

FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN



September 2009



WE BELIEVE

PASTOR TROY

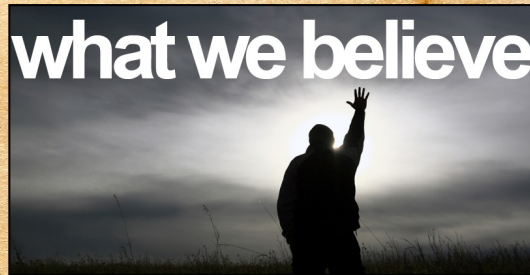
We are in a unique point in human history – philosophically speaking. Belief not only in God but ardent belief in much of anything at all has sadly become passé. There are reasons posed for this present state of affairs. One, how can we, as human beings who apparently only use less than 10% of our brain power and circularly produce histories of bad behavior, claim to know anything at all with certainty? Two, recent history has shown us (with many ancient corresponding examples) that people with uncompromising belief in a particular truth often resort to violence, intolerance and, therefore, display justified irrationality. The proposed solution to these assumptions, it appears, is to allow everybody the space to believe whatever they believe to be true – but only if they believe it skeptically, or half-heartedly. Ardent faith is clearly the problem, so it is said.

There are grains of truth to be found in such assumptions. There needs to be a certain degree of humility even in the person who understands that they are not God. There is also a clear and present danger of demanding that others believe like us, regardless of the cost.

The solution, however, is not only false but dangerous. The problem is that many fail to see that what you believe, what you *really* believe *really* matters. This is not the arena of preference. Indifference to competing truth claims is not the answer. What we believe defines how we live, how we treat each other, how we deal with pain and struggle, what we teach our children. It defines how we differentiate between right and wrong. It is the basis of what we hope for (or do not hope for).

The Christian church has, from the beginning, sought to teach its adherents to *really* believe the truth of God shown to us by Jesus Christ. The basis of the Christian faith is not founded upon the brilliant ideas of its followers, but rather on the belief

God has revealed himself in Jesus Christ. That is to say, what we claim to know about God has nothing to do with what we think he is or ought to be like but what he revealed to us. And the God who so loved the world that he sent his son to save it is a God who not only taught his followers to “love one another,” even one’s enemies, but rather lived it as well. This is the simple response to the advocates of the assumptions listed at the beginning. Belief in this God *really* matters. When it is not believed, and when it is not lived, then all hell breaks loose – literally.



This fall we will be embarking upon a sermon series entitled “What We Believe.” It will take as its framework the words of the

Nicene Creed, the creed that most Christians in most time and places have believed fervently. It will also attempt to show that what we believe is not stuffy, archaic words – but the very truth of God that matters for our lives today. That is to say, what we believe defines how we live. Christians today, much like the Christians of the first century, need to be clear about what they believe and why it matters. Indifference here is a matter of life and death.

Thus our discussion of “The Faith,” what Christians have primarily believed for two-thousand years, will be an exercise of extreme importance. For if we really believe this, if we really believe what God has revealed about himself, then everything changes – life is turned upside down and inside out. This is the good and dangerous news of gospel.

G. K. Chesterton once famously said in his classic book *Orthodoxy* (a word which means right teaching), “People have fallen into a foolish habit of speaking of orthodoxy as something heavy, humdrum and safe. There never was anything so perilous or so exciting as orthodoxy.”

What Christians believe is “perilous” and “exciting?” Join me as we explore this fall “What We Believe.”