

Why Do We Believe in God? #2

Why Do We Believe in God?

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It's a pleasure to welcome you to Truth Community Church. We're glad that you're with us this morning, particularly in light of what we have to share from God's word today. It's no secret that in the world at large and in the way that most of us were perhaps trained in our public education, that our world is built on a premise of evolution and a godless approach to life; that if there is a God, they say that he really doesn't amount to much, and really the whole nature of public education has become a means to define God out of existence. And yet here we are gathered together as believers in God, believers in Christ, believers in the Scripture, and we realize that there is a major confrontation; there is a conflict between what we teach and what we believe with what the world at large would say to be the truth about the nature of existence, and we feel the weight of that, we feel the need and the compulsion and the desire to help you, and especially to help you young people to be able to grab a hold of what Scripture says are the reasons that we believe in God, and the reasons that we reject what our world at large would teach us to believe and to think about the nature of reality. We don't hesitate to say that the world is wrong; that its proclamation of an anti-God approach to life is utterly contrary to reality, it is mistaken, it is false it is demonically driven. And yet at the same time, we realize that it's not enough simply to say that and to announce it, you need to have reasons for why you believe; you need to be strengthened in your understanding of why it is that we believe in God and particularly that we believe in the God of the Bible and that's what this series is about.

We started it this past Tuesday, we introduced it and I'm going to do just a little bit of review for those of you that weren't here. We'll advance it today and then we're going to conclude it this coming Friday at our Good Friday communion service. So we're kind of doing a little bit of a three-part series here, tying it together. I didn't want to rush through the material because it's good for us to have this presented to our minds over time so that we're thinking about it throughout the week and we're cultivating and mulling it over and chewing on it and letting it digest into our minds so that it becomes a part of us. Of all the things that we teach, we try to teach out of the Bible and everything that the Bible says is important, but there is something uniquely foundationally important about this that I want you to be able to grasp so that it is at your ready command at any time the thought even pops into your mind; that you would be able to rehearse a series of five proofs about the existence of God that would anchor you and stabilize you so that you're not tempted to be intimidated when fast-talking, glib opponents of God and atheists would stand up and

mock you for what you believe. For you young people who are trying to decide, "Do I believe because I believe or am I just borrowing my parents' faith," I want all of us to be able to sink our roots into these, draw from the water of God's word, and as Scripture describes, to be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water. There is no reason for us to be weak, to be vacillating, to be unsure about the truth of what we've been taught. There is every reason for us to be confident and to proclaim like a man against a society that increasingly violently opposes us, there is every reason for us to be strong and very courageous, but it's important for us to be anchored in it as we move forward. We need convictions to anchor our lives, to animate our witness, and to assist us in the persecution that is inevitably going to come in greater waves in days to come as there will be efforts to silence us, to marginalize us, to mock us. We need to know these things and to know them well and to be convinced of them so that we can stand firm as our Christ is worthy of.

So in general, we're answering the question: why do we believe in God? And the answer to that is this: we believe in God because he has made himself known. That's the simplest way that we can state it and then we're going to look at five areas in the ways in which that God has made himself known. But in answer to the question, it starts at that very fundamental premise: we believe in God because he has made himself known. My friends, my brothers and sisters in Christ, it must be very clear and established in our minds what I'm about to say. We must be very clear on the fact that we believe in God not because of something subjective in us. It's not because we find that belief comforting. It's not because we need something to believe in to get us through the difficulties of life. It doesn't start with us. Everything that we're about to see here today and on Friday, everything that we're going to see exists independently of us. It's true whether or not you had ever been born. It doesn't depend upon whether a man believes it or not, God has, as an objective matter outside of the feelings and beliefs of men, God has made himself known and we believe in response to what he has declared about himself. Our belief is in response to something else. It is secondary, it is not the cause of the existence of God, the existence of God is what produces our belief. It's very important to understand that because we will be accused of having imaginary friends and all of that. That's just rhetoric that has no substance in reality.

