

TRUTH COMMUNITY

- TEACHING GOD'S PEOPLE GOD'S WORD -

Why Do We Believe in God? #2

Selected Scriptures

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Welcome to GraceLife. Very excited to be up this morning with what I have to say to you today.

Last week, we started our consideration of perhaps the most fundamental question that a man can face. The question is, why do we believe in God? Why do we believe in God is very basic, but it is very foundational; it is very fundamental. And if you see people trying to articulate why they believe, the truth is that we need a little help from the Scriptures to speak forth this with all of the power and clarity that we should.

Based on the response to the last week's message, it seems that this topic has struck a little bit of a chord, a nerve of some sort because there was quite a bit of discussion about it that many people engaged me in which was encouraging to me.

Let me emphasize that last week's message and this week's message (I'm going to wrap this up this week) let me emphasize that this is no academic matter. You will notice, those of that read any theology and study it at all that I am not delving in to the human philosophical arguments for the existence of God—that's not why I believe in God and that's not why you should believe in God and that's why we are not approaching it from that perspective. Those things are weak and feeble compared to the truth of God's word, plainly stated. It is important for us to know this and have it ready on our list because eternal truth and the judgment of souls is at stake. We need settled convictions that we can articulate clearly, to anchor our lives, animate our witness to the lost and assist us in the likely event of future persecution. If God calls us to suffer for Christ, it needs to be clear in our mind why we are doing so--why is it that I am suffering for an unseen God. And beloved, these truths will help us stand confidently in every arena of life in the face of the most mocking oppositions of those who hate God so that we can be an approved workman before our Lord Jesus Christ, a workman who does not need to be ashamed.

By way of summary, by way of overview, the thing that I have really wanted to emphasize in these two weeks is that our belief in God is an objective belief, it is not subjective, it is not a matter of personal opinion. We believe in God because He has revealed Himself, He has made Himself known. We are responding to Him not generating Him in the fancies of our own imagination. God Himself has generated our belief in Him through His own work. There are five aspects of His work that we are

pointing to. We addressed the first three last time, I will review them quickly for you in case you were not here last week.

1. He has Revealed Himself in Creation.

All of these are alliterated with the letter “C” if you are taking notes. We believe in God because He has made Himself obviously known in creation. You observe the heavens day or night and you conclude that there is a powerful God who established that magnificent scene and that magnificent order with such precision and with such majesty and with such eternal vastness. You conclude that there is a powerful God who established it by His wisdom. Psalm 19:1: “The heavens are declaring the glory of God.” We believe in God because we go outside and look up and we see Him on display through what He has made.

2. He has Made Himself Known in Conscience

Creation first and then conscience. We believe that there is a God because a principle of conscience that operates in mankind. Humanity in general and individuals in particular have a transcendent sense of right and wrong that is similar across the ages of time, which is similar across differences in culture, across time and across geography and across cultures, there is a basic fundamental common sense of right and wrong that is operative in all of humanity. That sense of conscience points to a transcendent righteous creator. The Bible says in Romans 2:15:

The law of God is written in their hearts.

God has imprinted His law, His moral righteousness on the human consciousness in a way that points to the reality of His existence. And as we said last time, you say, “Are those things really enough for somebody to believe? After all, there are atheists in the world. Maybe that’s not so good of an argument.” Let’s put it this way, God says that it is more than enough, God says that on these two principles alone, people who deny Him, people who do not seek Him, are without excuse. We are not dealing in the realm of possibilities and probabilities here beloved despite what some Christian apologists say. We are dealing with divine certainties that would be a certain measure of divine judgment on the final day. I am not trying to lead you into probabilities and then help you just kind of jump over the remaining doubt. We are declaring divine certainties to which every man is accountable under all of creation. We do not have the liberty (oh this irritates me that people even do it) we do not have the liberty to diminish divine certainties and appeal to people based on probabilities that this is more likely than not. That is detestable unfaithfulness to appeal to a lost person on this route. Far to the contrary, we are declaring divine certainties for which there is no excuse not to believe. Get that to your head beloved, let it strengthen your soul and embolden your witness to those who would mock and deny. God has said on these bases that men are without excuse. We do not have the liberty to give them an excuse by creating some level of doubt and appealing to them on the basis of probability.

