



LESSON ONE: INTRODUCTION

FACILITATOR NOTE

This lesson is an introductory study in the foundational truths of the Christian faith that will be discussed this semester. Spend time helping the class participants recognize why this study is important and how it directly affects our practice of faith in the world.

PRAYER

Spend time in prayer with the class. Allow for requests and center your prayer on this lesson.

LESSON

I. CLASS INTRODUCTION

A. Opening Question: What do you believe about God and why?

B. Basic human questions:

1. What is this world and where did it come from?
2. Who am I and what am I doing in it?
3. Is there any purpose to it all?
4. Can we make sense of our lives?
5. Is there an explanation for things and people?
6. If so, where is it to be found?
7. How do we know?
8. These are the questions that push us toward seeking the truth. Some believe there is no purpose to it all and that all this happened by chance. Others believe there is something greater and beyond what we know that makes all of this make sense. At FXCC, we believe the later and believe that God can make all of this make sense. Yet, what do we believe about God?

C. Why this class?

1. It is a mistake to assume uniformity of belief within any church, denomination, or fellowship.
2. This semester, we will focus on the foundational of the Christian faith. The series is titled "Foundations." A foundation is what a building rests on and keeps it from collapsing. The foundation must be strong and resolute so that even if a portion of the building were destroyed, the foundation would stand and could be build upon again.



- a) Read Matthew 7:24-27 and discuss Jesus take on a foundation.
- b) Read Ephesians 2:19-22 and discuss.
3. These foundational truths are the core of what we believe as Christians and flow through everything we do. They are at the root of our evangelistic conversations and are the building blocks of the Christian faith itself. Often we take them for granted and we assume all of us understand them and agree on them. However, in today's age it is paramount that we regroup around these tenets of faith and join together to share the message of love contained within them.
4. Today truth is relative and flexible. Yet it is our belief that is not true. Even the statement itself is a truth. We believe that truth rests with God and God alone. With over 1500 different varieties of Christianity in the US alone it is important that our church family understands what is at the core of who we are and why we do what we do.
5. **The leadership of this church wants everyone we engage with – member, guest, or other – to know what we believe and why. The leadership also wants everyone to understand how our beliefs inform our practice.**

D. The Apostles Creed

1. The Apostles' Creed is the oldest creed, and lies at the foundation of most others. Though not (as legend has it) the direct work of the Apostles, it has its roots in apostolic times, and embodies apostolic teaching. It had an important place in the early church, when as yet no creed but itself existed. The oldest usage of the term "Rule of Faith" (regula fidei), now commonly given to the Scriptures, has reference to this creed. It was the creed that could be appealed to as held by the church in all its great branches. It was on this creed that the early church rested and could test whether or not a body of believers was truly a part of God's family. (James Orr, ISBE Vol. 1)
2. There are two forms (short and long) of the statement with the short (Old Roman) statement dating back as early as the 2nd century (140 A.D.). It reads as such:

"I believe in God the Father Almighty. And in Jesus Christ His only (begotten) Son our Lord, who was born of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary; crucified under Pontius Pilate, and buried; the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father, from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. And in the Holy Ghost; the holy Church; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; (the life everlasting)."

- E. **Why is this important?** *Because even the early church understood the importance of stating their beliefs in order to help others understand what they believed and in order to identify those who are members of their spiritual family.*
- F. **What does it mean to identify yourself as a Christian in our culture today?**



II. WHAT THIS CLASS IS NOT

- A symposium on “why we are right and others are wrong”.
- An attempt to enforce uniformity of belief.
- A testing ground.

III. REVIEW OF THE FXCC STATEMENTS OF FAITH

As a church family (a group of imperfect people seeking the Lord), we believe the Bible is God’s message revealed to us for the purpose of guiding us toward Him. With this in mind, in the Bible (Hebrews 6:1-3) we find essential truths that lay the foundation for our faith in Jesus Christ. These truths are at the core of who we are as a church.

