

Guatemala Mission Trip 2019

In-Country Devotional



- John 6:27 “²⁷ Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”
- Colossians 3:23 “²³ Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters,”

What do We Believe?

Essentials of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church

Langhorne Presbyterian Church has joined a new denomination: the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. This denomination has 7 Essentials of the Faith. In summary:

All Scripture is self-attesting and being Truth, requires our unreserved submission in all areas of life. The infallible Word of God, the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, is a complete and unified witness to God's redemptive acts culminating in the incarnation of the Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible, uniquely and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, is the supreme and final authority on all matters on which it speaks.

This year we will use a part of these Essentials of the Faith as our In-Country Devotions while we are on our 2019 mission to Guatemala. We will look at:

Practical Theology (the doctrine of God)

Christology (the doctrine and work of Christ)

Soteriology (doctrine of the means of salvation)

Holy Spirit (the doctrine and the work of the Holy Spirit)

Eschatology (the doctrine of last things, or end times)

Mission- (the purpose for which God created the world)

We recognize that personal faith of a team member may vary from these EPC Essentials, but wanted everyone to consider them as we share and minister during the trip.

We will do a debrief of the day's activities when possible each day, while in-country. Team members will be able to share what they are experiencing and how God is working in their lives. In addition, questions are included in this devotional so that those who wish to do so may keep a personal experience journal.

LPC Mission Committee

Sunday, January 27

Practical Theology (the doctrine of God)

EPC Essential: “We believe in one God, the sovereign Creator and Sustainer of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three Person: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. To Him be all honor, glory and praise forever!”

John Calvin wrote, “If we wish to have real wisdom we must know two things: we must know God and we must know ourselves. In order to know one of these properly, we must also know the other.

Knowing God. We cannot think seriously about ourselves without thinking about the One who made us, and continues to care for us. We have been given so many things in this life that we must think of the Giver.

Knowing ourselves. In order to have a right knowledge of ourselves, we must know God and know what we are like in God’s sight.

God created the world; God continues to sustain it for our good. God upholds all things by his power. It is in him that we live and move and have our being. God is in control of everything; he rules over all. There is nothing beyond his control. Jer 32:17 “Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.”

The doctrine of the Trinity was the church’s attempt to explain what the Bible said about this relationship. The historic formulation of the Trinity is that God is one in essence and three in person. Gal 4:4-6 “ But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.^[a] ⁶ Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba,^[b] Father.”

For You to Consider

“IF”: God’s nature of love and grace means that he always treats his creation with unconditional love and an attitude of mercy. If God is unchanging and consistent, this remains true even in times of judgment.

How is it possible to have both grace and judgment? “See Lamentations 3:22-23, Ephesians 1:7.

The “THEN”: How should this impact the way we live our lives? The way we minister to each other? Our evangelism?

In what sense is the doctrine of the Trinity a guide in what to believe?

Personal Experience Journal

What was the hardest thing that happened today and how did I handle it?

What was the highlight of the day? Who had an impact on me today?

What did I observe that I want to share with family and friends at home?

How did today affect my relationship with the Lord?

Monday, January 28

Christology (the doctrine and work of Christ)

EPC Essential: “Jesus Christ, the living Word, became flesh through His miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit and His virgin birth. He who is true God became true man united in one Person forever. He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. On the third day he arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where, at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He now is our High Priest and Mediator.”

With the Fall, our relationship with God was broken, and we lost the ability to lead an obedient life. Who was this Savior? In brief, we can say three things about Jesus: (1) He was fully human, (2) He was fully divine, and (3) these natures are a unity in one personality. God revealed Jesus to the Old Testament Jews by prefigurings and foreshadowings, by types and signs. See Isaiah 9: 6-7, Isaiah 53:1-12.

Jesus was born of a woman, from the womb of Mary. He grew in wisdom and stature. He displayed normal bodily responses to physical and mental stimulation. Jesus had all human emotions, but without sinning: compassion, moral indignation, distress, sorrow, amazement, joy. See Matthew 21:12, John 11:35.

