

“Back To The Basics”

Introduction:

1. It Is Always Good To Start The Year Off Right:
 - Worshiping The Lord:
 - Together As A Church!
 - As We Have Done For The Last Several Years:
 - I Would Like To Share:
 - What Will Be Our Special Focus For The Year To Come!
2. Last Year - Our Primary Focus Was On:
 - ***Biblical & Christian Hope!***
 - This Is The Kind Of Hope:
 - That We Find In The Word Of God:
 - And Offered To All Those Who Believe In The Lord Jesus Christ!
3. And So - To Help Us Grow In Our Hope Last Year:
 - We Spent Our Sunday Mornings:
 - From January Through August:
 - Going Through The Old Testament Book Of:
 - Esther!
 - Esther Is Such A Unique Book:
 - Because Nowhere In The Book:
 - Is The Name Of God Mentioned!
 - And Because The People Of God:
 - Are In A Foreign Country Living In A Foreign Culture:
 - It Seems As If God Is Completely Absent:
 - Along With Any Hope!
 - In Many Ways - It Is A Parallel To Our Own Time & Place:
 - Because Every Christian - No Matter Where Or When We Live:
 - Are Living As “Strangers & Pilgrims On The Earth!” (Hebrews 11:13)
 - And Sometimes It Even Feels To Us:
 - That God Is Completely Absent:
 - As Well As Any Hope!
 - But - What We Found:
 - All Throughout Esther – And In Our Own Lives:
 - Is That - As Paul Puts It In Romans 15:4 - “Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have ***hope!***”
 - Even If God’s Name Is Not Mentioned!
 - Even When God’s Presence Seems Absent!
 - God Is Still There - And So Is His Hope!
 - Then - On Sunday Nights:
 - For The First Few Months Of The Year:
 - We Explored The Topic Of Hope:
 - More Closely - And Especially How:
 - God Offers Hope To His People Through Jesus Christ!
 - Even As We Read In:
 - Titus 2:13 - “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ!”
 - 4. And All Throughout The Year:
 - We Learned What Biblical Hope Can Do!
 - When You Are Weary!
 - God’s Hope Will Give You Rest!
 - Psalm 16:9 - “Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall ***rest in hope!***”
 - When You Are Weak!
 - God’s Hope Will Give You Strength!
 - Psalm 31:24 - “Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that ***hope*** in the LORD!”

- When You Are Worried!
 - God's Hope Will Give You Peace!
 - Psalm 42:5 - "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? *hope thou in God!*"
- When You Are Weeping!
 - God's Hope Will Give You Joy!
 - Psalm 146:5 - "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose *hope* is in the LORD his God!"
- When You Trust In The Lord Jesus Christ:
 - You Can Have This Kind Of Hope!
 - Are You A Hopeful Christian Tonight?
- 5. This Year - Our Focus Is Going To Be:
 - "Back To The Basics!"
 - And We've Already Started Looking At These Basics:
 - As We've Started Reading Through & Studying God's Word Together As A Church!
 - But The "Basics" Are Essential:
 - To Our Lives As Christians!
 - Just As They Are To Any Kind Of Pursuit!
 - **IE:** Only Participated For One Year In High School Basketball - But I Still Remember The Coach's First Speech About The "Basics" Of Basketball! If You've Watched "Hoosiers" You Know What I'm Talking About! "Focus On The Fundamentals!"
 - We Need To Do This As Christians & As A Church As Well!
- 6. And So - Each Service We Have This Year:
 - Will Have As Its Goal:
 - To Help Us "Focus On The Fundamentals" In Our:
 - Life And Walk With God!