3. He has Spoken in the Canon

Thirdly (now that I have got that off my chest) thirdly, we believe in God based on His creation, based on the principle of conscience, thirdly, we believe in God because of the canon, because God has not only made Himself known in nature and has made Himself known in the realm of conscience, He has made Himself known in the 66 books of the Bible. Over periods of thousands of years, over forty different authors, God has made Himself known through this book that we hold in our hands. God spoke through the human authors of the Bible, He disclosed Himself, He revealed Himself, He has made Himself known in the pages of scripture. 2 Peter 1:21, speaking of the prophesies of scripture said:

Men, moved by the Holy Spirit, spoke from God.

Stated differently, God spoke through them and inspired the scribing of the scriptures in such a way, preserved them over time so that as we sit here in Southern California in the year 2008, we have the very word of God in our hands. God has spoken. God has made Himself known through His inerrant word, through His impeccable, perfect word. “The law of God is perfect, restoring the soul.” That’s why we believe. And as you start to put these things together in your mind beloved, and you step back from this and view it on a macro scale because that’s what we are doing, we are just looking at these things in a macro, helicopter type of view rather than viewing them all in detail, what should strike your mind and pierce your heart and give you great confidence in your faith is the fact that God has spoken in so many different ways.

His revelation in creation is much different from revelation in conscience, but they are both equally compelling. His revelation in His word from Genesis to Revelation and all points in between is utterly compelling and inexhaustible and it authenticates itself. The authority of the scriptures is self-authenticating. We don’t justify the truth of scripture by appealing to some non-existent higher standard. Scripture authenticates itself, it is the highest authority because it is the direct word of God, from the very creator and maker of the universe whose own existence is its own proof.

We are dealing in divine certainties beloved, in a book, the skies, and in the hearts of men, God has made Himself known. And that would be true beloved if you had never been born, that would be true after you die. I say that simply to help you see and to recognize that these truths about God are self-authenticating and they are independent of what you think about them. These exist outside the realm of your personal opinion--they are objective.

That was just a quick review of the last week’s message and that was enough to get me wound up. We are going to pick it up there. You get the Bible, you pick it up, you read it, where does the canon lead you? Where does the testimony of God leads you? There is a fourth reason why we believe in God, in some ways, the best reason of all, in fact, let me qualify it: the best reason of all:

4. We believe in God because of Christ

When you read the Canon of Scripture, when you read the 66 books of the Bible, you find that the central focus of Scripture is leading you to the Lord Jesus Christ. As we read and study the Scriptures, they point us to Christ as the climax and the perfection of God's self-revelation. In John 5:39, Jesus said:

You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about me.

Jesus says, when you read the Scriptures, they are testifying about Him. Scripture is not just a wide revelation of God, although it is that. There is a focus, there is a direction, it is designed to lead you to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ is the climax of God's self-revelation.

Turn to the book of Hebrews. I want you to see these things in the Scripture. There is nothing in anything that I have said in these two messages where you have to take my word for it. This is independent of your speaker this morning; these are things that you can search out on your own. And beloved, every man on the face of earth who has ever lived is going to be accountable for these things. And so the last thing that any one in the right mind should want to do is to follow along some piper who claims to be an atheist, denying God. You hear that kind of thing and you say, "Wait a second, time out, let's go through creation and conscience and the canon and Christ. You don't even have a platform to spout your follies in light of these things."

Hebrews 1:1 says this. We are talking about the revelation of God in Christ. Hebrews 1:1:

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers and the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

It's interesting; you see creation tied up even in this revelation of Christ. Verse 3:

And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature and upholds all things by the word of His power when He had made purification of sins (there is the principle of conscience invoked even) He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty On High, having become as much better than the angels as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

Beloved, in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have the most excellent, the most perfect revelation of God that there could ever be. When you read about Christ, when you read His words and you read His works in the scripture, you are seeing God moving and acting on the human stage.

Now in Old Testament times, if you think about it, God spoke in a variety of different lesser ways. He spoke to Moses in a burning bush. He spoke to Elijah in a still, small voice. Isaiah saw a vision of His glory in the temple, and on and on we could go. But when you compare those instances which in themselves were very spectacular, but when you compare those instances of God's self-disclosure in the Old Testament and then look at the person of Christ, these glorious things fade because of the greater glory that has surpassed them, the greater glory of Jesus Christ. In Christ we see a full and final revelation of God that goes beyond anything in the Old Testament because Jesus is God Himself in human flesh. What more can He do to reveal Himself to men of flesh except to come in the flesh and that is exactly what He has done. Jesus Christ radiates the glory of God. He is the exact representation of God's character because He is God, as we discussed months ago in our series on the deity of Christ. He represents God so clearly and so accurately and so perfectly in a way that simple prophets never could have been. The prophets' voice spoke and pointed to Christ and in Christ we see the fulfillment of the Old Testament ministry, in Christ we see God Himself.

