

The Foundations of Truth

A FOUNDATION FOR TRUST

RESPONDING TO JESUS CHRIST AS GOD, SAVIOR AND LORD

PRE-GAME

What keeps many people from trusting Christ or growing in him is not what they understand about Christianity, but what they misunderstand. Unlike many other religions, Christianity is not primarily based on a set of rules to obey or a path of life to follow. Neither is it a blind leap of faith or an irrational intellectual choice. Rather, Christianity is about having an assured trust in the person of Jesus Christ. But *who* is this Jesus Christ? Some view him as a lucky rabbit's foot that helps us out when we are in need. Others view him as a Santa Clause figure who will give us what we want (if we're good!). Still others view him as an "addendum" that we can tack on to our lives to give us balance. In Matthew 16:15, Jesus asks his disciples this very question: "Who do you say I am?" Our foundation for trust rests on the truth of Peter's response: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." This study will examine how we should respond to the claims of Jesus Christ to be God, Savior and Lord.

THEME

Our foundation for trust in Christianity rests on the claims of Jesus Christ to be God, Savior and Lord in our lives. God intends us to have an assured trust in these claims that leads us to a life of devoted obedience.

PRACTICE

Understanding the foundation for trust we have in the truth of who Christ is should lead us to worship him as God, rely on him as our only Savior and submit to him as Lord.

SYMBOL KEY



Indicates discussion questions



Indicates Biblical passages to look up



Indicates application questions to be discussed

The Foundations of Truth Series

A Foundation for Confidence

A Foundation for Trust

A Foundation for Growth

A Foundation for Community

A Foundation for Life

I. OUR TRUST IN JESUS CHRIST - ASSURANCE AND CERTAINTY

✦ Has your faith ever felt like a 'blind leap' or an irrational choice? What influence might this have on how you live out your Christian life?

Lacking certainty in our faith (or trust) can often lead to discouragement, defeat and doubt. God intends us to have an assured trust in the truth of Christ that leads us to a life of devoted obedience.



Read Hebrews 11:1-12

- How is faith described here? How is it different than a blind leap?
- Consider the individuals in this passage. What in their circumstances could have caused doubts and discouragement?
- How does their assured faith influence their response to these circumstances?

It is through a trust characterized by assurance and certainty that we will be able to respond obediently to Jesus as our God, Savior and Lord.



What is one circumstance in your life that is causing you doubt or discouragement? How would having a Hebrews 11 type of faith change your response?

II. OUR TRUST IN JESUS AS GOD

Throughout the Gospels, many people recognized Jesus as a good man, a moral teacher and a revolutionary leader. The main point of contention was Jesus' claim to be God. It is for this very reason that he was accused of blasphemy and sentenced to death on the cross (Matthew 23:63-66). Our whole foundation for trust rests on the truthfulness of this claim. If Jesus was just a man who lived a good, moral life, then Christ's influence on our life would be little more than that of a lucky rabbit's foot.

The claims: Jesus is the one, true God



Read John 8:53-59 and John 10:24-33

- In both passages, what question is put before Jesus?
- How does Jesus show them he is God?
- What is the response of the crowd in both cases?

“To believe is not lightly to form an opinion, or to assent only to what is said, but a firm, undoubting conviction, so that we may dare to subscribe to the truth as fully proved.”

- John Calvin,
Commentary on 1 John

“God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I am has sent me to you.’”

- Exodus 3:14

“Whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him.”

- Leviticus 24:16

Jesus' identity is undeniable. Even his enemies understood that he was claiming to be much more than a good moral teacher.

The response: our call to worship

Our response to Jesus' divinity should be to worship and glorify him with all of our lives. To worship something is to love, prioritize and pursue it with your time, energy and heart. We must no longer worship our own pursuits, but Jesus Christ alone.




Read Colossians 3:16,17

- What does worship encompass in this passage?

C.S. Lewis sums up well our proper response of worship to Jesus' claim to be God:

"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying that really foolish thing that people often say about [Jesus]: 'I am ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things that Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic...or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice....You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to." - Mere Christianity

 How would your study or sport look different if your end goal was worshipping God?

