

## **Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.**

**Sunday March 7, 2021. "I Believe: The desire to have something to believe in is at the core of who we are.**

### **I Intro.**

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from the message this Sunday. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotional is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. Take as long as you need to dive into this material and feel free to share it.

We're well into 2021 and thankfully, we're still gathering in person. A small but growing group who follow all the safety guidelines joins us at the church. We have also opened our children's and youth area also. We're so encouraged with your love and presence when you gather with us. If you're still joining us online, we love and so appreciate your presence also. We still are your church family, and if there is ANYTHING you need, prayer, ideas or suggestions you have, please pass them our way. We feel just as isolated as you, and we want to maintain that connection with each of you.

### **II Sunday.**

I know you're going to laugh, but...if you watched Sunday's message, I'm going to go ahead and apologize for the density and abstractness of it. This just felt like an unavoidable first step in understanding why we so desire to acquire beliefs before we have a conversation about the specific things we do believe in. If we don't have a fundamental understanding of why we are driven to gather beliefs to make sense of the world, we will mishandle the beliefs we do have. We began a series called; "***I believe...***". We will be looking at the foundation for beliefs, and what are some of those foundational beliefs we can stand on that will give us some stability in a world that feels a little scary. So, as always some questions to start the ball rolling.

**What does it 'feel' like for you when you can't understand or figure something out?**

**What does it 'feel' like when you do begin to gain some understanding?**

**Why is that so important?**

Here is our basic premise for the beginning of this series. We are driven by something deep within us to try to make sense of the world. We want the feeling of safety, predictability, and we have three choices when facing things we don't understand. To believe whatever we feel works for us. To escape or numb this drive to understand and gain understanding. Or we can face this inner drive to make sense of the world, embrace the unknown head on, and do the work to seek greater and greater understanding. Obviously the better and wiser choice, (remember this past series), is to "*gird our loins*", as God told Job when he was about to unload some knowledge on him, and do the work of gaining understanding.

There were a lot of preliminary statements about the purpose of beliefs that's too much to put in here. We'll just list them, and then get to the scripture. If you want to see more on each of these points then watch the message.

1. Beliefs are what we hold to be true or false.
2. Beliefs; who we are, our understanding of the world we live in, are the foundational building blocks EVERYTHING else is built on.
3. Religion contains beliefs about things we'll never completely understand.
4. Problem- how do we know what we know is true?
5. For the most part what we believe is our choice.
6. Share beliefs are glue for 'community'.

Each of these is somewhat self-evident, but again, if you want more explanation you can find it by watching the service.

The scripture was one verse that talked about the divine nature of beliefs. Read **Ecclesiastes 3:11**.

**What jumped out to you about this passage?**

**Were there any specific words or phrases that you noticed?**

**The two words we landed on were; beautiful and eternal. What do those mean to you in the way they were used?**

This verse talked about beauty and eternity. These were two powerful images and ideas that reflect the nature of belief and understanding our world.

Beauty was seen as the fundamental nature of what is true. This is a measurement you can use as you assemble your understanding of what is true.

Eternity is the divine spark, understanding placed within us that we are an important divine part of a larger seen world. And it's also the realization that the world we know is just a small part of a much larger world we cannot see. We are important because we are from God. But there is so much more we don't know that should give us this inner drive to discover.

Let's look at the specific things we can pull from this one verse about why and what we believe.

**1. You have an inner drive, holy curiosity for understanding ... so feed it.**

We were created to find patterns, ways to understand the difficult to understand. It's why we wear Google out. You are prewired, a divine image and spark placed within you, to seek beauty and truth, (eternal). Because you want to know how the world works, and how you should be in it, and what we want our society to look like. You have an innate drive to know and learn more. Because this is true, how you were made, you need to find healthy ways to feed this inner drive. We are hardwired with a passionate curiosity that wants to know about the great mysteries of life. **THIS IS FROM GOD!!**

Purpose, meaning, what is my existence about are all given to us by God. And it's always there. You get to choose, (based on your beliefs), to pursue it or not.

**If this is indeed true, then what would our lives look like?**

**2. No fear in pursuing truths.**

Because this questioning and seeking is from God, then there are no stupid or out of line questions. There is NO FEAR coming into a church, asking anything about God. Even wondering if there is a God at all. The greatest of questions. Were preprogrammed to want to know and seek.

## **DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK THE BIG QUESTIONS. AND TO WANT ANSWERS TO THINGS THAT SEEM/FEEL HERETICAL.**

If there is a new and different truth for you to embrace, then test it. A continual, passionate search for understanding how you understand the world, and how to be in it. This will ALWAYS mean asking and seeking...WITHOUT FEAR. Live in humility and openness...always to discover new things.

**How would you pursue God, understanding if you truly believed nothing was off the table?**

### **3. The goal is to bring beauty/eternity, this infinite world of truth into daily life, rather than trying to judge or escape from the world.**

There are two sins we can slip into.

**1. Protectionistic dogmatism-** Because our understanding is always less than what there is to know, there should be something inside of us, seeking in humility, rather than a dogmatic guard dog protection of what we think we already know. What we believe should propel us to seek more, desiring God, rather than using our beliefs as a wall deciding who's in and who's out.

**2. Isolationism, or escapism.** The world is bad, dark, against us, not understandable. So we'll hide in just making worship about the idea of God. I don't want to have to deal with ....ugh...actual people, so I'll cling tightly to all of the beliefs I've gathered and not deal with the world out there.

The desire for truth, what to believe, is to give us an anchor for being in the world. We gather under these beliefs, and do life together with everyone.

*"Yes...the world is messed up, crazy, senseless, mean, uncaring, heartless, cruel. But I have these truths, that are beautiful, that can bring beauty to the world!"*

### **III Challenge.**

Again, this was a tough, dense, super difficult to follow, starting point explanation of why we have this desire to understand, and why we form beliefs. We were hardwired from the beginning to try to make sense of the world, and it's what motivates us to try to find God. And in this pursuit of God, we are to **take our truths and make beautiful things**. Because beauty and eternity are what we are looking for and are called to co-create with God.

**So, in what areas of your life do you need understanding, wisdom, guidance, a working belief system?**

**What are you pursuing to understand?**

**What would you be willing to do to begin to grow your understanding?**

This is a great adventure. Take it!!