So the first two points here are going to be review from what we did on Tuesday night, and so I'm going to touch them very briefly. We believe in God because he has made himself known. Where has he made himself known? That's the question. If someone is earnestly asking that question of you, you don't have to say, "I know that he lives because he lives in my heart," even though we sing that song sometimes, that's not a right answer. A person can't look into your heart and see what's there. A person can't...it's not a safe grounds for belief for someone to believe simply because you tell them that you believe in your heart. That doesn't give them something to evaluate it on their own. That's not where God has primarily expressed himself.

Where has God made himself known? First of all, he has made himself known in creation. He has made himself known in creation. This is review from Tuesday. Scripture says that you observe the heavens and you observe the order of nature and you conclude

that there is a powerful God who established it by his wisdom. Psalm 19:1 says that, "The heavens are telling of the glory of God." So in the external creation all around us, in the order of the planets, in the order of the sun day by day, the display of the moon night by night, the kaleidoscope of the stars moving on a predictable path despite the fact that nothing hangs them, nothing suspends them in space, the fact that they are able to move in a predictable order with such grandeur and infinite majesty is the imprint that God has put on his creation that testifies to his existence. Scripture says the heavens are telling of the glory of God, and as we saw from Romans 1, Scripture says that for a man to live under the umbrella of that display of glory and to suppress the knowledge of God, to deny the existence of God, is a culpable act of unbelief. It is a moral failure. It is a moral transgression. It is a sin against that which is evident to his own very face, and we're going to look at that a little bit more later today, but the starting point for answering the question, "Why do we believe in God?" Is to say, "Well, look around you. This is self-evident." It is evident in creation and God says in his word that the heavens are declaring his existence and the glory and the power of his might through the very act of creation which every man anywhere in time, anywhere in the world, can look at and should be led to that immediate and obvious conclusion. So we would start and someone says, "Why do you believe in God?" Well, it starts in what's all around. God has put his unmistakable imprint on his creation and his creation testifies to his existence without fail and for men to deny the existence of God in light of creation about them, is culpable, damnable sin. There is no other way to look at it. Scripture makes that very plain. If you're interested in exploring this more, you can look for the CD that's out on the table, I believe, from this past Tuesday's message.

Now, secondly, we believe in God because of creation, secondly, we believe in God because of the principle of conscience. All of these start with "C" to help make them easily rememberable. Yeah, that's a good word, right? Easily memorable, easily called to mind, that's what I'm trying to say. We believe in God because there is a principle of conscience that is operative in the human race. Mankind has a general sense of right and wrong that permeates across time and across cultures. There is a transcendent sense of right and wrong that people don't have to be taught to understand that it is an act of evil for a group of schoolchildren to be slaughtered in their classroom. People don't have to be taught that spiritual hypocrisy in men who would claim to speak for God is wrong, it's evil, it's wicked for a man to say, "This is what you should believe and do," and yet for him to live a private life that contradicts his words. Everybody understands that that is despicable and it is wrong.

Well, the question is and you could multiply this in looking at the general acts of the laws of different societies and finding that there are common areas of agreement against murder and things such as that, the question is: where does that common principle come from people who have never met each other? Who come from completely different backgrounds? That have completely different educations? Where is that general sense of revulsion at evil, where does that come from? Well, Scripture teaches us that God not only has imprinted his existence, testified to his existence in creation in a way that is observable, when you go inside the heart of men, Scripture tells us that there is a principle of conscience at work that testifies to the existence of God as well. Romans

2:15 says that the law of God is written on their hearts and somebody might say, "Well, I didn't see it. I didn't know. You know, I've never seen a Bible. I've never heard the Gospel of Christ. How can God condemn me then? How could someone be judged for sin if they had never heard of Christ? If they had never seen a Bible, how could they be judged for sin?" Scripture says that God will evaluate and judge men on the basis of their own conscience if they have never heard the word of God, and that even on that basic principle that is imprinted on the heart, even by that standard, men fall short of their own inward intuitive sense of right and wrong and God will judge them according to the standard that they carried about in their own heart and yet did not keep, the standard in their own heart which they willfully violated and went against.

