

5/15/22 Christ Fellowship

## What We Believe about God – Gen. 1:1

Many years ago (2006) at another church (Hulen St. Baptist) where I was attending, I volunteered to help corral, I mean teach a group of 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> graders on a Wednesday night. It just so happened that the kids were learning about the book of Genesis and had learned the previous week about Adam and Eve. So, not being their usual teacher, I asked them what they had learned. And I wrote it down so I wouldn't forget it. It was very eye-opening. I hope this helps you understand.

*They said first of all, God made Adam out of dust (right on target so far) but then God realized that Adam couldn't have babies (I don't know that I would have put it that way, but okay). So, God took a rib out of Adam and gave it to Eve (another interesting way of phrasing it). Then He took a rib from Eve and gave it to somebody else. Then they had a lot of babies, one of whom was Abraham Lincoln.*

You know, they started off pretty well but something got lost there at the end. Maybe they were using a different translation than I am. I don't know. But I hear grown adults' theories about God and creation and I'm just about as confused. I did some research. (I Googled it.) And I found this NASA website that explains to kids how the universe got started. Let me read just a short paragraph or two. Remember, this is from NASA, the smartest people on the planet.

*When the universe began, it was just hot, tiny particles mixed with light and energy. It was nothing like what we see now. As everything expanded and took up more space, it cooled down. The tiny particles grouped together. They formed atoms. Then those atoms grouped together. Over lots of time, atoms came together to form stars and galaxies.*

*The first stars created bigger atoms and groups of atoms. That led to more stars being born. At the same time, galaxies were crashing and grouping together. As new stars were being born and dying, then things like asteroids, comets, planets, and black holes formed! How long did all of this take? Well, we now know that the universe is 13,800,000,000 years old—that's 13.8 billion. That is a very long time. That's pretty much how the universe began. (What Is the Big Bang? | NASA Space Place – NASA Science for Kids)*

You know, I think I like the one about Abraham Lincoln better. It is closer to the truth at least. At least it starts with the Bible. We learned last week about why we believe the Bible and we take all our theology or study of God and thoughts about God from the Bible. We know the Bible is true. But I hear ya! Todd, that was NASA. They fly people to the moon. How could they be wrong about how the moon was created?

Well, **Romans 3:4** has the answer to that. It says, *“Let God be true, and every man a liar.”* Yes, NASA is lying when they say the universe started with hot, little particles. Hey, NASA, where did the hot, little particles come from? They can't answer that. Or, rather, they don't want to answer that because to answer that kind of question would lead one to conclude that there is a Creator. And if there is a Creator then He will have rules and purpose and if there are rules and purpose then we would have to obey those rules and live for that purpose and who wants to do that?

**H.E. Fosdick** said, *“The existence of God means that we are living in a moral order, and in a moral order we can no more sin and get away with it than we can break all physical laws and escape the penalty.”* I think Atheists and Agnostics are not usually stupid people. They are stubborn people. They don't want to believe because if they believed in God then they would know that ultimately, to live a life worth living, you have to obey God. And they want to do whatever they want, not what God wants.

So, what do you believe about God? It's a big question, isn't it? It's a huge question. Every other thing in the world hinges on what you believe about God. We are continuing our look at what we believe. This is the second in our series. Last week, as I said, we looked at a few of the reasons we know the Bible is true and so we go to the Bible for all the other things in this series. Imagine that, right? I'm gonna preach out of the Bible.

I have a buddy that jokingly asks me all the time, *“So, you still preaching out of that same book?”* Yep. Still there. And today I want to go to the very beginning. Turn all the way left in your Bibles to the very first verse. **Genesis 1:1**. Everybody knows this verse. You know what it says but, like all of Genesis, this first verse is shallow enough that a baby can swim in it but deep enough to drown an elephant. (That’s not my saying. I don’t know who said it but I remember it.)

Genesis is the first book of the Bible. It and several others were written by Moses and Genesis tells us how everything came into being but it is not a novel. It is not a history book or a school book written for us to just gain knowledge. It can be frustrating because it doesn’t answer all of our questions. But it gives us enough and more than enough, really. Let’s start our journey to see what we believe about God by reading that first verse.

