

Summary

Solid foundations, both physical and spiritual, are crucial. John's epistle emphasizes love, truth, and staying true to doctrine amid false teachings. Paul's letter to Titus highlights foundational belief and belonging in faith.

PRAYER

Father, we thank you for all that you give. Be with us now as we draw together in worship. It's the sense of belonging that drives us to seek you and others who share the one great faith, so Lord join us now, and help us to be open to your presence, that through your son Jesus we may be renewed and spiritually fulfilled—its in his name we pray, Amen

Scripture

- ISAIAH 53 1—6
Isaiah's messianic prophecy V 5-6 in particular forecast the **atonement** which will come through the Messiah – foundational Christian belief.

SONG *by Henry Smith*

Give thanks with a grateful heart, Give thanks to the holy one
Give thanks because he's given Jesus Christ his Son

And now let the weak say I am strong
Let the poor say I am rich
Because of what the Lord has done for us
Give thanks.

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BIBLE READINGS

- 1 JOHN 4:17-21

In this is love perfected with us, that we may have confidence for the day of judgement, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and he who fears is not perfected in love. We love, because he first loved us. If any one says I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar: for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him, that he who loves God should love his brother also.

- ROMANS 10:9

Because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved

MESSAGE “A solid Foundation”

Back in the 90’s I purchased an above ground swimming pool Quite large, and decided to sink it half into the ground, where I would assemble the thing. After making the hole, I commenced assembly (with family help) but first there had to be a good base for the main support posts. They would ensure the whole mass (37500 litres of water) would stand-up long term. So we found some cement slab pavers, and used them to place on our sandy West Lakes soil. They needed to be put on compacted soil then hammered into place. That was the foundation, and it held for many years, even with a pool full of kids and water sloshing from side to side.

Solid foundations are needed for many structures in our world, both physical and spiritual.

John’s first letter was written in Greek around 85, from Ephesus, to unspecified congregations with central themes of love and encouragement. Persecution and false teaching were rife. At the time, and now! The epistle smacks you in the face with its straight to the mark frankness and proclamation of truth (Ch 1:1-4). Stay true to good doctrine, in a style unique to John with a message for us all – a solid foundation. Paul emphasises this too in his letter to the Roman church. The central theme of 1 John is to love one another, his main points being:

Love one another!

- God gives new life
- How would God have us live
- No fence sitting!
- Have you experienced the transforming love in Jesus?
- Chap 1:9 an atoning sacrifice
- Stronger together 1:7

John sets a high standard for early Christian churches in loving one another through the sacrifice of Jesus – John was a witness to that horrific time. But don’t waste that love that was brought to them, and now us, then and always.

John also reminds us about impure spirits and the antichrist. "Jesus Christ has come in the flesh" (4:1) an in-the-face reminder of truth and maybe a response to emerging views (Gnostic and docetistic) which were questioning the reality of Jesus’ humanity.

John’s challenge to the Church is that it must remind all about Jesus Christ’s all atoning sacrifice – a very high benchmark, but one which John insists upon, in all believers. That means, we need to know who we are, and to whom we belong e.g Titus 1:1-4 “I Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to further the faith of God’s elect and their knowledge of the truth which accords with Godliness, in hope of eternal life with God, who never dies, promised ages ago and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by command of God our saviour. To Titus, my true CHILD in the common faith”. In this opening of Paul’s letter to Titus you can clearly identify foundational belief AND belonging, both keys to evangelical ministry. In my experience there are times when belonging comes first, that is relational evangelism.

PRAYERS FOR THE WORLD:

Barnabas: Burkina Faso and Benin

Father, our thoughts turn to the struggling Christian communities in Benin, and Burkina Faso. French missionaries left small Catholic communities who no longer enjoy the protection of the colonial power. They struggle in the midst of Islamic majorities. Lord, what amazing faith in such a gruelling environment. Draw near, our God, and give them strength and peace and also provision. Bless Barnabas in its efforts there and elsewhere. Through Jesus our Lord, Amen.

HYMN 385 (AHB)

by Samuel John Stone 1839—1900

1. The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord,
She is his new creation by water and the word;
From heaven he came and sought her to be his holy bride;
With his own blood he bought her and for her life he died.
2. Elect from every nation yet one o'er all the earth
Her charter of salvation: one Lord, one faith, one birth,
One Holy name she blesses, partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses with every grace endued.
3. Though with a scornful wonder men see her sore oppressed
By schisms rent asunder, by heresies distressed
Yet saints their watch are keeping, their cry goes up "How long?"
And soon the night of weeping shall be the morn of song.
4. Through toil and tribulation and tumult of her war
She waits the consummation of peace for evermore
Till with the vision glorious her longing eyes are blest
And the great Church victorious shall be the Church at rest.
5. Yet she on earth hath union with God the Three in One
And mystic sweet communion with those whose rest is won
O happy ones and holy, Lord, give us grace that we
Like them, the meek and lowly, on high may dwell with thee.

Benediction:

May our Lord walk with you as you seek opportunities to share the foundation of the faith.
Amen.

Grant Jewell, for HopeNet SA