

# Why We Believe What We Believe 1

## *Justice & Morality*

(preached 10/30/22)

### **Have you ever wondered why we believe what we do and why?**

- Where does everything we believe actually come from?
- How does said source influence our thoughts, feelings, words, & actions?
- What's the real process of "repentance"?
- Why is it we can have the right theology and morality in our minds, but do the wrong thing anyway?
- Why do some seem to be more stubborn and skeptical than others?
- Why do others seem more trusting and even gullible?
- What's the reason for the great division in America right now, where even family and friends are dividing?
- Why is it no longer acceptable to "agree to disagree"?
- Are we truly sovereign beings who decide what to believe, or are we being influenced by powers greater than us?
- WHAT IF EVERYTHING WE BELIEVED WAS NOT NEUTRAL OR JUST KNOWLEDGE, BUT WAS ULTIMATELY CONNECTED TO EITHER GOD OR THE DEVIL?
- If what we believed was connected with God, how might that influence our lives?
- Same with the devil?

In this new sermon series we're going to answer all these questions and more!

NEW CHRISTIAN. When I was a new Christian I believed that all I needed to do was read my Bible, agree with it, remember what it said, and I would rushing forward on my path of being Christ's disciple. To ensure my victory not only did I read and study the Bible, but I wrote a bunch of verses on index cards and spent hours memorizing the same.

MEMORIZATION NOT ENOUGH. I understood that my main opponent was my own flesh and its desires, but what I didn't understand was that believing wasn't a matter of learning and memorization, but went far deeper.

HEART ONE BELIEVES. In Romans 10, Paul is encouraging the church to preach the Gospel and then says this:

### **Romans 10:5-11 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them.

<sup>6</sup> But the righteousness based on faith says, "Do not say **in your heart**, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down)

<sup>7</sup> “or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

<sup>8</sup> But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim);

<sup>9</sup> because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

<sup>10</sup> For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

<sup>11</sup> For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.”

**OUR MINDS MAY AGREE WITH WHAT WE READ AND HEAR FROM THE BIBLE, BUT IF THE HEART DOESN'T AGREE, THEN WE DON'T BELIEVE AND WON'T LIVE ACCORDINGLY.**

**We only begin believing something when our heart does.**

- This is why we can have great teaching and theology in our heads, but not believe and not trust in what God has said.
- This is why we can have great God-given morality in our minds, even to the point of memorization, yet go and do what we know is wrong anyway.

GIFTS OF SPIRIT. Our minds read 1 Corinthians 12 and say “yes, I believe the Gifts of the Spirit are alive and in operation today” yet our hearts are bringing up the umpteen times our bum knee has been prayed for with no results. The truth is it doesn't believe in healing, or perhaps feels only others deserve it, therefore WE don't really believe in healing.

TRUST GOD. We hear a sermon that we're supposed to trust in God and not try to control everything. We know that's right, but our hearts respond by reminding us of all the times past when we trusted Him and things fell through anyway and didn't work out.

***Which part of us is supposed to trust in God, BTW?***

**Proverbs 3:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

***It's with the heart that we believe and the heart that we trust.*** While it's true we struggle against the flesh and its passions, we also struggle against another part of us that can be just as powerful. I preached an entire sermon on this a few months ago, so I'll just give a quick review:

- We're not meant to follow our hearts, regardless of what the world says.
- Jeremiah called it “the most deceitful and wicked” part of us (*Jeremiah 17:9*) and Jesus said the same in *Matthew 15:19*.

- When speaking of either fiery passion for God or dullness, Jesus attributed both to the heart (*Matthew 5:8, 6:21, 11:29*).
- He said it was possible for us to worship God with our mouths, but for our hearts to be far from Him (*Matthew 15:8*).
- He also said that true repentance from old belief, and taking on the truth, all takes place within the heart (*Matthew 13:15*).

THE 4 FACTORS. Why does our heart believe the way it does? There are 4 factors that make us believe or stop believing:

- Justice/morality or lack thereof.
- Compassion/Mercy or lack thereof.
- Provision/lack thereof
- Multiple Witnesses saying the same thing (right or wrong).

We only have time today to cover Justice/Morality.

JUSTICE/MORALITY. PETA. Suppose a member of PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) gets Saved and their first service they attend at Gateway has a fellowship dinner. When they finally descend into our basement to see the meatballs, chicken, pulled pork, and burgers they're appalled and leave immediately. They cannot believe that all these so-called righteous Christians are eating meat! Their heart believes that killing any animals to eat is a sin.

RESPOND WITH BIBLE. After expressing this to me or one of you, we do the right thing by leading them through the Scriptures which is the inerrant, inspired, Word of God profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. We quote the following verses:

### **Genesis 9:2-3 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered.

<sup>3</sup> Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything.

The Apostle Peter is praying when this happens to him:

### **Acts 10:9-13 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance

<sup>11</sup> and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth.