**Genesis 1:1** says, *“In the beginning God...”* Stop right there. Just that will keep us busy for a while. I’ve told some of you that years ago when I was an adult Sunday School teacher we went through the book of Genesis and these four words took over a month to get through. I hope to get y’all out of here in just a few hours so don’t worry.

*“In the beginning God...”* How you feel about those four words will shape your theology more than any other phrase. In my Life Application Bible, the notes here say, *“The simple statement that God created the Heavens and the Earth is one of the most challenging concepts confronting the human mind.”* Those first four words are more challenging to my mind than anything else. My little feeble toad brain can’t understand how God can be alive before anything was created. Let me ask you this. Who created God? God is the Creator who created all that is created. Nobody created Him. God is and always has been and always will be.

If you don’t understand that, don’t worry. Nobody does. Our brains were not meant to understand that. Let me put it this way. If you were building a computer from the ground up, you could program it with as little or as much memory and RAM and computing power as you want. You could write your own code so that it will do only what you want it to. That computer has no idea how it works. It can’t get any smarter. It doesn’t have the capability to do any more than you want it to. Now, that is a poor illustration of how God created the universe. It’s a poor illustration because I don’t have any idea how computers work any more than I understand how God works but it gives you some idea.

And it leads me to the first main point I want to make. I have two overall basic points. I have two sentences that will help us to know what we believe about God. Will these two sentences explain God? Nope. But they will help us to have a better understanding of Him and they will be on the test we take tonight in Bible study.

You ready? Here are the two sentences. The first sentence is, **“God is.”** The second sentence is, **“God can be known.”** Under those two umbrellas will follow the rest of this message. When scripture says, *“In the beginning God...”* it is saying that God existed before time itself. God made time. He programmed time into His “computer.” He does not need time. He is always on time because time does what God wants it to do.

God doesn’t need anything. He doesn’t rely on anything. He is completely independent of His creation. His creation is completely dependent on Him though. In **Exodus 3**, God reveals Himself to Moses through a burning bush but that bush was not burned up. The fire was not dependent on the bush. It didn’t need the bush to stay burning. And what did God call Himself? The name is Yahweh which means, *“I AM.”*

In **Isaiah 40** it says, *“The Lord is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth.*

*He will not grow tired or weary,  
and his understanding no one can fathom.*

*29 He gives strength to the weary  
and increases the power of the weak.”*

Jesus expressed the same thought in **John 5** where He said, *“For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself.”* God just is. He was. He is and He always will be.

Also, **God can be known**. But how do we get to know God? We get to know God first through scripture and it is through scripture that we know that God is Father, Son and Spirit. We call that the Trinity. Now, most of you know that the word “Trinity” is not in the Bible. That is just what we call the three persons of the Godhead. The Father is God. The Son is God. And the Spirit is also God and they are all one. Surely you understand that, right? Well, if you do, please explain it to me because, while I don’t understand it, I believe it and add it to the list of things I believe about God that I can’t explain. It’s called faith.

Some people have tried to give illustrations for how better to understand the Trinity. I have heard people describe an egg as the shell, the white and the yolk as all parts of an egg but still an egg. Yes, but they are all just parts of an egg and not an egg. The same with an apple. The skin, the flesh and seeds are parts of an apple but not an apple in themselves. Water is a pretty good illustration but still not perfect. Liquid, vapor and ice are forms of water but it still doesn’t describe the Trinity just right and that’s okay. Don’t expect to understand how the Trinity works. You can know God without understanding that.

We know God from scripture and we also know God from what He has created. **Romans 1:20** says, *“For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.”* What that is saying is that even without reading the Bible, one can know there is a God just by looking around. If you see a tree or a flower, you know that creation was made by a Creator.

Similarly, if you see a house, you know there had to be a house-builder. If you see a car, you know Ford or Chevy or somebody else built that. If it’s leaking oil, you know it is probably a Dodge, right? 😊 It doesn’t even take faith to see that where there is something that is created, there must be a Creator. That’s not even faith. It’s just common sense. And God has allowed us and programmed us to see that because God wants us to know Him.

But if you saw a house being built, would you expect the builder of that house to care about your house? Would you expect the guy who is building the house down the street to be concerned about the quality and longevity of the house you live in? If you went to the GM plant in Arlington and found the head engineer in charge of building Tahoes, would you expect that guy to be at all concerned about the maintenance of your car? Could you count on him to make sure your Tahoe was washed and tuned up and had the tires rotated? Of course not.

