

INTRODUCTION

1. We are exhorted in 2 Corinthians 13:5 (NASB) to “Test [ourselves] to see if [we] are in the faith; examine [ourselves]! Or do [we] not recognize this about [ourselves], that Jesus Christ is in [us]—unless indeed [we] fail the test?”
2. Those sobering words come to everyone who names the name of Christ.
3. But admittedly so, it’s not easy to “test” or “examine” yourself.
4. Because in doing so, we either find ourselves as our greatest critic or we say we don’t need to do this because we have already believed in Christ.
5. But my question to you this morning is “Have you truly believed? Or have you believed in vain?”
6. Do you have a true and living faith or demonic faith?

7. James 2:19 (NASB) You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.
8. Modern preachers today have not made this any easier.
9. Their call to salvation sounds like this:
10. "Accept Jesus Christ as personal Savior."
11. "Ask Jesus into your heart."
12. "Invite Christ into your life."
13. "Make a decision for Christ."
14. And you may say, "I have done that."
15. You might be surprised to learn that none of those statements are based on biblical terminology.
16. They are the product of a diluted gospel.
17. In fact It's not the gospel at all.
18. It's not the gospel according to Jesus.

19. Those statements never mention Lordship, confession, repentance or following Christ.
20. Both what is said and not said falls woefully short.
21. This kind of preaching lacks conviction.
22. It says nothing that convicts of sin and calls for repentance.
23. It's Christianity light if it's Christianity at all.
24. This is dangerous.
25. This leads sinners to think God is not concerned about their sin.
26. That it's not an issue.
27. But it is an issue.
28. And getting the Gospel right is crucial.
29. It's crucial because it's the difference between living faith and dead faith (James 2:17); between the wicked, who "go away into eternal punishment" and "the righteous [who enter] into eternal life" (Matt. 25:46); between those who

will hear, “Well done, good and faithful slave.... Enter into the joy of your master” (Matt. 25:21) and those who will hear, “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness” (Matt. 7:23).¹

30. There are those that say to become a Christian all you have to do is assent to some facts about Christ.
31. But “belief into His name (Jesus’ name) involves much more than intellectual assent. It called for wholehearted commitment of one’s own life as Jesus’ disciples.”²
32. This week you are going to be exposed to the true gospel.
33. We will talk about what it means to truly believe.
34. What is the lordship of Christ.
35. What is biblical confession.
36. What is sin and repentance.
37. And what Jesus meant when He said, “Follow Me.”
38. Let’s address the first one this morning.

¹ John MacArthur, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: John.

² John MacArthur, The MacArthur Study Bible: John 2:24.

39. What does it mean to truly believe?
40. There are 3 things that I want us to consider this morning as we look at True Belief: First, “The Definition of Belief” then “The Command of Belief,” and finally “The Display of Belief.”
41. So basically I want you to see that belief is commanded and what kind of belief is genuine and then how it manifests itself.
42. First...

LESSON

I. The Definition of Belief

A.W. Pink says, belief “is the principle saving grace, and unbelief the chief damning sin.”

Since that is the case, it is critical that we understand this word.

The Greek word for believe is *pisteuo*.

This verb comes from the word *pístis*, which means faith. *Pisteuo* means “to believe, have faith in, trust, to be firmly

persuaded as to something, to believe.”³ It means “to believe to the extent of complete trust and reliance.”⁴

Of the writers of the Gospels, Matthew uses the verb ten times, Mark ten, Luke nine, John ninety–nine.⁵

There are two passages that I believe will help us to define belief: John 2:23-25 and Romans 4:21.

A. To Commit One’s Life to Jesus Christ - John 2:23-24

V.23, “Many believed in His name”

V.24, Jesus “not entrusting Himself to them”

Both words come from the same verb pisteuo.

The NKJV translated “entrusting” as “commit.”

This brings a whole new light to John 3:16 which uses this verb.

“That whosoever believes in Him.”

³ Zodhiates, Spiros. [The complete word study dictionary: New Testament](#) 2000 : n. pag. Print.

⁴ Louw, Johannes P., and Eugene Albert Nida. Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains 1996 : 375. Print.

