:22

He did not commit sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth

It was only a sinless life that could be a sufficient sacrifice for the sin of the entire human race.

2 Cor 5:21

He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Jesus traded our sin for His sinless life. When you give your life to Jesus, when you repent of your sin and receive God's free gift of forgiveness, God no longer sees your sin, He sees the righteousness of Jesus.

So many of us carry the guilt and shame of past mistakes. You may carry the burden of things you said and things you've done, but when you are in Christ, there is no more shame and no more guilt, and no more striving but never attaining a life that you think God will finally be happy with.

When you are in Christ, you are a new creation, why, because it's no longer about you, it is about what Jesus did for you. He willingly allowed himself to be arrested, beaten and tortured, and then murdered by being crucified on a cross.

But Jesus didn't just die, three days after His death, He rose from the dead.

Jesus rose from the dead.

Why is it important that Jesus rose from the dead?

The fact that Jesus rose from the dead matters because our justification hinges on it.

Paul says in **Rom 4:25 (NLT)**

He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised to life to make us right with God.

Jesus died for our sins but it was His resurrection that repairs our relationship with God.

A dead Savior cannot save, but we have a living Savior who justifies us and makes intercession for us like it says in ...

Heb 7:25 (NLT)

Therefore he is able, once and forever, to save those who come to God through him. He lives forever to intercede with God on their behalf.

After Jesus rose from the dead, He ascended into Heaven where He now sits at the right hand of the Father, reminding the Father that His death was enough to cleanse us of our sin.

The fact that Jesus rose from the dead is fundamental to our faith.

In 1 Cor 15 you can read a very detailed explanation of the importance of Jesus' resurrection.

1 Cor 15:14 (NLT)

And if Christ has not been raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless.

1 Cor 15:17-18

And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins. 18 In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost!

Jesus rose from the dead, and Paul presents that event as the only thing that gives us hope in this life. Christ was the first to permanently rise from the dead, clearing the way for a future resurrection for all who believe.

1 Cor 15:20-22

20 But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died. 21 So you see, just as death came into the world through a man, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through another man. 22 Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life.

After rising from the dead, Jesus appeared to His disciples and to many others. In one instance He appeared to over 500 people in one place. These were eye witness accounts of the resurrected Jesus. And seeing the resurrected Jesus, changed those who saw Him.

Paul Little says, it like this, "It was the thing that changed a handful of cowardly, whimpering men who denied that they even knew their leader, into roaring lions."

Peter at the risk of his life, juist fifty days after the resurrection declared to the men of Jerusalem, "God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. (Acts 2:32)

We don't worship a dead savior, we worship our risen Lord.

Why are all these things about Jesus important? Because all of these things point us to the most important thing to understand about Jesus:

Jesus is our Savior.

Acts 4:12

There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved.

What has Jesus saved us from? He has saved us from the consequences of our sin.

Rom 6:23

What we have earned because of our sin is eternal separation from God in a place called Hell.

But our savior, Jesus, offers a free gift, forgiveness of our sin and a new life in Christ.

Do you know Jesus, the Savior?

Jesus asked His disciples, who do you say I am? The most important question you will ever answer is

“Who is Jesus?”

How you answer this question will not only determine the direction of your life on earth but also where you spend the rest of eternity once your earthly life is over.

When I was a very young youth pastor I was the speaker at a Jr. High winter camp ...

There was not a single kid on that bus that wasn't thinking about their relationship with Jesus.

Give away book.

