

July 23, 2023
The Eighth Sunday after Pentecost
Pastor Matt Duerr

“The First Block”

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from our God and Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, Amen. Just prior to going on vacation I was listening to the radio, and I heard a statistic that shook me to my very bones. The question was should transgender men be allowed to compete in women's sports? Those who have a high school degree said no. 69% said no, the rest were undecided or said yes, they should. When college graduates were asked the exact same question, 68% said no. The other 32% were either undecided or said yes. When asking those with a postgraduate degree, 18% said no, the rest said yes. Those are scary, scary, numbers because it's an absolute refutation of truth by those what we consider to be experts. Because of that I think it is time for the church to wake up and it's time for the church to have an effective apology or defense for its faith. The culture around us is invading and touching the church. Prior to COVID, we have seen in the previous ten years a 10% decline in those who claimed Christianity and attended church at least once a month. At that same time, in that same decade the number of individuals identifying as atheistic increased by 400%. When we go to COVID 2019, at the end of 2019, the number of those professing to be Christians and attending church at least once a month in person or online, decreased by 33% in one year. What happened when COVID was over, and people could go back to church? The numbers are still down by 30%. That is only a 3% change. So in three short years, we've seen the number of people saying they are Christian and backing it up by going to church at least once a month 30% drop.

In the book already gone the researchers reveal that 2/3 of the Christian youth leave the church when they hit their twenties. Their first doubt about the Church of whether Christianity was true for 39.8% of them, it occurred at middle school that's where they began to question. 43.7% were questioning it in high school. Only 10.6% had their first

doubt when they got to college. When asked about why the number one reason was well there's no relevance to the church. It's no longer important and the result is we have seen in society a loss of the importance of the church. The church really, no longer has a voice in society. And yet Christ hold to us to go and preach the gospel, to win the hearts of those who are lost, to help them change, is still there. But we're afraid to do it. Especially when you consider that all of those with the graduate degrees, or 82% of those with the graduate degrees, the experts say we Christians, we're wrong.

And so, we need to build a really strong foundation for our faith. And it begins with one of those phrases from the Reformation, "Sola Scriptura," it's found in scripture alone. Right away you'd say, 'yeah but those experts say that science has disproved the Bible. We can't trust it.' There we see the root of many of our problems today, a bias within the fields that are being talked about, in this case science. What is science? By definition science is the systematic search for knowledge. So, I'd like to know who decided that science is limited to studying natural causes? Just saying there is no God and there is no chance that there was a divine intervention, or a divine cause for anything, what is the evidence for saying there is no God? Or is it just a part of our consensus science today? Because that's what modern science is today, consensus science. The majority say it; therefore it must be true. Or the surveys say, it must be true.

We have run into what I'm going to call the separation of church and state factor, were anything secular is assumed or considered to be neutral, yet I must say, how neutral is the LGBTQ plus movement? If you say, I don't agree with transgender, 'oh, hate speech, protest, you have got to be canceled.' Think about Black Lives Matter, if you say anything against it; kind of like Tim Scott saying, 'I'm a black man, this isn't a racist nation, I've succeeded, we had a black president.' Oh, hate speech, protest, cancelled, diversity, equity, inclusiveness.' If you don't follow the rules of that, oh, protesting, time to cancel you. In fact, I just read an article about those people, you know Christians who say abortion is wrong. They are referred to in the article 100% of the time, as

extremist, right wingers, with a terrorist bent. Anything Christian is religious, and therefore political, and not a belief. And therefore, you are afraid of using the Bible in discussion because we're not supposed to. It's political, it's not science, and that's the plan.

You go back to well the time with the churches when there was no moral authority. We read; “in those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” Does that sound familiar? And so, we have to go back to Scripture, the moral authority, the answer to everything. But how? Well, we're going to work on a seven-week series on how. And we're going to start with Genesis one through 11 because it's the first block in our apology. What we believe, and more importantly why we believe it. And we're going to follow a seven C pattern. C, the letter C, because it's the foundation of history and the doctrine of the Church. We're going to start with creation, which is followed by corruption, which is followed by catastrophe, which is followed by confusion, which is followed by Christ, which is followed by the cross, which is followed by consummation.

