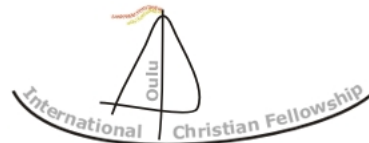


International Christian Fellowship of Oulu Worship Meeting / Message



Date & Time: Sunday, 11.1.2009 at 15.30
Place: Chapel of St. Luke
Sermon: Jesus Christ the Way
Info Session: Comparing Biblical faith with Mormonism
Authors: Attila György and David Mathew

Sermon (Attila György) Jesus Christ the Way

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father! We are hungry for your truth. Please, satisfy our souls! Jesus said that everyone who acknowledges Him before men, He will also acknowledge before You. (Matthew 10:32) Our deepest desire is that we would be acknowledged before You by Jesus, that He would tell You that He knows us. So we ask for heavenly wisdom and for Your Holy Spirit from You. You promised to give wisdom generously to those who lack it and ask for it. (James 1:5) Please, reveal Yourself to us! In Jesus name, we pray. Amen

Bible Reading

I'm gonna be reading a passage from John 14:1-6. My message is based especially on verses 5 and 6. So let us read John 14:1-6.

Story

This story happened a few decades ago in the dining room of a nice British hotel in the countryside, where a traveler arrived. He wanted to roast the meat he had with him at the fireplace of the hotel. Of course he was thrown out of the hotel immediately, which was a great mistake. Because the traveler was in fact a cunning lawyer, who demanded a large sum of money as compensation from the hotel. Because a 14th century law allowed travelers to roast the meat they had with them in the fireplace of any hotel. The court awarded him a large sum of compensation, because this law has not been revised since then. So the lawyer was fully aware of what he was doing. He knew the truth, and acted accordingly.

Jesus Christ – the Way

The same way Christians need to know the basis of their faith. They also need to know when and how to apply it in different situations. Today we will hear some information on Mormonism from David. So I would like to lay on your hearts a basic principle of faith. If I had been asked 14 years ago, what the most important thing was to know when witnessing to Mormons, I would have said, learn as much about their religion as possible. If I was asked the same question today, I would answer the simple sentence: there is no other way than Jesus Christ.

If you are stopped on the street by some nice men with little black nametags on their coats reading: the The Latter Day Saints of Jesus Christ, or if they ring your doorbells, just remember, God is providing you an opportunity to share your faith with them. But do we know, what to say in a loving and sensible way with the sound mind our Lord requires from us? Or we just answer, no, thank you. Maybe our mouth runs dry and have a hard time saying anything. I hope the following thoughts can serve as a guideline in determining how to answer them. Because the Scripture tells us to „always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you” (1Peter 3:15)

Jesus claims to be the only WAY to the Father. But most religions talk about multiple ways to reach the same God, we only need to chose one. Jesus says, he is the only one. The phrase: the way, in the Greek original is not something abstract. It doesn't only signify a direction or lifestyle. It could be translated into our contemporary language, as the only road suitable for travel with the destination of heaven. The words of Jesus are unmistakable: there is only one way that leads to eternal life. It means, the only way to live a real, harmonious life is to live it with Jesus.

Many religions claim that only they are the ones possessing the truth. But Jesus claims to be the TRUTH. So he embodies an abstract concept mostly used in legal terms. As an incarnation of Truth, he is the only one entitled to reveal the truth, and make it relevant to our everyday lives. So we can actually get to know the truth personally. He became a living and lively reality, who can fill the emptiness inside of us. So we don't need to accept misleading lies, if we accept Jesus Christ personally into our hearts.

Real LIFE is also found in Jesus: life that is alive, eternal and free from sin and the devil. There is no life besides Him. Every other form of life is just biological survival without spiritual and eternal life. The rhythm and vibration of the original Greek text reaches its climax in the word: life, the word that is always at the center of the teachings of Jesus. In one of the following chapters, in chapter 17, Jesus says in His prayer: „and this is eternal life, that they know You, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” (John 17:3)

As an answer to Thomas's question: „Lord, we don't know, where you are going. How can we know the way?” (John 14:5), Jesus does not only say, I am the way. He also adds: I am the way, and the truth, and the life. With this he adds great emphasis to his conclusion: „No one comes to the Father except through me.” He returns to Thomas's question with this statement: he embodies in Himself everything we need for eternal life.

So, when the time comes to give an answer, it is not something difficult. The only thing to remember for now is that there is no other way. Then it will also come to you, that Jesus is also the life and the truth. And that we can only come to the Father through Him. Finally, keep in mind that Scripture says in Galatians 1:8: „But even if we, or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.”

