The Absolute Necessity of Belief
JESUS KNOWS
Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.—John 2:23-25
But to all who did receive him, **who believed in his name**, he gave the right to become children of God (1:12)

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Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (20:31-25)
• The Problem
  – Consider setting:
    • Religiously charged atmosphere
    • “New face” on the scene
    • Evidence presented to change minds (signs)
• The Problem
  – Jesus knew something was lacking
    • Many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people.
    • Many began to trust in him. But Jesus didn’t trust them, because he knew all about people. (NLT)
• The Problem
  – Jesus knew this because...
    • He knew all people
      – He didn’t need a testimonial
      – This can be a comfort
        » He is the ideal intercessor

He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.” (John 21:17)
• The Problem

  – Jesus knew this because...
    • He knew all people
      – He didn’t need a testimonial
      – This can be a comfort
    • He knows everyone’s level of sincerity
      – The sincerity of early believers quickly faltered
Nicodemus

- Likely illustrates the lack of depth in early believers
  
  "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." (John 3:2b)

- Jesus’ response shows what must take place
  
  - Born of water and Spirit (3:3,5)
  - Nicodemus should have known this (3:10)
I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. – Ezekiel 36:24-27
The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. And he said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” And I answered, “O Lord GOD, you know.”(37:1-3)
Then he said to me, “Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD.” (4:6)
• Nicodemus
  – True belief is the only way to salvation
    • And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life (John 3:14-15)
The Samaritan Woman

– Also demonstrated little understanding at first
  • The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet” (4:19)

– Grew in understanding
  • The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.” Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.” (25-26)
• The Samaritan Woman
  – Developed real belief
    • Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, “He told me all that I ever did.” / They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.” (39,42)
Does Jesus Believe in Me?

- The present danger of tepid belief
  - Jesus knows what is – or isn’t – in my heart

And he said, “All these I have kept from my youth.” When Jesus heard this, he said to him, “One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” But when he heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich. – Luke 18:21-23
Does Jesus Believe in Me?

• Developing real belief in Jesus
  – Cannot rely on the external

  • But to all who did receive 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. (John 1:12,13)
Does Jesus Believe in Me?

• Developing real belief in Jesus
  – Cannot rely on the external
    • Pride must be removed

He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?” And they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” (9:27-29)
Does Jesus Believe in Me?

• Developing real belief in Jesus
  – Must understand and apply what is learned
    • Knowledge alone is insufficient
    • More than knowing the Bible; it is living the Bible
    • Bible study must be more than academic exercise
Does Jesus Believe in Me?

• Developing real belief in Jesus
  – Understand relationship of belief and baptism
    • Requires understanding “the who” and “the how”
      – **The Who**: The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! (1:29)
      – **The How**: Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you (I Peter 3:21)
"I Believe in Jesus"