Compass Life Adult Sunday School

Pastor Pete

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**“Contra-Fosdick: “Our Ultimate Authority”**

**I. What are the Fundamentals of the Christian Faith?**

##### *1.   The Inerrancy of* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The Bible is completely without \_\_\_\_\_ and fully truthful in all of its writings in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ manuscripts. The debate over this actually gave birth to both liberal Christianity in the late nineteenth century and fundamentalism in the early twentieth century. Liberal theologians claimed that modern \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ proved that some of the Bible was probably not true and that therefore the Christian world needed to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ itself to these scientific findings. Conservative Christians who correctly realized that not believing any one thing that God said, made all of it suspect. Full acceptance of this fundamental led to full acceptance of all of the others.

*2. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of Christ*

The **deity of Jesus** is considered an essential doctrine and is a central non-negotiable belief within Christianity. Also known as the "divinity of Christ," this doctrine asserts that Jesus Christ was and is the Son of God incarnate. Jesus Christ is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

*3. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of Christ*

Jesus was not conceived in Mary by a human man but by God the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. This doctrine has been one of the most controversial in the church. And it was one of issues that caused such angst between fundamentalists and liberal Christians. This doctrine is imperative because 1) a belief in the full inerrancy of Scripture demands that we accept this as true, 2) we needed a savior both fully \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and fully \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in order for Him to completely and efficiently finalize the sacrifice, and 3) a savior born of a human father would himself have inherited the curse of original sin.

*4. The* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *of Christ*

This is the doctrine that Jesus died in our place to pay the penalty of \_\_\_\_\_\_. Because of original sin which was the transgression of God’s law and our resulting sin nature, all mankind was deservedly under God’s wrath and justly condemned to eternal death. Scripture is full of examples of how Jesus was the ultimate sacrificial lamb who was offered up as a blood offering in our stead.

*5. The Bodily* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_ *of Christ*

This doctrine states that three days after he died for our sins He rose again. But it wasn’t just His spirit that resurrected; it was His entire \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_. It has been so strongly defended by fundamentalists because it is possibly the most important part of Jesus’ saving work. In fact, it is widely considered to be the cornerstone of Christianity itself.

*6. The Reality of the* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *of Christ*

In light of the new modern science knowledge emphasis of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, believing that Jesus’ could have actually performed miracles came to be seen as irrational. The liberal theologians, therefore, began to come up with scientific explanations that in reality questioned the deity of Jesus, the truthful recollections of the eyewitnesses, and the integrity of God’s Word.

**II. What is Liberal (Modern) Theology and the Social Gospel?**

In liberal Christian teaching, which is not Christian at all, man’s \_\_\_\_\_\_ is stressed and is treated as the final authority. Liberal theologians seek to reconcile Christianity with secular science and modern thinking. In doing so, they treat science as all-knowing and the Bible as fable-laden and false. Genesis’ early chapters are reduced to poetry or fantasy, having a message, but not to be taken \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (in spite of Jesus’ having spoken of those early chapters in literal terms). Mankind is not seen as totally \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and thus liberal theologians have an optimistic view of the future of mankind. The social gospel is also emphasized, while the inability of fallen man to fulfill it is denied. Whether a person is saved from his sin and its penalty in hell is no longer the issue; the main thing is how man \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ his fellow man. “Love” of our fellow man becomes the defining issue.

Social Gospel:

1. Man is not so \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and God is not so \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

2. Cultural restoration is the Gospel.

3. Social salvation is superior to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ salvation.

**III. Harry Emerson Fosdick (1878-1969)**

Born in Buffalo, Fosdick received his formal education at Colgate University and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Theological Seminary (New York), beginning as a virtual fundamentalist and ending as a vigorous advocate of reason and common sense in religious faith. Fosdick was ordained in the Madison Avenue Baptist Church in New York city in 1903 after an unsettling seminary career that included a period of service in the filth and poverty of the Bowery, which quickened his \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ conscience, and a nervous breakdown which made him, as it had made William James, sensitive to the dark side of human nature. That same year, 1903 he married Florence Whitney and assumed his first full-time pastorate at First Baptist Church of Montclair, New Jersey. "Preaching for me," he once said, "has never been easy, and at the start it was often \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_." Early in his ministry he discarded \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and topical preaching as unsuitable and came to look upon preaching as "personal \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on a group scale." He declared: Every sermon should have for its main business the head-on constructive meeting of some problem which was puzzling minds, burdening consciences, distracting lives, and no sermon which so met a real human difficulty, with light to throw on it and help to win victory over it, could possibly be futile. Fosdick remained in Montclair until 1915, when he became Morris K. Jesup professor of practical theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York. He also began an extensive weekend itinerant ministry to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ across the country and thus widened his range of influence and liberal notoriety. In the meantime, he had begun another important phase of his ministry -- \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. "I do not see how a man can preach without writing," he declared. "I always have thought with my pen in hand" He published more than \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in his career, perhaps the most significant, in addition to his collections of sermons, being the trilogy The Meaning of Prayer, The Meaning of Faith and The Meaning of Service; The Modern Use of the Bible; A Guide to Understanding the Bible; On Being a Real Person, and his autobiography, The Living of These Days. In 1918 Fosdick became the preaching minister at a newly formed Presbyterian Church which had resulted from the merger of three Presbyterian churches in midtown New York. Thus, began a period of six years during which \_\_\_\_\_\_ Fosdick became embroiled in the modernist-fundamentalist controversy, which rocked all the major denominations but especially the Presbyterian Church. As the controversy began to emerge, Fosdick preached a sermon titled "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" As he later admitted: The trouble was, of course, that in stating the liberal and fundamentalist positions, I had stood in a Presbyterian pulpit and said frankly what the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ position on some points was -- the virgin birth no longer accepted as historic fact, the literal inerrancy of the Scriptures incredible, the second coming of Christ from the skies an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ phrasing of hope. The First Presbyterian Church tried to work out a compromise so that they could keep Fosdick, the controversy became so raging and bitter -- one fundamentalist minister referred to him as "a religious outlaw" and as "the Jesse James of the theological world" -- that Fosdick resigned and preached his final sermon at First Presbyterian in March 1925. In that farewell sermon he said: "They call me a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Well, I am a heretic if conventional \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is the standard. I should be ashamed to live in this generation and not be a heretic".

The best of Fosdick was yet to come. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of Park Avenue Baptist Church in New York approached him about the possibility of his becoming the minister of that church. Fosdick demurred on two grounds: that baptism by immersion was required for full church membership and that the church was located in a rich residential area where its influence on the greater social problems of the city would be minimal. The Park Avenue congregation voted to remove these two obstacles by forming the new Riverside Church at Morningside Heights, completed in 1931, the citadel of the best in American Protestantism and a lasting tribute to the high ideals of Harry Emerson Fosdick. Fosdick remained at Riverside until his retirement in 1945; during that period of 20 years at Riverside he was a regular preacher on the National Radio Pulpit, through which his name became a household word. He remained active as a preacher and writer for many years after his retirement and died in 1969.

**IV. Shall the Fundamentalists Win? Inerrancy of Scripture**

When we reflect on Inerrancy, we reflect on the nature of God. Inerrancy flows not from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ tradition but from the very nature of God himself. Inerrancy means God’s Word is trustworthy. (For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:21) Inerrancy means God’s Word is useful. (All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness. (2 Timothy 3:16)

## 10/14 Contra-Fosdick: “Divine Forgiveness”