

Sermon Series: "From Bethlehem to Calvary to Heaven"—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—3/7/2004

Title: Fundamental Faith

Text: Selected passages from Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians

Intro: *Ills.: Fundamentals of a winning team*

Theme: Learning and living out the fundamentals of our Christian faith in Jesus Christ are necessary to our eternal salvation and basic to experiencing the full life and joy which Jesus has promised for us.

### *A snapshot of the Pauline letters to the churches*

- **Christian faith and life is both doctrine and practice** — cannot separate faith into a cognitive thing w/o application
- **Foundational truths for a faith based upon Christ**— Church=organism not an organization—the living Body of Christ
- **Warnings and encouragements** —Christians need to get serious about the serious business of the Church but also understand the sheer joy of being Jesus' Church bring to the world a life-giving message

### *The A, B, C's of the Christian faith*

- **Saved by grace through faith for a life of good works**

#### 1. Its grace alone! (*justification*)

1. **Ills.: recognizing the simple truth ('92 campaign "it's the economy stupid!")**
2. A great heresies within our midst in *performance Christianity* – works based religion
3. "Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." Gal 3: 11

#### 2. Good works are a natural outflow of grace through faith (*sanctification*)

1. Another great heresy among us is *consumer Christianity* — no works religion
2. "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Ephesians 2: 8-10
3. God's encouragement to us that we have living faith is when we live it out in words and actions and thought

- **Assembled to be an accountable and responsible church for Jesus**

#### 3. In belief (**Print Ephesians 4: 1-6**)

1. It does matter what you believe and it must be based solely on what God says about it from Scripture
2. It is about what you "stand for" rather than what you "stand against"
3. Unity is as important as the purity of the faith
  - "I pray that they may be united with us so that the world will believe that you have sent me. John 17:20-21
  - **Ills.: Bad direction lead to potential fatal misstep**

#### 4. In service

1. Our purpose is to an living, working part of the Body of Christ
  - *From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. Ephesians. 4:16*
2. Our purpose is "to serve one another; not to be served" as Jesus did (Mark 10: 45)
  - *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Philip. 2:3-4*

#### 5. In practice

1. Practical Christianity (family, marriage, work, play) (**Print Col. 3: 18-24**)
2. Practiced theology (substance over form in worship, organization, piety) (**Print Col 2: 20-23**)

- **Bathed in the practice of powerful prayer**

#### 1. Often, we as His Church give lip service to prayer

1. *You do not have, because you do not ask God. James 4:2*
2. Challenge to be more deliberate and intentional in families, church meetings, ministry to begin, do, end in prayer

2. As a matter of spiritual warfare (**Print Ephesians 6: 12, 18-20**)
  1. Because the battle is engaged — Satan is serious about stopping us and disrupting our homes
  2. *Greater is he who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. 1 John 4: 4*
3. As a matter of fostering faith (**Print Philippians 4: 4-6**)
  1. Joy and thanks as a matter of trust in God
  2. Joy and thanks as a matter of humbleness before your God
4. As a matter of evangelical effort (**Print Colossians 4: 2-6**)

### **Fundamentals of a winning team**

Once someone asked legendary football coach Vince Lombardi what it took to make a winning team. Lombardi's answer: "There are a lot of coaches with good ball clubs who know the fundamentals and have plenty of discipline but still don't win the game. Then you come to the third ingredient: if you're going to play together as a team, you've got to care for one another. You've got to love each other. Each player has to be thinking about the next guy and saying to himself: 'If I don't block that man, Paul is going to get his legs broken. I have to do my job well in order that he can do his.' "The difference between mediocrity and greatness," Lombardi said that night, "is the feeling these guys have for each other." In the healthy church, each Christian learns to care for others. As we take seriously Jesus' command to "love one another," we contribute to a winning team. *Citation: Christopher Stinnett, Waived Lake, Michigan. Leadership, Vol. 15, no. 3.*

### **Bad directions lead to potential fatal misstep**

*Trail* magazine, with 37,000 readers, is one of the most widely distributed climbing magazines. The February 2004 issue provided directions for climbers descending Britain's highest peak, Ben Nevis. Returning from the 4,409 foot summit in bad weather requires explicit instruction. The article gave step by step advice on navigating the trail down. The directions were wrong. Roger Wild, the mountain safety adviser for the Mountaineering Council of Scotland, discovered the mistake and immediately contacted the magazine. He wrote: The potential consequences of following the advice provided by *Trail* are clear. Anyone following a bearing of 281 degrees from anywhere close to the summit cairn or shelter will be taken directly over the north face. I find it incredible that *Trail* has published advice which is so obviously and dangerously wrong. *Trail* magazine admitted that a crucial step in the instructions was inadvertently omitted. Those following the article would pay a high price for the missing information. In poor visibility, climbers depending upon the directions would walk off the edge into Gardyloo Gully. The 1,000 foot drop is one of the *Citation: "The Quickest Way to Gardyloo Gully," news.telegraph.co.uk (1-22-04); submitted by John Beukema, Western Springs, IL*

**Ephesians 4:1-6**

<sup>1</sup>As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. <sup>2</sup>Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. <sup>3</sup>Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup>There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to one hope when you were called-- <sup>5</sup>one Lord, one faith, one baptism; <sup>6</sup>one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

**Col. 3:18-24**

<sup>18</sup>Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. <sup>19</sup>Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. <sup>20</sup>Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. <sup>21</sup>Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged. <sup>22</sup>Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. <sup>23</sup>Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, <sup>24</sup>since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

**Col. 2:20-23**

<sup>20</sup>Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: <sup>21</sup>"Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? <sup>22</sup>These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. <sup>23</sup>Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

**Ephesians 6:12, 18-20**

<sup>12</sup>For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms . . . <sup>18</sup>And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. <sup>19</sup>Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup>for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

**Philippians 4:4-6**

<sup>4</sup>Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! <sup>5</sup>Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup>Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

**Colossians 4:2-6**

<sup>2</sup>Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. <sup>3</sup>And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. <sup>4</sup>Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. <sup>5</sup>Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. <sup>6</sup>Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.