When you think about it, for somebody to say as probably all of us have said at one time or another, for somebody to say as is so commonly heard, "I know I shouldn't do this but I'm going to do it anyway," realize that there is a massively important spiritual transaction that is going on there. Somebody is saying, "I know what the right thing to do is and I'm going to violate it." Scripture says, "Don't trifle with that idea of righteousness because God will judge you according to that very standard." Someone could say, "I know that it's wrong to move in with my girlfriend or my boyfriend but I'm going to do it anyway." Scripture says, "You don't need any other Scripture to condemn you. Your own conscience told you that was wrong and you did it anyway and therefore you have incurred guilt on your soul, and that you are in desperate need of forgiveness and a Savior as a result of that because you cannot wipe away your own iniquities."

Creation and conscience testify to the reality of God in a way that is objective; it is outside us. We can observe these principles in creation and in conscience across men and say, "Where did that come from?" That's the question that's supposed to be asked. "Where did that come from? Did this just happen?" And to say that creation just happened is foolishness. To say that a principle of right and wrong that transcends time and culture just happened is foolishness. You can observe what is around you and see the testimony that God has put in creation that he is a powerful God as expressed in creation, and that he is a righteous God as expressed in the principle of conscience that every man carries about in his heart. The law is written right there and testifies to the existence of the one who put it there.

What we said on Tuesday was is that these are principles of what's known as general revelation. It's revelation that is available to all men everywhere if they would only look; if they would only seek, they would find that this testimony to God is printed there for all to see. However, there is an aspect of that that is, while it is a perfectly good testimony to the existence of God, it is lacking in the sense that it doesn't lead men to a Savior. It doesn't tell us everything that we need to know about the character of God. It doesn't tell us how we can find forgiveness of our sins, it merely puts us on notice that this God exists and puts us on notice that we should seek him still more, and if we seek more, the question then becomes: where would we look? Where else would we find him? Where could we find this God revealed? And that brings us to our third point and for new material for the series here this week, and we find God revealed, point 3: in the Canon,

the Canon of Scripture, c-a-n-o-n. The Canon of Scripture is where God has revealed himself and made himself known.

The term "Canon" refers to the 66 books of the Old and New Testament as we have them in our English Bible. The Bible records God's words to his creatures and with that, let me invite you to turn to 2 Timothy 3 as we get into Scripture now, as we have completed our review and we look more deeply into it, remembering that what we said was we believe in God because he has made himself known. The question is: where has he made himself known? In creation, in conscience, and in a unique way, God has made himself known in this book that most of you have on your lap. God has revealed himself in a book. 2 Timothy 3:16 says that, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." When you open the Bible, you are looking at, you are reading the revelation of God. You are reading where God has made himself known.

2 Peter, a little further back in your Bibles after the book of Hebrews, turn there and we'll look at one other passage of Scripture here. 2 Peter 1:20 says that we are to "know this, first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." They spoke from God. God spoke in the process of inspiration, moving men to speak and to record his word. God has spoken, as it were, in creation; in a language without words, God has spoken in creation; in a language without words, God has spoken in the principle of human conscience. Here in the Scripture, we have God speaking in human language and making himself known. These two passages describe the process of what is called inspiration. God, in the person of the Holy Spirit, moved in the human authors of these Bible books so that they wrote precisely what he wanted them to write. God so moved and so operated through their personalities and their intelligence and so directed them that when they were penning their words, they were writing the very word of God in what they recorded. They wrote the very word of God without error in perfection, making known to men what God intended to be revealed. Beloved, this is very very significant. Over 1,500 years, through 40 authors who wrote 66 books as they stand in English, God has spoken in the Bible.

Now, think about this with me for just a second. You start to realize how inexhaustible, how comprehensive, how massive the revelation of God is. You have a Bible in front of you, the pages from Genesis to Revelation in my Bible total well over 1,000, probably I didn't look at this but 1,268 pages in my Bible of revelation from God, in addition to the principle of conscience that operates in my own heart, in your heart, and across humanity; in addition to the daily nonstop revelation that comes from creation around us. Beloved, you start to see the cumulative impact of what we're discussing here. There is never a moment in time where any man anywhere is not subject to the ongoing revelation of God because all of us live in the realm of his creation which testifies unceasingly to his existence. You go to the micro level and find it in conscience, and then on top of that, as if that ceaseless revelation were not enough, God has put a book of over 1,200 pages in front of us and said, "Here is my word to mankind." Well, mankind is on notice. Men are

