

The Christian Faith

Last Week Recap: The nature of belief was the theme of our discussion. This included topics such as: “What is a belief?” [one’s acceptance of something as true.], that all people base their basic worldview on belief [example discussed was origin of the universe], and beliefs must be consistent [Karen is 5’2” and Karen is 7’5” can’t both be true]

This Week

- I. What do Christians believe? Let’s start with foundational beliefs.
 - a. **Foundational beliefs** are major initial beliefs that other beliefs are built on.
Example: God created the universe and everything in it.
 - b. DISCUSSION QUESTION: What are some foundational beliefs of the Christian faith?

- II. Given the foundational beliefs we discussed, are their beliefs by definition that can no longer be true? If so, what are some of those beliefs?

- III. What is the basis for the authority for my belief?
 - a. The question of authority deals with why we believe and where this belief comes from.
 - b. Humanity establishes authority for beliefs in numerous ways; we are going to look at a few of the most common sources of authority for belief.
 - i. Experience/Emotion – “It feels right.”
 1. That which the individual feels to be true is true. Truth is defined in _____ categories. [post-modernism]
 - ii. Reason/Intellect – “It sounds right.”
 1. That which can be rationally demonstrated is true. Human reason is the final judge. [modernism, enlightenment era]
 2. NOTE this authority places truth outside of the individual
 - iii. Personal – Because he/she said it, I believe.
 1. A dynamic or charismatic leader engenders obedience from his/her followers.

iv. Institutional – “That is what [my church, my country, my community] believes.”

a. A particular group or organization with its traditions and leadership structures.

IV. What is the authority of the Christian faith?

a. Let’s look at one of our foundational beliefs that we identified earlier. On what authority do we believe them?

V. God exercises his own authority through His Word. Read II Timothy 3:15.

“From infancy you have known the _____, which are able to make you wise for _____ through _____ in Christ Jesus.”

a. What happens when God speaks? See Psalm 33:6 He _____.
The “Autogenetic” Word: it creates trust in itself when spoken.

b. God’s Word accomplishes His own purposes. See Isaiah 55:10-11

VI. The Holy Bible is the Word of God

A. What is Scripture’s origin? See II Peter 1:16-21

These accounts are given by _____.

Inspired by the _____.

B. How are the Scriptures to be used?

See II Timothy 3:14-17 Useful for:

See Psalm 1 “The blessed man” is like: a _____

Word (“Law”) of God is like: _____ of _____

The “fruit” and “leaves” are like: the man’s _____

VII. Principles for Interpreting Scriptures

A. Recognize it to be the _____ and _____ Word of God since God does not lie. [See John 14:26, Holy Spirit will _____ you all things and bring to your _____ all that I have said to you]

- B. The Bible has many _____ but only one Author. Therefore, we must let _____ interpret _____. That is, we read individual passages in light of their immediate context as well as the context of the whole of Scripture.
- C. Properly distinguish _____ and _____. The Law shows our sin while the Gospel gives and bestows salvation for Jesus' sake (see Romans 3:21-26).

VIII. The Liturgy Delivers the Word of God

- A. Readings every Sunday: _____ (or Acts)

Holy _____

These follow the Church Year. What do you think the readings are about at Christmas time? At Easter?

Next Week: We will begin to look at the 6 Chief Parts of the Christian faith. We will be using Luther's Small Catechism as the basis for our discussion. Now that we have established an understanding regarding the nature of belief and their authority, we will now look at our own beliefs or doctrines in the LCMS.