

# God Has Spoken

Number two in a nine-part series on what we believe

September 19 & 20, 2009

## Intro:

We read in the news of some country making a choice and we think, *Why did they do that?* Maybe you've seen an individual doing something recently and you asked the same question, *Why did they do that?* Why do people do what they do? Whether it is as individuals or in institutions, people *base their behavior on underlying beliefs*. Families and churches alike *do what they do* because of certain ideas, certain values.

For instance, if your guiding philosophy is *hedonism* then you'll always be looking for the next high. Nothing else will matter much besides your pleasure. You'll be motivated by what feels good.

If you're built on the foundation of *pragmatism* then you'll always be thinking about practicality. You'll be concerned only about producing results.

These are two very common foundations, not only for individuals, but for churches as well. Some just exist to generate good feelings. Others seem driven only to produce results in the bottom line.

Last week I mentioned that on *our church* website we have a list of *what we believe*. We're talking in this new series about *the foundations of our faith* and today we come to the one that underlies them all. We'll consider **why we believe what we believe about the Bible and what difference it makes**.

Jesus told a story that will help us organize our thinking today. *Matt 7:24 Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who*

*hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.*

## 1. Everything is built on something.

• *We all have underlying beliefs and values* (what we hold as true and what we care about). Behind actions we find attitudes: underlying values. How we live reveals these deeply held beliefs. You may not have *intentionally chosen* your foundation, but your life *is built on something*. I think many people and many institutions just sort of slip into the ways they follow. They didn't set out to build their life on something silly, but it happens.

If we don't want to be haphazard about this, then we need to sit down and decide: *What am I going to be all about? What am I going to believe in? What will be the basis of my life?*

Every church is also built upon something. Some decide ahead of time while others just slide off the rock onto shaky ground. There are lots of alternative foundations:

• The personality of some leader besides Jesus - someone who can draw a crowd and build an organization or write something that ends up rivaling Scripture. Masses love to follow charismatic leaders. The problem with putting people on pedestals is that they tend to fall off. Only Jesus is rightly exalted.

• Tradition: *the way we've always done it*.

• Current culture: when society shifts, the church changes as well (adapting methodologically is strategic and necessary, but acquiescing in fundamentals is neither). Some churches are desperate to be politically correct. They compromise in the name of relevance and end up having nothing to offer to a society from which they do not differ.

Other churches build only on pop-psychology or subjective emotions. **R.**

Notice, there were *two kinds* of people, not three or four. Jesus was not shy about dividing people into two groups. Everyone is like one or the other of these builders.

## 2. That which is built on unstable ground will not stand the tests of life. ...it fell with a great crash.

Any of these alternatives I've just mentioned for churches demote the Scripture and dilute ministry of power. In the end, these competitors lose.

### A flimsy foundation invites disaster.

This is true for individuals as well. Like *the guy* in the frat who's claim to fame is how much beer he can drink. Or *the girl* who's known for being able to go home from the club with anyone she wants. Or *the guy* who's against everything - he's suspicious and sarcastic. Or *the woman* who's decided not to age - she wears clothing for another generation and embarrasses her grown kids. All of these are building on shaky ground. *How's that working for you?*

The worst foundation is the fantasy of narcissism. A great example is in **Dan 4**. Daniel interprets a dream for King Nebuchadnezzar. It's a warning. Daniel concludes: 27 "Therefore, O king, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue." ...29 Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, 30 he said, "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?" 31 The words were still on his lips when a voice came from heaven, "This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you.

It's dangerous to build upon *the glory of your own majesty*. His power wasn't enough keep him standing. It all came tumbling down. This story reminds me of so many

Hollywood stars that get caught up in *how they shine* only to *go out*. Their light is snuffed; not even a glow is left.

### 3. That which is built on the rock of God's Word will stand these tests. it did not fall...

There's only one place to safely build: *the rock of God's Word*. Time erodes everything but truth. Matt 5:18 I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Matt 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. We need to base our lives on *the only thing that isn't moving* in these uncertain times.

