

The Non-Negotiables: Basic Christian Beliefs

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[0 : 00] The taller the building, the deeper the foundation.

! Well, you know, I'm not going to talk this morning about the construction of a skyscraper.! That's not my subject this morning. But what I am going to be talking about this morning relates, in a way, to the same principle.

I mean, in a very real way. It relates to the same principle when it comes to the Christian life. And I think we all know this, too, don't we? Though we need to be reminded of it from time to time.

When it comes to the Christian life, the sound Bible doctrine, truth of God's Word, is a foundation upon which the building of our lives is being built.

Now, the foundation, of course, is Christ, but it is His Word as well. So Bible doctrine is very important. And so we could say the taller the Christian, that is in a spiritual sense, the taller the Christian, the deeper the foundation.

[1 : 21] And the good news is we can all have a deeper foundation. And we ought to have a deeper foundation. In fact, as we live, our foundation should be coming deeper and deeper and deeper and more solid as we study God's Word.

And so what I'm going to be doing this morning, and I announced this last Sunday, but in case you weren't here, I'm going to be spending the next several Sundays, as a matter of fact, talking about the foundation, the foundation of our lives, the foundation.

That is what we believe, our foundational doctrines of the faith. And so, first of all, this morning, I want us to focus on what I'm calling the non-negotiables.

The non-negotiables. When it comes to Bible doctrine, I'm talking about this morning the non-negotiables, the basic, the most basic of Christian beliefs.

And these beliefs that we have, by the way, proposed to be added to our church documents. The basic Christian beliefs. And then starting next Sunday, I'm going to go a little deeper, in fact, a lot deeper, with some of these same doctrines, same doctrines of the faith.

[2 : 39] As we kind of step by step, and I'll take several Sundays to do this, to walk us through the five doctrinal statements that our church adopted back in 2009.

It's time to revisit those and talk about those. And so these go deeper, much deeper, actually, than just the basics.

And consequently, they are a little more complex. And so we want to spend some time doing that. But the basics that we're going to be talking about this morning are non-negotiable.

I want to emphasize that. These are non-negotiable. That is, these represent the essentials of Orthodox Christianity, true Christianity.

These are doctrines that define, really, what true Christianity is and what it believes. It's the most basic of doctrines.

[3 : 39] But now, I would also add that the five doctrinal statements of our church, these are things that we teach. Things we teach.

So here's what we believe, the basics, the non-negotiables. And then next week, we'll be looking at the five doctrinal statements of things that we teach.

And not everyone will necessarily agree with every single point of the five doctrinal statements. I mean, I'll just admit that to you.

For one, probably many of us have not had the opportunity really to look at them deeply and in depth. And some of the wording may be a little complicated.

And so maybe there's some vagueness with some of these doctrines. But we may not all agree with every single point of the five doctrinal statements.

[4 : 40] And you can be a member of Highland Park Baptist Church and not agree with every nuance, every element, every aspect, every point of the five basic or the five doctrinal statements.

But we should at least know what they are, right? We should at least know what they mean and the support for them in Scripture.

And so that's what I will do starting next week. Now, again, as you see on the screen here, this morning, I want us to look at the basics. The basics of Christian belief, basic Christian beliefs.

And the first one is this. The Bible. We begin with the Bible in our basic Christian beliefs.

And here is a basic statement, a non-negotiable. And so I want us to read this together. I believe that every word of the Bible is uniquely inspired of God, holy without error as originally given by God, and is true, authoritative, and sufficient for faith and practice.

[5 : 55] Now, that's a very basic statement of belief concerning the Word of God. Now, we could say more about the Word of God. This is a very basic statement. And there is more about the Word of God that I believe very specifically, and we'll get into some of those next time when we kind of expand upon these.

But this is the basic, non-negotiable statement of belief concerning the Word of God. And so let me just highlight a part of this.

First of all, every word. You know, a statement is a statement, but it's made up of words and phrases, and we need to focus on exactly what we're saying when we say that this is what I believe about the Bible.

I believe that every word of the Bible is uniquely inspired of God. Every single word. The technical terminology for that, and it's not important that you remember this, but it will help me define what I mean by every word.

The technical terminology is plenary verbal inspiration. Plenary verbal inspiration. What does that mean? Well, plenary means the whole.

