

5/8/22 Christ Fellowship

What We Believe  
Bible – Psalm 19:7-11

Okay, it's sure good to be back! I took a couple of Sundays off and that was very nice but I'm glad to be back up here. I want to start by asking you some questions. Think of it sort of like an IQ test. I have a range of topics to ask about; just general knowledge stuff. Sort of like a game. We will see who can get the most answers correct. So, here goes.

First question. We'll start with an easy one. How far does a sheep walk? Anybody? Well, according to **Dr. Seuss**, a sheep "*walks by light of moon and light of star. They walk from near. They walk to far.*" So, there ya go. Feel free to keep score on this.

Next question. Here's some pop culture for you. What year did Elvis Presley die? 1977? No. I'm sorry. Actually, according to the **National Enquirer**, Elvis is actually still alive, living in Baltimore and he works at a donut shop. Yes, evidently he married Farrah Faucet a few years ago and they had a baby that many believe to be Michael Jackson reincarnated. I don't know if I believe that part though.

Okay, third question. What do you get when you mix the color red with the color blue? Purple? No, very close though. Actually, according to Michael and Liz's 2-year-old son, **Kayden**, the answer is "ball." Has anybody gotten all the answers right so far?

Alright, just one more. What is a woman? Define the word "woman." I'm sorry. According to most **liberals** today, that is a trick question and can't be answered and how dare you ask.

Now, I have to admit that those are very frustrating questions. Aren't they? It is frustrating when your sources are not reliable. If the answers to your questions are not based on truth, what happens? The answers are wrong. But who determines truth?

I understand that the Biden administration has formed what they are calling a Disinformation Governance Board hoping to silence people who speak anything that is not the truth. And while that sounds good on it's face, the obvious question is, who decides what is truth and what will be their basis for that truth?

All truth must have some sort of basis. If the basis for truth is a man's opinion, we know opinions change. If the basis for truth is a person's feelings, we know feelings can change. If truth depends on someone's education, what if they get more education and their truth changes? If anything causes truth to change, then it was never truth.

I'd like to ask you to turn in your Bibles to the Book of Psalms. The Psalms are right in the middle of your Bible in the Old Testament between Job and Proverbs. It is here that we are going to start a new sermon series entitled, "What We Believe." It is important to everybody to know what is truth. People have searched for truth since Adam and Eve ate the fruit in the Garden. Years later, Pilate stood there having a conversation with Jesus and wondered aloud, "*What is truth?*" I bet at some point in your life you have basically said the same thing. Everybody wants to know truth. Just not everybody likes it when they hear it.

Well, this sermon series is a search for truth in itself. I want to find out what the truth is and what we as Christians believe about some important topics; things like who we are and why we are here. I want to know the truth about how to get to Heaven and what we are supposed to do until we get there. I want to know what the truth is about baptism and the Lord's Supper and evangelism and giving and even about God Himself. So, for the next couple of months, we are going to try to answer some of those big questions.

But where do we start to be able to answer those questions? Well, you can Google it, or as I like to call it, research. But the problem with the internet is that there are lots of different views on what is truth. It's the same with asking people

you know or reading books in the library or even asking a teacher. Some of those say truth is one thing and some say truth is completely different.

Now, I think most people have at least some respect for the Bible. But when they read in here some truth that they don't like; something that is going to go against the lifestyle they want to live, they just brush it off as untrue. They think it is untrue so it must be untrue. But is that what determines truth? Let's dive into it and find out.

Let's start with a beautiful passage from the nineteenth chapter of Psalms. I say it's beautiful and that is my opinion and it's okay to have an opinion about the beauty of something. I may be biased, though, because it is written by my main man, David. David was convinced of the importance of scripture. He knew scripture was true and helpful and wonderful and he writes about here.

But remember that while David only had a small part of the Bible that we have, probably just the first five books, this applies to all the Bible, the New Testament as well as the Old and you will hopefully see why by the time we are done. Turn to **Psalm 19** and we will read verses **7-11**.

*The law of the Lord is perfect,  
refreshing the soul.*

*The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy,  
making wise the simple.*

*8 The precepts of the Lord are right,  
giving joy to the heart.*

*The commands of the Lord are radiant,  
giving light to the eyes.*

*9 The fear of the Lord is pure,  
enduring forever.*

*The decrees of the Lord are firm,  
and all of them are righteous.*

*10 They are more precious than gold,  
than much pure gold;*

*they are sweeter than honey,  
than honey from the honeycomb.*

*11 By them your servant is warned;  
in keeping them there is great reward.*

Mmm, mmm. Good job, David. It reminds me of several years ago when I lived in Bridgeport. I lived about a block away from the middle school and the elementary school and on the back of the school property was a big tree that was old and falling apart so the school decided to just cut it down. I walked my dogs around there every day and I watched them cut it down and I watched them leave in a hurry when the bees that were in the tree came swarming out and they were not happy about their tree being cut down.