Info Session (David Mathew) Comparing Biblical Faith with Mormonism

INTRODUCTION & HISTORY

1	The Mormon church is also known as Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS).
2	Founded by Joseph Smith based on a series of revelations (starting at the age of 14) that he claimed to have received from gods and angels.
3	From golden plates using seer stones, Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon which contains the supposed history of Native Americans. <i>[The Book of Mormon has been constantly revised since 1830 and has over 3,900 changes made until 1996!]</i>
4	Joseph Smith claimed to have restored the true church and had a loyal following that grew in large numbers.
5	Joseph Smith was charged with the destruction of Nauvoo Press which exposed his practice of polygamy. When jailed, an irate mob killed Joseph Smith in a gun battle.
6	Joseph Smith was known to be a money swindler, a womanizer & a Freemason (<i>Freemasonry is a Satanic group that believes in 'The Great Architect' but refuses to acknowledge Jesus above all gods</i>).
7	The Mormon teachings differ significantly with the Bible on <u>ALL</u> important matters of faith as shown below.

SCRIPTURE

	<i>Biblical View</i>	<i>Mormon View</i>
1	<u>Scripture (Bible) alone</u> is God authored, eternal and worthy of total trust. (2Tm 3:16, I Pt 1:22)	<u>Three books</u> (Book of Mormon*, Doctrines & Covenants, Pearl of Great Price) precede the Bible in importance.
2	Revelation of God is complete in Scripture. Adding to the Scripture is a highly condemnable (abominable) deed. (Pr 30:5-6;	Constant revelation and so newer teachings are revealed by 'god' that could even contradict the existing revelation.

	2Pt 1:21; Rv 22:18)	
3	Bible (having 66 books) is consistent in its message on the key doctrines of God and man.	The Mormon books have many contradictions. (Example - Alma 18:26-28 vs Moroni 8:18)
4	Biblical truths have been attested by numerous (over 25,000) archaeological finds.	<u>Not one</u> shred of evidence for the histories mentioned in the Book of Mormon.
5	The message revealed by God through the Holy Scriptures is more trustworthy than the message of men and angels. (Gl 1:6-9)	The supernatural vision(s)** of Joseph Smith is the keystone of the Mormon faith.

*Joseph Smith said, "I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book."

**Joseph Smith altered the account of the first vision many times during his life.

GOD

	<i>Biblical View</i>	<i>Mormon View</i>
1	Trinity - <u>ONE</u> God in THREE Persons. (1 Tm2:4; Gn 1:26; Jn 1:1; Mt 1:23; Ac 5:3,4; Mt 3:16-17, 28:19)	<u>THREE</u> distinct Gods.
2	Forever God is God. (Ps 90:2, Gn 1:1, Jn 1:1)	God is ever progressing (upward in knowledge, wisdom & power).
3	God is a Spirit (Jn 4:24)	God the Father has flesh and bones. (D&C)
4	Not one reference in Scripture that God has wives.	God the Father has Eternal Wives through whom spirit children have been and continue to be born.

JESUS

	<i>Biblical View</i>	<i>Mormon View</i>
1	Jesus is the Creator of all things. (Jn 1:1-3; Col 1:16-17)	First spirit child born to the Heavenly Father.
2	Jesus is eternally God (Jn 1:1)	Jesus became a god (equal to the Father) after his death, ascension and exaltation.
3	Physical Christ conceived supernaturally by the Holy Spirit in the body of Mary. (Mt 1:18; Lk 1:35)	God the Father had physical relation with Mary that caused the conception of Christ.
4	Jesus is the Creator while Satan is a created being.	Satan was the spirit brother of Christ.

MAN

	<i>Biblical View</i>	<i>Mormon View</i>
1	No pre-existence. Mankind (Adam & Eve) was created by God. (Gn 1-3)	Man existed as a spirit. His essence always existed and was never created.
2	Adam disobeyed God and death entered human race. (Gn 1-3, Rm 5:)	Adam's fall was not sinful but rather necessary for the propagation of human race
3	Man is an eternal being and will always be a man.	Man has the potential to be God just as Christ did.
4	Men do not turn into angels after death. (Rv 21:3)	Father Adam is now the angel Michael while Noah is the angel Gabriel.