[7 : 14] The whole of it. That is from cover to cover. Now, that's excluding, of course, introductory material that might be in your copy of Scripture, and the concordance in the back, and the maps in the back.

Those are not part of it. I'm talking about the Word of God. And, of course, if you have a study Bible, and many of you do, that does not extend to the notes in your study Bible. As much as you might think that John MacArthur is inerrant, he's not.

So, we're talking about the Word of God, and it's the whole of it that we believe is inspired of God.

So, plenary means the whole, and when we say verbal inspiration, we mean down to every word.

It may sound like two ways of saying the same thing, but it's not just simply the all of God's Word, but also down to each individual word. See, there are those who believe that the Bible is inspired of God, but only in spots.

Just spots. Liberals teach that and believe that. They kind of hold what we like to call a Dalmatian theology. You know, it's inspired in spots.

[8 : 26] And they are inspired to spot the spots, I guess. You know, and that's what makes the whole thing so problematic. But the Bible is inspired of God, the whole of it is, down to each individual word.

And the word inspiration, of course, means breathed out by God. This is what we're saying when we say that I believe that every word of God is uniquely inspired of God.

In fact, let's take that next phrase there, uniquely inspired of God. We like to use the word inspired to refer to a lot of other writers, don't we?

Some might say that Shakespeare was inspired as he wrote his sonnets and his plays. Longfellow, inspired in poetry.

And one of my favorites, Tolkien, inspired in fantasy fiction. You know, okay, maybe he's not inspired to you. And so we might talk about other people being inspired and their writings being inspired, but that's not the same as with the Bible.

[9 : 32] The Bible is uniquely inspired. Uniquely inspired of God. All the Bible writers that God chose down through the several thousand years that the Bible was written were uniquely inspired of God and used of God to write his unique word.

He breathed into it. It's uniquely inspired. 2 Peter chapter 1 verse 21 says this, No prophecy was ever produced by the will of man.

This is a reference to the Bible. It's not produced by the will of man. No prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke, and of course later it was written down, they spoke from God.

This is what Peter said. They spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit of God. Born along, brought along, carried along, and so God inspired what they wrote.

It came from him and not by the will of man. So uniquely inspired of God. Next, we might notice here, holy without error. And this is a very important statement of belief.

[10:50] The Bible is without error as originally given by God. Now you might think, well that's kind of an unusual caveat to add in there, but this is the truth.

It's holy without error as originally given by God. Now let me say a couple of things about that. In the fullest sense of the word, the inerrancy of the Bible does not extend to the many translations that are out there translated into thousands of different languages.

When I say inerrant, I'm not referring to the translations or the versions of the Bible. It only pertains to the originals. And you say, well, what do you mean by that?

Well, let me give you an example. And I would say a rather extreme example. There is a version, a translation of the Bible that is called the Cotton Patch Gospel.

Have you ever heard of it? Cotton Patch Gospel. Now the Cotton Patch Gospel recasts, the author of it, recasts the stories of Jesus and the letters of Paul and Peter into the language and culture and even geography of the mid-20th century Deep South.

[12:14] Seriously. And so let me give you a little sampling of a little taste of it. Matthew chapter 2 begins this way. When Jesus was born in Gainesville, Georgia during the time that Herod was governor.

I mean, this is pretty crazy, isn't it? Some scholars from the Orient came to Atlanta and inquired, where is the one who was born to be governor of Georgia? We saw his star in the Orient and we came to honor him.

Well, this news put Governor Herod and his cronies in a tizzy. So he called a meeting of the big-time preachers and politicians and asked if they had any idea where the leader was to be born. In Gainesville, Georgia, they replied because there is a Bible prophecy which says, and you, Gainesville, in the state of Georgia, are by no means the least in the Georgia delegation.

From you will come a governor who will wisely guide my chosen people. Now, let me ask you something. Is that inerrant? Is that holy without error?

[13:18] Well, of course not. Now, that's an extreme example but the truth of the matter is all of our versions and translations of the copies or the copies or the copies that date all the way back to the originals have some error in them.

You say, I would never believe that my pastor would say that my Bible has errors. Well, it does. It has some little grammatical errors here and there. Maybe words are translated somewhat incorrectly.