Jesus lived a life that was righteous in every respect, a perfect life. The sinlessness of Christ is more than just an example to us. Since every sin carries with it the penalty of death, this perfect obedience was required in order for Jesus to offer a sacrifice of infinite value. See Romans 6:23.

Jesus is of the same divine nature as the Father. He is described as the creator, upholder and ruler of the universe.

Jesus did not think his equality with God a thing to be grasped, but Jesus emptied Himself, taking on human likeness, and humbled himself, even to death on the cross. By his atoning death on the cross, Jesus won redemption for multitudes. Jesus won for us a restored nature and a right relationship with God. See Philippians 2:6.

The resurrection of Christ is a promise that as Jesus has been raised from the dead, we also will be raised. See 2 Corinthians 4:14.

To Consider:

Jesus is our prophet, priest, and king. He speaks to us for God; he speaks to God on our behalf; and he rules over all. What does it mean for me to accept Him as all of these?

“Incarnational living” for Christians is defined as modeling the spiritual life of Christ on earth, and with those around us. Practically speaking, how can we do this?

Personal Experience Journal

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Tuesday, January 29

Soteriology (doctrine of the means of salvation)

EPC Essential: “Being estranged from God and condemned by our sinfulness, our salvation is wholly dependent upon the work of God’s free grace. God credits His righteousness to those who put their faith in Christ alone for their salvation, thereby justifies them in His sight. Only such as are born of the Holy Spirit and receive Jesus Christ become children of God and heirs of eternal life.”

Soteriology deals with the application of Christ’s death to our lives to bring us to a saving knowledge of God. What makes Christ’s sacrifice effective for us? Christ’s death does not bring us to right relationship with God without some action or response on our part. What action or response is needed, and how do we come to that response? S

Salvation involves regeneration, spiritual rebirth. Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again. He says, “I tell you the truth, unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). Paul echoes this thought. “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come” (II Cor. 5:17).

Justification is the act by which unjust sinners are made right in the sight of a just and holy God. We are declared to be righteous when God imputes the righteousness of Christ to our account. The necessary condition to this is faith.

We should feel Calvin’s compassion for all who do not know Christ. We can take part in evangelism as privileged partners of God. We are not responsible for the results, which are up to God, only for our faithfulness in proclaiming the message.

Faith and good deeds can never be separated. James says that faith without works is dead (James 2:18-24). In other words, if you have no works, you do not have faith. A true understanding of God’s grace to us makes us grateful to him, and the work of the Holy Spirit changes our nature; these together result in good works.

To Consider

What is the proper relationship of faith, works, and justification? How have I as an individual, experienced this?

Can you identify a precise time that you were “born again in the spirit”? If so or not, what was your conversion experience?

Personal Experience Journal:

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Wednesday, January 30

Holy Spirit (the doctrine and the work of the Holy Spirit)

EPC Essential: “The Holy Spirit has come to glorify Christ and to apply the saving work of Christ to our hearts. He convicts us of sin and draws us to the Savior. Indwelling our hearts, He gives new life to us, empowers and imparts gifts to us for service. He instructs and guides us into all truth, and seals us for the day of redemption. “

God knows we need help in changing. That’s why he not only forgives our sins, but also puts a piece of Himself inside us. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come (2 Cor. 1:21-22).

The Bible attributes divine qualities to the Holy Spirit. “No one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God” (1 Cor. 2:10-11).

What is the work of the Holy Spirit?

- 1) Revelation of Truth. It is the Holy Spirit who reveals truth to us. The Holy Spirit brings us to salvation and reveals spiritual truth.
- 2) Power. What is it that enables us as believers to do things that make us afraid? It is the power of the Holy Spirit: “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you,” Jesus promised (Acts 1-8).
- 3) Comfort. Jesus told the disciples at the Last Supper, “I will ask the Father, and he will send you another Counselor to be with you forever -- the Spirit of truth.” (John 14:16).
- 4) Prayer. The Holy Spirit “helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.” (Rom. 8:26-27).
- 5) Enabling for Service. The Holy Spirit also calls men and women to service and enables them to serve well.

