"Believing Jesus"

Do you believe that Jesus is truly the Christ, the Son of the living God? Hello, I’m Phil Sanders. And welcome to our Bible study, “In SEARCH of the Lord’s Way.” Today we’re exploring what it means to believe, truly believe, in Jesus Christ.

Welcome to In Search of the Lord’s Way, we’re here to search God’s Word for His will. We believe God, so we believe what He says in His Word, the Bible. God has shown us the way to eternal life in Scripture. We’ve learned that God will keep every promise, but we also realize that God makes a distinction between those who will obey Him and those who won’t. So, we study the Scriptures and strive to follow the Lord. We’re delighted and thankful that you’re on that journey with us. We want to be a part of your life each week.

If you wish to be right with the living God, faith is a necessity. You probably recall the verses that we all heard in Bible classes from our childhood. The Lord Jesus, you remember, said in John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only (some versions say only begotten) Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish (or shall not perish) but have eternal life.” But do you recall the next two verses, verses 17 and 18? The Lord also said, “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.”

Believing in the name of the only begotten Son of God is necessary if we are to have eternal life. It’s not just believing God exists; it’s also believing in Jesus as God’s only Son. That is His only begotten Son. We must put our faith in Christ. The Lord Jesus said in John 14:6, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; (and) no one (no one) comes to the Father but through Me.” The way to God is through faith in Jesus. And we must put our faith in Him.

Now we offer the information on this program free. And if you’d like a printed copy or a CD of our study, mail your request to In Search of the Lord’s Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also stream this program on our website at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we’ll read from Hebrews 11:1 to 6, and then we’ll explore what it means to believe in Jesus.

Our reading today comes from the letter to the Hebrews chapter 11 verses 1 to 6 where he defines, he illustrates, and then talks about the importance of what it means to believe.

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old gained approval.

By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible. By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks. By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God. And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Oh how important it is that we believe.

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Let’s pray. Father help us to have a strong faith. To do as You have willed for us in our lives. To believe the things that You’ve taught us. And grow in our hearts a deeper love and desire to serve You. This is our pray in the name Jesus, Amen.

For the next fourteen minutes, we’re gonna to look at faith from God’s perspective. Now, many look at God and Christianity through the eyes of popular culture. Salvation isn’t an entitlement that God owes us. It’s a gift to those who believe. We should believe what God teaches and not read into our faith what we think it should mean. Let’s listen to God, asking what kind of faith God wants from us. We seek to please God.

Now, throughout the Bible, God distinguishes those who please Him and abide in His grace from those who don’t. Hebrews 11:6 says, “And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God (come to God) must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.” We must believe in God, but we must also know about the God that we believe. We must know that He only rewards those who seek Him. Now, many people believe a God exists, but the God they seek is not the God of the Bible.

Our postmodern society thinks it should design its own god and tell its god what to believe rather than hear the God who created them. Some manufacture a god that fits the times. Well, faith in a culturally-correct god is not the same as faith in a holy God who made the world and will one day judge us according to His word. We must believe in God as He reveals and defines Himself in His Word, not in the naive and non-judgmental god that’s popularized by our culture.

Our culture thinks of God as one who winks at sin, who never condemns anyone, and who believes everything that we believe. Many think the God of all grace doesn’t care about righteousness or truth. Others have forgotten that God is not just holy but utterly holy. Habakkuk 1:13 says of God, “Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You cannot look on wickedness with favor.” Some think God doesn’t care what we believe or do, but God is vitally interested in our living holy lives devoted to the truth, serving the Lord Jesus Christ.

We cannot speak of having faith in Jesus Christ but then believing anything that we want. Nor can we speak of having faith in Jesus Christ and living any way we want. When a person comes to Christ as a believer, He belongs to Jesus. Paul told the Christians at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 6:19 to 20 “You are not your own, for you were bought with a price.” If we wear the name Christian and believe in Jesus Christ, we can never forget that. We are not our own, we belong to Jesus. He is our Lord and Master, and we are His servants.

Moses wrote in Psalm 90 verse 2, “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.” The eternal God stands above our changing culture. The Lord is not subject to the changing whims of humanity. His holiness, His righteousness, His purity, and His justice do not change with popular opinions. We must accept Him and His revealed will as He gave it to us instead of trying to remake Him in our own image. Faith in God doesn’t mean that we can believe whatever we please. How can anyone say He trusts in God, when he doesn’t believe what God says? Faith means we believe what the Lord teaches. Well, why? Because He is Divine and we’re not. He knows all things and has all authority and we do not. He gives us His wisdom in the Bible, because He loves us and wants us to know the truth.

Believing in the God of the Bible also necessitates trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ, His Son. The Old Testament prophesies of Jesus as the coming Messiah. The New Testament tells how He fulfilled dozens of prophecies. Believing in Jesus means you believe the claims that He made to be God’s Son.
Jesus said that He would rise from the dead, and He did. Jesus said Jerusalem would fall, and the Romans destroyed the city in 70 A.D.

The Bible says in John 1:11 to 13 that, “He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, (welcome Him, accept Him) who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” Many people approach Christ with preconceived notions. And if Jesus fails to measure up to what they want or what they imagined, they’re not willing to believe. Some will only believe if Jesus never judges anyone or never calls for moral change. Well, that kind of Jesus doesn’t exist. To know the real Jesus, we must read all the New Testament says about Him, not just pick out certain passages and then ignore the rest.