And so that leads me to say a second thing and a very important thing. We don't have any of the originals. You say, well, boy, that makes it awfully hard. How can I say, how can I believe the Bible if I know that only the originals were without error, wholly without error?

Well, don't worry about that because we do have old, many of them very old, copies of copies and copies and thousands and thousands of these. In fact, some just fragments of a copy and scholars have taken all of those and every time archaeology finds new scraps of Scripture and so forth, like several years ago when the Qumran tablets were found, the Dead Sea Scrolls, you probably have heard of those.

then they compare all of these copies of copies of copies and they found out that there's very little variance between them, which is an amazing supernatural thing when you think about it.

[14:48] We're talking about something that was produced over the span of thousands of years and yet, today, we have a pretty pure copy of Scripture and the versions may have some problems but none of them pertain to any doctrinal issues and God has supernaturally preserved His Word.

So we can say in our statement of belief, holy without error as originally given by God. Let's move on from there. Is true.

Anybody doubt that? God's Word is true. I mean, if it is holy without error and every word of it has come from God, breathed out by God, then we know that it is true because God is true.

True, but not only true, but authoritative. That is, God's Word has not only the power but also the right because it is God's Word to rule our lives, to lead us in the right way.

We're to obey it. We're to read it. We're to apply its principles to our lives. It's not only true, but it's authoritative for every area of our lives. That's why it's so important that we read it and learn it and in many cases memorize it.

[16:06] So it's authoritative and also it is sufficient. Sufficient. Sufficient for what? For faith and practice. Now, you probably already know that the definitive passage of Scripture as it relates to all of these things concerning the Word of God is 2 Timothy chapter 3 verses 16 and 17.

Let me read it to you. All Scripture, that is, the whole, including every word, all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.

That is, it is literally, the word literally means breathed out by God. Given by inspiration of God and is profitable.

That is, it's sufficient. It's exactly what we need. It's profitable to us for a number of things. For doctrine. And don't go, oh hum, when we use the word doctrine.

I cannot emphasize more how important doctrine is. Just take my little illustration at the beginning of it. We've got to have that firm foundation. So, all Scripture is given by inspiration, breathed out by God, and is profitable for doctrine.

[17:26] That is, the truth about God, the truth about His character, His nature, also the truth about what He likes, what He does not like, and what He wants us to do. It is profitable for us, for doctrine.

And also for reproof, the Bible says, is profitable for reproof. That means it reveals what is wrong in our lives.

and wrong in our thinking and wrong in our destiny. It's profitable for reproof. Reveals what is wrong. But also for correction.

So, it's not just on the negative, it's on the positive. It reveals what is right. So, reveals what is wrong, reveals what is right. And for instruction, Paul said in this passage, for instruction, that is training.

Training in what? In righteousness. So, it's a tremendous passage and pretty much is all inclusive about everything I've said about the Word of God and what we believe.

[18:26] Most basic statement of belief concerning the Word of God. Now, of course, someone will invariably say, well, great pastor, too bad I can't understand it. You know, the Bible's important for all that, but I just don't understand it.

Well, you understand some of it, don't you? Well, of course you do. Adrian Rogers used to say, to understand the part of the Bible you don't understand is to obey the part of the Bible you do understand.

And before long, you'll begin to understand what you did not understand. Understand? Okay. Pretty good principle. All right, so let's move on to the next basic doctrine.

And that is the doctrine of God. Perhaps we should have started there. We start with the Bible because the Bible reveals who God is. Apart from Scripture, we wouldn't know him.

We wouldn't know who he is. And so, now, God. And here is the statement, a very basic, non-negotiable statement about God. Let's say this together, read this together. I believe there is only one true and living God, the creator and sustainer of all things in heaven and earth, visible and invisible.

[19:37] He is all-powerful, all-knowing, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable. All things exist for the glory of God. And that's pretty basic, isn't it?

And yet, it's rich, isn't it? But there's more to the doctrine of God than just this statement. But this is the most basic, most non-negotiable statement, the very essence of what we believe concerning God, the essentials of the Christian faith about God.

Now, let me just quickly highlight some words here. One, true, and living. One.

I mean, there's just one. Just one God. We're monotheistic. Why are we? Because that's what the Bible teaches.

God is one, and He's the true one. Okay? There are many gods out there. It is with a little g. Thousands and thousands. In fact, they're coming up with new ones every day.