In I Cor. 12:4-6, Paul says, “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one.” Paul emphasizes that, although there are diverse gifts, the giver is God.”

To Consider:

How have I seen the works of the Spirit alive in this country, this place?

How can I most faithfully use my gifts from the Spirit?

Personal Experience Journal

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How did today affect my relationship with the Lord?

Thursday, January 31

Eschatology (the doctrine of last things, or end times)

EPC Essential: “Jesus Christ will come again to the earth-personally, visibly, and bodily- to judge the living and the dead, and to consummate history and the eternal plan of God. ‘Even so come, Lord Jesus’ (Revelation 22:20).”

As Christians, there are some things about which we can be sure: (1) God remains in charge of history. (2) We have a purpose here. (3) The Lord will return. (4) This age of struggle will end in a time of righteous judgment by Jesus. (5) For every one of us, our time on earth is limited and will certainly end. (6) One day, we will rule and reign with Christ forever.

We are to do more than argue about when the end is coming, or about how it will unfold. We are to make a difference here and now. We have a purpose in the midst of struggle: to glorify God by following Christ with all of our hearts, minds, souls, and strength. The price of following Christ is clear: it is everything we have. It is all of our money. It is all of our time. It is every member of our families. It is every right we so often feel we deserve. It is every skill and talent we have, dedicated to him. The end IS coming. And God promises to use us to fulfill a worthwhile purpose while we are here.

In 2 Peter 3:10-14, the Spirit warns us about the end of the age:

“¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

¹¹ Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹² as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. ¹³ But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. ¹⁴ So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.” (NIV)

To Consider:

What have I been taught, or learned by experience, that points to the return of Jesus Christ?

How am I living a purposeful life, given a future uncertainty?

Personal Experience Journal

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Friday, February 1

Mission- Purpose for which God created the world

EPC Essential: “The Lord Jesus Christ commands all believers to proclaim the Gospel throughout the world and to make disciples of all nations. Obedience to the Great Commission requires total commitment to ‘Him who loved us and gave himself for us’. He calls us to a life of self-denying love and service. ‘For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them’(Ephesians 2:10).”

Every Christian should be able to state succinctly the purpose of his or her life. The first question of the Westminster Shorter Catechism is, “What is the chief end of man?” and the answer is “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.” When we become Christians we see that the world and all that is in it is from God, is governed by Him, and exists for his glory. There is no conflict between God valuing his own glory, and his seeking our happiness, our joy, in him. In fact, they are the same thing.

The entire creation gives glory to God. Isa. 6:3 says, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory.”

The natural world gives glory to God. In Psalm 19, the works of God are said to declare the glory of God. “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.”

The work of Christ on the cross was for God’s glory. In John chapter 12, Jesus was troubled at the prospect of his own death. But he was strengthened by the purpose of the cross, which is the glory of God.

The good works of the redeemed give glory to God. “This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit” (John 15:8).

The work of God in missions and outreach give glory to God. In Isa. 60:6, God proclaims the coming conversion of the gentiles, and says that he would send missionaries “to the faraway islands that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory. They will proclaim my glory among the nations.”

“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (I Cor. 10:31).

To Consider

If God's ultimate purpose for me is the display of His own glory, what opportunities to glorify God have been presented during this week?

Where and how am I responding to the "Great Commission" to take the gospel to all?

Personal Experience Journal

What was the highlight of the day? Who had an impact on me today?

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Saturday, February 2 (and beyond)

Reflections on the Week- The Christian (Gospel) World View

- Matthew 6:19-21 ¹⁹ “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
- Gospel Worldview Purpose: God made the world, filled with beings to know, serve, love God and one another
- The Problem: We pursue things for ourselves, lose peace with others and nature. Lost creation= sin.
- Gospel Worldview Solution: Jesus Christ defeated death, and we have a new heaven and new earth.

To Consider

How have I celebrated this Solution in my daily life, in my service, in my evangelism?

Personal Experience Journal

List the experiences of this week that will stay with me as I return home.

What can I take with me from this week that will continue my Christian growth

What do I treasure in my heart?