



The following is a copy of the sermon notes for Sunday January 21st, 2018.

"Are Christians Safe"

Speaker: Pastor Wayne Flowers

We are doing a series called: "Trust Issues. Is Christianity Believable Today?"

We are presenting what we believe is the truth about faith, the Bible and the existence of God.

We are seeking to respond to the skepticism about matters of faith.

We are hoping to engage as many as possible through questions and discussion.

You can write out your questions on the hand-out card or email us at trustissues@ssc.church

Last week...The Bible...Fact or Fiction

This week...Are Christians Safe?

Why this title and topic?

Not about believers being protected from persecution.

It is about addressing the trust issues that non-Christians have with Christians.

Some of what I have to say is going to be painful, but helpful.

I want to be honest, but fair.

What is driving this defense?

Is it the desire to be right? No!!

Of course we want to stand for truth, but it is not so we can be antagonistic.

Compassion for people is what drives the desire to defend God's truth.

In knowing God's truth there is the release of God's peace and freedom.

There is salvation in the good news that we are seeking to convince others of.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation to all who believe.

Rom. 1:16

Do we want to know what our present day culture thinks about Christians?

There can often be polarized opinions...

1. No. I don't care what they think. Never have and never will.

- These believers would tend to be antagonistic or uncaring.

- Favourite scripture:

"For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men?" Gal. 1:10

2. Yes. I want to know if they like me.

I am troubled if I know someone is upset with me because I am a Christian.

- Favourite scripture:

"I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." 1st Cor. 9:22

3. Most of us find ourselves somewhere in the middle.

We care about what people think, but we also know that we cannot please everyone, so we live with that tension of being in the world, but not of the world.

So if there are issues of trust among non-Christians towards Christians we must remember:
Trustworthiness and credibility cannot be demanded or produced through our verbal arguments.

What are the actions we can undertake?

1. We must acknowledge the reality of broken trust and understand why this matters.

- First step towards addressing a problem is to acknowledge that there is a problem.
- We must acknowledge the skepticism.

This matters because...

We are the face of truth.

We are the face of the Christian faith.

We are the letter people read when wanting to know what God is like.

(Paul – 1st Cor. 3 Living letter known and read by all)

Illustration...

1. The Company. 2. The Product. 3. The Salesperson.

Isn't it interesting how an amazing company and product can be judged based on that one person seeking to convince you to use the product.

Illustration...the pastor at the restaurant...



2. We must own the things that we know in our heart we are guilty of practicing.

We are not responsible for the non-Christian's decisions, but we are accountable when our actions and attitudes have misrepresented a holy, just, and loving God and have pushed others away."

We cannot run away from the things we have been accused of.

1. Hypocritical.

When the life I live does not match the truth I embrace!

Are we the only ones who struggle? No! But we must be honest about our shortcomings.

2. Uncaring.

When people are just an "evangelistic statistic."

Illustration: True story...someone was approached...friendly, warm conversation. Next time, told me a bout a Bible Study. Talked excessively about it. Next time...invited me. I said I was not sure. **The conversation stopped!!**

3. Sheltered.

When our cloistered life has disconnected us from the hurting world around us.
We live in a Christian sub-culture.

4. Judgmental.

When we quickly and easily slap labels on people based on our surface impressions or shallow observations of their lifestyle or behaviour.

Not only own....repent. Change. Seek forgiveness from God and others.

Discussion questions...

How do Romans 1:16, 17; Eph. 4:15; Titus 2:10; 1st Cor. 9:22 relate to this topic?

Do you feel the tension of being in this world, but not of this world?

How can we do a better job at building trust those who do not follow Jesus?

Leave the title slide on the screen for this closing part (until we sing the song)

Allow me to add some perspective on this....

1. This is much deeper than managing our image by tacking on some more “cool” things.

This is living with the tension of bearing truth to others without isolating them.

As a counter-cultural movement in the world, I would suggest that our central question is not “How do we manage our image in this world,” but “how do we represent our Lord and obey his radical call on our lives?” (Owen Strachan)

2. A change in our behaviour will not automatically change the decision or destiny of the person who chooses not to believe.

It is still incumbent on every person to know and understand and hopefully embrace faith in God no matter what some of his followers have done or failed to do.

A breakdown in trust often begins with a disappointment, a misunderstanding or a miscommunication.

Disappointments...let’s talk about this!!

Sometimes we feel like Elijah in 1st Kings 19 – everyone has forsaken the living God to follow Baal. I am left alone. God’s response? I have 7,000 who have not bowed the knee to Baal.

We get disappointed in each other. Disappointed in leadership. Leaders and pastors in the people. Things could have been dealt with so easily. The devil magnifies the disappointment. (our disappointments become the driving force)

Accusations swell. Defensiveness rises.

Spiritual meanings and leading are sought to justify our decisions.

A culture of vulnerability, honesty, humility would circumvent the devil's tactics.

Trust must be established among ourselves as well as with those who are in our community.

We are all broken and flawed.

We all have blind spots!

We all must humble ourselves before God.