

FUNDAMENTAL LIST – 1 of 7
Jesus is God's Son and Our King
August 4, 2024

INTRODUCTION I heard a preacher tell the story of getting ready to go to church one morning and listening to another preacher on the radio.

The first preacher served a very large wealthy church that was very formal. The preacher he was listening to on the radio served a very small country church.

As the radio country church preacher got up to preach he started giving his congregation instructions about how to act in church – things they should not do in worship.

The country preacher said, **“Now while I’m preaching this morning don’t be talking in church. Don’t let your children run wild and make a bunch of trips to the bathroom.”**

The preacher of the high steeple downtown church started laughing out loud as he listened to the radio preacher. He thought, *I can’t believe he’s saying this on the radio!*

But then as the preacher of the large formal church reflected on the preacher at the country church, he realized something.

He thought to himself, *The country preacher had a congregation full of people who did not know how to act in church. They didn’t know how to act because they were new to the church.*

They had not grown up in the church and many of them had recently gotten saved. They didn’t have a clue about what was and was not acceptable in worship.

As the preacher of the downtown high steeple church reflected on that, he had a thought. *How long has it been since an unchurched person attended our church?*

How long has it been since someone got saved in our congregation? The more the large church pastor thought about it, he began to be convicted.

He stopped right there and began to pray that God would send unchurched people to his church. That people far from God would attend and that the members would make them feel welcome.

With that in mind, we're starting a new series today to help people understand the **Fundamental List** of beliefs we have in our church.

We have first time guest who attend our services every week. Let's help them understand what we believe and make them feel welcome!

Today, we are beginning a brand-new series titled, **The Fundamental List**. We're going to attempt to answer this question -

WHAT MUST WE BELIEVE IN ORDER TO BE A FAITHFUL FOLLOWER OF JESUS?

What makes this so confusing is, the Christian faith is like a giant house made up of large living rooms with double doors leading to the outside world. All of these living rooms are trying to invite people into their version of the Christian faith.

But each one of these faith traditions comes with their own terms and conditions.

The main thing that all of these have in common is, they each are absolutely confident that they're right, and everybody else is not right, or misinformed, or confused.

And the truth is all of us are probably wrong about some things, but hopefully we're not wrong about the essential things, the fundamental things.

So the question is, **what is actually fundamental?**

We're going to talk about one of those today. What's absolutely required to believe in order to be a faithful follower of Jesus?

But equally as important, because of what's happening in our culture, is the question – What is just cultural? That's just the way we do it in our culture.

Well, this is how I've always done it, this is how our church has always done it, but it's not necessarily fundamental or essential.

And the reasons we know sometimes that these things aren't essential, is when you hold them up against Jesus, it becomes clear to you and us, **"Wait a minute, this is just how you do it. This is just what you expect of your people."**

But that's not fundamental to Christianity. That's not essential to Christianity. That's some sort of add-on."

And sometimes these things, they're not modeled by Jesus or taught by Jesus, they're actually the opposite.

Why do you think these things catch on? Because these new and novel ideas appeal to some groups' self-interest.

They confirm and fuel some sort of cognitive bias, or they support a cultural movement, or sometimes they support a political agenda.

But then you actually open the Gospels and follow Jesus through the Gospels and you realize, **"Wait a minute, my view may conflict with your view,**

but my view doesn't necessarily conflict with what I see in Jesus," they actually conflict with what the Apostle Paul called the Law of Christ.

And the Law of Christ is this, there was His final command, His one command that superseded all the other commands. **"If you're going to follow me,"**

He said, **"you love other people the way that I loved you, and you love your enemy."**

ILLUSTRATION And sometimes these new and novel and trendy ideas, again, held up against the teaching and what Jesus modeled. They just began to fall short.

But if we're not careful, we will treat them as essentials and fundamentals until they no longer work for us.

ILLUSTRATION When this happens in a church tradition or a specific church or denomination or a network of churches, and all of a sudden, you begin to feel a little bit uncomfortable,

"I'm not really sure about that. I'm not really sure that's what Jesus would do. I'm not sure that's how Jesus would behave. I have no choice but to leave the church."

And then here's the catch, if the church they choose to leave, which represents a version of Christianity, if that version of Christianity is the only version they know, they feel like they have no choice but to leave Christianity entirely.

In their zeal, to separate themselves from something unhealthy or harmful. They separate themselves from something valuable and important. And maybe that's your story.

ILLUSTRATION I've heard the story that goes like this, "My father won't have anything to do with church, and I'm not sure why." "What happened?"

"Well, he won't exactly tell us, but something happened back there. He had some bad church experience. He won't have anything to do with organized religion."

And we've said, "Dad, look, hey, there's different kinds of churches." He's like, "Nope. No, I'm never going to step foot inside a church again."

Something happened, and he had to distance himself from something harmful, something unwanted. But in doing so, maybe he walked away from something valuable and important.

ILLUSTRATION Or maybe it was your mom. 'Cause your mom went to your priest, or your mom went to your pastor and said that your stepfather was abusive, and the priest or the pastor said, "Well, you have to go home, and you have to submit."

And this is what the Bible says, and this what God wants you to do," and it almost killed her. She'll never have anything to do with organized religion again, and neither will you.

And now you wonder does Christianity offer anything valuable and important?

But a lot of people don't leave the faith, they just leave church, right? You stepped away from organized religion to rethink your faith because you still believe, you still believe in God, and you still hold Jesus in high esteem.

In fact, you haven't really changed what you believe about God and Jesus, it's just the whole organized religion and the church tradition, it just didn't seem to line up, and now you're kind of in no man's land a little bit.

You had to step away from organized religion to figure out what is fundamental and what's not, what is essential and what's not.