on notice that God has made himself known and for a man to have a Bible in his life, for a man to possess the word of God and to neglect it, to not open it, to not read it cover to cover, is an act of inexcusable neglect. Men have to deny the existence of God in the face of overwhelming, relentless, abundant testimony that God has given to his own existence. You can see why Scripture says in Romans 1, that they are without excuse. No one is going to be able to say anywhere in the course of time, "But I didn't know. Nothing told me about that." That is not true. That is the great lie of our generation which we have inherited from many. That is not true. God has revealed himself in creation. God has made himself known in conscience. God has disclosed himself in a book that takes weeks to read cover to cover, if that's all that you do.

So when we consider and answer the question, "Why do we believe in God?" you young people especially and many of you have been taught well by your parents and taught well in other churches and praise God for that, but I also understand that there is still this realm of your heart that says, "This is what I've been taught but what do I believe myself? I'm not sure inside my own heart what I think about all of this. I'm just coming into my own. I want to think for myself." Fair enough. Good for you that you're not just living off of borrowed faith. You have to think in light of what God has done and where God has made himself known. You must consider the testimony of creation for yourself, the reality of conscience for yourself, and above all, young people, you must open the Bible for yourself and read it on your own so that you can see for yourself with your own eyes and your own understanding what God has made known in his word. If you refuse to do that and say, "I've heard enough about it," listen, you have no excuse. Every one of us, not just the young people, every one of us in this room should humble ourselves before the word of God and open it and say, "Lord, here am I. Send me. Lord, here am I. Help me understand your word. Give me understanding that I may know thy testimony," Psalm 119:125. And you go to the word of God and say, "God, help me understand. Help me find you in this. Your word says that this is where you're found. O God, help me to find you here in it."

You see, and there's something I said on Tuesday that I want to come back to. We'll address this again more in just a moment, I guess, but what I want to come back to is for us as Christians, for those of you that believe the word of God and love Christ and have turned from sin and put your faith in him and you have been born again, I mean, praise the Lord that we can be brothers and sisters in Christ on this. But what I want to help you understand and to think all the way through and to help you perhaps make another step toward spiritual maturity, it's important for us to understand our own position. It's important for us to understand the Christian position. Don't discard this by saying, "Well, I know a neighbor who won't believe any of that of what you're saying." That's not the point. We're trying to understand our own position. There is another reason why your neighbor doesn't believe that I'm going to cover in just a moment, but what you need to understand as a faithful humble Christian, what the basis of your own faith is, we believe because God has made himself known and we receive, we respond to, we respect, we revere, we bow before, we welcome, we yield ourselves to the fact that God has made himself known. We have put aside the principle of autonomy. We realize that we need God to speak, that our minds are not the final judge of what is true, and that we look to

these things where God has made himself known and as a little child, we humble ourselves before them and say, "God, I receive your testimony as you have chosen to give it in creation, in conscience, and now in the Canon. Lord, I bow before it. I humble myself before it and I receive your revelation, your self-disclosure as authoritative in my life and I will be unbowed and unmoved by the fact that people mock me for my humble trust in you." It is critical for you to understand that and that we stand on the ground that God has established rather than simply trying to formulate what we believe in a way that somehow would be acceptable to an unbeliever. The unbeliever is not the judge, does not get to set the standard by which God makes himself known. No, we come and we look at what God has done and we receive it on his terms and then and only then do we address, "Well, what about the fact that people don't believe?" The difference in those starting points is huge, it's massive, it's critical for you to understand. So if we stopped here, we would look and we would say, "There is more than abundant reason to believe."

