



# FOUNDATIONS

A Study Through the Basics of the Faith

Sept 8 -Sept 29







# FOUNDATIONS

## A STUDY

*Through the Basics of the Faith*

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Sept. 8 - Sept. 29

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Written by TJ Johnson

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## FOUNDATIONS

Jesus once told a story about a foolish man building his house upon sand rather than rock. Over time a storm came with great winds. With the winds came rain. With the rain came a flood. All this proved too much for such a faulty foundation. The house, “fell, and great was the fall of it.”

Foundations are important. If we build anything (lives, ministry, church) on a faulty foundation we will reap the same results as this foolish man. Therefore, over the next four weeks we will be discussing the foundations of City Church. Christ is the head of the church. Christ is, as the 1787 hymn declares, our firm foundation, “What more can He say than to you He hath said. To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled.” Everything we discuss will ultimately go back to Christ, our firm foundation. But practically, what does it look like to flee to Jesus? What does a church whose foundation is Christ do? How do we structure our service, our time, our events, our relationships?

At City Church we use four terms to capture our vision for what life on the firm foundation of Christ looks like: Know God, Be Family, Go Deep, and Make Impact. It is our desire that all of us are growing in these four areas, that our church is one in which the firm foundation of Christ will anchor us to Him as we seek to fulfill His purposes for us in this city for this season.

Standing with you,

TJ Johnson



# FOUNDATIONS of the FAITH

*Know God*

*Week 1*

*Sept. 8, 2019*







## Prepare your Heart

The English language can confuse us from time to time. Take the word, "know," for instance. To know something means to have knowledge of that thing. But how does this definition change when the object is no longer a thing but a person? I know about many famous people, I have knowledge about them, but I don't know them. In this instance, "to know," means to have a relationship with, to be friends with.

The Bible uses the word, "know," in the most intimate ways. In **Genesis 4:1** we are told that "Adam **knew** Eve his wife." To know someone in the Bible is not a casual, informal activity...it is intimate, it is special, it is holy. God speaks of His relationship with us as Him knowing us. **Deut. 34:10** tells us the LORD **knew** Moses. **Jeremiah 31:34** looks forward to a day when all of God's people will **know** him for, "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." This is what it means to know the LORD. Unfortunately, many falsely think they know Him. Matthew 7 speaks of a group of people who did mighty things in the name of God, who had great power, how knew, had knowledge, of God...but had never really knew Him in a Jeremiah 31 way. In the end Jesus says to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.' Our topic today is of utmost importance. To get this wrong is to get everything wrong.

The desire of our heart is to Know God and make Him known. At City Church we are wildly passionate about making sure that we have a right relationship with God and equally passionate about proclaiming to others the joy that can be found in Jesus.



## Scripture

As a group, read Philippians 3. How does this chapter describe knowing God?

# AT CITY CHURCH WE ARE

**wildly passionate** about making sure that we have a right relationship **WITH GOD** and **equally passionate** about **PROCLAIMING to OTHERS** the joy that can be found in Jesus.