⁵ Vine, W.E., and F.F. Bruce. [Vine’s Expository dictionary of Old and New Testament words](#) 1981 : 116. Print.

“Though they believed in Jesus, Jesus did not believe in them. He had no faith in their faith”⁶

Jesus “knew all men and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man” (v.25).

In John 1:47-51 (NASB) Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no *deceit!*” (dólos from délō, to bait. It’s used to speak of fraud, guile, deceit)⁷ 48

Nathanael *said to Him, “How do You know me?”

Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” 49

Nathanael answered Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.” 50

Jesus answered and said to him, “Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” 51

And He *said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”

B. To Be Fully Assured of God’s Promises - Romans 4:21, “being fully assured”

⁶ MacArthur, John F. The MacArthur Study Bible: John 2:24-25.

⁷ Zodhiates, Spiros. The complete word study dictionary: New Testament 2000 : n. pag. Print.

Πληροφορεῖσθαι, (plerophoreo) “be fully convinced, wholly certain.”⁸

Marvin Vincent says the idea is to be “filled with conviction.”⁹

It is translated “fully convinced” (NKJV, ESV) and “fully persuaded.” (NIV)

Abram’s faith was truly astounding. For some forty years before it was fulfilled, Abram believed God’s promise to give him an heir.¹⁰

Applying these two words to the gospel, what does it mean to truly believe? It means to be “committed,” “fully convinced” of the truth of the gospel, of who Jesus is and of His atoning work.

II. The Command of Belief

Paul said in 2 Thessalonians 1:8 (NASB) that Jesus will deal “out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.”

⁸ Dunn, James D. G. [Romans 1–8](#). Vol. 38A. Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998. Print. Word Biblical Commentary.

⁹ Vincent, Marvin R. *Vincent’s Word Studies*.

¹⁰ MacArthur, John F., Jr. [Romans](#). Vol. 1. Chicago: Moody Press, 1991. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.

Jesus used the same force in Mark 1:15 (NASB) “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent (imp) and believe (imp) in the gospel.”

The command of Gospel is to repent and believe.

The Gospel is to be obeyed.

- A. By Peter - Acts 2:38 (NASB) Peter said to them, “Repent (imp), and each of you be baptized (imp) in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- B. By Paul - Acts 16:31 (NASB) They said, “Believe (imp) in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.”
- C. By John - 1 John 3:23 (NASB) This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.
- D. By Jesus - Jesus said to the Jews in John 8:23-24 (NASB) “You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. 24 Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.”

The verb pistueo (believe) is not used in the imperative here but what He says is. If you do not believe, you will die in your sins! What's the alternative of not believing? Dying in your sins!

III. The Display of Belief

A. By Abraham - Romans 4:18-25

He believed (v.18), He did not waver in unbelief (v.20), He grew strong in faith giving glory to God (v.20), He was fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform it (v.21).

B. By Paul - Acts 9:1-22

C. By Men and Women of Faith - Hebrews 11

D. By Jesus' Brothers

1. Matthew 13:55-56 (NASB) Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? 56 And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this man get all these

things?”

2. John 7:5 (NASB) For not even His brothers were believing in Him.
3. James 1:1 (NASB) James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.
4. Jude 1:1 (NASB) 1 Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.

E. Genuine Faith Produces Good Works

1. James 2:21-24 (NASB) Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? 22 You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; 23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,” and he was called the friend of God. 24 You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.
2. 1 John 3:14-18 (NASB) We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. 16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

3. Titus 3:8 (NASB) This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.

4. Ephesians 2:10 (NASB) For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

F. Genuine Faith Produces Repentance (regeneration, faith, repentance)

1. Jesus said to the chief priests and elders in Matthew 21:32 (NASB) For John came to you in

the way of righteousness and you did not believe him; but the tax collectors and prostitutes did believe him; and you, seeing this, did not even feel remorse (metanoia) afterward so as to believe him.

2. 2 Timothy 2:19 (NKJV) Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”
3. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (NASB) Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.
4. Galatians 5:16-25

CONCLUSION

1. Have you truly believed in Jesus?
2. Romans 10:9-13 (NASB) 9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. 11 For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.” 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; 13 for “Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.”
3. If you are saved you will be different than you were before.
4. It will be clearly known that your life belongs to Jesus Christ.
5. Let's pray.