Now, one other thing, let me say that you'll sometimes hear mockers say, "Well, if God exists, let him show me a sign. You know, let him explode something in front of my eyes. Let him cause the sun to spin funny. Or let him make a muskrat appear or whatever just like that," and they just demand a sign from God and say, "Then I'll believe," and when God doesn't give that to them, they say, "You see, there you go." Well, look, Scripture says, Jesus says that it is a wicked and adulterous generation that seeks for a sign. It is not legitimate for a man to demand that God prove himself on that man's own terms. That's not legitimate. God has already made himself known in so many ways that are relentless and nonstop, that there is more than enough for a man to explore and to understand and to ask questions and to receive. There is more than enough testimony already and so you can't in rebellion demand a sign that says, "I don't want any of this stuff that God has already said," you can't reject that and then demand a sign on your own terms as the proof whether God exists or not. That is not legitimate. That is culpable rebellion and we don't bow to that. We don't cater to that. We're not intimidated by that. We say, "No, you need to go to the testimony that God has already given." And if you are unwilling to do that, if you are unwilling to break away from your video games or your television or your earthly pursuits long enough to consider what God has said, then you have no complaint about the revelation of God and the way that he has disclosed himself. If it's not that important to you, that's up to you, but understand that there will be judgment as a consequence, as a result. It is not for the creature to demand a particular kind of revelation from his Creator. The Creator makes himself known, the creature bows in humble response and says, "I received this as it is."

So, beloved, what we're saying in other words is that we let God define the terms of the debate. We let God define the terms of his self-disclosure. It has pleased God to reveal himself in these ways that we have been talking about, and it is not for us and it is certainly not for an unbelieving skeptic to come to God and say, "You have to do it my way." On what ground do they speak to the Creator that way? What kind of mindless arrogance is that? God has already spoken and he has said enough. You, skeptic, you, unbeliever, you, mocking, hostile enemy of God, simply don't want to engage God on his terms and that brings judgment.

That's a way of introducing, this is a side point of what I'm about to introduce. So we've said creation, conscience and Canon. It would thrill my heart to know that in the coming days that you are just reciting those in your mind. Why do we believe in God? Creation, conscience and Canon. Creation, conscience and Canon. And that that's just starting to operate in your mind because that mental repetition is where it really takes root. And as you yield yourself to the mind of God in these things and you repeat them and rehearse them again and again in your mind, you just become more and more settled in it. You see, that's what we want. We want you to be settled. We want you to be confident. We want you to have an assurance that is unmoved by the world around you.

Now, that brings us to a side point here. Someone might say, "Pastor, if your reasons for believing are so great, if God has made himself known in such irrefutable ways as you insist, why then don't all men believe in God? Why is it that you have atheists who publish books and teach in seminars and get rich off denying the very thing that you say is obvious? Why is it that there are ready audiences to hear what they have to say?" Well, this is a point in the middle of it that we'll call the seeming contradiction. The seeming contradiction. If God has made himself known with such clarity, why then are there atheists, so called, using that in air quotes, why are there atheists? Doesn't the existence of atheists argue against the clarity of God's self-revelation? If it's so clear and irrefutable, then how could anybody disagree, isn't that a weakness in our position? The answer to that is no, absolutely not. In fact, the Bible anticipates their unbelief and explains it. The Bible explains exactly why men deny the existence of God. The Bible goes so far as to condemn it, to condemn all atheism, all unbelief as a deliberate, morally culpable act of rebellion against their Creator. It's deliberate. It is known. It is intentional.

And although we looked at this passage on Tuesday, we're going to go back there again because it's so important. Go to Romans 1. I actually got ahead of my notes a little bit on Tuesday evening and now we're going to inject this in the place where I like to introduce it at this point. Romans 1:18. Oh beloved, it's so important for you to grasp this, for us to trust the word of God as a little child trusts the mother that just fed it and brought it to a point of contentment. It is so important for us to have a childlike trust in God's word and let God define reality for us rather than trying to impress unbelieving friends with how hip we can be and how far we can stretch the bounds of truth to try to bring them into it. No, let's take God at his word. That's what we do.

Romans 1:18 says that, "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness." Look at that word "suppress"; they hold it down. Verse 19, "because that which is known about God is evident within them," it's inside them, the knowledge is inside them, "for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse." What is an atheist except that he's an ungodly man by his own testimony? "I reject God. I do not believe in God," so he says. He's defined himself as an ungodly man and where does that come from? Well, he may tell you that, "Well, you should read the books I've read and the philosophers that I've read." You don't have to get into that. Scripture cuts through all of it and, beloved, this is so

urgently important for you to understand that we believe the word of God over the testimony of men. We believe what God says about the heart of an unbelieving man rather than what that unbelieving man says about his own heart, and we'll explain this a little bit more in the time to come.