What is the chief end of man? To glorify God and enjoy him forever.
- Westminster Shorter Catechism

III. OUR TRUST IN JESUS AS SAVIOR

The most radical claim of Jesus Christ is that he alone is the Messiah - or Savior - of all mankind. During his life, this claim threatened to overturn the elaborate system of laws found in Judaism, the idol worship of pagan religions and the pursuit of reason of ancient philosophy as paths to spiritual enlightenment. Likewise, in today's marketplace of religious ideas, Jesus is seen as one of many valid paths to God. Can we trust Christ as the only way to God?

The claims: Jesus as our only Savior

Jesus claimed to forgive sins and to be the source of our eternal life.



Read Luke 5:17-26, John 3:16-18 and John 14:6

- Why was it so astonishing that Jesus claimed he could forgive sins?
- Why must Jesus be the only way to get to the Father?

Jesus is not one of many ways to get to God - he is the only way our sins can be forgiven. We should be grateful to God for providing us a way to be right with him.

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead verifies his claim to be our Savior. It is through his death that he pays the penalty for our sins and it is through his resurrection that he gives us eternal life. There is no other way to be made right with God.



Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-20

- What does the passage offer as evidence that Jesus really rose from the dead?
- Why would our faith be futile and hopeless without the resurrection?

No system of laws, sacrifices or philosophies can earn us a right standing with God. Jesus' resurrection alone affirms that we are saved from our sin into eternal life.

The response: seeing Jesus as the only way to God

Our response to Jesus' identity as our Savior should be to rely on him alone as the source of our salvation. We can be confident that there is no other way to God.



Is it 'intolerant' or 'close-minded' to think that Jesus is the only way to God? Why not?

tolerance =
 sympathy or
 indulgence for beliefs
 differing from or
 conflicting with
 one's own
 (actual definition)

**"You are wrong to tell
 people they are
 wrong!"**
 - Princeton debater,
 arguing against the
 exclusive claims of
 Christ as the only way
 to God

III. OUR TRUST IN JESUS AS LORD

Many people are happy to live 'part-time' Christian lives. They are devoted to Christ on Sunday mornings, in Bible study and around their Christian friends, but the rest of their lives are controlled and directed by other priorities. Jesus demands not only to be a part of our lives, but to rule as King over all that we do. He is not just our Savior - he is our Lord.

The claims: Jesus as our Lord



Read Matthew 28:18-20 and Matthew 12:1-8

- What does it mean for Jesus to have 'all authority in heaven and on earth'?
- Why is it significant for Jesus to proclaim in the presence of Jewish leaders that he is Lord of the Sabbath?

Jesus claims to be Lord over all creation and has authority over all things.

Jesus demonstrates his authority as Lord by performing supernatural acts, or miracles. In response, we should acknowledge Christ's authority and submit our lives to him.



Read Luke 5:1-11

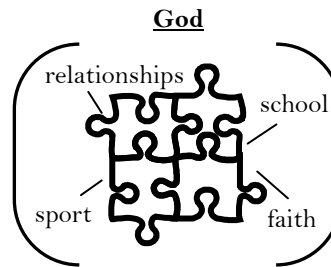
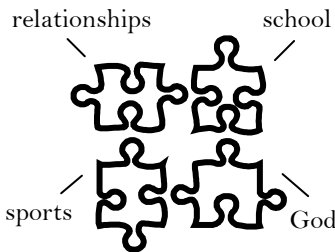
- What was Peter's response to the miracle of the great catch of fish?
- How's is Peter's decision in v 11 a response to Christ as Lord?

The response: submitting to Jesus' Lordship

Jesus is not a mere addendum that we tack onto our lives. We can't just give him Sunday mornings or a few minutes a day praying and reading Scripture. As Lord, he demands that we submit all of our lives to his authority.



Which diagram below best represents your life? How would understanding Christ's Lordship help you transform your life to look like the diagram on the right?



Who do you look to as authorities in your life? Why?

“There is not one square inch of creation about which Jesus does not cry out: ‘This is mine!’”
- Abraham Kuyper, 19th century theologian

V. POST-GAME

Christianity is not just a set of ideas to believe in - it is a commitment of our whole life and all that we do to God. This type of commitment comes as a response to who Christ *really* is - our God, Savior and Lord. As worship Jesus as God, rely on him as our only Savior and submit our lives to his Lordship, we build a solid foundation for trust.