Notice that the people who build their lives on the foundation of God's Word experience just as many tests as anyone else. The storms still threaten and the rain still falls. They have just as many problems at work and at home. *How they respond* is the difference. You can hear it in how they speak to their children and how they speak of their co-workers. They can endure because they stand balanced.

With the stability and strength available, the search for significance can finally come to an end. Such security leads us to redefine what it means to be successful. As Christians, we stand on that which is *unchanging and timeless*.

**S:** *So, everything is built on something. That which is built on unstable ground will not stand the tests of life but that which is built on the rock of God's Word will stand these tests. Now...*

## 4. Dayspring Fellowship is built upon God's Word, the Bible.

We made our choice. And it makes a difference in everything we do. Here's what it says on our list of beliefs about our foundation: *The sole basis of our belief is the Bible, composed of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament. We believe that Scripture in its entirety was inspired by the Holy*

*Spirit, through the instrumentality of chosen men. Scripture thus at one and the same time speaks with the authority of God and reflects the backgrounds, styles and vocabularies of the human authors. We hold that the Scriptures are infallible and inerrant in the original manuscripts. They are the unique, full and final authority on all matters of faith and practice, and there are no other writings similarly inspired by God. R.*

### **Why? Because it is...inspired by God.**

**2 Tim 3:16** succinctly substantiates this idea: All Scripture is God-breathed .... Jesus said, **Matt 4:4** - Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. That's what the Bible claims to be: God-breathed communication. This involved a supernatural process! Jesus told his apostles: *I will bring all things to your remembrance. I will lead you into all truth.* **2 Pet. 1:21** describes how God's Word was put into print: the Scriptures **never had their origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**

### **Another reason why our church is built upon God's Word, the Bible, is that it is...entirely reliable.**

Corroboration is provided by some key qualities:

- **Fulfilled prophecy** provides a supernatural confirmation of the Bible's claims. The only explanation of the Bible's ability to predict the future is to recognize it as a supernatural book.
- The **internal consistency** of the Bible is particularly impressive considering the diversity of the authors.
- The Bible's **literary credibility** shows its dissimilarity from other works of antiquity. The Bible also demonstrates
- **Historical validity.** The archaeological evidence vindicates the historical accuracy of the biblical accounts. Each new discovery provides more confirmation.
- The **textual reliability** of the Bible shines when it is subjected to the same tests used to check the credibility of any ancient document. Finally...

• **Logical selection.** The canon of Scripture was recognized according to very reasonable criteria such as age, authority and authenticity. *The Bible is entirely reliable.*

### **A third reason why our church is built upon God's Word, the Bible, is that it is...unique in authority.**

Of course, the authority of the Bible is wrapped up in its origin. If it is God's Word, then nothing else compares. The God of truth is not going to give us a book we cannot trust. **Ps. 19:7,8** The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. What God says is truth. When we accept it, there is *revival, wisdom and joy!*

The word unique is significant. If the church is built on anything else, great will be its fall. There can be no rival writings, no competitive ideologies. In the book of **Rev** we read that, in the end, all false religion bites the dust. Only one foundation is solid. We are **built upon God's Word, the Bible.** Build your life on it. When you do, nothing can move you for you are on solid ground. No matter what may be threatening to push you around, you can stand secure.

### **5. To build on God's Word involves not just hearing it, but doing it.**

Did you notice in **Matt 7:24** everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice... This means not just *saying* you believe in it, but *acting* on it. Not just *knowing* it, but *following through!* He spoke so we'd obey! **James 1:22-** Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. 25 ...the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it--he will be blessed in what he does. Jesus said the

same thing: [Luke 11:28 - Blessed... are those who hear the word of God and obey it.](#)

• **What this means to us as a church:** Let's go back to familiar territory: Reaching, Connecting, and Growing! (*Show what it has to do with the Word of God.*)

• **What this means to you as an individual:** Follow through. You want blessing in your life? [Ps 119:1 - Blessed are they whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the Lord.](#) Not those who *skip* around it.