But Paul says, the Apostle Paul writing under the inspiration of God says, "Let me explain to you why they are ungodly. Let me explain to you why their unbelief exists, their so-called unbelief, it's because they are actively suppressing that which they already know to be true." When you talk to an atheist, when you talk to an unbeliever and start to explain the reasons why you believe in God and you get contested back on that, it's a perfectly legitimate response to say, "Why are you arguing? You agree with me inside. You're on my side. What are you doing arguing against me?" And you appeal directly to what their conscience knows to be true. You appeal to them according not to what they say but what Scripture says is true in their hearts, and what Scripture says is that they suppress the truth in righteousness, they hold it down. It's evident to them what God has done. It's evident to them. It is clearly seen. It is understood so that they are without excuse and so that we understand unbelief, we understand atheism on the terms of revealed truth from God rather than letting the unbeliever define the terms of the discussion for us, and that is, yes, that is a major clash of worldviews. That is a major clash of truth against what a man claims that he truly believes but that is where we engage the battle, rather than yielding to their self-descriptions. Scripture says they hold down the truth. They repress what they know to be true. In other words, let's just say it as plainly and unqualifiedly, as dogmatically as we possibly can: when a man or a woman claims to be an atheist, he or she is lying. They are perpetrating a deliberate falsehood against the testimony of their own conscience which testifies against them but they deny it and they repress it and they don't give voice to that because to do so would have moral consequences for them that they don't want to engage. The atheist, in other words, must stifle his own conscience in order to verbalize a disbelief in God.

Now, why would they do that? Why would someone do that if this is so plain and obvious and God is benevolent and good and gracious and loving and extends kindness even to his enemies? Why would they deny a God like that? On what possible basis would you drive the gracious Creator out of your existence? Why would you do that? Listen, it's not an intellectual problem. It's not because they don't have enough information. As we've already seen, God says that the testimony in creation is enough to condemn them. They are without excuse for denying God just in light of what is revealed around them in the world around them. The law is written on their heart. There is a 1,268 page book just waiting to be opened where God could be made known but they close it and mock it and won't have anything to do with it. Why? It's because they have a moral problem. They have a sin problem. More specifically, they have a love for sin problem and they prefer their sin over the testimony of God that he has imprinted upon his creation.

Look over at John 3:19. John, the Gospel of John 3:19 where Scripture says that, "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and

does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed." They won't admit the truth of what their conscience testifies to because to do that has moral consequences and they don't want their life of sin to be exposed. Don't let their rhetoric bully you. Don't be intimidated by their confident assertions to the contrary. They have a hidden agenda in their heart.

We can illustrate this. One atheist said a few years ago, quoted in the Los Angeles Daily News, he said that religion is, quote, "A human invented delusion that is sexually repressive and a threat to human survival." Do you hear what he's saying? The concept of religion restrains his fleshly impulse and therefore he hates it. That's the reality of what he's saying. He has just articulated what Jesus said in John 3. "I hate religion because it is repressive to the expression of my fleshly indulgence; because it agrees with the testimony of my conscience that what I am doing is wrong and subject to judgment and I don't like that. I would rather have my sin and therefore I am going to define religion out of existence." An intrinsic awareness of God testifies against his sinful desires and so he attempts to deny God so that he can liberate his flesh. What has he done in reality? He has traded – watch this – he has traded truth, he has exchanged truth for an incoherent, self-indulgent worldview. He upholds big bangs and evolution so that he can deny God's revelation in creation. He uses psychological tricks of self-esteem to deny guilt rather than acknowledging the testimony of his own conscience. He worships the environment instead of Jesus Christ as Christ is revealed in the Canon of Scripture. He has to redefine his whole worldview into meaningless, senseless, incoherent stuff rather than what his own heart says, "This is obvious. Why are you doing this?" And the result of that is mental and moral oblivion. Having chosen darkness, they go deeper into darkness.