[20:43] In fact, in some culture, some religion, there are so many gods you can't count them. And every day, they come up with new ones. But there's just one true God.

And it is Yahweh God. It's the God of the Bible. One true God, God, and He's not made out of stone or wood or made out of somebody's imagination, some spiritual thing, concept, or thought. He is a living God. Living God. One true and living God. He is creator. Creator of all things in heaven and earth.

Paul's great doxology in Romans chapter 11 verses 33 to 36 ends with these words. For of Him, this is my favorite part of the doxology, for of Him and through Him and to Him are, do you know, all things.

Of Him, through Him, to Him are all things to whom glory, to whom be glory forever. Amen. Of Him, all things exist, came into being.

[21 : 59] Of Him and through Him and back to Him. It's all for His glory. It's kind of a divine cycle that really applies not just to the creation but everything about our lives. It's of Him, through Him, to Him.

And so He is the creator of heaven and earth, the creator of all things, but not just creator, sustainer. He is the sustainer. It's important that we note that.

Colossians chapter 1 verses 16 and 17 kind of puts all this together. For by Him all things were created. Now, you can't get any simpler than that.

I mean, you cannot believe it if you want to, but you can't say that's not what the Bible teaches. For all, for by Him, excuse me, yeah, for by Him all things, all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible.

And He goes on to say all things were created through Him and for Him. And here's the part I want you to note. And in Him or by Him all things consist.

[23 : 12] All things consist. That is all things hold together. Literally, it's what that means. You know, scientists have yet, even today, to identify, they can identify the various parts of the atom now, but they can't tell you how it all holds together.

All those electrons and neutrons and so forth. And then the collection of atoms that form molecules and molecules that form everything. They don't know how all that holds together.

Well, I do. But it's not to say that God is just kind of some entity that inhabits all things like something you would hear in Star Wars.

He is the one who superintends over all things and He created it all and He holds it all together. He is the sustainer. I mean, what is it that keeps the planets in their orbits and the solar systems in their tracks around other solar systems, the entire universe operating in perfect sync and without any bedlam or disorientation.

It's God who sustains all things, heaven and earth. And then, what do we believe about His nature? Well, He's all-powerful, right?

[24 : 31] The term is omnipotent, all-powerful, nothing beyond His power. He is all-knowing, omniscient. There isn't anything God does not know.

Someone has said, has it ever occurred to you that nothing ever occurs to God? Think about that. God knows all things. He's not learning anything. He's not discovering things.

We are discovering things and we base our decisions in life based upon new data that we get and so forth or maybe we don't base it on any data at all.

But we're learning and growing and becoming more aware of things and so forth. But God, that's not true at all of God. He knows all things, all things.

He's infinite in the sense no beginning. He is eternal in the sense no end. No beginning, no end.

[25 : 27] He's eternal and He is unchangeable and aren't you glad that He is? Although I think some might object. In fact, some would maintain that God does change.

That's why, you know, what was relevant in the Bible for my ancestors is not necessarily relevant for me today. Well, God never changes. He is the same God, same yesterday and today and forever.

He is the great I Am and the very essence of that name that God gave for Himself means that He never changes. not only that He is self-existent but by virtue of the fact that He is self-existent He does not change.

He has no beginning, no ending, all things and then all things exist for the glory of God and again, I'm reminded of that passage I quoted a moment ago in Romans chapter 11 verse 36 to whom be glory forever.

Amen. That's just basic belief about God, the basic teachings of Scripture, the essentials. The essentials. They're non-negotiable.

[26 : 37] Now, let's get a little bit more specific in the basic Christian belief concerning God and that is the Trinity. In our doctrine of God, we must also include that the Bible teaches the reality of the Trinity.

The Trinity, even though the word Trinity does not appear anywhere in Scripture. The doctrine is taught throughout Scripture. We find it demonstrated all throughout Scripture. And so, let me just say this, let's say this together.

I believe that God eternally exists in three distinct persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And we believe that because there's a particular verse of Scripture we can go to that says it just exactly like that.

Well, no. Sometimes I wish there were. We believe that because the taking Scripture as a whole, this is exactly what it teaches. that basically, he is three distinct persons.

Distinct persons. That means identifiable personages, three of them, within the Godhead, the one God.