## Know God

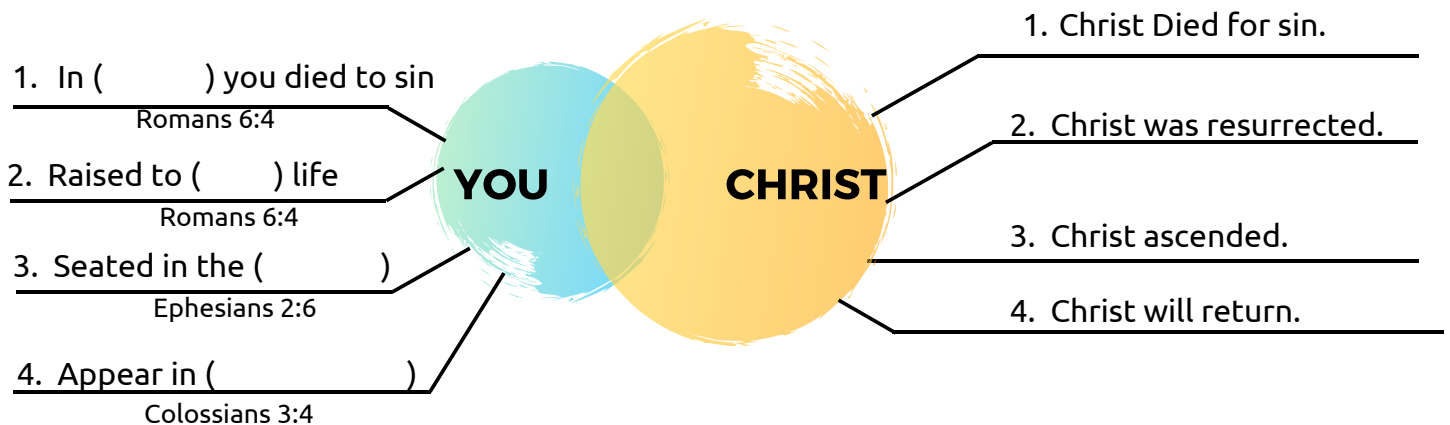
- What is the difference between knowing God and knowing about God?
- Give some examples of people in the Bible who knew about God and others who actually knew God.
- Philippians 3 is a Trinitarian chapter. Where and how is the Trinity discussed in this chapter? What role does the Trinity play in us knowing God?



## Know God

- What is this "surpassing worth of knowing Christ," that Paul references in v. 8?
- How has your knowing God changed since you have come to China?

**Read Phil. 3:9 and note the phrase: in Him (Christ) - this is called Union with Christ. Fill in the following chart:**



**Sinclair Ferguson**

☞☞ *If we are united to Christ, then we are* ☞☞  
*united to him at all points of his activity on our behalf.*

- Revisit v. 7-8. The surpassing worth of knowing Christ is everything that we gain, "in Christ." What are some other things we gain "in Christ" that was not mentioned above?
- How does one go about gaining Christ? See v. 9
- One of the most meaningful ways we express our knowing Christ is through baptism. Take some time to share your baptism experience.
- Why is it important to follow Christ in baptism?
- At City Church, how and when do we celebrate baptism?





## Make Him Known

# EQUALLY PASSIONATE *about* PROCLAIMING

to **others** the joy that can be found in **JESUS**.

- Do you think it is important that others know the Lord? Why or why not?
- What people were instrumental in you coming to Know God? How did they help you know God?
- Read Jeremiah 31:34. We look forward to this time, but are not there yet. Until that day comes how should we go about telling our neighbor to, "know the LORD?"
- What are some ways we City Church can be better at helping people Know God?
- What are the barriers that keep us from being open about our faith?

## Keep Knowing Him

- Read Phil. 3:12 and Hosea 6:3. What does it look like to press on to know God?
- Why is Paul reminding the church to keep on knowing God? What dangers are there in life that would distract us from knowing God?
- Read Matthew 7:21-23. How can we know that we know God and not have a false faith?
- Read Phil 3:17. Who does Paul tell the church to imitate/keep their eyes on and why?
- Read 1 Timothy 1:18-20. What are some things we can do this week to keep from "shipwrecking our faith?"



## Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another. Ask the Lord to give you opportunities this week to help others Know God (be specific)!

### Prayer Requests

### Praise Reports



# FOUNDATIONS of the FAITH

*Be Family*

*Week 2*

*Sept. 15, 2019*







## Prepare your Heart

Several weeks ago, a storm came through our neighborhood. The next morning as I walked around to survey the damage, I couldn't help but notice the number of trees that had been uprooted from this storm. It wasn't a particularly severe storm, so I began to wonder why these trees succumbed to the mild winds. I think the answer lies in the fact that these trees were transplants with no sure root system.

