

We Believe! Lessons from Historic Christianity

Week 1, Pastor Peter 06-05-16

I gave you a copy of the Nicene Creed to consider for the next several weeks as we come to a new message series called "What We Believe". I invite your questions about the topics of belief in this creed. Text me or write them down on your **Connection Card** each week and I will try to address them in this series.

Me: Growing up I wrestled with my beliefs in the form of Who is right? And Who was wrong?

Passed by several churches going to church:

- The church on the corner known for Strawberry Festival in May
- The Church who had the Farmer's Market
- The BIG church that didn't look like a church
- The Bingo Churches...lol
- Why didn't my friends talk to me about church? Why did some of them seem snooty, mean about God and faith?
- Why didn't we **EVER** do things together...were we all separate faiths (actually had more in common. . . I know that now)

We: Many of us struggle with this Question. Have you?

Many in our community don't cross church traditions lines (you think it's bad in the Presidential Primaries, huh?! Lol Invite someone from another church to an event here and see the reaction sometimes....

Pastor, what do *you* believe? What does *our church* believe about....?

Pastor, are we this or that?

Pastor, what kind of church are we?

Pastor, are we a Pentacostal Church of God?

Some people come to church with deep rooted hurt because of beliefs in the churches they attended:

- Very strict
- Very loose
- Low view of women (can't preach and teach)

- Low view of forgiveness (Divorced pastor can't Preach again but an convicted murderer who got saved can!)

Do you struggle with co-workers / neighbors / uninvited Saturday-morning-door-knockers who believe different than you?

So what do we believe? How can it impact our daily lives?

What does God have to say about the importance of what we believe?

1. God wants me to grow in belief so I can help others to grow as well

"About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil."

-Hebrews 5:11-14, ESV

2. God says a strong belief will bring balance and strength to my life

"until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ." -Ephesians 4:13-15, NIV

3. God wants me to have Spiritual Convictions tempered with Love

"Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables...One person considers one day

more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind.”

-Romans 14:1-5, NIV

What listeners need to do / Application
So what can we do regarding our beliefs?

Wouldn't our church be a better place / our community if we were truly convinced of what we believe in? If we knew how to answer questions and settle disagreements with love instead of fighting? It's Possible!! How do we get there? **How do we form our beliefs? Together we must:**

1. Doing the hard work

- Read & Study & Ponder the Bible
- Join a Small Group
- Reasoning through Bible discussions brings us to the Truth, helps us form our belief

So after starting the hard work, I need to

2. Be willing to consider a new way of belief

- Biggest challenge is a closed 'mind'

There are cycles of wrong thinking / beliefs. Today, if I think I am....I am!! If I think I'm a lady trapped in a Man's body, I am. Even if I'm 5 years old...

As you come to God at church, at home, reading the Bible, discussing in your small groups, are you open to God correcting wrong beliefs?

I do the hard work of reading and studying, I consider new beliefs from God, then I should

3. Desire life change in my beliefs, not just knowledge of creeds

“For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.”

-Proverbs 23:7, NKJV

- If we think wrong in our hearts, we will disobey God and not please Him
- If we believe in quick, easy answers that make us feel good, we will cave in when life becomes challenging

Finally, not only should I desire life change for me but also for those around me. I should

4. Desire to get involved in the work of the Gospel

“My friends, you are spiritual. So if someone is trapped in sin, you should gently lead that person back to the right path. But watch out, and don’t be tempted yourself. You obey the law of Christ when you offer each other a helping hand.”

-Galatians 6:1-2, CEV

- I don’t think this is just yelling “Hey, Stop it!!”
- It’s in the context of daily life, representing the REAL God and Savior
- Taking a chance and lovingly saying, through the relationships we have established, “There’s a better way, I believe!”

My NEXT Step:

This week I will humbly look at my beliefs through the pages of the Bible and will cast off any wrong beliefs.

Next Week we will consider what Christians believe about God compared to others spiritual views in our world today.