Yes beloved, God has made Himself known uniquely in the eternal Son of God. We read the Scriptures, we read the life of Christ in the gospels, we read the extension of His church in the book of Acts, we read the interpretation of His life in the epistles, we read about His second coming in the book of Revelation, and all of that screams the reality of God to us because God has made Himself known. We have read God's own testimony about His own Son and as a result, we believe in Him.

The apostle John in his gospel said:

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

People saw Him, they held His flesh, they heard His words, they touched Him, they saw His miracles, they saw Him buried in the grave, they saw Him resurrected. These are objective matters outside the realm of human subjectivity. We saw Him, we saw His glory and it was undeniable—John said. He goes on and says no one has seen God at any time, God in His unveiled, full glorious essence of which no man can look at and live. But speaking of Christ he says, the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, he has explained Him.

The life of Jesus Christ, the words of Jesus Christ explained perfectly the character of the living God because He is the living God. Jesus Himself said in John 14:9:

He who has seen me has seen the Father.

Perfect equivalence because they share the same very essence, to see Christ is to see God, to read about Christ is to read about God. Here is what I want you to see beloved in the context of what we are talking about this morning. God's written revelation in the canon points to His personal revelation in the Lord Jesus Christ. His written revelation points to His personal revelation.

Why do we believe in God? Listen and appropriate this, collectively; you and I need to get this through our thick skulls that are so quick to disbelieve and so quick to doubt, so quick to question when the slightest of trials comes our way. Why do we believe in God? Listen, we did not make this up. Do you get that? We did not make this up. We did not make up creation, we did not make up the conscience, we did not write the Bible, we did not make up about Christ by whom we measure time here in the year 2008 in the year of our Lord. We believe because God has made Himself known so clearly and so fully and so undeniably that any one that would question it is without excuse—that's why we believe.

We believe in God in response to His self-disclosure in creation, conscience, the canon and Christ. These four reasons are broad, they are very deep and they are varied, they are different, they are independent, mutually supportive witnesses to the same reality, objective reasons that would be true if none of us had ever existed—it is apart from you beloved, it is outside of you.

Now, there is a fifth reason that we believe in God. But before I get to it, I need to deal with an extended side issue that may be troubling some of you, that you may be thinking about. Someone might say—perhaps one of the New York Times best selling authors would be here this morning who have written books about the new atheism and mockingly call out from the back of the room, “Hey, preacher, if your reasons for believing in God are so good and so compelling, why don't all men believe in God then? Why is it that there is such a growing chorus of voices who are saying, ‘I am an atheist, I do not believe in the existence of God, there is no God.’ Why is that, preacher, if your stuff is so good?”

Well beloved, if you are taking notes, put this next section under this heading—it's kind of a break-out section that doesn't really fit with the five points “why we believe in God?” Put it under this heading: “The Seeming Contradiction” Beloved, we are not afraid of this question that is following. If God has made Himself known, why do people still deny Him? We are not afraid of that question at all. Why do people say that they are atheists? Why are these seeming atheists grow in number and why are their books so popular? When did you last write a best selling book preacher? And I haven't, that doesn't diminish God's self-testimony, it doesn't argue against the clarity of God's self-revelation.

Do the existence of people who call themselves atheists undermine why we believe in God? Write down this really technical special word. Does the existence of atheists argue against the clarity of God's self-revelation? Here is the special word I want you to write down: “NO!” It does not at all.

The Bible explains their unbelief and the Bible condemns their unbelief as a deliberate (get this) as a deliberate morally culpable act of rebellion against the Creator that they themselves know. The Bible condemns their unbelief as a deliberate morally culpable act

of rebellion against their Creator which they themselves are conscious of. They have no intellectual problem with the concept of God at all beloved, their problem is moral, and the Bible speaks to this with definitive authority.

Turn to the book of Romans chapter 1. There are couple of passages that I want to take you to here and help you think through these things. Romans 1 beginning in verse 18, here is what God thinks about unbelief, it makes Him angry, it insights His judgment. Romans 1:18:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them, for God made it evident to them. For, since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature had been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made so that they are without excuse.