As I contemplated this my mind automatically wandered to the fact that we too are all transplants and are therefore susceptible to the same dangers of these trees. If we do not grow roots in the community, if we do not latch on to others for support then we too will find that we will be tossed to and fro by the storms of life. And in case you haven't noticed yet, storms seem to surface quickly and often in Beijing. That is why this Sunday we will discuss the second of four foundational expressions of the church: Be Family.

God has created us to live in community. At City Church we are radically committed to the faith community God has placed us in and purposefully seek relationship with one another for the up-building of our faith. We do this through small groups, corporate worship, and intentional relationship building throughout the week.



## Scripture

As a group, read Hebrews 10:19-25 and circle how many times a plural pronoun us used (we,us). Then write down and discuss your thoughts as to why the plural is used here.

# AT CITY CHURCH WE ARE

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of our faith.

## Be Family

- Describe the idea of family in your culture.
- What was your family life like growing up?
- How would you describe the ideal family?
- How would you describe, "Be Family," in a church context?



## Draw Near v. 22

- What are the benefits of us drawing near together?
- What Old Testament connections are being made with "sprinkled clean," and "washed?"
- Today the church no longer has these ceremonies, what ceremonies do we have and how do they help create a sense of family?
- "Draw near," has temple language. What role did the temple have in the community? What role does Jesus have in our community today?

**Read John 17 and continue discussing how Jesus helps create a family from such diverse people.**

### Draw Near

*This phrase is used seven times in Hebrews. Using a Bible search app find those seven instances and discuss (and write down) what it practically looks like for us as a community to draw near together:*





## Confession of Hope

**Read v. 23 as a group.**



*3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.*



- What would you describe as the core of our confession of hope?
- How can the family of God hold fast to this confession together?
- How does the confession itself help us remain united as family?
- If anyone in your group knows the Apostles Creed, have them recite it, then as a group discuss the confession of the early church.
- What are some practical ways we can help others hold fast to their confession without wavering?
- Has there ever been a season when you wavered in your confession? If so, how did God use the family of faith to give you assurance of that confession?

## Stir Up

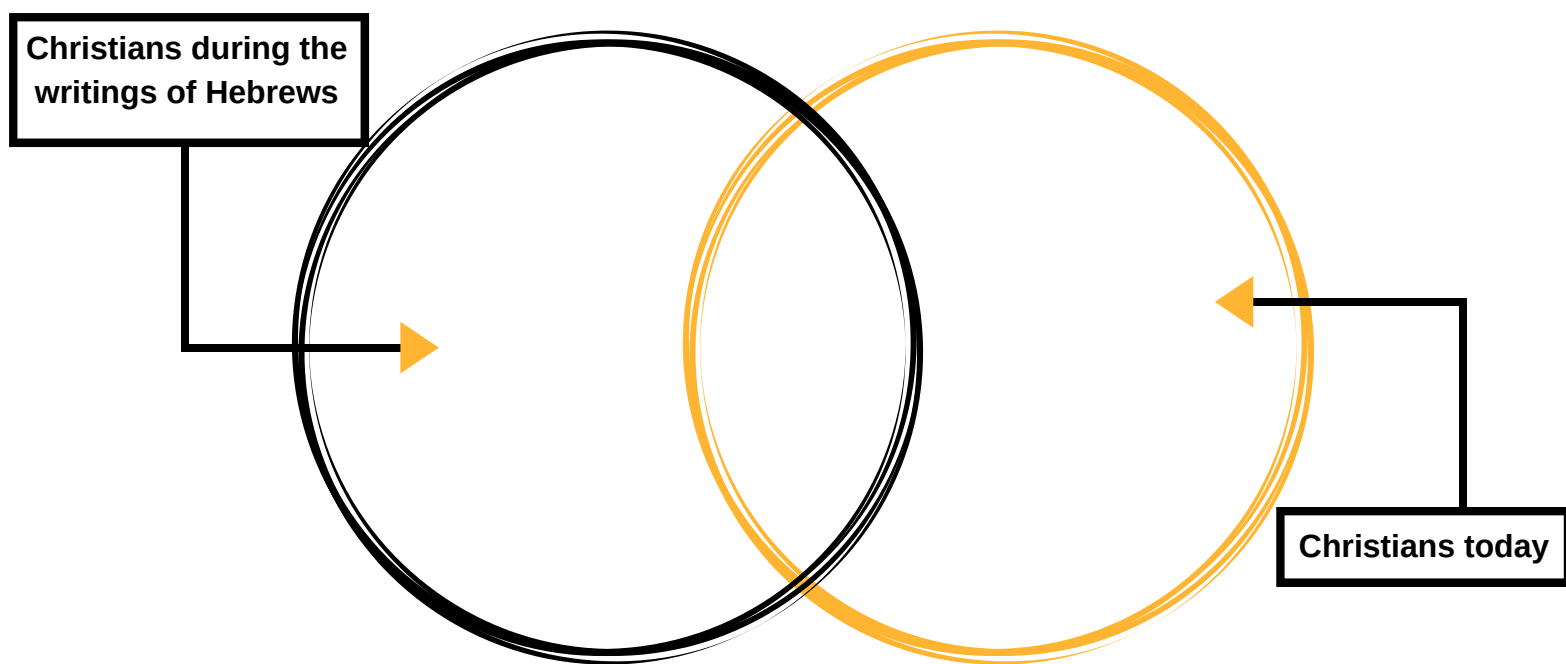
- Read v. 24.
- What two things are we called to "stir up" in one another?
- How can you stir up love in your fellow believers life this week? (specifically, love for God and love for others)
- How can you stir up good works in your fellow believers life this week?
- Why is it important for us to grow in good works? See Matt. 5:16, Eph 2:10, 1 Tim. 6:17-19, Titus 2:14, 3:8, 14)



