



Following the One True God

“True North” Series – #2

We are heading into new territory! With a “new” church year (September always feels that way!) and a new church experience this is new territory.

In the days ahead we will be asking God to give us his direction so we don’t just do what all the other churches are doing – we do what God wants US to do. Few of us have ever been through a Building Program either and so that will be new territory for most of us.

So before we begin it’s important that we check details and make sure we are all set on “True North”.

This week Jim and Deanna are celebrating their 10th anniversary in San Diego. Earlier this week Deanna was making the plane reservations on the church computer and we were talking about details since Vicki and I have Natalie while they are gone. Deanna was wondering why the flight was so early and I came to look over her shoulder at the options. I noticed she was scheduled to fly out of New York City! I asked about it and she said, “Maybe that’s where we connect.” But she checked back and found that she had not entered her city of departure as Minneapolis. New York was the default city! She was very grateful that a little detail like that was taken care of before she selected the “Make Reservations” function!!

This week I heard the carpenters upstairs us the adage, “Measure twice / Cut once” – Better to be sure!

Last week we spoke of our certainty of the Authority of Scripture

What Do We Believe?

Article III. Statement of Faith

2. We believe that there is but one God, the Creator, Preserver and Ruler of all things, who is perfect in holiness and in love, infinite in wisdom and measureless in power, and who reveals Himself to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

One God – (Monotheistic)

Creator, Preserver, Ruler – (Above All)

(did not come about through evolutionary processes, that they are not preserved through only the ecological workings of mankind, and

that above all rulers and authorities on earth God rules)

Holiness and Love– (Balanced in perfection)

He is holy and to be feared; He is love and invites us into relationship with Him.

Wisdom and Power – (Again, perfect balance)

Can you imagine, “All wise...but no power.” Or “All powerful...but not wise?” Neither would give comfort

Reveals as Trinity – (One God in three persons)

I can see you (Body) but cannot know your thoughts (soul) until you speak – words – and there’s another unseen part of you called your (spirit) that has a special relationship to God – dead until made alive in Christ at conversion.

Why Do We Believe This?

Deuteronomy 6:4,5

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.”

We sing the song “Shout to the Lord”: Part of the lyrics proclaim, “Lord there is none like you!” That’s true!

Nehemiah 9:6

“You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of the heaven worship you.”

Matthew 28:19

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

All through Scriptures God is revealed – but especially in the New Testament it becomes clear – with the coming of the Son and His teachings about the Father and the sending of the Holy Spirit.

How do we learn all this? How do we learn to set our compasses on True North? And how do we learn to walk through the days of our lives without getting lost in so many other “things”

that can sidetrack us from following God? The answer is: We have to learn! We don’t have a CD slot – buy a disk, install it and there it is! We have to be taught. We have many teachers (school takes years to learn math, language skills, science, etc.) and the same is true with the Scriptures and our relationship with God.

We have a ministry area at Immanuel Church that focuses on education. I’m going to turn it over to them for a preview of what’s in store for us in the weeks ahead...

The Importance of Christian Education

Norma Deem - Chairperson
Tami Kalhagen – Children’s Ministry,
Chris Bjur – Student Ministry

Follow-Up

Discipleship area is crucial to our health as a church. False teachings are like viruses to the human body and this team serves as our first defense against anything being taught that does not go along with Scripture.

Pray for them when they come to your mind!

Let’s finish off this morning with a review of our statements on Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Article III. Statement of Faith

3. We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal and only begotten Son of God, conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, and that He is true God and true man and is the only mediator between God and man. (Matthew 1:20; Luke 1:35; John 1:1,12,14; John 12:45; 14:9; 1 Timothy 2:5)

This statement separates us from other groups that call themselves biblical, Christian – JehovahWitnesses or Mormons would not agree to this statement. They sound very sincere and biblical – and they are very nice and good people – but their understanding of who Jesus is keeps them from being included in the mainstream of the Christian faith.

Article III. Statement of Faith

4. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person, equal with the Father and the Son, and of the same substance and nature, that He convicts of sin, righteousness and judgment; that He bears witness to the truth; that He is the agent of the new birth; and that at conversion He baptizes the believer into the body of Christ, and that He seals, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses to, sanctifies, and helps the believer, indwelling every true child of God. (John 16:8-11; 3:3-7; Ephesians 1:13; 2 Corinthians 13:14; John 14:16,17; Romans 8:14-27; 1 Corinthians 12:12,13)

That is a lot of information! What does it mean? Interest level might not be high. But let me illustrate...
Legal documents are long, tedious, boring, confusing... not interested!
What if that same legal document had your name on it?

Last summer we took some vacation time and went up to Bayfield, WI. We stayed in a Bed & Breakfast. Next door a new building under construction. It looked like another B & B so we asked the inn keeper about it. He said, "No, it's a private residence." He went on to tell us the story of this couple who had been watching the television program "Unsolved Mysteries." A story came on about an elderly man who had died but they could not determine if he had any heirs. The man looked at his wife and said, "That's my uncle!" (or some connection like that) To make a long story short he contacted the show, validated his relationship and they received the inheritance!

Do you think they were interested in some dry, boring, legaleze documents? You bet!

If you are a part of the family of God through your personal faith in Jesus Christ ... This document is yours! As things start out for the year consider connecting with a class that teaches you what you have in Christ! Have your kids part of these programs! Good truth!

Life can be tough! 9/11 yesterday!
Let's pray for our nation!

The more we understand of the nature and character of God the greater our capacity to persevere through the highs and lows of life.

This message was originally presented on Sunday, September 12, 2004 by Pastor Mark Coughlin at Immanuel Church of Forest Lake, Minnesota.

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