

## **Take Me Back: No Creed but Christ, No Book but the Bible** **Psalm 119 and various texts**

Good morning and good to see everyone here today...and we welcome in our online folks who will join us today or later this week. We are wrapping up our sermon series today which is titled TAKE ME BACK – and we have been looking at the important statements that the founders of our movement, the restoration movement built everything on...and all of it was based on going BACK to the beginning of the Church in the book of Acts and inspecting the way they did it. And today...in 2023 we are still working every day to live out the life of the church like they did back in that time. To help us remember to stay focused on the things that matter, and work to stay unified on those things, our founders who were working to reform their denominational churches became united on that goal, and in the early 1800's the restoration movement was born.

There were four principle statements that these early leaders created to help the church stay focused on this goal of staying united on the mission of Jesus Christ. Now we are not going to be able to get to one of the principle statements...

**Where the Scriptures Speak we Speak, and where they are silent we are silent.** I had planned to cover all four statements, but I chose to do the other three once I got sick because this first statement is pretty self-explanatory...if it says it in the bible then we will talk about it, address it, stand on it...and If the scriptures don't address it clearly or don't talk about it at all, then we won't waste time fighting about it...again staying unified on the things that matter.

Then the two principles we have looked at so far...the first one was...

- **We are Christians only, but we are not the only Christians.** This meant that our confession is on Christ only and we will not be called by any other name but his - but as we live as a church we are not the only Christians...we are not the only ones who have it all figured out, and we have not always been able to stay on mission as a movement. We need to remain unified with each other and with other believers in other movements for the purpose of the kingdom all over the world. Then last week we looked at...
- **In essentials unity, in opinions liberty, in all things love.** This meant that we will stay unified on the most important things...the essential things...we will give each other grace on the things that are debated or matters of opinion...and in all of our interactions with one another...we will approach each situation and conversation in love.

Today's message we will look at the final principle...

- **No creed but Christ; No book but the Bible. (slide only)**

Normally I would have you turn to a passage of scripture...it may be too many page turns for you to keep up with me today...but I did list all the texts in your bulletin so if you want to try to keep up with me you can most of the scriptures will come from Psalm 119; I call it the WORD PSALM... I don't expect you to look up every text I cover today...but I do challenge you to go and not only read every text I list but read the context around the verses I am quoting to get a fuller understanding of what I am sharing with you today...

So...What is a creed? a Creed is a formal statement of Christian beliefs – or – a set of beliefs or aims which guide someone's actions.

There are five main creeds that are known throughout the theological and doctrinal world...they are the...

**Apostles Creed** – 120 to 250 AD – which ironically was not spoken or written by the apostles - they were all dead by the time this was put into place. It was a product of the Roman Christians – I will share this creed with you so you kind of get what they are like...

***I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into Hell, the third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into Heaven, And He sits on the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the holy ghost, The holy Catholic Church, The Communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, The resurrection of the body, And the life everlasting. Amen.***

I think we would agree with most of those statements, and there is nothing inherently wrong with a creed or a statement of faith. We still have one. But as time rolled on there were other creeds that were devised by councils of Christian leaders...

**Creed of Nicaea** – 325 AD – product of the first ecumenical council in Nicaea that were trying to solve the Arian controversy which argued the nature of Christ – was Jesus fully God... or fully Man... or Both...?

**Nicene Creed** – 381 AD - also known as the Constantinopolitan Creed – 381 – it was an expansion and revision of the creed of Nicaea

**Chalcedonian Creed** – 451 AD– again arguing the nature of Christ.

**Athanasian Creed** – 500 AD – Origin of the creed is unknown but used by many Christian denominations even today.

You can look these creeds up online but I will say that not all creeds are completely scripturally based, not all creeds are completely accurate in theology and doctrine. And none of them are authoritative scripture.

Now some folks might point out that we have belief statements on our website which some might consider a creed of sorts...but we do not make people memorize them nor are they an official exhaustive list of the things we believe. In other words, we do not give these man created statements holy God inspired recognition...nor do we recite them or chant them as part of our worship. They are not Scripture. They are not necessary as a confession of faith. They are just bible based statements that let people know what we believe as a church...they are certainly based solely on ESSENTIAL THINGS...they are scripture inspired but they are not scripture.

So - We say...we have no creed but Christ...

I BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD. That's it. We don't need to confess faith in anything or anyone but Christ alone for salvation, because if Christ is truth and he is the living WORD of God then all the rest is true anyway. It all starts and ends with JESUS. With THE WORD. In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the Word WAS GOD. John chapter 1. We don't need to confess anyone or anything but Jesus.

So understanding no Creed but Christ is pretty simple and straight forward.

What about No book but the Bible? Does that mean that we don't read anything else? Does this concept support the banning and burning of all other printed literature in the world?