There is no excuse for this—none. Paul shows us why men deny the reality of God, he says they “suppress the truth in unrighteousness...” they hold down the truth like a spring that wants to spring up, they hold it down and apply pressure on that spring that will well up within the testimony of their own conscience. They deliberately repress what they have clearly understood and known in their hearts to be true. They know this and the Bible says so. This is not a debating technique on my part; this is what God says about it, they are deliberately holding it back on an ongoing basis. In other words, beloved, when people claim to be “atheists” (for those of you on the tape, I am putting that in quotes with my fingers) when people claim to be “atheists” they are lying, no matter what they say. They are lying because they must stifle their own conscience to spread these lies and mock God and mock those who believe in His name based on His own self-disclosure. It is ungodly, it is unrighteous, it is contrary to the truth that God has made evident within them and to them in all of creation—they are lying, they are being deceptive.

It was interesting, I saw a video couple of weeks ago of the guy who was explaining and stating confidently so-called that there is no God. And when he got to his punchline, his punchline was, “I’m telling you, there is no God” and he is looking out at the tiny audience that was gathered together there in front of him—very interesting, he dropped his head when he said that. He said, “I’m here to tell you,” looks down, “there is no God.” His body language betrayed the testimony of his own conscience.

You say, why would they do that? Why would they deny that which they know? Why would they deny that which is obvious? Why is it a growing phenomenon in modern society? It is not an intellectual problem. It is not that they found anything new in the intervening 2000 years since Christ walked the face of the earth beloved—it has nothing to do with that whatsoever, it is a moral problem. They would rather have sin; they would rather have self autonomy than acknowledge the reality of God echoes within their own conscience. The Bible is definitive on this. In John 3:19-20, our Lord Jesus Christ said this (actually, the Apostle John, depends on how you view it, something that the

Apostle John was interpreting as he wrote this, but it is all under the inspiration of God)
John 3:19:

This is the judgment that the light has come in to the world and men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their deeds were evil.

They loved darkness, they loved sin, in a realm of self-created reality, the realm of their imaginations where they pretend there is no God, they prefer that to truth because they love darkness. They like it that way, they want the lights turned out—that’s what they want, so that’s what they make up. Verse 20:

For every one who does evil hates the light and does not come to the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

If they acknowledge the existence of the God of the Bible, their whole world collapses because all of a sudden, there is a judge, all of a sudden, there is accountability, all of a sudden, there is a moral standard. And that changes and revolutionizes everything about the way they have approached life and threatens that which they love spending their life doing. And so, rather than acknowledge the evident testimony that echoes within their heart and are all around them in creation and in the canon and in Christ, they make a deliberate choice to say no to the God of the Bible. They spit on it; that’s what they did to Christ and that’s the same thing that is animating them today, it’s the spitting in the face of God because they love darkness more than light, because they are willing, loving, slaves to sin—that’s why.

So beloved, those of you that are here today that love Christ, that love God’s word, listen, don’t let that rhetoric, don’t let smooth-talkers, don’t let appeals to so-called science about the origins of the universe intimidate you—don’t do that, that is totally unnecessary. The Bible says they have a hidden agenda in their hearts which explains everything about these massive houses of cards that they have constructed that from a distance might look appealing and imposing, but when you get up to it, a little flick, it all comes down. And that little flick is the powerful finger of God’s self-revelation in creation, conscience, the canon and in Christ. These things are undeniable, these are truths which are unassailable. And if you look when you are sensitive to those issues, when you look and listen to what these men say, they betray themselves, in their own words, they prove the proof of the Bible.

In a very recent article in the Daily News, titled “The Religion Fight Goes to Vegas” is reporting on a debate between one of these new atheists and a Christian apologist. The article reported the atheist as saying this: “Religion” (He likes to lump everything together; Christianity, Islam, Judaism, he lumped everything under the rhetoric of religion, that makes his argument easier, makes for an easier strawman.) Religion is “A human invented delusion that is sexually repressive and a threat to human survival.” You think about what he said there. What is prominent in that, what stands out to me, “sexually repressive” look at that, this man feels repressed in his lustful desires.

Something is restraining him in the pursuit of his lusts and what is repressing him is his own intrinsic awareness of God. He says “I want to pursue this,” what he is saying is, “I will pursue this more if only there wasn’t this human invented delusion that I call religion.” That’s it, it has nothing to do with the arguments in his book, it is about the desires of his heart. He loves evil, he loves sin, he wants to pursue it and he blames religion for holding him back. So how can he liberate his flesh? It is easy, just define God out of existence, create a construct in your mind that eliminates that restraint of conscience or at least give it a try. Define God out of existence and may be those restraints will go away and the lusts of the flesh can be indulged more fully.

