

Fountain of Truth

"Christianity"

Pastor's Notes

August 30th, 2020

Welcome out to Innovation and the LAST in the series **FOUNTAIN OF TRUTH -**

We will see the Three S's Here today and ALOT through the next 3 months as we walk through the New testament as we continue THE STORY. So that we can say after 2020 that while we may not know the whole scriptures backwards and forwards but that we will know the overarching HEART of the story and that is God's Heart for his creation. The Love that he has for his people is amazing and the lengths that He goes through to display it on the pages of our Bible have been WAY more than evident if you have been on this journey with us.

So some of Today is a review and then a preview

Because we have talked about the History - With Adam and Eve, With Noah, With Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, With people like Daniel and David, and others like Ruth and Deborah and Eli and Esther... We have seen the history of God's People and Gods plan unfold in their lives. We have seen the Jews and how they were God's chosen people.

Were about to see how Jesus was indeed Jewish (That's why you don't see and blonde haired, blue eyed white guy in glamour shots on our walls at Innovation) **Jesus was Jewish.** He lived in a Jewish culture, studied the Jewish scriptures. He was called a Rabbi.

The calling of the disciples was a Jewish practice.

Rabbi Jesus talked about the yoke of his teaching. **"Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."** - Matthew 11:30. A yoke was a symbol for the teachings of a particular Rabbi.

His followers weren't called Christians at first, but they were called the followers of **the way**. They were called that because Jesus rather famously said that He was the way, the truth and the life.

The Romans believed the church was just another Jewish sect. (Just another groups of people with different beliefs) Lots then lots now.

Our Christian roots are in Judaism. AD 64 - Rome burned and Emperor Nero blamed it on Christians. Great persecution broke out. **The Apostle Peter was killed during this time.**

Christianity spread from Rome to other cities, because as Christians fled, **they took their faith with them as Jesus had commanded them to do.** (Matthew 28:19-20)

After a vision, (Remember last week) Constantine declared Christianity to be the official religion of the Roman Empire. Christianity went from being outlawed to being official.

As the church grew and expanded, it became institutionalized. In the 3rd century, churches began to buy buildings. Christianity is mainly the Catholic church. For about 1,000 years, Christianity and Catholicism are the same thing. So we go from Judaism to Catholicism.

During the Dark Ages, the church divides into the East and West.

In 1095, Pope Urban 2 launched Christians into The Crusades. Christians KILL MUSLIMS to "Take Back The Holy Land" - (See how making one hands words as important as Gods can cause GREAT DAMAGE)

The Crusades led to the Inquisition, where Christians were killed because of their faith.

Throughout history, people have done bad things in the name of Christianity and in the name of God. These are examples of using Gods name in vain more than just as a curse word - VAIN -= having or showing undue or excessive pride in one's appearance or achievements : CONCEITED marked by futility or ineffectualness : UNSUCCESSFUL, USELESS vain efforts to escape

On October 31, 1517, a pastor named Martin Luther got fed up with the religious systems around him and NAILED IT!. **Much of what we know as The Church started Here with a peaceful protest as they Protestants were born and began to separate from the Catholic Church and it's corruption.**

The story goes on...

A guy named William Tyndale translated the New Testament and published 6,000 copies. That decision ended up costing him his life.

Christianity was a prominent factor in the birth of America.

In the 1700s, a guy named Robert Raikes started something called Sunday School to educate children in Britain. It lasted all day, and was designed to teach boys who worked in the factory during the week how to read. Critics thought it was going against the Sabbath. In the 1800s, that idea made it's way into American churches.

Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians all set up shop here in the New World and Protestantism spread.

Altar Calls. "The old fashioned altar call" was unheard of until the nineteenth century. It first came into being by the influence of Charles Finney, the pioneer of modern evangelistic methods. In Finney's crusades during the 1830s, seats at the front were reserved for those who, after the sermon, would respond to the challenge to come to the Lord's side.