SALVATION / GOSPEL

	<i>Biblical View</i>	<i>Mormon View</i>
1	<u>Personal salvation</u> is solely based on the merit of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. (1Pt 1:18,19)	Christ's blood only provides <u>universal resurrection</u> & does not pay for personal sin.
2	The gospel includes Christ (death, burial & resurrection) and <u>EXCLUDES</u> the law or works. (Rm 3:20)	Eternal life achieved through obedience to the Mormon church and having one's marriage sealed in a Temple ceremony by a temple priest.
3	Salvation only by His grace, through faith, apart from ALL works. (Ep 2:8)	Salvation is possible by a combination of faith, baptism in the church & works
4	The Lamb (Jesus Christ) was foreordained before the foundation of the world. (1Pt 1:20)	Mankind sanctioned the plan of salvation and the appointment of the Savior.

HEAVEN

	<i>Biblical View</i>	<i>Mormon View</i>
1	Eternal life is entering into an eternal knowledge and fellowship with God through Christ. (Jn 17:3)	Eternal life is the power to attain godhood & have children in heaven
2	Eternal life is a <u>gift</u> received from God <u>ONLY</u> by believing in Jesus Christ. (Ep 2:8)	Eternal life is achieved through obedience to the Mormon church and having one's marriage sealed in a Temple ceremony by a temple priest.
3	Bible speaks about <u>two</u> eternal places for	Three eternal kingdoms - Celestial kingdom,

	mankind - heaven and the lake of fire. (Rv 20, 21)	Terrestrial kingdom, Telestial kingdom.
4	Man can escape hell and go to heaven ONLY by faith in Jesus (not works). (1Th 1:9, 10)	Man must have faith and also <u>must</u> live by the Mormon doctrine to attain the highest kingdom.

CHURCH

	<i>Biblical View</i>	<i>Mormon View</i>
1	Salvation is possible ONLY by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. (Ep 2:8)	Salvation is possible by joining a Mormon church.
2	Church is the body of Christ and comprises ONLY of the saved. (Co 1:24, Ac 2:47)	Joseph Smith and some others received the Aaronic Priesthood.
3	According to the promise of Jesus Christ, His church would never be overcome by Satan. (Mt 16:18)	The church disappeared from the earth and therefore required restoration.

PRIESTHOOD

	<i>Biblical View</i>	<i>Mormon View</i>
1	All who trust in Jesus as their ONLY Savior belong to the royal priesthood. (1Pt 2:9; Rv 1:5)	Church members qualify for priesthood based on their individual merits.
2	Aaronic Priesthood was done away with when Jesus paid the ransom for all of mankind. (Hb 10:9)	Joseph Smith and some others received the Aaronic Priesthood.
3	Jesus Christ alone is the great High Priest. Priesthood after the order of Melchizedek is unique to Jesus Christ. (Hb 4:14, 7:20)	Joseph Smith and some others received the Melchizedek Priesthood (after receiving the Aaronic Priesthood).
4	Jesus Christ, the great High Priest is the ONLY mediator between God and men. (1Tm 2:5,6)	No one can enter into the kingdom of God without Joseph Smith.

OTHER UNSCRIPTURAL PRACTICES

1	Polygamy – Joseph Smith introduced polygamy as a “new and everlasting covenant”. Though officially discontinued by LDS in 1890, it is still practiced in secret. <i>[Men in the Bible disobeyed God's model of marriage, yet when Jesus Christ spoke of marriage, He mentioned ONE man, ONE wife (Mt 19:5)]</i>	
2	Discrimination by color – People with darker skin are cursed and not eligible for certain offices. <i>[In the Bible, we see that God loved the whole world (Jn 3:16) without any difference. Also God's heaven will have people from every tribe, tongue and nation (Rv 5:9)]</i>	
3	For Holy communion - wine is replaced by water. <i>[Jesus Christ used bread and wine when instituting the Communion – Mt 26:26-29)]</i>	
4	Similarities exist between Mormon temple worship and symbolism and the stories and symbols of Freemasonry. (ex – washings, endowments, anointing, communication of keys related to Aaronic Priesthood).	

Your eternal destiny is at stake. The Bible says that all who reject salvation through Christ shall take their place in the lake of fire. The Mormon teachings cannot be reconciled with the Bible's teaching about the salvation of our souls. The Mormon doctrine is clearly NOT from the God of the Bible. You can decide whom to believe in (Jesus OR Joseph Smith).

The plan of salvation in the Bible

Rm 3:23 – All have sinned and come short of the glory of God; *Rm 6:23a* – The wages of sin is death.

Jn 3:16 – For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever BELIEVES in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

Rm 5:8 – But God demonstrates His love towards us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Rm 10:9 – That if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. *Rm 10:13* – For who ever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Ep 2:8,9 – For by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast.

Rm 6:23b – but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.