* For Sunday School - Our Focus Will Be On:

1. The Basics Of The Word Of God!

- 2018 Marks The 10th Year Of Our:
 - "Take 20 Bible Reading Program!"
 - With The Goal Of Our Church Going Through The Bible On A Regular Basis:
 - Using Different Reading Plans & Formats!
 - And This Year Is No Different!
 - We Are Going To Be Going Through The Bible:
 - In Chronological Way - Using The Guide Developed By George Guthrie!
 - Now - Why Do We Do This?
 - Key Verse - 1 Peter 2:1-3 - "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, / As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: / If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious!"
 - If You Are A Christian:
 - Then Verse 3 Must Certainly Apply To You!
 - You "Have Tasted That The Lord Is Gracious!"
 - In So Many Ways & At So Many Times!
 - And Since This Is The Case:
 - Each One Of Us Should:
 - "Desire The Sincere Milk Of The Word!"
 - The Word Of God!
 - And So - In Our Sunday School Class:
 - We Will Focus Our Attention On:
 - Reviewing & Discussing The Reading From The Previous Week!
 - Even As We Did This Morning!
 - Hopefully, We Can Encourage Each Other To Not Just "Go" Through The Bible This Year, But "Grow" Through The Bible This Year!
 - Make Sure You Make Sunday School:
 - A Special Priority This Year!

* For Our Sunday Morning Worship Services - Our Focus Will Continue To Be On:

2. ***The Basics Of Worship!***

- As We Use The Elements Of Worship:
 - Given To Us By God:
 - To Re-Commit Ourselves To The Lord!
- We Worship The Lord:
 - Through Praise!
- We Worship The Lord:
 - Through Giving!
- We Worship The Lord:
 - Through Submission:
 - To His Word - As It Is Proclaimed!
- Sunday Mornings:
 - We Will Continue To Work Our Way Through:
 - The Book Of 2 Corinthians - That Will Likely Take Us Through The Rest Of The Year!
 - But Each Service - We Need To Remember To Keep Our Focus On The Lord And What He Has Done For Us!
- Came Across A Very Compelling Quote:
 - On Worship By - William Temple - In His Book:
 - “Readings In St. John’s Gospel” - Written Back In 1939: “Worship is the submission of all our nature to God. It is the quickening of conscience by His holiness; the nourishment of mind with His truth; the purifying of imagination by His beauty; the opening of the heart to His love; the surrender of will to His purpose — and all of this gathered up in adoration, the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable and therefore the chief remedy for that self-centeredness which is our original sin and the source of all actual sin!”
- We Will Probably Look More At This Definition Of Worship:
 - At A Future Time:
 - But As We Come Together As A Church For Worship, Let Us Remember To:
 - “Submit All Our Nature To God!”

* For Our Prayer Meetings Each Wednesday, Of Course Our Focus Will Be On:

3. ***The Basics Of Prayer!***

- In Luke 11:1 - After Watching & Witnessing The Prayer Life Of Jesus:
 - “And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples!”
 - And With This Special Request - Jesus Provided What Is Commonly Known As The “Lord’s Prayer” - But What Was Really Meant To Be A Model Prayer For His Disciples!
- Luke 11:2-4 - “And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. / Give us day by day our daily bread. / And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil!”
 - And In Matthew 6:13 - We Find The Conclusion To This Prayer: “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen!”
- One Of Our Goals:
 - For Our Prayer Meetings This Year:
 - Will Be To Learn More About Prayer:
 - And Then - Continue To Devote Most Of Our Prayer Meeting To Actual Prayer!
 - To Help With This:
 - We Will Be Using A Book Written Many Years Ago By The Reformer Martin Luther:
 - Who Was Asked By His Barber To Teach Him How He Prayed!
 - And So - He Wrote A Little Book Entitled - “A Simple Way To Pray!”
- It Provides A Simple Pattern For Prayer:
 - That Will Deepen Our Prayer Life:
 - As Christians!

* And Then - On Sunday Nights This Year - Our Focus Will Be On:

4. ***The Basics Of Doctrine!***

- And To Help Us With This:
 - We Will Be Using Something Known As:

- The "Apostles Creed!"
 - A Creed Is A Brief Statement Of Belief!
- And The Apostles Creed:
 - Is The Oldest Creed Of The Christian Church!
 - And It Provides Some Of The Most Basic & Fundamental Truths:
 - That Differentiate True Christianity From False Christianity And Other Religions!
- The Apostle's Creed:
 - Was Not Written By The Apostles:
 - Even Though There Is A Legend That:
 - Each Apostle Provided One Of The Twelve Lines Of The Creed!
 - But Even Though It Was Not Written Directly By The Apostles:
 - The Creed Does Faithfully:
 - Reflect 12 Of The Fundamental Truths & Doctrines Of The Gospel:
 - And The "Faith Which Was Once Delivered Unto The Saints!" (Jude 1:3)
- The Apostle's Creed:
 - Was Frequently Used:
 - "To Express One's Confession Of Faith At The Time Of Baptism!"
 - And It Was What Unified Christians Together Within The Church!
- The Apostle's Creed States:
 1. I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:
 2. And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord:
 3. Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary:
 4. Suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead and buried: He descended into hell:
 5. The third day he rose again from the dead:
 6. He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty:
 7. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead:
 8. I believe in the Holy Ghost:
 9. I believe in the holy catholic church: the communion of saints:
 10. The forgiveness of sins:
 11. The resurrection of the body:
 12. And the life everlasting. Amen.
- Now - This Is The Traditional Form Of The Apostle's Creed:
 - And - As Philip Schaff Once Wrote - "All The Facts And Doctrines Which It Contains, Are In Entire Agreement With The New Testament!"
 - But Even Though This Is True - There Are A Few Statements That Raise Our Eyebrows A Bit When We Hear Them!
 - Like The Statement That Jesus "Descended Into Hell!"
 - And Like The Statement About The "Holy Catholic Church!"
 - Each Of These Statements Need To Be Explained A Bit More, But When They Are, Any Confusion & Concern About Them Can Be Alleviated!
 - "Hell" Here Can Simply Mean "Hades" Or The Grave!
 - And "Catholic" Here Does Not Refer To The Roman Catholic Church, But Simply Means "Universal!"
 - And We Will Look More Closely At Those Statements When We Get To Them!
 - But Each Month This Year:
 - We Will Focus Our Attention On One Key Doctrine:
 - Referred To In The Apostle's Creed!
 - For Example - For The Month Of January - Look More Closely At The First Article Of The Creed:
 - "I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth!"
 - Also - To Help Us Grow:
 - In Our Understanding Of These Fundamental Truths And Doctrines:
 - We Will Be Using A Special Book That I Discovered Several Years Ago:
 - Titled: Lyra Fidelium - A Little Book Of Hymns Written By Samuel J. Stone!
 - "Lyra Fidelium" (By Fred Sanders, October 22, 2008) - "Samuel J. Stone (1839-1900) was an Anglican clergyman and poet whose claim to fame is that he wrote the hymn, The Church's One Foundation. But that's just the hit single off a great album. That hymn is from an interesting collection that Stone wrote in 1866 entitled Lyra Fidelium:

Twelve Hymns on the Twelve Articles of the Apostles Creed. / According to Kenneth Osbeck, it was a controversy over liberal theology that provoked Stone to put a complete statement of Christian doctrine into hymn form. But Stone doesn't mention that in his preface, where he simply offers these 12 hymns as a way of increasing the theological understanding of people "among the poor especially" who are in the habit of saying the creed during prayer time, but with little insight into its meaning. There are plenty of theological commentaries on the creed, he says, but you can't really pray them. Putting them into poetic form would be "effectual in securing an abiding place in the general mind, and also in exercising an influence upon heart and life."

- And So - Each Month - We Will Be Using:
 - Samuel Stone's Hymns To Help Us Learn More About These Tremendous Truths!
- And So - As We Close Our Service Tonight:
 - I Would Like To Hand Out:
 - Our First Instalment Of His Book:
 - Which Explains The First Article Of The Apostle's Creed In Great Detail!
 - Also Providing Key Scripture Quotes To Support Every Single Line Of His Poem!
 - You'll Want To Bring This With You:
 - Each Sunday Night This Month!

Conclusion:

1. So - This Is Going To Be Our Focus For 2018!
 - We Are Going "Back To The Basics!"
 - We Are Going To Focus On:
 - The Basics Of God's Word!
 - The Basics Of Worship!
 - The Basics Of Prayer!
 - And The Basics Of Doctrine!
 - But In Doing So:
 - Perhaps We Will Grow Deeper In Our Faith Than We Ever Have Before!
 - And So - As We Close:
 - Let's Sing Together This Hymn:
 - On The First Article Of The Apostle's Creed:
 - About "God The Father!"
 - To Hopefully A Familiar Tune - "Eternal Father!"
 - Let's Sing:
 - "None Else But Thee!"

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