[27 : 52] Three identifiable, distinctive persons. See, not modes. There's a heresy of the early church called modalism.

That means that they denied the Trinity and they just simply see that God operates in different modes from time to time and we've identified those as persons.

But that's not at all what the Bible teaches. Not modes of existence or activity, not concepts, not distinctive concepts, not even certain three aspects of God.

Like you would hold up a, you know, an object or maybe even a diamond and turn it to see different features or facets or aspects of the same one diamond. It's not even that.

It is that he is three, expresses himself as three distinct persons. Persons. In fact, throughout Scripture, throughout the New Testament, and even in the Old Testament, every time the Bible refers to the Father, every time it refers to Jesus or the Son of God, every time it refers to the Holy Spirit, it always uses pronouns to refer to them.

[29 : 10] Not its, but he. He or his. Personal pronouns. And so the Bible very clearly teaches that the Trinity, that God is Trinity in three distinct persons.

And then, who are these three distinct persons? Well, first of all, the Father. The Father. Let's read this together. The Father is the head of the Trinity, though each member is co-equal and co-eternal. Co-equal and co-eternal. So he's the head. Every, the Trinity has to have a head. And it's God the Father. You say, well, where is that taught in Scripture?

Well, it's taught in a number of places. Much of it from the words of Jesus himself. Jesus said in John chapter 4, verse 34, he said, my food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.

So, Jesus submitted himself to the supremacy of God the Father in the work that he had been sent to do. And so, God is the head.

[30 : 28] Father, the Father is the head. Jesus also said something very similar in John chapter 6, in verse 38, for I have come down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.

The will of the Father. And we can say the same thing about the Holy Spirit in John chapter 16, in verse 13. The Bible says the Spirit of Truth, that means the Holy Spirit, will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears, he will speak.

Hears from whom? God the Father. God the Father. All right, so, yet, though the Father is head of the Trinity. Each member of the Trinity is co-equal and co-eternal.

Co-equal is no division in the sense of equality. They're co-equal. We have a living illustration of that in the biblical teaching of the husband and wife.

They are equal, co-equal, and yet one is to be submissive to the other. Not because the one is inferior, but they're co-equal.

[31 : 41] But one submits to the will of the other, the authority of the other. And so, this is the Godhead. They're co-equal, co-eternal, and then the second person of the Trinity, God the Son.

And so, let's read this. The Son, Jesus Christ, is the promised Messiah of the Old Testament who was born of the Virgin Mary and is both fully God and fully human.

Let's stop right there. He's the promised Messiah. The promised Messiah. That is, all throughout the Old Testament, the Old Testament prophets were looking to the coming of Christ.

They prophesied His coming and what His work would be, what He would accomplish. And all those prophecies came true, specifically, detailed.

He was prophesied and in His prophecy of His coming, God has promised that He would come. So, all throughout the Old Testament, He is the promised Messiah.

[32 : 52] And what did He do? He died on the cross. Let's say this, the Son, Jesus Christ, died on the cross to redeem mankind, rose again from the dead to justify the believer, ascended to the right hand of God where He intercedes for us.

And let's stop right there a minute and point out a couple of things. He died, we believe that, died upon the cross, rose again.

Now, this is basic belief. you can't take any one of these things out and be Christian. Can't deny any of these things and be Christian. He died, He rose again, but also He ascended to the right hand of God where He intercedes for us.

And this is what Scripture teaches. And then, what? He will return. The Son, let's read this together, the Son, Jesus Christ, in the Father's own time, will return in visible, physical form to overthrow sin and judge the world.

And so, He will return. And I think about the disciples, it was after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, in fact, some 40 days after His resurrection.

[34 : 19] resurrection. And they're standing there and Jesus is lifted up before them. He ascends back to the Father and the angel said to them, do you remember?

He said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, not a different Jesus, another Jesus, or some deity, another deity, but this very same Jesus, the one that called you to be an apostle, the one that you sat under as He taught you, and the one you witnessed who did many miracles, the one who died upon the cross, the one who was raised from the dead, and the one that you now saw lifted up to the right hand of the Father, this same Jesus, the same one, will return in visible form.

That's what we're saying. This same Jesus, the angel said, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.