So, it’s easy to understand how people can view God as the Planner, Creator and Sustainer of the universe but they have a hard time believing that THAT God could be interested in them. They might agree that God wants us to know that there is a God but surely that God is way too busy for little ol’ me.

Even King David had similar thoughts. In **Psalm 8** he tells God, *“When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, 4 what is man that you are mindful of him, human beings that you care for them?”*

Can I tell you something? The topic of “What We Believe about God” is huge. In fact, it’s too big. How can I squeeze everything about God into just a few minutes? I could preach just on this for weeks and weeks. And I could tell you all the ways to get to know God better. We could discuss Bible reading plans and fasting and prayer and repentance in sackcloth and ashes like the Old Testament saints did when they wanted to know God better and maybe we should but I have one main way.

Call it a shortcut if you like but if you want to go from knowing ABOUT God to KNOWING God and having a deep relationship with Him where you call Him not just Savior but Friend, then do this one thing. You ready? Go through a crisis. Yes, go through a major life-change. Suffer great loss. Make some really bad decisions and go to jail. Have your spouse leave, your boss fire you and lose your health or all of your money. That can be a shortcut to knowing God right there.

Like so many other aspects of life, the hardest way is the best way in one sense. It is the best way to truly learn Who God is and how He works. It is the best way to go from head knowledge about a faraway God who has no interest in you to having a Friend who sticks closer than a brother. (Prov. 18:24)

When you get to the point that you absolutely cannot help yourself and you are desperate ; when you get to the point where if God doesn't save you then you feel like you are going to die or get killed or kill somebody else, that is when you can **know** that you **know** that you **know** that God is real and alive and active and He cares about you and loves you passionately.

In fact, I don't think you can truly know any other way. You can believe in Him and rely on Him and worship Him and be a good Christian but until you have been chopped off at the knees, circling the drain about to die, crushed and broken, you will not really understand God's love, His power, His sovereignty, His grace and His mercy. You can't truly understand God.

In the first chapter of Job, we are told that Job was a good, godly man. In fact, it says he was the greatest man of all the people. That's pretty big talk. I think you could easily say that Job knew God at this point. But you know the story of Job. He lost everything. He lost his wealth, his health and even his ten children. And then for thirty-something chapters he and his buddies discuss theology, seeing who knows God better.

But then God finally addresses the situation and goes twelve rounds with Job and all Job can do is listen and learn and we see at the very end, in the very last chapter, chapter 42, Job says to God, *"Surely I spoke of things I did not understand. My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you."* **"My eyes have seen you."** He didn't see God physically. But he knew God in a way that he would never have known had he not been crushed and destroyed.

We have said for years that we at Christ Fellowship minister specifically to the poor, the addicted and the incarcerated. That is just who God usually puts in our path but every now and then we get to minister to the wealthy and the carefree. Do you know when that is? When a parent loses a child or when cancer hits or a family member makes bad choices. That is when their money, their status, their friends can't help and they cry out to God. Those kinds of things are going to happen to all of us at some time but sometimes God allows that or even causes that so that we will cry out to Him and know Him better.

God created you to have fellowship with you and to love you and the most important thing to God is not your comfort or your happiness. The most important thing to God is for you to know Him better and become more and more like Him. He wants you to be happy but it is far more important that you be holy.

Crisis is going to come to all of us. Sometimes it is because God allows it or causes it. Sometimes it is because of our own sin. And sometimes it is just because we live in a fallen world. Your response to that crisis is up to you. You can do what you think is best or you can turn to the Creator and Sustainer of all creation and submit to His will and His plan for your life.

When you submit to Him, He promises peace and wisdom for you and blessings in this life and the next. Do you know Him today? Do you have that relationship with Him through His Son Jesus? You can. All you have to do is submit. I know that's hard but so is living this life without Him. It is your decision. Make it now because you might not have another chance. Ask God to forgive you of all your many sins and then repent of those sins. Turn away from that lifestyle. Then just believe that Jesus died on the cross to pay the price for those sins that the Father said was due. Then let God's Spirit come into your life and change you into a new creation. Do it right now as the music plays.