Look at that in light of what Jesus said:

Every one who does evil hates the light and does not come to the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. Men love the darkness rather than the light.

There you have it. The Bible says, don’t be deceived by these silly arguments, go to the heart of it. So what are atheists doing? They trade obvious truth, they trade obvious, self-evident truth that echoes within the halls of their own heart, they trade obvious truth for an incoherent world view. They uphold big bangs and evolution to deny God’s self-disclosure in creation. They use psychological tricks to deny guilt instead of responding to the testimony of their own conscience. They worship the earth and the environment instead of Jesus Christ as He is revealed in the canon of scripture. They hire theological liberals to attack the truth of the Bible and the deity of Christ and on and on it goes.

Listen beloved, when you look at it for what it is, it makes absolutely no sense, it is absolutely incoherent. They are living in a self-created, self-imposed mental oblivion. And that mental oblivion is the result of turning your back on God and His self-disclosure. And the outcome of that is eternal destruction and judgment at the hands of a righteous and holy God who when they stand before Him with their atheism behind them and the full glory of God on display before them in terrifying judgment, for it is a terrifying thing to fall in the hands of the living God. The reality of scripture will be most fully displayed in Psalm 53:1 where the Bible says:

The fool has said in his heart “there is no God.” They are corrupt and have committed abominable injustice.

It is foolish, they change the truth of God for a lie, the Bible says, for the sake of their own sinful, lustful desires, they throw away their eternal soul to face the judgment of God and create philosophies and world views that make no sense. Beloved that’s foolish, it’s ridiculous, that’s incoherent, it’s total nonsense. So understand beloved that it is not that unbelievers don’t get it when it comes to the reality of the existence of God—they get it, they just don’t want it. But because the testimony of God is so vast and varied all around it, they have to come up with something to explain what is evident and they just create lathers of water in a swimming pool that is up against an ocean—it’s not going anywhere.

Think about it this way beloved, this will really help you understand this little illustration. They are like a judge who is about to hear a case and that judge, before any evidence is presented, before the law is known, before any attorney arguments are articulated, that judge has taken a bribe to determine the outcome of the case. No amount of compelling evidence presented to that bribed judge will cause him to do what is right. No amount of compelling law or presentation will sway that judge away. He has taken a bribe; he has a vested personal interest in an outcome that over rides consideration of truth.

People who deny the God of the Bible are just like that. They have a vested interest in their self-autonomy, their self-made religion and their sinful lives. If they acknowledge the existence of the holy God of the Bible like their conscience begs them to do, their world would collapse and they would have to change. God is a threat to them and so they try to kill Him and in Christ they did.

The way the Jews and the Romans treated Christ when He was actually here on earth is just a reflection that are animated by the same things that animate these so-called atheists and God-deniers today—they just want Him done away with. But their efforts will always fail because they cannot change the nature of fundamental reality.

What does that mean beloved? Understand this in your own personal witness. Understand this as you see debates in all this stuff, understand that no argument will force a so-called atheist to melt. Nothing that you can say can make an atheist melt before you. If they won't melt before the testimony of creation and the testimony of conscience and the testimony that is canon and the testimony in the person of Jesus Christ, do you think they are going to fall down before your self-constructed argument? No, their vested interest is too great. And so what that means for us is that we construct our world view, we understand why we believe in God in faithfulness to God's self-witness and we let Him take care of those who deny Him. We let Him deal with the hearts of those who do not believe.

What I mean by that is we articulate these things, we proclaim these things, but we don't step outside of them to try to find out a better argument that will turn their heads. No, we just stick to what God has said and we are faithful to that and trust Him for the results of it and we plead with God to open their hearts and minds that they might believe.

Now, lest you and I get smug about our position in Christ and our declaration of why we believe in God, understand this. You and I need to remember that we all, every one of us, were once in that lost condition in one way or another. Where they are at, is where we used to be at. Some of us openly denied God, others acknowledged Him verbally, but denied Him with our lives. Ephesians 2:1 said:

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

The apostle Paul says:

Among them, we, too, all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, we were by nature children of wrath even as the rest.