But the next morning was very cold and when I walked the dogs over there, the bees were pretty much dormant. I could see all these bees but they weren't moving and I could see honeycomb so I just reached in and pulled this little piece out. Have you ever tasted fresh honey dripping off the honeycomb? Oh my! I walked all the way home licking my fingers. It was the sweetest, best-tasting stuff ever! I couldn't get enough.

That is what David is saying about scripture. Do you see that in **verse 10**? He combines everything that God's Word is, at least the part that David had at the time – the law, the statutes, the precepts, the commands and decrees – and says that it is sweeter than honey from a honeycomb. He didn't even have the Gospel like we do and he said it was right and true and good and helpful and tasty and sweet.

But how do we know that the Bible – the Old Testament and the New Testament is true? How do we know we can base our decisions and our world view on what it says? **Isaiah 40:8** says, *“the grass withers and the flowers fade, but the Word of the Lord endures forever.”* That means it never changes and is true forever. But how do we know that?

Well, let me give you a few ways. The first thing I think of that proves the Bible is true is the **prophecies** that were given in the Old Testament that came true either in the New Testament or even later. There are thousands of prophecies in scripture and they have all either come true or haven't taken place yet because they are referencing something that happens in the future but one of the easiest to see is the prophecy about Israel becoming a nation again. **Isaiah 11** and **Ezekiel 37** and others say that Israel will be dispersed and not even exist for years and years. But then it says they will then become a nation once again and the Jewish people will be drawn there.

My Mom told me that her father, my granddad, used to preach about that prophecy. He preached that one day it would happen even though no nation in history has ever been scattered among all the other nations and then come back together again. But in 1948, Israel was declared a nation again fulfilling that prophecy from over 2700 years before. There are many other prophecies that have been fulfilled and none have ever been proven to not come true. If you want to see more then just dive into scripture and be amazed.

But let me give you another reason why we know scripture is truth. **Archaeology**. The Bible is not a history book just for the sake of learning history but there is a lot of history in here. So, you would expect to find some supporting evidence from other historical sources and you absolutely find support for scripture in all kinds of historical and archaeological studies.

I read in an old book one time that there was no evidence that Pontius Pilate ever lived or ruled at all but in 1961, a team of archaeologists found an important inscription on a stone in Caesarea that dated to the time of Jesus and proved that Pilate was not only a person but he was proved to be a prefect/governor in Judea at the same time as Jesus.

There have been archaeological finds of marine life high up in the mountains that could only have gotten there by a massive flood. **2 Kings** and **2 Chronicles** tell of a massive tunnel that King Hezekiah dug on the west side of the city of Jerusalem. If you go there today, that tunnel is still there. I'm not trying to prove the Bible is true with these examples. I'm showing that the Bible has already been proven to be true and factual. You can do some archaeological research yourself if you doubt it.

Let me give you another way you can know that the Bible is true. If something is absolute truth, **it will never cease to be truth**. Think of how many times somebody somewhere has tried to get rid of the Bible. It has been banned and burned and confiscated for thousands of years and still is to this day in 52 countries and yet, how many copies do you own?

Banning scripture and Christians started at least by the time of Jesus and every time the church, the Bible and Christians are banned or persecuted, it all spreads like wildfire. You can see it happen on the pages of Acts and throughout all of history. Truth will always be truth and you can't stop it or even slow it down. God's supernatural power always sees to it that trying to squash the truth just makes it spread.

Let me give you one more reason you can know that scripture is true and there are many others but I'll give you just one more. **It has changed my life**. I look around here and see dozens of people whose lives have also been changed by the Bible. **Hebrews 4:12** says, *“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”*

It speaks to me like no other book I've ever read. It has proven itself to be true in my life. I see promises made in the Old Testament. I see encouragement given in the New Testament. And none of them have ever been proven wrong in my life. I can see with my own two bug eyes that God's Word is true. It is true and life-changing and it is sweet.

Before there was GPS and before electronics and maps and sonar, captains of boats used to have to use stars and waypoints to navigate the waters, especially the ocean but even big lakes. So, they would use lighthouses or other lights fixed to big, solid objects. They could see those lights for miles and they knew where they were and the dangers they needed to watch for.