Of course not. That kind of mentality is totalitarian and a sign of fear mongers seeking control of people's minds...and not what

our founders were fighting for. What we are simply saying is no other book has the authority, the life, the sustenance, the purity, the truth that the Bible has. IT IS GOD'S INSPIRED WORD. So to be more literal – we are not to bow to the authority of Osteen or Yancy, or Moore, or Rainer, or Graham, or Peterson, or Lucado, or Frazee, or Chan, or Shriar, or any other writer that is out there today. I can read their work and it can help me see an aspect or an understanding that they have from their point of view but they are not my source of biblical authority. They are not writing the inspired word of God...they are simply commenting on it. In all seriousness you should not be listening to my observations of the Bible passages that I share in my sermons and trusting it as your only interaction with the Authority of God's Holy WORD. We all should have a relationship with God's Word... and then come together on it as our authority. When you know it and I know it and we come together on it...then...

Unity is found in **God's Word** alone.

Do you get what I am saying here? I am going to do my best to teach and preach to you from a heart of study and interpretation but I am no more special than you are...You are capable of having a relationship with God's word as rich and as full as mine...and when I preach you should be able to follow along and know if I am speaking God's truth or not. Listen...we decided over 8 years ago that one of our new CORE VALUES moving forward as a church was - We Value God's Word as Truth. We don't only read and study it but we apply it!

God's Word is a **CORE VALUE** of Brady Lane Church.

That means that God's Word is a central fixture in the daily life of this church and everyone who is a part of it. We value time spent with God's Word...We value its truth...and we hold it up while we

hold each other accountable to it. It is what always brings us back to a life centered on Him.

God's Word is the **guide** that always brings His people **back**.  
(Ezra 7:10; 1 Kings 22:8-13)

Throughout the old testament when God's people would drift away from him, often times it was his holy word that would bring them back...from the times that Moses and Joshua would have to read the Torah – the Law to the people to remind them of Who God is...to times like when Prophet Ezra came to the temple of God in a time when the people had stopped worshipping at the temple...had stopped sacrificing...they were worshipping false gods and idols- **in Ezra 7:10 it says...**

### **Ezra 7:10**

**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.

... Ezra came with the authority not of his own...but of the WORD to bring the people back to God...and the people came back... because the Word was brought back as the focus again.

It happens again in...

**2 Kings 22:8-13 – with a king named Josiah... when Josiah was king the high priest found the book of the law... in verse 8 it says...**

**8** Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in the temple of the Lord." He gave it to Shaphan, who read it. **9** Then Shaphan the secretary went to the king and reported to him: "Your officials have paid out the money that was in the temple of the Lord and have entrusted it to the workers and supervisors at the temple." **10** Then Shaphan the

secretary informed the king, “Hilkiah the priest has given me a book.” And Shaphan read from it in the presence of the king.

<sup>11</sup> When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his robes. <sup>12</sup> He gave these orders to Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Akbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan the secretary and Asaiah the king’s attendant: <sup>13</sup> “Go and inquire of the Lord for me and for the people and for all Judah about what is written in this book that has been found. Great is the Lord’s anger that burns against us because those who have gone before us have not obeyed the words of this book; they have not acted in accordance with all that is written there concerning us.”

Do you get that...the book of the law had been lost? And because the people had lost the WORD they lost their WAY and had drifted from God again. When the WORD was found and brought before the people again...there was a great revival and renewal of the people’s faith to God because King Josiah responded to the Authority of God’s Word. We are called throughout God’s word to REMEMBER...we see in Deuteronomy 8 a very powerful statement in regards to this...the Israelites are instructed by Moses...

**DO NOT FORGET THE LORD, OBSERVE HIS COMMANDS.**

(Deuteronomy 8:10-11)

### **Deuteronomy 8:10-11**

<sup>10</sup> When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. <sup>11</sup> Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day.

He is saying to them...you are going into the promised land... eventually you are going to have all the blessings of the land, and all the good things...and it will be tempting for you to forget who it

is that gave you those things...stay focused on the WORD...the commands...the decrees of GOD!

We should also remember what the Prophet Isaiah said about the Word and how important it is for us to remain connected to it in relationship...

### **Isaiah 48:17- 19**

This is what the Lord says—

your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel:

“I am the Lord your God,  
who teaches you what is best for you,  
who directs you in the way you should go.

<sup>18</sup> If only you had paid attention to my commands,  
your peace would have been like a river,  
your well-being like the waves of the sea.

<sup>19</sup> Your descendants would have been like the sand,  
your children like its numberless grains;  
their name would never be blotted out  
nor destroyed from before me.”

Jesus continues this focus going forward into the new testament. HE when he comes to earth is the embodiment of the WORD. The word becomes flesh. God's Word is important. God's Word is something we should look upon as authoritative. In fact I want to share with you that there are five things that God's Word is... first...