SACRED WRITINGS

The Bible. Our source for truth and the Story of God. "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." -Hebrews 4:12

Pay attention to the last parts of that verse...the Bible judges our thoughts and attitudes. Throughout true Christianity, there is an emphasis on the inside, not just an outward conformity to some kind of standard.

BELIEFS

As a Christian what they believe, and the answer will depend on what "flavor" of Christianity they prefer. But here's a quick summary on what MOST Christians will agree on.

1. Our connection to God was broken because of sin. "For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard." – Romans 3:23. God placed man in the middle of a garden and gave them free reign. **There was just one rule in Eden...don't eat from a particular tree** (that says something about God). But we broke that rule...that's sin. And when we sinned, **that broke the connection to God**. Instead of walking with God in the cool of the evening, man was kicked out.
2. God sent his son Jesus to die on a cross to pay for our sins. "But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation." – Romans 5:8-9. The broken connection didn't just hurt us...it hurt God. Throughout the Bible, God is pursuing His people. We can't be good enough to get to Him, so God sent His son Jesus to pay the price for our sins.
3. **We become Christians by repenting of our sins, placing our faith in Jesus and following Him.** "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." – Romans 10:9. **What about baptism, tithing, and the membership class? None of those things are required for salvation.** They are good things... They are walking in OBEDIENCE to scriptures... but they aren't the main things.

CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS

There are so many **flavors** of Christianity. (Think Baskin Robins) YUMMM

1. **Style vs. Substance:** Choir robes, pew furniture, communion table, stained glass...**none of those things are in the Bible.** Jesus never taught from behind a pulpit or wore a suit. There were no stained glass windows in the Scripture. There no BIBLICAL kind of music. **When you choose style over substance, you are elevating your own personal preferences over Scripture.**

The college football program that makes the most money every single year is Notre Dame. They haven't been good for a decade, but they bring in the most money. Why? **Tradition.** People remember when they were good, so they hope for the next season. They raise more money than other schools because of tradition.

Think about the power of tradition when it comes to the holidays. What else makes you cook a giant turkey in your oven and invite a bunch of people that you don't really like in the first place? You do it because you did it last year.

Religion is filled with tradition. And while there is nothing inherently wrong with tradition, it can quickly become **traditionalism**. **Where the traditions are elevated more than the things they symbolize.**

True Christianity is not about a religious preference, but about following Jesus.

What if our style changed? Sadly, there are people that attend Innovation Church because of style. There are people that **don't attend** because we don't conform to their image of church. But those things don't matter most to God. **Our personal preferences and religions traditions are not more important than Scripture.**

2. Outside vs. Inside

Growing up in church, I felt a lot of pressure for outward conformity. There's a lot of pressure from church (more or less depending on what church) to look right, dress right, act right.

- Go to church.
- Dress a certain way.
- Say the right things.
- Put on a happy face.
- Read the Bible.
- Say your prayers.

While those all might be good things, when we focus on external behaviors, I think we miss the point of Christianity. Jesus even cautioned against it.

"And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward." – Matthew 6:5

It's not external religion that matters most. Jesus is more concerned about the condition of our heart. Even today, I bet there are a lot of people who put on their happy face, but underneath the surface...you're hurting, you're empty, you're in need. Religion has taught you how to fake it, but Jesus says come as you are.

- On the outside, you pretend to have a **good marriage**. But on the inside, your marriage is crumbling.
- On the outside, you drive a nice car and live in a nice house, but your **finances** are a mess.
- You tell your **kids** to be on their best behavior and threaten them into obedience, but on the inside, you have no idea if you're raising them right.
- On the outside, you are playing the **religious game**, but on the inside, your heart is far from God.

You look nice, but inside you're broken. You look nice, but inside, you're torn and ragged. You look like you have it all together, but on the inside, you need Jesus.

This church says come as you are. But more importantly, Jesus says come as you are.

But what this church also says " Let's Be the church that the world needs to see"

But More Importantly Jesus said that John 13:35 - By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."