"I'm not sure I can be a Christian," or "I can't be that kind of a Christian, because I don't think Jesus would treat people that way. I don't think Jesus is going to send my brother to hell.

He's one of the finest people I know. I just have to step away and think about this." You know what needs to be left behind.

If you know what needs to be left behind, now you're trying to figure out, **"What do I hang on to?"**

So I'm going to tell you right now what you hang on to. You hang on to Baby Jesus.

So in this series, we're going to do our best to strip Christianity all the way back down to the foundation and ask the question, what must one believe to be a faithful follower of Jesus? What is essential and what's not?

We're going back in time. There's no church, no Bible, no hymns, no choir, no Christian theology, so systematic theology.

There's just the Law and the Prophets. There's Torah, there's the temple, there's the priesthood, there's Roman occupation, and there's this unusual Rabbi from Nazareth who is drawing enormous crowds everywhere he goes.

He tells sometimes helpful and sometimes confusing stories, he seems to be just confronting the status quo and calling out the corruption in the temple and the corruption in the entire religious system.

And some people love him and some people hate him, and some people are just confused by him.

In about two and a half years into Jesus' ministry, we find him and his 12 disciples, about 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee, in a region called Caesarea Philippi.

It's a region with two names, it was named this way because Herod the Great named it after his son, Philip, Philip got control and then Philip renamed it for Tiberius Caesar, so thus it has two names,

is the region with two first names, and maybe that's what sparked the conversation that takes place is far away from the big city of Jerusalem as they could possibly get.

If you grew up in church, if you've been around here you've heard this before.

I want you to, if you could, just sort of isolate this story for a minute and sit in it with us, because we're about to discover the first and maybe the most important fundamental of the Christian faith.

Here's what happens in Matthew 16:13, *¹³When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"*

Who do people say the Son of Man is? And Jesus gives Himself, this title, Son of Man, either an extraordinarily arrogant or perhaps true.

Our version of the question is this, who is Jesus? Or, who do you think Jesus is?

Verse 14 says, *¹⁴They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."*

John the Baptist had been recently beheaded. Elijah who died a long time ago. Jeremiah who died a long time ago. Or one of the other dead prophets.

In other words, people think you're either reincarnated some prophet or maybe you've come in the spirit of some prophet who died a long time ago. Jesus's like, alright. They he walk along.

Verse 15 says, ¹⁵*“But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”*

You've been with me about two and a half years, who do you think I am? Now, this was important to Jesus or he wouldn't have asked. This is important to our faith.

Verse 16-17, ¹⁶*Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”*

¹⁷*Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.”*

Peter's answer is a lot. I believe that you are God's final king. That God has chosen you to be the king of the entire human race. That God has anointed you as king.

And that's why you're his son, because it's a dynasty and King God who is King has made you His king. And has anointed you as king, we believe you're not a Messiah, I believe that you are the Messiah.

And in some unique way, God's son in a body. What if that was true? What if that's who Jesus is? What if Peter was right.

Shouldn't people just bow and worship? You talk Jesus, because if you're God's final king, if you're God's representative to the human race on Earth, then everything you say is as if God is talking through you to us.

What if it's that's true? He's Lord. He's king. He's everything. Acknowledging who Jesus is and getting that right.

Jesus is everything, he is our king, he becomes the center of everything. Think about this. Anything he said is as if God was speaking. Would you like to hear God speak?

Would you like to know what God thinks about things? Jesus walked around planet earth and said, I'm here so you can know...

This is fundamental, and here's the most amazing thing, Jesus leans in and says, **"Blessed are you Simon, son of Jonah, Peter, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood."**

In other words, Peter, this was revealed to you by my Father in Heaven. Peter, you are exactly right.

I am God's unique son. And in that moment, I think they believed him. But in time, they would unbelieve. And you know why they would unbelieve? Because they too had a God box.

And in their God box, God always wins. God's Messiah always wins. And when Jesus was crucified, the narrative no longer fit their box, and

they walked away with their box and they unfollowed Jesus, and yet these are the men that brought us the message because when Jesus rose from the dead, they realized our box was too small, our box was misinformed.

When Jesus rose from the dead, all of that changed and they re-followed and they changed the world, and that's why we're here today.

This is the only thing the Church has agreed upon consistently since the beginning, the only thing. Not the way we baptize, do communion, sing, traditions, confess everything.

This is the only thing that the Church has agreed upon since the beginning. It is fundamental, it is essential. And this one statement, the identity of Jesus organizes and prioritizes everything else.

It's why every single morning I wake up and get my Bible out and I read something that Jesus said, or something that people who knew Jesus said about him, because what a privilege. I mean where else should I go?

What else is there? What's more important than that? What's more significant than that? To hear the voice of God from God's final king.

The first thing we must believe to be faithful followers of Jesus is,

NUMBER ONE: JESUS IS GOD'S SON AND OUR KING.

If you're going to be a faithful follower of Jesus, you have to start here. That Jesus is who He claimed He was. And they believed it in the moment, they un-believed it later, because there's no way Messiah can die when he rose from the dead, they said, yes.

He's God's final king. If that's who Jesus is, then what else can we do but submit? What else can we do but worship? What else can we do but say, yes? Who are we to question?

Because if God sent his son into this world because he loved the world, and because God loved you, and because He sent His son into this world to pay the sin debt that you could not pay, and you know that God is for you,

and Jesus is God's king, what else do we do but bow down and worship, surrender, and to use the Jesus word, to follow.

So it's imperative that we accept submit to that because everything flows from that, in fact, if you clear about that, you're pretty much good to go, because as we're going to discover, everything else flows from that.

In fact, if you get this right, everything else is just detail, but it's important detail, and we're going to look at many of those details next time in part two of our series, **The Fundamental List**.

THE END