<sup>12</sup> In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air.

<sup>13</sup> And there came a voice to him: "Rise, Peter; kill and eat."

CLEAR ON THIS ISSUE. I could quote several other verses proving, just as these did, that God did give us animals to eat. The Bible is crystal clear on this issue as it is in some many others.

CONVINCE THEM? Now let me ask you something: *do you think that the mere quoting of these verses, even to a Saved PETA person, will convince them that killing and eating animals is ethical?* I don't think so and now I'm going to tell you why:

**THE PETA PERSON HAS ATTACHED JUSTICE TO THEIR DOCTRINE.**

**They believe it's IMMORAL to kill animals for food.**

*We do the same thing with much of what we believe, regardless of the facts or the truths of Scripture.*

- One person is passionately against abortion because they believe it's murder (justice/morality).
- Another is vehemently for it because they view a child born in poverty, with a disease, as the result of rape, or harm to the mother as being unjust.

MARXISM. Why has generation after generation of people fallen for the deception of Marxism? The facts of its failure are clear because the experimental use of this system dates back at least 2000 years starting with Plato and the publishing of his pamphlet titled "The Republic." Different people, cultures, and governments have tried to implement this system over and over from small communities like the Puritans & New Harmony to great countries like China and the Soviet Union.

*Despite results that end in tyranny and starvation, every new generation hears its gospel and desires it.* Why? Because it convinces them that its cause is just. It points out the grave injustices of whatever system is currently in power whether a monarchy, oligarchy, dictatorship, capitalism, or what have you. The 1% of the 1% rule everything, have everything, and are sitting in their ivory towers quoting Marie Antionette: "let them eat cake."

"WORKERS OF THE WORLD!" It goes on to preach how its system will return power to the people and make everything fair and equal. As Karl Marx is famous for saying: "workers of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains!" As alluring and righteous as this sounds, the result is a bloody revolution where new dictators move into the palaces, live lavish lifestyles, and the people still starve.

**WHEN SOMEONE ATTACHES THEIR OWN JUSTICE, OR SOMEONE ELSE'S TO WHAT THEY BELIEVE...THE FACTS DON'T MATTER.**

**The truth is irrelevant regardless of history of what the Lord says in the Bible.**

YOUNG PASTOR. As a young pastor I was naïve in many ways. One of said ways was that I believed that if I merely quoted the Bible to fellow Christians, and if what I was quoting clashed with what they believed, they would repent. When that didn't happen, I was confused and frustrated until the Lord began to show me what I'm teaching today.

*The solution is that our hearts must be convinced that God is always just, and more so than we are.* Some people deny God's existence because they believe themselves morally superior to Him. I just had another person say, for the umpteenth time, that a just God would never send anyone to Hell and if He really does that, then they want nothing to do with Him.

**A person who says something like this believes themselves to be more righteous than God.**

**What does the Bible say about God's justice and righteousness?**

Jesus, Who was completely righteous and sinless, said this:

**Luke 18:18-19 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> And a ruler asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

<sup>19</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.

TRIBULATION. During the Tribulation when God is pouring out many wrathful judgments upon the people of earth, an angel declares the following:

**Revelation 16:4-7 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> The third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water, and they became blood.

<sup>5</sup> And I heard the angel in charge of the waters say, "Just are you, O Holy One, who is and who was, for you brought these judgments.

<sup>6</sup> For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink. It is what they deserve!"

<sup>7</sup> And I heard the altar saying, "Yes, Lord God the Almighty, true and just are your judgments!"

HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS DECLARED. From Genesis to Revelation, the righteousness, holiness, and justice of God is declared by prophets, kings, angels, and the Son of God Himself.

BRING YOU THROUGH MY PROCESS. Whenever I start to question whether God is treating me or someone I love justly, the Holy Spirit asks me: “do you think you’re more righteous than Me?”

*I always answer “of course not Lord!”* and then the Holy Spirit says: “but you think you are which is why you’re acting and feeling this way.” As always, He’s right. When I do a little self-exam then yes, I am exalting my own righteousness above His. After all, I would have healed this person rather than letting them die. I would have saved that person from getting in that accident. I would have paid that person’s mortgage or rent vs. seeing them kicked out.

BACKSLIDE & FALL AWAY. Even church going Christians will backslide and even fall completely away because they feel God and/or fellow Christians have been unjust toward them. Even when its fellow Christians it still comes back to God, because He allowed it didn’t He? He didn’t step in and stop it, or expose the truth?

**A CHRISTIAN WILL EVEN BEGIN TO REJECT THINGS THE BIBLE IS CLEAR ABOUT BECAUSE THEY SEE AN INJUSTICE THEY CAN’T RECONCILE.**

BRAINWASHED? They’ll even go so far as to say they were “brainwashed” by their church into believing these things, and that they were persecuted for asking questions. While there’s nothing wrong with asking challenging questions and hoping someone in our church will help us navigate through them, our hearts will impugn the very character of God for the cause of justice.