Look over at Psalm 14, actually, Psalm 10. I think we've got enough time to do that. Psalm 10 and Psalm 14. Psalm 10:4, notice the culpability that Scripture assigns to unbelief. Psalm 10:4 says, "The wicked, in the haughtiness of his countenance, does not seek Him. All his thoughts are, 'There is no God.'" In the haughtiness of his countenance, he thinks in his mind, "There is no God." What does Scripture say about that elsewhere? Look at Psalm 14:1, "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good. The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men To see if there are any who understand, Who seek after God." The answer is, "No. They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one." The Bible looks at this unbelief and says that it's wicked; that these men are fools; that these men are without excuse; that these men are on the fast track to eternal judgment. Why would we be intimidated by what people like that say to mock the truth that God has made known to us?

Beloved, it must be very clear in our minds, it's not that atheists don't get it, it's that they don't want it. The atheist is like a judge who has taken a bribe before hearing a case. No amount of compelling evidence will cause that judge to do what is right because he has sold out the interest of truth for his self-interest of the bribe and no amount of courtroom testimony would ever change his mind about the outcome because he sold the outcome in advance for his own self-interest. You could have the most brilliant attorney arguing the

most brilliant legal case and the judge that has been paid off, it's just going to roll off him like water off a duck's back. Beloved, that is the position of every atheist in the world. He has a vested interest in the outcome of the discussion that overrides any considerations of truth. That is the testimony of Scripture and that's what we believe. That's what we accept. God is a threat so they try to kill him. We as Christians, we in this church where you young people need to bring your convictions in line to is to say, "I reject that perverted mind. I reject that rebellion and I will bring my mind into submission to the truth that God has revealed in creation, in conscience, and in the Canon."

Now, if someone would bother to open a Bible, they would come to the fourth way that God has revealed himself and made himself known and they get increasingly sweet as you go down the line because if you would read your Bible, you would find that God has revealed himself, point 4: in Christ. In the Lord Jesus Christ, God has supremely made himself known. The focus of the Canon is Jesus Christ. As we read the Scriptures, they point us to Christ as the climax of God's self-disclosure; as the climax, the finale of God's revelation of himself.

Now, as you, and if you've never done this, it takes a little bit of commitment over time but if you've never read the Bible cover to cover, just started at Genesis and worked your way through all the way to Revelation, I would encourage you to do that. There is a lot to be said for seeing the Bible from that perspective, and if you did that, in Old Testament times you would find that God spoke to his people in different ways. God spoke to Moses through a burning bush in Exodus 3. He spoke to Elijah one time, the prophet Elijah, in a still small voice. Isaiah in Isaiah 6 saw God's glory in a temple. And God made himself known to these spiritual leaders in different ways and in different times and disclosed himself individually to them, but as you continue on reading through the Scriptures and you come to the New Testament Gospels, you find this person of Jesus Christ elevated and talked about at great length, about his miraculous virgin birth; about the miracles and his teaching; about his redemptive death on the cross and his resurrection. And you read through Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, you read through those and you see Christ made known to you and what Scripture says is that this is the very climax of God's revelation because Jesus Christ himself is God in human flesh.

Look at the Gospel of John 1, if you would, beginning in verse 14. We're bringing this in for a landing now. Creation. Conscience. Canon. Christ. John 1:14, actually look at verse 1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," John 1:1. Drop down to verse 14, "And the Word," who was God, "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." Verse 18, "No one has seen God at any time," that is, in his invisible essence, "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him." And so in Jesus Christ, the glory of God was made known in human flesh. In Jesus Christ, God revealed himself perfectly. God revealed himself as a seeking Savior, a redeeming God. And in his perfect life, his perfect death, and his perfect resurrection, God made himself known in the person of Christ and Scripture is our authoritative, spotless, inerrant testimony to the reality of Christ, and Jesus claimed this for himself.

Look at John 5:39, Jesus said, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that bear witness about Me, it is these that testify about Me." Creation and conscience put us on notice. We come to the word of God and the word of God narrows our focus even more and says, "Here is God, here in the person of Christ."

Look at John 14:9, Jesus speaking to one of his disciples on the verge, on the eve of his crucifixion said, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father?'" Jesus is saying, "I am the final self-disclosure of God. When you see me, you are seeing God in action." Jesus is the very essence of God and that's why to see Christ is to see God. He is the climax of God's self-revelation.

