Who do you believe God to be? Have you grasped His Message to us?

We are here today, as the church, because at some point in our lives we were told about God the Creator; that He loves us and that we could know Him personally. He drew us to Him and many of us have responded to the message we were told, which was that by reading the Bible, we could learn about Him and His love, grace, compassion, mercy, forgiveness, righteousness and because of God's perfect justice and judgment; His redemption of man. The redemption of man being accomplished by the death on the cross and three days later, *the greatest event to ever take place on earth, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.* It is the reason we celebrate Easter. It is the beginning of new life. The beginning of our new life (no matter how old we may be) when we acknowledge that He died in our place for our sins and we are "born again."

In *(Jeremiah 9:23,24)*
This is what the Lord says: "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the Lord .

Some say, "I believe in (a) God." But do you know who that God is, what He is like, or what He says about who He is? God gave us the Bible so we could know Him and understand Him. Although the "Gospel" of the Bible, "The Good News" of Jesus Christ is straightforward and simple enough for a child to grasp and comprehend, the evidence that the Bible contains to substantiate it claims is overwhelming. It is 66 books written over a 1500 year span by 40 "God inspired" authors from every walk of life. Biblical authors spoke on hundreds of controversial subjects with harmony and continuity from Genesis to Revelation. There is one unfolding story "God's Redemption of Man." The Bible as we now have it is one complete Book, composed by God to make Himself known and make known His ***one plan of grace***, to redeem His people from sin for His Glory.

As God's redemptive purposes and plan unfold in Scripture, five recurring themes are constantly emphasized: • the character of God • the judgment for sin and disobedience • the blessing for faith and obedience • the sacrifice of the Lord Savior for sin • and the glory of the coming kingdom.

It has been said that the letters of the word Bible stand for "basic instructions before leaving earth." It states in (*2 Tim 3:16,17*) *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.* Peter explains the process, *"...knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit"*. (*2 Pet.1:20,21*). Through the work of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God was protected from human error.

The Bible is our foundation: The Bible is God's word directed to each man and woman personally to read and allow God's Spirit to guide you to the understanding of His word in "context." It tells us in Proverbs and Psalms how we are to live our lives and know our God and His attributes. The Bible lays the foundation for our system of law and punishment, the foundation of marriage and family, along with many other cultural systems after which mankind has structured his societies. The Bible explains creation and gives us an understanding of mans sin nature, which allows us to understand *why we* as individuals, and mankind in general, *act and do the things we do.* We learn He is ***Omnipresent*** (everywhere***), Omniscient*** (all knowing) and ***Omnipotent*** (all powerful – almighty).

A Christian believes that the Bible is the inerrant (free from error) and infallible (incapable of error) Word of God, written by its authors *while under the inspiration of God*. We believe it was written in order to be man's book of instruction on how to live our lives on this earth and do so with preparation for our eternal life as promised by God. It was written to make God known to man. Many of the teachings came from Jesus, The Christ (Messiah, Anointed One, Deliverer) who was God, having come to this earth, as the *only* sinless man, the only one qualified to die in our place for our sins. We believe, ***by faith and trust***, that after His death He was resurrected from the dead to prove who He was, and is alive today. He gives us the power to live our lives according to His Word which includes telling others of His free gift of eternal life for all who would believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, ***and the consequences for those who will not.*** We are people who feel as though we have found a treasure, much more than we could ever spend. And knowing that it cost us nothing, wish to freely give it away to our family, friends, and anyone who will accept it. *Everyone needs it*, however, not all will accept it. Such a treasure is forgiveness of sins, the gift of salvation from God.

To be a Christian we have to believe in the One true God. We need to acknowledge God as the Creator of heaven and earth and all that that includes. God as a Trinity consists of God the Father, Jesus-God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. In *Genesis 1:26* it says *"Then God said, "Let* ***Us*** *make man in* ***Our image****, in* ***Our likeness****, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."*
The word "Yacid," in Hebrew, means to state something singular, undivided, a unit. It does not allow for plurality. If God, singular, was meant - He could have - but did not - use Yacid. But instead, in *Deuteronomy 6:4* it states "*Hear, 0 Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!"* The word "one" is "Echad" in Hebrew and the grammar *singular but allows for plurality*. It is used in Scripture for unity with plural elements. It does have to be at least two but can be many. An example is in (*Genesis 2:24) Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh*. Husband and wife = one flesh (oneness with two parts)

A person may sincerely believe in another concept of God but he will be sincerely wrong and not a Christian. (*Romans 8:1-17*) explains the involvement of God, the Trinity, in Salvation.
*(Romans 8:1-17) states "So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. For the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you through Christ Jesus from the power of sin that leads to death. The Law of Moses (the Ten Commandments) could not save us, because of our sinful nature. But God put into effect a different plan to save us. He sent His own Son in a human body like ours, except that ours are sinful. God destroyed sin's control over us by giving His Son as a sacrifice for our sins. He did this so that the requirement of the law would be fully accomplished for us who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit. Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. If your sinful nature controls your mind, there is death. But if the Holy Spirit controls your mind, there is life and peace. For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will. That's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God. But you (*and he was speaking to Christians*) are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them are not Christians at all). Since Christ lives within you, even though your body will die because of sin, your spirit is alive because you have been made right with God. The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as He raised Christ from the dead, He will give life to your mortal body by this same Spirit living within you. So, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation whatsoever to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. For if you keep on following it you will*

perish. But if through the power of the Holy Spirit you turn from it and its evil deeds, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. So you should not be like cowering, fearful slaves. You should behave instead like God's very own children, adopted into His family--calling Him "Abba Father" (an endearing, personal term i.e. daddy)*." For His Holy Spirit speaks to us deep in our hearts and tells us that we are God's children. And since we are His children, will share His treasures - for everything God gives to His Son, Christ, is ours, too. But if we are to share His glory, we must also share His suffering.*

While walking through the rooms at the convalescent hospital we also visit, we have had some ask; "Who is God? "What about this? or "I don't believe that!" These people have known about the Bible and could have read it anytime throughout their life. Many people have spent their lives studying the Bible to search out the answers they seek, learning the knowledge of who God is and continually growing closer to Him. You cannot, after most of your life has passed, begin to ask deep and complex questions and expect to get a 5 minute answer that satisfies your curiosity. This is where faith enters in.