Jesus said to His disciples in John 14, don't let your heart be troubled. Yeah, I'm going, but don't be troubled. He said, in my Father's house, there are many mansions.

If it were not so, I would have told you. And He said, I go, I'm going to prepare a place for you. And if, really, since I'm going, I will come again and receive you unto myself.

[35 : 56] And where I am, you may be also. Now this is the hope of the Christian faith. And this is what we believe. He will return in visible, physical form to overthrow sin and to judge the world once and for all.

Now let's move on from there. We're talking about what we believe about God and the reality of the Trinity. And there's the Father, there's the Son, and then there's also the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit. In fact, really we ought to say Holy Spirit. I mean, that's His name. He's not the Holy Spirit. It's kind of like, you know, a smoky bear.

It's not the smoky bear. It's smoky bear. That's His name. Well, it's not the Holy Spirit as if He were some entity or some concept. He is Holy Spirit.

That is His name. And so let's read this together. The Holy Spirit is the one sent from God to convict the world of sin, of righteousness, of judgment, to regenerate and cleanse from sin.

[37 : 03] He is the indwelling guide, teacher, and strengthener of the believer. That's the most basic statement of belief, an essential statement of belief, a non-negotiable statement of belief concerning the Holy Spirit.

He's sent from God. Sent from God. God the Father, also God the Son made a statement about sending another, a comforter, the one who would come.

And to do what? Well, a number of things. First of all, to convict the world, and as each individual person, to convict the world of what? Of sin. Because that's the problem.

It's sin. It's not environment. It's not the family you were born into. It's not a problem with some hereditary health issue.

It's not oppressive governments. That's not the problem, though sin is at the heart of it. The problem is sin. And so, the Holy Spirit convicts us of the real problem.

[38 : 11] The problem is our sin, but also convicts us of righteousness. That's the solution. The righteousness of Christ. And he also convicts of judgment, the judgment that will come.

That's what we deserve. Whatever one of us deserve. Whatever one of us will get if we do not come under Jesus Christ who took our judgment for us.

And what else? To regenerate and to cleanse from sin. To regenerate. That is, to birth us. A new birth.

Being born again, which literally means to be birthed from above. And this is the ministry of the Holy Spirit. And he is indwelling.

You see, the Holy Spirit is not a temporary visitor. He doesn't just come and leave and come at will. We're not praying for him to come, unless you're lost.

[39 : 18] The moment you believe, the Holy Spirit comes to indwell the believer and he takes up residence. So he's not a temporary visitor when you need him or when you, you know, you deserve him to come or you want him to come or you, you know, you repent and get right in your life and then he comes back.

No, he comes and takes a permanent residence in the life of the believer. All right, let's move on from there. We have to get through all of these here this morning.

Next one is humanity. Humanity. So let's read this. I believe that all humanity, Christ excluded, is sinful by nature, birth, and choice, actions.

The deserved penalty for sin is eternal death, both physical and spiritual. All right, so let's take this apart a little bit. All humanity.

This statement includes all humanity, every single person, every person, no one excluded, except, of course, Christ, who was perfect and sinless so that he could be our savior, our sinless sacrifice.

[40 : 33] But other than Christ, all humanity, I mean, from Adam and Eve, our parents, when they fell in the garden, and everyone who has been born since, including little Miles, my new grandson, son, yeah, I've got to include him in there, and everyone else, and from here on out, all humanity is sinful by nature as we're born into it, as well as by choice, by volition, the very actions that we take.

All sinful, and by the way, is sinful, not just do sinful things. That is, we are this by nature.

Sinful is what we are. This is the basic Christian belief. It's what we are. It's how we were born.

Sinful, and therefore we need a savior, and then the deserved penalty is eternal death.

That's what we all deserve. Eternal death, both physical and spiritual. Romans chapter 6, verse 23, you know it by heart, for the wages of sin is death.

John 3, 16, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. Whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

[42 : 09] See, in both those passages, everlasting or eternal is put side by side with both death and life. Every one of us deserve eternal death because of our sin.

And every one of us who will trust Jesus Christ will receive eternal life, eternal life. But let's move on from there to the final doctrine in these basic doctrines, and that is the doctrine of salvation.

salvation. This is the most basic statement of belief concerning salvation that I think we could ever come up with. This is non-negotiable. Let's read this together. I believe that Jesus Christ is the only Savior from sin.

