

#199 “A Crisis of Belief”
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Perhaps you know of people who have suffered so greatly or been brainwashed to such an extent that they do not even know for sure what to believe anymore. They might even question their salvation or even God’s existence, let alone the gospel of grace in Jesus Christ. They might have been so turned off by hypocrisy in their family, their church, or by their friends. They might have compromised so severely that their consciences have been defiled such that they are desensitized to sin and the Holy Spirit (Titus 1:15, 1 Corinthians 8:7). Then again, perhaps they were never saved at all, never having really believed in the gospel. Or, perhaps they believed a false or partial gospel which has left them confused and empty. The reasons that lead to doubt can be vast and complex, but the solution to freedom lies very simply through truth. As Jesus said in John 8:31-32, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” Jesus also said that those who seek the truth will find it (Matthew 7:7). In the Old Testament, Scripture teaches over and over that God will be found by those who seek Him with all of their hearts (Deuteronomy 4:29, Jeremiah 29:13). Their Spirit-directed search for the truth must inevitably lead them to the words of Christ, that is, the Scripture. Only God’s Word, because it defines and reveals truth, can set us free from the world’s lies and deceptions. Those who really want to know God will find Him by believing in His Word. There is no other way to freedom, life, joy, and peace.

This does not mean that those in crisis have to immediately get beaten down with Bible verses. Of course, this assumes that their doubt is from a heart that is truly seeking and not just trying to make excuses for sin. In mercy and patience, a person can be pointed to evidence that God exists and that His Word is reliable and divine. If we ever find ourselves so lost and confused, we need to go back to the basics. First, we must determine whether or not God exists. That shouldn’t be too complicated given that God has etched His signature over all of creation such that it testifies to His supernatural genius and design (Romans 1:20, Psalm 19:1-2). We need only think about a bird, a plant, a tree, or the human body, for example, to recognize that these things could not possibly be a product of chance, natural law, or human design. God has given us a conscience that is innately aware of right and wrong and of their eternal implications (Romans 1:32, Ecclesiastes 3:11). We need only contemplate why we feel a moral obligation or a sense of guilt pertaining to various matters to recognize that we are more than a cosmic mix of chemicals produced by a chaotic accident. The evidence is without bound when it comes to God’s existence, for He purposefully made it that way. Once we are assured of God’s existence, we need to ask if He has revealed more about Himself to us. In other words, if God does exist, can He be known? If so, how? The God of the Bible can only be known to the extent that He desires to be known and that we desire to know Him by reading and studying His Word. Otherwise, God becomes a product of man’s imagination and sinful preference, being given attributes that are convenient for us in our selfish pride. Satan has made many counterfeit religions, all claiming to know the one, true God. But what sets the Bible and true Christianity apart from false teaching is,

first and foremost, the first coming of Christ and His death and resurrection. Only Christianity holds that Jesus was more than just a man, more than just a teacher, and more than just a prophet. Only Christianity believes that His death provides the only hope of salvation; all other religions are works-based and man-centered. Our God is alive because our Savior conquered the grave. No other religion has such a Savior. Add to this that even a casual reading of other religious books shows how sin has infiltrated their pages, from how women are unfairly treated, to how unbelievers are viewed, to how God is supplanted and confused with His creation, etc. This is not to say that what has been done under the label of Christianity is superior to what has been done under the banners of other world religions. It is simply to say that those who know Jesus know that there is nothing that can compare. His truth cuts through the religious externals and false pretenses, and it leads those who seek Him into nothing short of heavenly bliss. There is no other way because Jesus is the only way. This is the truth, and those who truly want to know it will find it by finding Him.

A crisis of belief is not necessarily something to be ashamed about as long as it is met with a desire to seek and know the truth with all of our hearts. Then it can be used to deepen our faith, to give us reasons that support our beliefs, and to make us more unshakeable than before. If nothing else, it will make us honest before God and others as to where we really stand. We need more who profess to know Christ who will think deeply about what they believe and why, so when times of trial come, they can stand, being absolutely sure that their Jesus is with them, loving them, and enduring with them.

A crisis can either be met with collapse or confidence. By faith in Christ, we can emerge from crisis with increased confidence. As Proverbs 14:26 says, "In the fear of the LORD there is strong confidence, And his children will have refuge."