We were just like them, in principle if not in the exact way that we lived out and articulated our own unbelief. So as we study these things together beloved, as we proclaim them, understand that we do so not from some claim of intrinsic moral superiority, we ourselves at once were dead in sin, dominated by the devil and doomed to suffer the wrath of God—we were in that same condition, in the face of the same testimony. So how is it that we now believe in God when we were once like those who reject Him, what made the change?

That brings us to the fifth and final reason that we believe beloved:

5. We Believe in God Because of Conversion

I just ask your patience for a few extra minutes today as we finish this. We believe in God as a result of our conversion. In a technical sense, the theological term “conversion” means to turn to God in repentance in faith—there is a precise definition for that. I am using the term “conversion” here in a slightly broader sense to refer to the work of God in securing our personal salvation. The work of God is securing our personal salvation. If you would turn to Ephesians to continue reading with me in verse 4. Paul had just said we were like them, we lived in the same lusts and desires and were by nature children of wrath. Verse 4:

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).

Praise God that He broke those chains that held us, the spiritual bondage in which we lived. Beloved get this. If you are a true Christian, a born again believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, saved by His shed blood, made fit for heaven by His righteousness, understand this, we believe in God because God Himself has worked in our lives and made us spiritually alive even when we were dead in sin. The Holy Spirit opened our blind eyes so that we could believe the gospel and truly know God—that’s why we believe, that’s the distinguishing point, that’s where it has been made personal, it is still a work of God, it is still God making Himself known. He exercised grace toward us in our conversion, He has taken those objective realities that we have been discussing and applied them to our individual hearts, we could not and we would not have done it ourselves. Our belief stems from the work of God.

I want to read a couple of passages to you. 1 Corinthians 2:10, Paul says:

For to us, God revealed these things of salvation, God revealed them through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him, even so the thoughts of God, no one knows the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God so that we may know the things freely given to us by God.

2 Corinthians 4:6:

God who said light shall shine out of darkness is the one who has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge and the glory of God in the face of Christ.

God shone it into our hearts, that's why we believe beloved. Step back from this and if this isn't giving you goose bumps, check your pulse. The God of creation, the God of conscience, the God of the canon, the one who walked on the face of the earth in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, that is the God who has shone the light of the knowledge of Him in to our hearts. From this great macro view of God, this great exalted view of who God is as He has revealed Himself to all of the world, to all of creation, to every man under the sky, that is the God who has worked in your heart and brought you to the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are other passages that I wanted to go to, but time forbids it.

Why do we believe in God? The true Christian can rightly say (and this is what I want you to be able to just tick off in your mind, write them on your fingers if it helps—I don't care). In addition to creation, conscience, the canon and Christ, I believe because God opened my heart to believe, He changed me, I am converted, I once was dead, but now I live. Think about it beloved, that's true. If you are a Christian, that's true and therefore, it is right for you to say it, "I once was dead, but now I'm alive in Christ, I was dead in sin, and now I live."

If you are a Christian, rehearse these things over and over again in your mind so that your faith can be strengthened. Your faith is real, it is not in vain, it corresponds to an objective reality outside of yourself.

If you are not a Christian, take these things to heart. If you are an atheist, understand that there is a God and I don't have to look down of my podium to hide in shame when I say it. There is a God and you have broken His law. You are in a condition of guilt and condemnation before the holy judge of the universe.

My friend, stop playing games with your conscience and bow the knee. Stop running from God because He intends good for you. You see, the good news is that this holy

righteous God who has revealed Himself is the same God who forgives sinners, who has authority to forgive transgressions against His law. He sent Christ to the cross to bear the punishment for sin for any one who believe in Him. And He raised Him from the dead after He had been dead and buried, raised Him from the dead to prove beyond doubt that this was the only savior for all of mankind.

Yes my friends, God Himself, this God of whom we have been speaking, will forgive all of your sins if you repent and put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Your guilty conscience will be silenced because God has taken the righteousness of Christ and put it on your account--your conscience responds to that. Your conscience says the demands of righteousness have been fulfilled, you go free. Your fight against God can be changed to peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not too late, that's why He came. The Bible says, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved." Let's pray.

Father, we thank You for the way that You have made Yourself known. We thank You so much for the clarity and the reality of our own salvation in Christ. Father, would You strengthen us in faith and call even more God-haters and God-rejecters to Yourself. Make Yourself known to them just like You did to us that You would be glorified in the salvation of souls for all of eternity. We thank You, we acknowledge You, we bow before You in Jesus' name. Amen.