## Meet Together

- Read v. 25 and

What reasons do we make for not meeting together? Fill in the Venn Diagram below:



- What are some ways we can encourage one another to be committed to small groups and our Sunday gatherings.
- Why is it important that we take seriously the call to "Be Family?"
- This verse speaks of habit in a negative sense, but habits can be good as well. How can we form good habits for meeting together?
- The verse ends by speaking of The Day, what is this? (do a search for "day of the Lord")
- What is the connection with "The Day" and Christian fellowship?



## Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another. Ask one another for specific encouragements they might need.

### Prayer Requests

### Praise Reports





# FOUNDATIONS of the FAITH

*Make Impact*  
*Week 3*  
*Sept. 22, 2019*







## Prepare your Heart

Jesus came proclaiming a Kingdom. As He describes this Kingdom, He speaks of it in strange terms. It is not a place you go to but rather a place that is coming to you. It is an ever-expanding Kingdom. It is a Kingdom of power and of change, of radical transformation. It is a Heavenly Kingdom which charges the gates of earth, converts sinners, and commissions God-followers to go forth and change the world. It is a Kingdom inside us that is longing to seep out of us in order to expose others to the joy we have experienced by becoming citizens of this new Kingdom. This Sunday we will discuss the third of four foundational expressions of the church: Make Impact.

God has blessed us with Himself that we might be a blessing to those around us. At City Church, we long to make positive, eternal impact not only in Beijing, but in the world. This is achieved by using our Spiritual Gifts within the context of City Church ministries, our homes, workplaces, and wherever the Lord leads us after our time at City Church.



## Scripture

As a group, read Acts 1:3 and 28:31. How do these two verses relate to the entire book? What other key verses come to mind when you think of the Kingdom?

# AT CITY CHURCH WE

**LONG** to make positive, **eternal impact** not only in Beijing, but in the world. This is achieved by using our **SPIRITUAL GIFTS** within the context of City Church **ministries**, our **homes**, **workplaces**, and wherever the **Lord leads** us after our time at City Church.

## Eternal Kingdom

Read Daniel 4:34-37

- Compare Nebuchadnezzar's Kingdom to God's Kingdom, in what ways is God's Kingdom superior?
- Like Nebuchadnezzar, we can live for our own Kingdom rather than God's Kingdom. What does that practically look like today?
- Nebuchadnezzar's Kingdom was restored to him, in what ways can we use our "kingdom" to "honor the King of heaven?"
- What hope do we have knowing that the Kingdom we are a part of is eternal?



