

# The Foundation for Happiness

## Part 1 of *Dismissing the Myths that Make Us Miserable*

Message for Sunday, October 14, 2018

**Scripture:** Matthew 7:24-27, and others

### Children's Message:

Hebrews 11:1, New International Version:  
Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

I fill a glass with water. Then I place a piece of cardboard on top of it. Then I turn the glass and cardboard upside down. What will happen when I remove my finger, which is holding the cardboard in place? What makes this particularly interesting is that I'm holding the glass of water over someone's head! That person is especially interested to see what happens. ☺

The theory is that the air pushing up against the cardboard is enough to hold it in place, even though the weight of the water is pushing down. Does it work? [I tested this ahead of time, and it does. At least, it worked in the test...]

The point: We can't see air, but air is very strong, and our lives depend on air. We can see Jesus, but we know that he is very powerful, and we need him in our lives.

Thanks to Deanne Hutton and his *Christian Parables from Science* for this idea.

**Message** "The Foundation for Happiness" Part 1 of *Dismissing the Myths that Make Us Miserable*

### Myths – some are harmless, some not

I want to start with a little survey this morning. How many of you growing up were taught about the tooth fairy? How many of you heard about Santa Claus? How about the Easter Bunny?

We have learned a variety of myths from the world around us. Most of them are purely harmless, but there have been some myths, some things that you've learned from the world, that really are very harmful to you. They have robbed you of happiness, they have caused worry, and stress, and fear in your life. Our lives need to be based on the truth, not on myths. Jesus said,

John 8:32, Today's English Version:  
"You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Today I am beginning a new series of messages "Dismissing the Myths that Make Us Miserable."

Credit: I got the idea for this series from another preacher, Rick Warren. Even though people tell me that my messages are helpful, I'm always happy to learn from others. So when I read some of Rick Warren's messages, I said, "Wow! This is too good to keep to myself. I must share it with others." While I've changed much of the wording, the core of this message is from Rick.

One of the most common myths goes like this:

**Myth: "It doesn't matter what you believe, as long as you're sincere."** Now, that sounds so good, it sounds so broadminded, so tolerant, so nice. The only problem with this is that it's absurd to hold that belief; it's irrational. There are some beliefs that are exact opposites of each other, and it's impossible for them all to be true. Not only that, but some beliefs are self-destructive to your life.

There is a *Calvin and Hobbes* cartoon where little Calvin and his Mom are in a shopping mall. He keeps his eye on the back of her jacket all the time as they go from store to store. He finally gets tired of this, taps her on the leg to ask a question, and is horrified to find that he's been following the wrong jacket all along. You can be sincere, but you can be sincerely wrong. The fact is that it takes more than sincerity to make it in life. **It takes truth.**

I want to give you six facts about what you believe because what you believe is extremely important.

### 1) My Beliefs are My Choice

If I want to believe Elvis is alive, I can believe it. If I want to believe the moon is made of cheese, or the world is flat, I can believe it. Here's the point: **You can't blame anybody else for your beliefs.**

People say, "I'm like this because that's how my parents brought me up." There is some truth to that, when it comes to our personalities. But what we *believe* is our choice entirely.

Romans 1:25, New Living Translation:

"Instead of believing what they knew was the truth about God, they deliberately chose to believe lies."

God has given us the ability to choose what we believe. And that's important, because...

## 2) My Beliefs Determine My Behaviour

In other words, the way that I act, the kind of person I am, my attitude towards life and other people—all these things are based on what I believe.

Proverbs 4:23, Today's English Version:

“Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts.”

There is a belief behind every single action you take in life. For instance, when you came in today and you sat down in that pew, you unconsciously believed it would hold you up. When I started preaching today, I believed you were listening. That's an act of faith! Everything you do has a belief behind it.

Here's the problem: even when we have wrong beliefs, they still determine our behaviour. For instance, if you believe you're clumsy, how are you going to act? Clumsy. If you believe you're unlovable, you will act unlovable. If you believe other people cannot be trusted, you'll tend to treat them with suspicion, put up a barrier and wear a mask, and you'll receive that kind of response. If you believe that God doesn't care about you, you'll never pray.

## 3) The World Has Taught Me Many False Beliefs

When I'm at a grocery store, I get a big laugh out of reading the headlines in the *National Inquirer* and the other tabloids: the latest sightings of Elvis; eat turnips and you'll never get cancer. We laugh at that and it's funny, but there are some myths that that really mess up our lives. And that's not funny.