And when we look at creation, Genesis, “in the beginning,” we might ask ourselves, “Does it really matter?” Six days of creation, modern science says, ‘No that can't happen. It isn't natural, it's supernatural, therefore it's not science.’ (Which is a systematic search for knowledge) but today says you can't look there for the knowledge. And what has that led to? Within the church, the adaptation, adopting of the day age theory. When it says, on the first day God said, that stands for millions of years. And yet in the Hebrew language and the way Genesis one is written, leaves absolutely no room for that understanding of it. The word is yon. Everywhere else in the Bible, it refers to a 24-hour period, especially if you use an ordinal number with it, like on the first day. Anytime you use an ordinal number, 100% of the time, in the Bible, the word yon, Hebrew for day, means a 24-hour period. Likewise, if you ever attach the words evening or morning to yon, it means it's a 24-hour day. Nowhere else in Scripture is it ever interpreted otherwise. But because the experts say it's not scientific, many of the church say, ‘well it must mean millions of years,’ or ‘well you know God, when He said

created, what He really meant was He guided evolution.’ We call a theistic evolution. There's a very big problem with that. If you say God, first of all didn't understand the difference between creation and evolution. I think that's not very smart, but then you have to ask yourself the question. Well, if God used evolution, was there death before Adam and Eve sinned? Yes. Well, then death isn't a result of sin, is it? The problem with historical evolution is scientists will say, ‘not a chance,’ because there's no God. And a theologian will say, ‘not a chance God said created, and created means created, and all of doctrine goes back to this can't be. It's the wet noodle approach. Then there are those who just say, ‘well its just evolution, we're just taking God out of it because it doesn't really matter.

but when we reinterpret scripture like this, we undermine the history, the foundation of the Christian doctrine and we undermine the very word of God. Creation is a big deal! Because the creation account is the foundation for marriage and the doctrine of marriage. In fact, Jesus himself in our gospel this morning confronted those Pharisees with, “haven't you read that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female and said for this reason a man will leave his father and mother be united to his wife and the two will become flesh?” I could go off on a whole screen on the transgender garbage today, or gay marriage, or any of those things. We're going to do that in some seminars in the coming weeks.

But creation, it's the very foundation for the theology of the cross. Consider Luke chapter 24, “And he said to them his disciples, “oh foolish ones and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken, was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? And beginning with Moses, (that's the first five books of the Bible) and the prophets He interpreted for them all the scripture, the things concerning himself.” How much do you want to bet He began with Genesis one and went right to Genesis 3, and the fall where you told Satan the seed of the woman's coming, He's going to crush your head?” The foundation for the doctrine of sin’ Romans 5:19 “for just as through the disobedience of the one man, the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man Jesus, the many will be made

righteous.” Sin came because of one man, Adam. We all have inherited it. When we look at death, Romans 6:23 where did death come from? We sinned. It's right there in Genesis. And when you look at it, the seven-day week that we follow, well that's based on Genesis, the clothes that we wear, that's based on Genesis, the working, that's based on Genesis. God put Adam in the garden to work the garden. Sicknes why is there sickness? We live in a sin marred world. Where did that come from, from Adam. And what did God say to Adam when He said well, you're going to die, there's going to be sickness. Oh, by the way, weeds-someday you're going to have to invent roundup because weeds are coming because of your sin too.

The authority of the word of God is under attack. And I'm not referring to society, I'm referring to in the Church. People will say ‘it doesn't really matter what is said in Genesis, just trust Jesus.’ Well OK, trust Jesus. Did Jesus rise from the dead? Well yeah. How do you know? The Bible says so. Yeah, but science has proved that you can't rise from the dead and keep on living and then levitate yourself up into heaven. It's not scientific. Must we reinterpret this too? When we reinterpret Genesis to anything other than what God specifically says, it unlocks the door to question the exodus, did it really happen? The flood, did it really happen? The giving of the Law on Sanai, did it really happen? The walls falling down at Jericho, that can't happen. Jonah and the really big fish couldn't happen. The virgin birth of Jesus, now that doesn't happen. In fact, all the miracles of Jesus, they aren't scientific. But Pastor Matt, the Bible says that to God a day is 1000 years, and 1000 years is as a day, you're just making too big deal of it, see God could have used evolution.

And the point here today is this it is not about what God could have done. It is about what God has said He did. And He did it. And so we need to become effective in sharing what God did, why we believe He did it, and why we believe it's true. Because if we know what we believe, and why we believe it, then we can stand on it, we can share it. And do so as Saint Peter says, with gentleness and respect, because you know it's true. We don't need to cancel anybody. It's truth the Bible stands on its own.

But if we don't, if we don't ask questions for why others believe what they believe, and respectfully then challenge it, how will they come to Christ? Then again if we don't do that, we just become a part of the consensus Christianity. Survey says, the majority say this, therefore we will believe. No what we're going over the next seven weeks is this, God said it, God did it, and the science, the history, the archaeology backs Him up. In our Saviors Name, Amen.