Look over at Hebrews 1. And so really what we're doing here is we're just giving you a way to think, a way to think through big picture issues. Hebrews 1, and listen, listen, giving you things that you can think through – this is so very important – giving you things that you can look at for yourself, that you can consider yourself so that I in the final analysis am not asking you to take my word for it. I'm not asking you, I'm not telling you, saying, "Hey, I saw a vision from God. Let me tell you what he said," and so you have to take my word for it about whether it's true or not. If I died tomorrow, everything that I have said to you here today would still be true, would still be subject to your own independent review and analysis and consideration and by the power of the Holy Spirit, God would lead you to the truth as well. If I disappeared, all of these things would still be in place. This does not depend upon your speaker here this morning whatsoever. We merely point you, we merely testify in a secondary way about what God has already made known about himself so that he gets all of the glory; so that he alone is the authority in what is said.

Hebrews 1:1, remember we said that we believe in response to God's self-disclosure, Hebrews 1:1, "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in 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. 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 you read about Jesus Christ in the four Gospels, when you read about him as he is explained in the subsequent epistles, you are reading the exact representation of who God is and what he is like. There is no distinction whatsoever. Who God is, Christ is without diminishment and so God's written revelation in the Canon points to his personal revelation in Christ.

Why do we believe in God? We believe in response to God's self-disclosure in creation. You can say it with me under your breath: in creation, in conscience, in the Canon, and in Christ. What more could God do? It wasn't just that he disclosed himself in the Canon, in the book, Christ left the glories of heaven to disclose God still further and left behind men who would write an authoritative account of his appearance. Disbelieve God in light of that? Not me, beloved. Not me. What about you? What about you? You young people

sitting in the back, what about you? What do you say in response to this? God has revealed himself in broad ways, in deep ways, in varied ways, in objective ways. Beloved, especially you young people, you're just so much on my heart today, you young people, understand that we did not make this up. We don't believe in fables. We're not repeating what someone else has said. We believe because God has made himself known and now God calls you yourself to respond to that self-disclosure that he has made of himself. For you Christians, be encouraged and be very courageous. Your belief is not in vain. The God of the Bible in whom you believe is real. He is an objective reality, more certain than your next breath. Your trust in Christ is not in vain.

Now, there is one final question to be asked: how is it that we individually came to believe in Christ when we were all once like those who rejected him? How is it that we went from death to life? That we went through our own version of denying truth? Of rejecting Christ's authority over our lives? How did we move from there to here where we now gladly proclaim Christ and submit our minds and lives and our souls to his redemptive care? Beloved, that's the fifth reason why we believe in God and for that you're going to need to be with us on Friday night at our Good Friday communion service and it will be the culmination of these series of studies and will climax in us celebrating the work of Christ on our behalf. We believe because Christ made himself known in our hearts, we believe because Christ ransomed our souls and we'll talk about that and celebrate it at a communion service this Friday. Join us at that time.

Let's bow in prayer.

Our Father, we do believe. We submit our minds to you. We acknowledge, we confess, we affirm that your revelation is sufficient. There is nothing more that we need. We don't need a secondary word of prophecy, we don't need a Latter Day church to give us additional books that came from Satan anyway. Father, everything that we have seen is sufficient grounds for us to believe and we say with strength, with confidence, "Lord, we believe. We bow. We receive it. We honor you. We thank you. We worship you in response to your self-disclosure." Father, for those that are here weak, struggling, tottering perhaps, for them we pray that you would be gracious according to the prayer of the man who said, "Lord, I believe. Help thou my unbelief." Strengthen them in their unbelief through the truth that you have made known to us here today. Father, for those that are here that are still dead in their sins, dead in their trespasses and sins, Father, we pray that you would make known to them the purpose of the incarnation, the purpose of the coming of Christ, that he came to seek and to save that which was lost; that this great Christ who is God in human flesh receives guilty sinners and forgives them. Father, may you work in their hearts and lead them to a saving knowledge of Christ that they might enter into, from the heart, the truth of these things that we have seen from your word here today. For this, Father, we give you thanks and pledge our allegiance to you and you alone. Let the world do to us what it may, Father, we will never move from this foundation. Strengthen us to that end. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

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