The number one source of myths in our culture is the television, especially the talk shows. Rick Warren had the flu for a few days, and watched a couple of days worth of talk shows, and wrote down the Top Five Myths from talk shows. Here they are:

- **All of your problems are somebody else's fault.** You are not responsible for yourself.
- **This world owes you happiness.**
- **You'll be happy if you get whatever you want.**

- **You can have it all. Now.**
- **The answer lies within you.** I'm my own source of truth and knowledge; in other words, I'm God.

Now what would happen if someone believed all these lies? Can you imagine what kind of a mess that person's life would be?

The Bible gives us some very blunt advice about this:

1 John 4:1, Living Bible:

“Don't always believe everything you hear... for there are many false teachers around.”

## 4) Untrue Beliefs Cause Emotional Problems

We've seen how our beliefs determine our behaviour. But they even affect our emotions.

Suppose you go camping in Algonquin Park, in the back country away from the crowds and traffic. You set up your tent, crawl into your sleeping bag, and snuggle down for the night. In the middle of the night, you hear strange noises outside the tent. It's too dark to see anything, and you can't tell for certain, but you think it's a bear pawing around, looking for food. You've seen pictures of what bears can do to tents when they're hungry! Let's say that it's just the noise of the wind in the branches, but you really believe there's a bear outside your tent. Your heart will start racing, you'll start breathing faster, adrenaline will shoot into your system, your muscles will tense up, and you will get emotional turmoil—all over something that isn't true.

Now, that happens all of the time but you don't realize it.

- You worry about things that aren't true.
- You're afraid of things that aren't real.
- You feel shame about things maybe you shouldn't feel shame about.

If you want to overcome emotional problems in your life, you must clear up the misbeliefs behind those feelings. Listen to what Jesus said:

John 8:32, Today's English Version:

“You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

And where can we find this truth?...

## 5) The Only Source of Absolute Truth is God

There is a fundamental question that we all need to ask ourselves. Here it is: **What is going to be the authority for my life?** What will be the basis for my beliefs and my behaviour?

When it comes down to it, you only have two options: You either have the world or the Word — that is, the Word of God, the Bible. You either have what people say or what God says.

I was watching *Jeopardy* on TV one time, and the final question was, “Aside from the Bible, the best-selling non-fiction book of all time was published in 1946. Who was the author?” The answer: Dr. Benjamin Spock. There are about 9 million baby-boomers in Canada (that means people born between 1948 and 1964). That’s about one out of every four Canadians. That entire generation was brought up on *Dr. Spock’s Baby Book*. Dr. Spock gave his opinion on the proper way to raise children. The only problem is, a few years ago, Dr. Spock publicly held a news conference and said, “I was wrong. That’s not the way to do it. Sorry.” An entire generation was raised on one method of parenting that studies later confirmed isn’t effective.

Compare that to what Jesus said about his teaching:

**Luke 21:33, New Living Translation:**

“Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will remain forever.”

In the Gospels, there are 78 times when Jesus says, “*I tell you the truth.*” 78 times! And there are 6 times when Jesus says this: “*You have heard it said, but I say to you...*” He’s dismissing the myths that make us miserable.

## 6) Building My Life on God’s Truth is the Key to Life

**Matthew 7:24-27, Today's English Version:**

“So then, anyone who hears these words of mine and obeys them is like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain poured down, the rivers flooded over,

and the wind blew hard against that house. But it did not fall, because it was built on rock.

But anyone who hears these words of mine and does not obey them is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain poured down, the rivers flooded over, the wind blew hard against that house, and it fell. And what a terrible fall that was!”

Jesus says building your life is like building a house; you have to have the right foundation. And he says you can have one of two foundations: you can build your house on the solid rock, which is God’s unchanging truth, or you can build your house on shifting sand, which is the constantly changing opinions of the world. If you choose the latter, Jesus says you’re a fool. He’s very blunt about it.

I have to warn you—it’s not always easy to follow the truth; it’s not always popular; it’s sometimes painful and scary. It means contradicting popular opinion. It means not going with the crowd. But it’s the only way to emotional health and stability — to seek the truth, to face it, and to follow it.

Over the next few weeks, we’ll be challenged by some of the myths we’ve believed. But we can start with one step:

### Next Steps:

- Choose to base my life on God’s way, not my way or the world’s way.

**Prayer:** Dear Jesus, I’m tired of pretending that everything is okay in my life, putting on a show, acting like I’ve got it all together, when I know I don’t, and you know it too. I want to live a life of truth and so I commit myself today to these things.

First, I want to become a seeker of the truth, even when it’s unpopular or not easy; I don’t want to live a lie.

I commit to living and following the truth and when you teach me something to do, I want to do it because I know it’s right and it will work out best for me.

And, I commit myself to believing in you, Jesus, as the truth. I accept you as the truth of my life and I

want to follow you from here on out. In your name,  
we pray. Amen.