Salvation is the sovereign work of God by grace alone on the basis of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, and not on the basis of human merit or works.

Now, there's more to the statement, but let me pick a little of this apart. Only Savior from sin. You know, I think this is one of those few times that I really sense more than any other time that I'm preaching to the choir.

[43 : 30] I mean, you know this, don't you? Know this by heart. This is what you believe. I hope so. If not, that's what you should believe. But Jesus is the only Savior from sin.

There is no other Savior from sin. Jesus, listen, Jesus said in John 14, verse 6, and you know this one by heart as well. He said, I am the way, I am the truth, the truth, and the life, no one.

That's pretty exclusive, isn't it? No one comes to the Father except through me. I mean, that's exclusive, very narrow, very dogmatic, and this is what Jesus said.

And that means that apart from Jesus, there's no going. He's the way. Apart from Jesus, there's no knowing. He's the truth.

Apart from Jesus, there is no living, not real living, because he is the life. This is what Jesus taught, and his disciples continue to preach this same message, and we preach it still today, because this

is what the scriptures say.

[44 : 45] The disciples preach this very exclusive nature of the gospel. In Acts chapter 4, verse 12, Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said, nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

There's no other name. No one's ever been named that is our Savior. It's not Muhammad, it's not Buddha, or Confucius, or any other Savior that has come along that people are trusting in.

There's only one name, and it's Jesus. This is what Paul is teaching, or Peter, rather, is preaching, and what Paul preached, and all the apostles preached, and all their disciples, the disciples of Christ, all the way down through our day, and will continue to be preached until Jesus comes again. There is salvation in no other. No other but Jesus. And that salvation is grace alone on the basis of. On the basis of what? Christ's death, his burial, his resurrection, all those things. You can't leave the resurrection out and say it's of lesser importance.

[46 : 10] The entire house of cards we call Christianity would absolutely fall to the ground if you take any one of those things out. on the basis of his death, burial, and resurrection, and not, of course, on the basis of human merit or works.

It's not something we could ever deserve. It's not something you could potentially deserve. It's not something you can work for and put enough good works on the scale to, you know, outweigh the bad stuff and the sin.

This is not the teaching of Scripture. The essential truth is that salvation is by grace alone on the basis of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, and not on the basis of human works at all.

And how? Through faith. Let's read this. I believe that only those who turn from sin, that's repentance, and to Jesus through faith in his person and work will be saved and raised to eternal reward.

those who do not turn from sin and to Jesus will be raised to eternal punishment. That's a very basic statement of faith. From sin, that's repentance, to Jesus.

[47 : 34] From sin to Jesus. The very essence of the idea behind repentance. From to. From sin. From self-effort.

From self-righteousness. From self-confidence. From your own works of righteousness, which in God's eyes are sin.

From sin and to Jesus. To Jesus and him alone through what? Through faith. Faith. Trusting him. Believing on him.

Not just simply believing, of course, with your head. I mean, there are many, many unbelievers who believe in Jesus as a person. Maybe even believe all the facts that are taught in scripture about him.

They say, well, I would give a mental assent that those facts are true. We're talking about faith. Pistuo. It means a confidence.

[48 : 33] A total reliance upon the Lord Jesus Christ. And then the rest of it, as we wrap this up, read this with me.

I believe that only through repentance from sin and faith in Jesus Christ can one be reconciled to God and experience true life and joy.

Reconciled. Reconciled to God. You see, we are all born separated from God. We are all born and continue to be, in a very real sense, enemies of God.

Enemies of his righteousness and holiness. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

that is, for every one of us until we are saved, we have this insurmountable barrier between us and God.

It's a barrier of enmity, of hostility. It's called sin. And that sin is the problem. It must be removed and we cannot remove it ourselves.

[49 : 54] We have no ability to and even if we did, we wouldn't want to. Because we love our sin. But that sin has to be removed and it's only through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ and him alone that we can be reconciled with God.

That the enmity can be removed. The sin that forms an insurmountable barrier, impenetrable barrier, can be removed and it's then that we can experience life and joy.

Now, that's what I believe. Is that what you believe? Is that what you have believed? And if not, I would conclude by saying this, if not before today, before this very moment, what about now?

Will you believe this now? Thank you.