- Our family believes in *one* eternal God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matthew 5:16,45; 6:1,4,8,9; James 1:17; John 1:1; 14:9; Genesis 1:2; John 4:24; 14:16-20; 2 Peter 1:21)
 - Our family believes in *God the Father*, who is the Creator of all things seen and unseen (Genesis 1:1; Acts 17:24-28; Hebrews 11:3)
 - Our family believes in *God the Son*, Jesus Christ, who is God’s Son and our Savior (John 1:14; 1 John 4:9; John 3:16; 2 Peter 3:18) and who:
 - Was born Jesus of Nazareth, both fully human and fully divine, conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary (Matthew 21:11; John 19:19; John 1:14; Romans 5:15-17; Colossians 2:9; 1 John 1:1; Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:26-38)
 - Lived and taught the perfect life (John 13:14-16; Philippians 2:1-11; Hebrews 2:14-18; 3:1; 4:14-16; 12:1-3; 1 Peter 2:21; 1 John 2:6)
 - Suffered and was unjustly crucified (Luke 23:1-46)
 - Died, was buried, and rose from the grave on the third day following His death (Luke 23:44 – 24:8; John 20:24-29; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8)
 - Ascended into Heaven and now sits at the right hand of God the Father (Luke 22:69; Acts 1:1-9; Colossians 3:1)
 - Promised to return to earth to judge all people, both living and dead (Matthew 24:36-42; John 14:1-3, Acts 1:10-11; 10:39-42; 1 Peter 4:5)
 - Our family believes in *God the Holy Spirit*, who has been God’s presence on earth from the beginning (Genesis 1:1-2) and who:
 - Is an active and vital part of God (John 16:5-15; Acts 1:7-8; Romans 8:26-27)
 - Lives and works in every baptized believer (Christian) (Acts 2:38; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; 2 Timothy 1:14)
- Our family believes in *the Bible*—God’s message, His Holy Word (Scripture).
 - We believe God inspired the original writings of the 66 books of the Bible and those original writings were without error (inerrant) (Mark 12:36; John 14:26; 16:12-15; Acts 1:16; 1 Corinthians 2:12-13; 2 Timothy 3:14-16; 2 Peter 1:20-21)
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- Our family confirms the Bible as the final authority for all matters of faith and practice as it reveals God, God's vision, God's purposes, and God's good news for all people (Isaiah 40:8; Matthew 5:18; 24:35; Romans 15:4; Hebrews 4:12)
- Our family believes the Bible teaches that all people...
 - Are separated from God through sin (Isaiah 59:2; Ephesians 4:18; Colossians 1:21)
 - Are without hope apart from God's saving grace through Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12; Romans 3:23)
- Our family believes the Bible teaches that salvation (forgiveness of sin and reuniting with God) is *only* by grace (God's gift of salvation given without merit) through Jesus' sacrificial death and realized through relationship with Him (Matthew 26:28; Romans 5:9; Ephesians 2:4-9; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 1 John 1:7)
- Our family believes the Bible teaches that one commits to this relationship with God and His grace by...
 - Believing in and putting their faith in Christ (John 11:25-26; 20:29, 31; Romans 5:1-2; 10:4, 9-10; Mark 16:16)
 - Repenting of sin (acknowledging and turning from sin) (Luke 24:45-47; Acts 3:19; 17:30; 2 Peter 3:9)
 - Confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord (Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:9-13; Philippians 2:11; 1 John 4:15)
 - Being immersed (through baptism) into Christ (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:1-7; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21)
- Our family believes that the Bible teaches that our committed relationship to God prompts a response from every believer (disciple). This response to our relationship with God inspires us to:
 - Worship God (2 Kings 17:28-39; Psalms 29:2; 95:6; 99:5, 9; 100:2; Matthew 4:10; John 4:20-24; Romans 12:1; Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 7:11; 14:7; 22:8-9)
 - Love each other in perfect unity (John 13:34-35; 15:12; 17:20-23; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Colossians 3:12-14)
 - Grow spiritually (Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 1:6; 3:12-15; Colossians 1:9-10; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 5:12-14; 6:1-2; 1 Peter 2:1-3; 2 Peter 3:17-18)
 - Share the good news (Gospel) of Jesus Christ to all people (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 4:18-20; 5:27-32, 40-42)
 - Serve others (Acts 2:45; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15; 1 Peter 4:8-11)
- Our family believes the church (fellowship) of Jesus Christ (*God's family*) was...
 - Founded by Christ (Matthew 16:13-18)
 - Established after Christ's resurrection (Acts 2:14-47)
 - Consists of *all* believers (Christians) everywhere