IDOLATRY. Christians who have fallen away from a Biblical upbringing and now embrace the morals of the world are following their hearts and not the Lord. They’ve either 1) rejected that God is just and that His judgments are true or 2) redefined God into an image their hearts can finally reconcile—which is called idolatry. Is it possible that the Church they grew up in sinned against them, weren’t the best representatives of Jesus, and persecuted them for questioning things? Sure. *That being said, if that church taught Biblical truths then its those truths we need to link ourselves to even if we criticize our church.*

**Unbelievers play the injustice card all the time:** God sending the flood and wiping everyone out except Noah & his family, for example. Joshua being commanded by God to wipe out entire tribes of people down to the last man, woman, & child when he entered the Promised Land. When Roe V. Wade was overturned, I saw multiple memes on Facebook citing these examples and saying “so much for God being ‘pro-life’.” Unbelievers use examples like these to justify their lack of faith and to attack believers for theirs, not wanting to believe in any God Who would do or allow things like this.

*Since our hearts will attach justice and morality to what it believes, our reconciliation begins with humility.*

**It starts with acknowledging any pride that our sense of what's right and wrong being on par with God's is nonsense.**

**We must fall to our knees and acknowledge the same thing Jesus did: only God is good and just. Far more than we ever will be.**

- Whether sending Noah's Flood or giving His only begotten Son to die for us, God is just.
- Whether allow Satan to sift Job as wheat or blessing him later on, God is good.
- Whether He heals us or doesn't, God is holy.

*God allowed Satan to put Job through the wringer.* In the midst of all the terrible things that were happening, Job's wife told him to "curse God and die." To empathize with just a little: both she and her husband were being horribly affected by Satan though Job certainly had it worse. It's likely she saw God as uncaring and even outright cruel, especially seeing that Job was someone who'd always been faithful to God. It's the cry of her heart and the injustice of the entire situation, that compels her to advise her husband to reject the Lord and abandon his faith.

FOLLOWING HER HEART. That being said, my sympathy with her comes to an end because she's following her heart, whose telling her that she's more righteous than God is. That her sense of what's right and wrong are superior to His. She's saying that Job has been a faithful man and doesn't deserve to be put through this test, but should be getting rewarded for his loyalty and love for God. Therefore, her heart concludes, if God is allowing the devil to do all these terrible things then God is cruel and sadistic and instead of giving Him praise, we should curse Him.

*What is our righteousness and goodness compared to the Lords?*

**Isaiah 64:6 (NKJV)**

<sup>6</sup> But we are all like an unclean *thing*, And all our righteousnesses *are* like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.

**Isaiah 53:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

### Romans 3:9-12 (ESV)

<sup>9</sup> What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin,  
<sup>10</sup> as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one;  
<sup>11</sup> no one understands; no one seeks for God.  
<sup>12</sup> All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”

***“How can anyone be Saved?”*** Should be the question verses like these generate. God gave us Jesus to die on the Cross to satisfy justice once and for all. Our Lord Jesus gave us His righteousness and we were justified—just-as-if we had never sinned. In other words, the righteousness we have now belongs completely to Christ so we can only brag about Him.

***Since Christ is God, then any attempts we make to lift up our sense of morality to be equal to or above God’s is an effort of the flesh.*** In other words, we’re shucking off the righteousness Jesus gave us and falling back on our own... saying it’s good enough.

**BOLD ENOUGH?** Are any of us really bold enough to make that claim? Out loud?

**PROCESS.** I’m just bringing you through the process the Holy Spirit brings me through whenever I start think I would have handled things better than Him or been more fair than He was.

***God is completely just and moral, my fellow saints and He’s that way all the time, in every circumstance.*** More than we ever will be.

If we perceive an injustice that seems to clash with God’s Word, then:

**Recognizing God’s righteousness is the first step in ensuring that we believe in God’s Truth and not something else.**

***The second step is to attach HIS justice to what we believe vs. that of our heart, someone else’s, of a political party, etc.***

***After all, it’s HIS righteousness that is in us now.*** Paul told the Corinthians its even deeper than that—he said it’s WHO we are:

### 2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)

<sup>21</sup> For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

**We have BECOME the righteousness of God!** There's nothing wrong with asking challenging questions, and both my heart and yours will cry out when it perceives what it believes to be an injustice that God is allowing.

DISTANCE. If we go down that path too long without resolution, we'll distance ourselves from the Holy Spirit and draw closer to another spirit—yes, you heard that correctly and I'll explain it in a future sermon in this series. This goes way deeper than we tend to think and has far reaching consequences.

Instead of that, let us partner with the Holy Spirit to speak through both the Bible and other Christians to help us navigate through those murky waters and end up at Truth.