All the best logic presented cannot win anyone over. It must be spiritual. *(2 Cor. 4:3,4)* says *"If the Good News we preach is hidden to anyone, it is hidden from the one who is on the road to eternal death. Satan, who is the god of this evil world, has made him blind, unable to see the glorious light of the Gospel that is shining upon him, or to understand the amazing message we preach about the glory of Christ, who is God." (Psalm 10:4)* states *"In his pride the wicked does not seek Him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God." (1 Cor.1:18), (1 Cor. 2:14) "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power God." "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned"* ***The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none who does good. (Psalms 14:1) Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life (Galatians 6:7).***

When we believe in the one true God, accept the Gospel message passed on to us from Him by His Spirit through the writers of the Bible, we can also accept all the other benefits and guidance the Bible offers as we go through the trials of life. Basing our lives on and trusting in a foundation of Jesus, The Rock, and not on the shifting sands of the philosophies of man no matter how intelligent they sound, will give us the wisdom and discernment to navigate life's difficulties. Most everyone in this room has most of their lives behind them and no longer has to deal with most of life's demands. If we had God in our lives He helped us through many rough times. Those who did not have God in their lives probably endured more pain and harder times because you did not have God's comfort to see you through. But you can have Him now. Through prayer He has allowed us to come to Him. *(1 Pet.5:6,7)* Jesus said *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Matt.11:28-30) "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you."*

In (2 Peter 3:9) it says "The Lord Is Longsuffering And Patient, Not Willing That Any Should Perish, But That All Should Come To Repentance." God will give you until your last breath you take to acknowledge and accept Him as your Savior with sincerity. God does not want you to perish. He is rich in mercy and compassion, and has provided a way for you to be forgiven. He has invited you to come to Him for a full pardon and receive the free gift of Eternal Life. You cannot earn it,

and you do not deserve it, but God is offering it to you as proof of His love for you. Many find it hard to understand or accept the aspect of the Christian doctrine of salvation which teaches that a person may at any time *sincerely* repent of his sins, and accept Jesus Christ as Savior, even at the *eleventh hour (later years or last moments of his life)*, and receive forgiveness and eternal life, regardless of the quantity and magnitude of their sins. ***But remember*** *- your life can be taken in an instant and that decision to accept Christ as your Savior must be done with a* ***sincere heart*** *and* ***true motive*** *before you take your last breath here on earth!* The Lord Jesus Christ replied to the thief on the cross, who had repented of his sins at the eleventh hour, so to speak, crying *"Jesus, Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom"(Luke 23:42*). The answer of our Savior was unequivocal when He said, *"Assuredly, I say to you, today you shall be with Me in paradise"* (*Luke 23:43*). The parable of the laborer *(Matthew 20:1-16)* presents Christ's teaching that God agrees to give to all who believe in and will serve Him the same inheritance*, i.e., eternal life*, namely, *eternal redemption*. *So whoever comes to Christ for salvation receives it*, *whether at the first hour (*early in life*) or at the eleventh hour* (Later years or last moments of his life). The **"*gift of God*"** the scriptures tell us, ***is*** **"*eternal life*."** Rewards for deeds done to further His kingdom may be earned as the believer surrenders himself to the power of The Holy Spirit and bears fruit for the Lord. Those rewards are different for length and content of the services rendered.

Jesus Christ, the righteous and sinless Son of God, having taken upon Himself man's every sin *past, present and future,* and paying the penalty of death**, (***once and for all***)** in turn gave us His righteousness. However**…** as *(Romans 3:22-26)* states *"This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. But now God has shown us a different way to heaven - not by 'being good enough' and trying to keep His laws, but by a new way (though not new, really, for the Scriptures told about it long ago). Now God says He will accept and acquit us - declare us 'not guilty' - if we trust Jesus Christ to take away our sins. And we all can be saved in this same way, by coming to Christ, no matter who we are or what we have been like. Yes, all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious ideal; yet now God declares us 'not guilty' of offending Him, if we trust in Jesus Christ, who in His kindness freely takes away our sins.*
"For God sent Christ Jesus to take the punishment for our sins and to end all God's anger against us. He used Christ's blood and our faith as the means of saving us from His wrath." "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16) "... for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10)
"*For salvation that comes from trusting Christ - which is that we preach - is already within easy reach of each of us; in fact, it is as near as our own hearts and mouths. For if you tell others with your own mouth that Jesus Christ is your Lord, and believe in your own heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in his heart that a man becomes right with God; and with his mouth he tells others of his faith, confirming his salvation." "For the Scriptures tell us that no one who believes in Christ will ever be disappointed. Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect: they have all the same Lord who generously gives His riches to all those who ask Him for them. Anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved."* **(**Delivered from judgment for your sins and separation from God for all eternity) (*Romans 10:8-13*) *Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. (Matt.10:32,33) "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) "Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God." (John 1:12) If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)*