The Lord Jesus doesn’t play games. He came to His own people but they didn’t receive Him. The Lord Jesus blesses only those who believe in His name, who believe that He is the Christ, and what He teaches. Jesus loves you, but He’s not obligated to save you unconditionally. Jesus isn’t your servant; He’s your creator and Lord.

Faith stands between being accepted and being rejected. God made that decision, and we can’t overrule God. The Lord Jesus said in John 3:18, “Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.” On another occasion Jesus taught the Jews that He had come from the Father in Heaven. He said in John 8:24, “I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins.” Believing in Jesus means believing that He truly is the Christ, the Son of God. It means believing He is the fulfillment of God’s prophecies of the Messiah.

Saving faith isn’t simply believing in the act of believing; it’s believing in the Person. Believing in the Person Jesus means that you believe that what He claims, says, and promises is true. If I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, then I’ll recognize His authority over my whole life. Faith includes duties and responsibilities. The Lord Jesus said in John, Luke excuse me Luke 6 verse 46, “Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?” If I regard Jesus as Lord, I cannot pick and choose which of His commandments I will obey and which I won’t.

There are times when we wonder why God asks the things that He asks. But trusting faith means we act even when we don’t understand. Hebrews 11 and verse 8 says, “By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.” Abraham didn’t argue with God. Because he trusted God, he simply obeyed. He showed his confidence in God, though he didn’t know what would happen. We trust God in things we don’t know, because we find Him trustworthy in what we do know. And we know God is true and loving.

The apostle Paul said in 2 Timothy 1 and verse 12, “For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.” Paul could face the future with peace and confidence, because He knew God and how God kept His promises. We can trust God in what we do and we can trust God in what we don’t know, because God has proved Himself worthy of our trust in what we do know!

Hebrews 11 and verse 3 says, “By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.” By faith we can understand that God created this world in six days, just as He said in Genesis, chapter one. While no one was around to witness the creation, we can trust God’s word about the creation. Why? Because we know God is trustworthy, and worthy of our faith.
The early disciples were willing to die for their faith for two reasons. First, they were eyewitnesses of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus “presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days” according to Acts 1 verse 3. They saw Him, heard Him speak, and touched His body. They were so convinced that when they were threatened by the Jewish council, they replied in Acts 4 verse 20, “we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.” They were eyewitnesses of the resurrection of Jesus Christ!

Second, they believed in Jesus, because they saw how He fulfilled the many Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. Now, if you’d grown up as a Jew in first century, your Bible studies at the synagogue would constantly include prophecies about the coming Messiah. Jesus was born in the right place, Bethlehem, at the right time, during that forth kingdom, in the right tribe, of the tribe Judah, with the right family lineage, and with the right kind of mother—a virgin. A star announced His birth, and wise men came from the East looking for Him. The apostle Philip said to his brother Nathaniel, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph” (John 1 verse 45). As you read the book of Acts, the apostles and evangelists repeatedly preached that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah.

What we know is true about Jesus is that He is the promised Messiah who arose from the dead. And for this reason we call Him “Lord” and “Christ.” Since we have confidence that He is the Son of God, we can trust what He says about creation, about Adam and Eve, about the flood, about Sodom and Gomorrah, and every other story found in the Old Testament. When Jesus spoke of the Old Testament, He treated what He read there as true, historical events. For this reason we can believe the Old Testament is trustworthy and true. And we trust Jesus Christ.

Because we have a living Savior, we want a living faith and not a dead one. James 2 verses 14 to 18 says, “What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,’ and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. But someone may well say, “You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.” Now dead, inactive faith is useless. It doesn’t reveal one truly believes in Jesus Christ. And it doesn’t save.

Saving faith is always obedient. The Lord Jesus said in John 3 and verse 36 that, “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.” I tell you you can claim to believe; but unless your faith leads to obedience, you cannot be right with God. When the Bible speaks of saving faith, it’s always an active, obedient faith. Galatians 3:26 to 27 says, “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” James said, “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.” Are you a doer of the Word or merely a hearer?

Let’s pray together. Oh Father help us to be believers who love, who trust, and who obey. In Jesus name, Amen.

After Lazarus died, Jesus visited his sisters Mary and Martha. In John 11:23 to 27 the Scripture reveals a conversation between Jesus and Martha. Jesus told Martha, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha said to him well, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”
We need to ask ourselves, “Do you believe this?” Do you believe God created the world in six days? Do you believe the Bible is true? Do you believe Jesus arose from the dead and is Lord? Do you believe Jesus’ death on the cross can atone for your sins? Do you believe that you will one day be raised from the dead? Do you believe in the Judgment Day? Do you believe in Heaven and Hell? Faith in Christ means believing what He taught and what He did to give us eternal life.

If you really believe, put your faith into action by repenting of your sins; confessing Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God; and by being baptized into Christ. Now, baptism is an immersion in water of a penitent believer. It’s done in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. Baptism is the time when you become a child of God, free from sin, and added to the Lord’s church and that’s all of God’s doing. The Lord Jesus said in Mark 16:16, “He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.” We hope you’ll become a Christian today.

Well we hope that today’s study about faith in Jesus Christ has blessed you. If you want a free printed copy or a CD of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord’s Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org.

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Please worship with a church of Christ in your area. They’re the reason we don’t ask for money. And if you’re looking for a church home, we’ll be happy to help you find one. Churches of Christ love guests, and you’ll be glad that you attended. Well we’ll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God’s Word with us and tell a friend about this program. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord’s Way.