### **God's Word is...**

- **True** (John 1:14; 17:17)
  - <sup>14</sup> The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- **17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.**

God's Word is Jesus...Jesus has been with God since the Beginning of time we see plenty of evidence of that in scripture and we would consider that an essential to our faith. When Jesus came to earth he brought the grace and the truth of God's words and commands to us. He brought both. He brought the truth of the law which illuminates our sin and helps us to recognize our need for a savior and he brought the GRACE and LOVE of God's Word that heals us and saves us from that Sin and allows us the opportunity to be in God's presence.

Secondly God's Word is...

- **Eternal** (Psalm 119:89,160) it says...
  - **89 Your word, Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.**
  - **160 All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal.**

IN these texts we see not only is God's Word true...but it is eternal...I have said from up here before that there are only two things from this earth that will never pass away – two things that will be eternal...people who are covered in the Blood of Jesus... and GODS WORD. Our cars, houses, possessions, things – nothing else will be there...but God's Word will be. Again...God's Word is JESUS.

Third... God's Word is...

- **Perfect** (Proverbs 30:5-6)
  - Proverbs 30:5-6 5 **"Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.**  
6 **Do not add to his words,**  
**or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.**

This is where the NO CREEDS but CHRIST and NO BOOK FROM THE BIBLE is clearly illustrated...adding words to GODS WORD – will result in rebuke. Now repeating God’s Word or Teaching God’s Word is not what we are talking about. Someone who writes a book on God’s Word and does not alter the truth of that WORD but instead supports it is not sinning...so again it is ok for us to read what modern writers are writing about God’s word... but we need to have a relationship with God’s Word so we know if what they are writing is true or NOT. God’s WORD is our PRIME AUTHORITY...IT IS WHAT we HOLD UP. Those that try to change the meaning of God’s Word by either misinterpreting it or twisting it to fit their agenda will be exposed it says as liars.

Next God’s Word is...

- **Useful** (2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 119:105-111)
  - **16** All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,
  - **105** Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.  
**106** I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws.  
**107** I have suffered much; preserve my life, Lord, according to your word.  
**108** Accept, Lord, the willing praise of my mouth, and teach me your laws.  
**109** Though I constantly take my life in my hands, I will not forget your law.  
**110** The wicked have set a snare for me, but I have not strayed from your precepts.  
**111** Your statutes are my heritage forever;

they are the joy of my heart.

God's Word when studied and applied in our lives is so useful...it guides us, it leads us, it corrects us, it grows us, it transforms us. We have to have a relationship with it...which leads us to our last idea...God's Word is...

- **Essential (Matthew 4:1-4)** When Jesus was challenged by Satan early in his ministry...when temptation came...Jesus responded not with power, not with physical attack...but he responded with the WORD. God's WORD was ESSENTIAL EVEN TO JESUS!
  - 1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."  
  
4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God'"

WE CANNOT LIVE on JUST FOOD AND WATER. JESUS SAYS a relationship with the WORD IS ESSENTIAL...YOU CANNOT LIVE a LIFE IN JESUS WITHOUT IT!

I want to wrap up this series by looking at a couple of things that are really important for us to understand. If we really want to live out the idea – TAKE ME BACK – to the things that matter, to the heart of the life of the CHURCH...to the ESSENTIAL THINGS we again must look at what the first Christians were focused on...the things that were important in their practice...

**The first Christians were devoted to four things (we find this in Acts 2)**

- **THE WORD –** It says they were devoted to the apostles teaching...not the apostles...but what they taught. And what did they teach...ALL THEY HAD WAS THE GOSPEL MESSAGE. ALL THEY HAD WAS the STORY OF THE WORD of GOD...OF JESUS.
- **Fellowship** – They were devoted to coming together with one another and spending time together in Relationship... they were devoted to the CHURCH.
- **Communion** - They were devoted to remembering Jesus sacrifice on the cross, his death burial and resurrection that freed us from our destruction in sin. Communion is not just some ritual folks. It is our recognition of the sacrifice of THE WORD. It is an expression of our relationship with JESUS. Finally...they were devoted to...
- **Prayer** – This is why we have prayer team leaders, this is why we have a pastoral care team that prays with people, this is why deacons, elders, and staff make visits that end in prayer, it is why push prayer as one of our CORE VALUES and we give you a prayer list every week. It's not a form of gossip. It's not nosiness or getting in other peoples business...it is something we are DEVOTED to doing for each other!

**"No creed but Christ, no book but the Bible." (SLIDE ONLY)**

Here's our main point today...and it is a little different than what we would usually do...it is one more passage of scripture from Psalm 119...41-42...and its' going to come up on the screen behind me...I want you to say the part that is BOLDED when I get to it...say together as one body...say it as loud as you can....and we are going to say this as a prayer together today...

**Main Point: PSALM 119:41-42... (SLIDE ONLY)**

**41** May your unfailing love come to me, Lord,  
your salvation, according to your promise;  
**42** then I can answer anyone who taunts me,  
**for I trust in your word.**

**AMEN!**

**GO RIGHT INTO INVITATION.**