The story in Matt 7 teaches the same lesson as the previous one: *by its fruit will a tree be recognized.* The proof is in the pudding. *Not all who call me Lord really know me.* When the end comes, some will be surprised, like the guy who built on the sand: he didn't plan for his house to collapse. He thought he was fine. His house looked similar to his neighbor's house. The contrast is not in the materials or craftsmanship, but what it is built upon! In the parallel passage, [Luke 6:48](#), we read that the guy who puts God's Word into practice is like a guy who [dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock.](#) He wasn't satisfied with being shallow or superficial, but went down to bedrock. In contrast to all that is shifting and slipping around us, one thing never changes: *God has spoken (Heb 1).* He revealed his will that we would do it! We need to ask ourselves, *Where do I stand?* **Prayer team. I pray for offering.**

*Young adult? See me after the service at the Rooted table.*

### **More Meat: unused ideas and so on:**

As Christians, we talk about knowing the Lord. Having a relationship with God. This presupposes communication for we know that there is no relationship without

communication. We know that from our marriages, don't we?

God has revealed himself. [1 Chron 28:9](#) If you seek him, he will be found by you...

The Creator could've finished his initial task and then punched the clock. But instead, he chose to communicate. Agnosticism isn't necessary. We don't have to pretend that we can't ever know. *God invites us to know him. We'd never know that he's loving, or merciful, or anything else if he didn't choose to communicate.*

Now, we can't discover him on our own, we're dependent upon his initiative.

1 Cor 1:21 – It was God's choice to set things up such that there is a necessary spiritual dimension. Our natural wisdom is inadequate. 2:11 – Who knows the thoughts of God but God? 2:14 – without the work of God inside, no one can really understand spiritual things. Mt 11:27 – no one knows the Father except the Son and those whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Yet, when formulating their opinions about God, people look to all sorts of sources. They trust in what is slippery and flounder in the quagmire of speculation.

R. Albert Mohler reminds us of the centrality of preaching in the minister's calling:

"I believe when the minister of the gospel faces the Lord God as judge, there will be many questions addressed to us. There will be many standards of accountability. There will be many criteria of judgment, but in the end, the most essential criterion of judgment for the minister of God is, 'Did you preach the Word? Did you fully carry out the ministry of the Word? In season and out of season, was

the priority of ministry the preaching of the Word?'

"This is not to say that there are not other issues, that there are not other responsibilities, or that there are not even other priorities, but there is one central, non-negotiable, immovable, essential priority and that is the preaching of the Word of God. And Paul speaks to this so clearly when he states his purpose, 'That I might fully carry out the preaching of the Word of God.'"

Ezra 7:10 - For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the Lord, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel. Here's a guy who had a tremendous commitment to learn God's Word. He devoted himself to...study But it didn't stop there, it *just started* there. He *put it into practice*: it says he also devoted himself to...observing the Lord's law. He didn't just read it to increase his knowledge; *he followed through* by obeying it!

Ps 119:45 I will walk about in freedom, for I have sought out your precepts.

92 If your law had not been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction.

93 I will never forget your precepts, for by them you have preserved my life.

114 You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word.

The Bible's message is not swayed by fluctuations in society or by situational ethics.

Ps 19:11 By them (God's laws) is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. Not in *neglecting them*.

1 Pet. 1:23 - For you have been born again... through the living and enduring word of God.

These are not just the normal storms of life, but to the final judgment day in the end. It will all come tumbling down if we have built upon human philosophies or religious efforts.

Have you ever wondered how anyone can know anything for certain about God and life?

You've only got two options: speculation or revelation. The basis for our beliefs comes down to either relying on our best guesses or hearing from God himself.

When we talk about hearing from God, that can conjure up a wide variety of thoughts. Are we listening for whispers? Do we claim to be able to tune into his frequency? Does he send you his tweets? Such claims land people in psychiatric care. No, I'm talking about the fact that God has chosen to communicate with us through his Word, the Bible.

If Christianity really is the overarching worldview, the lifestyle, and the relationship it claims to be, then it would make sense that we would have a significant foundation for our beliefs as well. And we do.