Well, imagine thinking you needed a light to navigate by and so you just put a big lantern on the bow of your boat. And you, as the captain, would plot your course according to that light. How do you think that is going to work for you? Why? Because you need a light that is fixed; a light that is not going to move and is the same all the time.

I hear people sometimes say that they are just getting through life the best that they know how. They trust their gut. Or they follow their heart. **Jeremiah 17:9** says, *“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?”* Not using scripture to guide your life is like putting a light on the bow of your boat to guide you. Your heart is deceitful. Your mind changes. Your mood evolves. Your education is not enough. God gives us all those things to supplement our lives and the decisions we make but they are not trustworthy to guide us.

Go back to **Psalms 19**. Poor David had just a small part of the scriptures that we have and, honestly, a lot of what he probably had was, well, don't tell anybody I said this but some of that stuff can be kind of dry. Know what I mean? He probably had Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Now there are some cool stories in Genesis and Exodus but after that...have you read the book of Numbers? You know what's in there? A lot of numbers!

After that, Deuteronomy and Leviticus both have a lot of rules and statutes, commands and laws. And yet, look at how David describes them. The law is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes make you wise. The precepts give joy! The commands give light. And all of it is better than gold and sweeter than honey. How could he possibly describe boring old scripture like that?

Let me give you a scenario. Let's say you are hiking through the woods on a trail but you get lost. The wind is picking up and it starts to rain. The clouds are black and here comes the lightning and thunder. Was that a wolf that just growled? Uh oh! Now you realize you just stepped in quicksand. This is horrible.

But all of the sudden an old man walks up, grabs you by the backpack and pulls you out. Then he shows you a shortcut to where you were going. You are leery about following a stranger but he is very helpful and says he lives just around the corner in a cabin and has lived in these woods since he was born. So, he obviously knows the way. He shows you to a tunnel and you think, *“No way am I doing that. I know better.”* But as you step into the tunnel you see that it is warm and dry and well-lit. It even has signs. As you go along you see that the man has even supplied it with bottles of water and even some snacks. This is great!

Yes, it goes against everything you were taught. It goes against what the forest ranger told you. It's scary to not be in control. The old man's ways don't make sense at first but then you see light at the end of the tunnel and you realize the man didn't want to hurt you. He just wanted to help you. He made your trip so much nicer and so much easier.

That is scripture. Scripture is the old man saying, *“No. Don't go that way. Come this way. I know the right way. It may be scary but please trust me. My way is proven and it is good and helpful and true.”* When I was a kid, I thought the Bible was just a bunch of *“Don't do that!”* And *“don't do this. If it's fun, stay away from it!”* But it's really just a beautiful guide showing the way to a full and abundant life as it says in **John 10:10**.

I met a man in Wise County Jail years ago who wanted to be baptized. I asked him why he wanted to be baptized and he said, *“Man, I don't know. I never went to church but I read in the Bible that Jesus got baptized.”* He hemmed and hawed for a bit trying to find the words to say. *“And I see that Jesus says we are supposed to be baptized...and I don't know. I think I just want all the world to see that I am now a follower of Christ.”*

Well, good grief! That's the best answer I have ever heard in my life and do you know where he got that answer? From scripture. He didn't get it from church. Nobody told him that. He picked up the unchanging, unfulfilling, inerrant and sharp

as a two-edged sword Bible and it cut through his lack of knowledge and gave him light and joy and revived his soul and made him wise. Just like David described it. That is why we use the Bible to guide us as Christians and why we believe what it says.

Yes, it is archaeologically correct and scientifically accurate and historically interesting and factual but, in the end, I believe scripture because it changed my life. Scripture introduced me to Jesus and I realized I was a sinner living life the wrong way. I was going the wrong way and I needed somebody to guide me and I needed a Savior to save me and a Father to forgive me. Thank you, Lord, for your Word! It is sweet and it is true.

Do you know Jesus today? I am not asking if you believe that He lived 2000-some years ago. I'm asking if you know Him and have a relationship with the Christ, the Anointed One, the Savior who lives today. Do you have a relationship with Him? Have you asked Him to be Lord of your life?

Sin is anything that displeases God. We are all sinners. **Romans 3:23** tells us that. Then **Romans 6:23** says that what we deserve for that sin is eternal death in Hell separated from God and everybody else. That's bad news! But the Good News is that **John 3:16** says that God loved you so much that He gave His only Son Jesus to die on the cross to pay the price for your sin that you couldn't pay. And all you have to do is believe it. That belief will show itself in your changed life. And that all starts when you confess all your many sins to God and ask Him to forgive you of those sins and then turn away from that lifestyle and submit totally to God and anything He says to do. Do that right now as the music plays.