

The Foundation of the Church – Jesus Christ

“If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” – Psalm 11:3

The #1 absolute foundation of our faith in the church of Jesus Christ is our faith in **the Lord Jesus Christ himself**. After:

- a. Humility and repentance (both from dead works and toward God – Mk 1:4,15; Acts 2:38; 11:18; 20:21; 26:19-20; Heb 6:1) and...
- b. A general & personal faith in God himself (Believing that he is (exists) and that it is worth seeking him – Heb 11:6)

Then the church of Jesus Christ (for so it is) is built upon the Lord Jesus Christ himself! He is the foundation and chief corner stone of this church and our faith (within the church) begins and ends with HIM! - 1 Cor 3:11; Eph 2:20; 1 Pet 2:6-8

Now here, for this lesson, I seek to lay the proper groundwork of what our faith is to be in concerning the Lord Jesus Christ (for there are many aspects of his person and work in which we might believe). I am not seeking to push forth my own stance, but rather, based upon the due order set forth in the scriptures by the Lord Jesus himself, I am seeking to bring you to the same faith that he brought his own apostles to which then in turn went out and reached the entire world with his glorious gospel and were used themselves as the foundational stones (upon Christ) by which the rest of this church was built (see Eph 2:20).

So before I illustrate what our faith in Christ is to begin with, let me lay out what it is NOT to begin with...

Our faith is NOT to begin with....

- Our personal Saviour Jesus (Yes he does want to save you personally, but this is not where it begins...)
- Asking Jesus into our heart so that we may go to heaven! (Yes, Christ would like to dwell in your heart by faith, and ultimately he would like us to dwell with him forever if we meet the right conditions, but this is not it either...)
- Believing that Jesus died on the cross for all my sins! (Clearly he did... but still this is not the starting point...)
- Even the gospel of Christ as we know it: the death burial and resurrection, is NOT the actual starting point of our faith (although it will be closely tied to it)

So what is it? (By the way the first 2 points above are really found nowhere in the scriptures but are purely a modern humanistic approach at trying to appeal to unregenerate sinners). What is it? Well let us search the scriptures as the noble Bereans to see what the truth so clearly is!

I. That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God!

Now you may say, “Well that is obvious!” But is it... and do we even understand what that statement entails? Before we seek to understand the statement let me show you clearly that this is really the most fundamental, foundational truth that Jesus himself wanted his apostles to come to and that the apostles then carried forth to the whole world!

1. Scriptural Proof: Matthew 16:13-20; John 20:30-31; Acts 2:36; 8:35-38; 9:20-22; Rom 3:21-26; 1 John 5:1
2. Our faith clearly from these texts sets forth the reality and importance that our faith is not based on what Jesus can do for us, nor what he will do for us (humanistic and man-centered faith), but that our faith is to start with WHO HE IS!!! (Christ-centered faith) What he does will flow OUT of who he is, but it all starts with properly identifying and believing in WHO HE IS (before we believe in what he will do for us).
3. A closer look at Matthew 16:13-20: This is the first time the word “church” ever appears in the Bible and here Christ is clearly showing that the rock upon which he will build his church is THIS VERY FAITH!! At this point, Peter does not believe in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ yet (clearly as he tries to hinder Jesus later in verses 21-23) and yet Jesus still gives a BLESSING to him and pronounces that his church is built upon this rock! He also manifests the truth that flesh and blood did not reveal this truth to him, but rather it was an inner spiritual revelation from the Father himself. (No man knoweth the Son, save the Father...). Before we can ever reckon what Christ has done and will do for us we must come to reckon and believe in WHO HE IS!!!

So now the question is: **What does it really mean to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God?** What were these men thinking about when they were making these statements? Were they thinking of the helpless baby boy cradled by Mary? Were they believing in an effeminate, hippy, peace-loving teacher? When these men confessed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, what were they professing?

1. “Christ” – The word “Christ” is the greek form of the Hebrew word “Messiah”. They both mean “anointed one”. Anointed for what? And by what?
2. Psalm 2 – After reading Psalm 2 it becomes very clear who the anointed one is. He is the one anointed by God the Father himself to rule over ALL the heathen and the ENTIRE earth as ABSOLUTE KING in Zion. Who would he be? He would be the very Son of God himself!! And the only hope for men to survive would be to serve the LORD (Jehovah, the Father) with fear and to kiss the Son! Compare this with Hebrews chapter 1 (which is a letter to the Hebrew people proving that Jesus is the Christ and that therefore he is the Son of God AND the priest after the order of Melchizedec) and you see how clear it becomes!
3. Look at the apostles:
 - a. Andrew & John: John 1:41
 - b. Nathanael: John 1:49
 - c. Even the woman at the well: John 4:25-30

* This is why they were willing to forsake everything to follow and serve him! He was not their personal Saviour, he was their absolute KING!

II. Believing In Jesus Christ entails that he is the Lord of all!

1. Confession is the Lord Jesus Christ! (not personal Saviour) Acts 2:36; 10:36,42; 16:30-31; 20:21; Rom 10:9-13; Phlp 2:9-11
2. This makes us HIS servants (Christ-centered) not that he is our servant (man-centered) – Phlp 1:1; Jam 1:1; 2 Pet 1:1; Jude 1; Rev 1:1
3. The numbers don't lie!:
 - a. "Lord" – found in 670 verses in the NT.
 - b. "Christ" – found in 532 verses in the NT
 - c. "Jesus" – found in 942 verses in the NT
 - d. "Saviour" – found only 24 times in the NT...
 - It is SO CLEAR! Our faith is to be in the Lord Jesus Christ first and foremost! He will be our Saviour... if he is our Lord! Not the other way around as we have been presented with. This may seem shocking, but search the scriptures to see whether these things are so...
4. The apostle Paul himself! Look at the 2 first most basic questions he asked when he encountered Jesus (Acts 9:1-6):
 1. Who art thou, Lord? (Notice, WHO are you? Not, what have you done... or what will you do? And notice, Who are you LORD? Not who are you Saviour? Or who are you Friend?, etc...The issue is WHO is the Lord?)
 2. What wilt thou have me to do? (Not what wilt thou do for me? Or how wilt thou serve me? But rather, if he is the Lord, then that makes Paul his servant, and thus the next logical question is: what would you like me to do?)

Conclusion: In our Westernized mindset, everything is about WHAT we do. We have lost our identity of WHO we are. Also, being materialistic, our focus is on things and what others can provide for us to make our existence better. Thus, we have lost the humble mindset of what we may do for others. We can now see why our culture would be so easily tricked into believing a false gospel which emphasizes what Jesus has done and what he will do for YOU so that YOU can go to heaven and experience everything that YOU should. We do need to teach people what Jesus has done, and what he will do. We do need to show people how much Jesus can and will do for them. However, this is NOT where it starts. It starts with WHO JESUS is. Our gospel is CHRIST-centered. He is who he is whether or not we believe in him. He will do what he will do whether or not we come to him. And so our faith must be in the truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that he is Lord of all! And then and only then can we take our rightful place as his servants... as his children! And then we can receive all the wonderful things that he has for us... not because we are great... but because we are IN CHRIST!!! (Ephesians 1)

“And he is the HEAD of the body, the church: WHO is the BEGINNING, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things HE might have the PREEMINENCE!”

- Col 1:13-18