## Transformative

Read Matthew 13:33



### Heidelberg Catechism Answer 123:

*Thy kingdom come; that is, so govern us by your Word and Spirit, that we submit ourselves to you always more and more; preserve and increase your Church; destroy the works of the devil, every power that exalts itself against you, and all wicked devices formed against your Holy Word, until the fullness of your kingdom come, wherein you shalt be all in all.*



- Describe the process of baking bread and how yeast/leaven works.
- What is Jesus teaching about the Kingdom with the leaven analogy?
- What other places in the Bible do you see the idea of God's expanding, transformative Kingdom? (see Genesis 1:28 & 2:5-9; Ezekiel 47; Matthew 6:10, 28:18-20, etc)
- Read the Heidelberg quote above. Discuss what all God's Kingdom is transforming in this world.
- In what ways are you playing a part of God's transformative Kingdom in your home, church, and community?
- What areas of society most need God's Kingdom transformation?

## World-Wide

Read Acts 1:6-8

- How did the disciple's idea of the Kingdom prove to be too small? (see also Isaiah 49:6)
- Do you think we have the same narrow-mindedness of God's Kingdom in the church today?
- How does Acts 1:8 work as a table of contents for the book of Acts?
- Acts ends with the gospel not reaching the "ends of the earth." Many describe the time we live in as "Acts 29." How can we strategically fulfill the mandate to go into all the world?
- Some use Acts 1:8 as a "then, then, then," theology. Do you think we are called to reach our city, then our province, then our country, then our world, or is this something we should simultaneously be doing?





## Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another. Challenge one another to think locally and globally about their role in God's ever-expanding Kingdom.

### Prayer Requests

### Praise Reports



# FOUNDATIONS of the FAITH

*Go Deep*  
*Week 4*  
*Sept. 29, 2019*







## Prepare your Heart

There are many ways to “Go Deep” with Christ. Most of the time at City Church this phrase is used as a synonym for “growing in spiritual maturity” or “becoming more like Christ.” In order to really “Go Deep,” we must first consider the source and center of all human problems, the human heart. Once we look inward we can learn what it truly means to grow as Christ's disciple.

At City Church we are insanely intentional about being discipled and making disciples, therefore we are committed to equipping the body for the work of ministry.



## Scripture

As a group, read 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 and discuss what it means for the whole person to be completely sanctified.

# AT CITY CHURCH WE ARE

insanely **INTENTIONAL** about **being disciplined** and **making disciples**, therefore we are committed to **EQUIPPING** the **body** for the work of ministry.

## Additional verses

## to read through

- Proverbs 4:23
- Proverbs 27:19
- Matthew 15:16-18
- Luke 6:43-45
- James 4:1





Questions to

ponder together

**Dietrich Bonhoeffer**



*Christianity without discipleship is always*



*Christianity without Christ.*

- In medicine, what is the difference between treating the symptom of a problem and treating the source?
- Where do you struggle the most? (Do you say things that hurt others? Do you do or think things that harm yourself? Do you harbor any secrets that bring such shame you feel you could never share them?)
- Why is it so hard to say these things even with trusted sisters and brothers in the Lord?
- Has the Lord set you free from anything that would be an encouragement for others to hear?

**Going**

**Deeper**

- When you think of "Go Deep," what are the main things you think of?
- Why is it important for us to continue our journey in knowing God more and more?
- What are the most meaningful ways you have experienced discipleship?
- Share with the group your discipleship experiences (do you have someone discipling you, have you disciplined someone before, etc).
- Going deep is meant to more about relationship rather than just knowledge or tasks to complete. Discuss the dangers of misguided discipleship vs no discipleship.



## Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another. Challenge one another to think through how they can live out 2 Timothy 2:1-2.

### Prayer Requests

### Praise Reports

