

Forensic Faith | Part 1

July 21, 2019

Introduction:

- I. Brand new series ..."Forensic Faith" ...
 - A. Forensic Files
 - B. Forensic Investigators
 - C. Forensic Factor
 - D. Extreme Forensic
 - E. Forensic Firsts
 - F. Forensics: You Decide
 - G. Cold Case Files
 - H. Bones
 - I. Quincy..!
 - J. CSI: Crime Scene Investigation
 1. CSI: New York
 2. CSI: Miami
 3. CSI:
 - K. NCIS United States Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) is the primary law enforcement agency of the U.S. Department of the Navy.
 1. Los Angeles
 2. New Orleans
 - L. Not at all relevant to the Bible...but gets us in the arena...
 1. All these shows have in common...
 - a) application of scientific methods and techniques to the investigation of crime.
 - M. They have to accumulate evidence, clues...information, resources, people..
 1. To draw a conclusion...that they feel is true..!
 - a) That they 'believe' this is how this went down
 - b) They have "FAITH"...they are right!
 - N. Slide:
faith: complete trust or confidence in someone or something
belief: an acceptance that a statement is true or that something exists
 - O. Gather evidence...in order to get to a place of certainty...full BELIEF...!
 1. Research...get to a place of definitive FAITH..!
 - P. Now..we understand those words...belief & faith...
 1. As they relate to solving a case...

- a) Or in a relationship...
- Q. We believe based on evidence...
 - 1. Or the person giving us the information
- R. But what about when we use those words in religion...
 - 1. A pastor say: 2 of the most misused words in all of religion
 - a) Especially Christianity
 - b) FAITH & BELIEF
 - 2. Outside of Christianity...
 - a) At home...work...culture...society
 - (1) Those words are used and we know what they mean...
 - (a) They make more sense
 - b) SCHOOL (multiplication)
 - (1) $7 \times 6 = 42$
 - (a) I struggled with one equation
 - c) My teacher said...Mrs. Marlowe...that is 42
 - (1) I 'believed' her...i didn't second guess it
 - (a) I did go and get a calculator
 - (b) I trusted her...i had FAITH that she was right
 - d) SCIENCE:
 - (1) Distance to the moon 240K miles away...
 - (a) I did walk that one off...just to be sure!
 - (2) Based on our confidence in NASA...
 - (a) Astro-physicists
 - 3. Our belief & faith in these areas...
 - a) Based on confidence in the one providing information
 - (1) Resources, evidence, data...!
- S. What do you do when the information that you believe/faith in...conflicts with information you already believe in...
 - 1. EXAMPLE: Avocados
 - a) Nutrient rich...heart
 - b) Vision...bone health (osteoporosis)
 - c) Cancer...depression...
 - d) Digestion...detoxification
 - 2. Adverse effects:
 - a) Flu...paralysis
 - b) Nausea...migraine
 - c) Fever...drowsiness
 - d) Asthma

T. So...now what?...

1. Stay off Google..!

U. I love avocados...so when i read information...i only want to read good articles

1. Positive info on avocados
2. What is that called?
 - a) COGNITIVE BIAS...
 - (1) Just want to listen to information that confirms what I already believe!
3. The point I'm getting at is...
 - a) We all know what it means to have belief in something
 - (1) We know what it means to faith in something

V. HEAR THIS: In Christianity...

1. When we use words like...faith & belief..
 - a) They do not take on different meanings just b/c they are used in a religious context
2. "Religious faith...Religious belief"
 - a) Are no different...
 - (1) For some reason...
 - (a) These words ...when used in religion
 - (i) Become more associated with HOPE
 - (a) Instead of reason...rationale

W. HOPE...becomes the word associated with religious faith/belief

1. Hope is a good...but hope...CONFIDENCE
 - a) Those are 2 entirely different things..!
2. But in religion...it happens...
 - a) "Just gotta have faith...man"... "just gotta believe..."
 - (1) We don't use those words that way in everyday life
 - (a) Just gotta have faith the moon is 240K
 - (i) You either believe it or you don't
3. But with Christianity...they say...just have faith..man..! Just gotta believe!
 - a) It shouldn't be that way...!
 - (1) There is so much evidence and data proving the existence of Jesus Christ...
 - (a) The accuracy of the Bible
 - b) Yes..we are saved by faith...
 - (1) But..you don't need to be talked into believing that the Bible is accurate...that Jesus was real

- (a) There's so much evidence proving His Life!
4. I believe this is why so many college students lose their faith
 - a) They were never given the evidence...the data
 - (1) They were just told...believe have faith...
 - (2) So you were never really 'taught' into it...
 - (a) Shown...proven...educated...
 - b) So..you get away...and someone shares one quote from some philosopher...whose atheist or agnostic and you get talked into that belief..
 - c) Slide:
atheist: a person who disbelieves or lacks belief in the existence of God or gods

Slide;
agnostic: a person who believes that nothing is known or can be known of the existence or nature of God; a person who claims neither faith nor disbelief in God
 - (1) Because you saw it somewhere besides the Bible or church reading material...
 5. What's ironic...there have been some very influential skeptics of Jesus Christ...that ultimately became believers b/c of the evidence..data was overwhelming...
 - a) C.S. Lewis...was a Christian as a child...became an atheist
 - (1) Mythology & the occult
 - (2) Clive: English Literature at Oxford University
 - (3) Chair of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at Cambridge University
 - (4) The Chronicles of Narnia.
 6. Francis Sellers Collins is an American physician-geneticist noted for his discoveries of disease genes and his leadership of the Human Genome Project.
 - a) He is director of the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland.
 - b) Before being appointed director of the NIH, Collins led the Human Genome Project and other genomics research initiatives as director of the National Human Genome Research Institute

II. That's what this series is about..

- A. The evidence of Jesus Christ...His death...and resurrection...

1. If you like CSI...NCIS...this will be fun!...
 - a) Share your faith...your belief...with more than just HOPE...
 - (1) There's proof...evidence....data
 - (2) You will really be able to get behind what you already believe
 - b) Or...take your faith to another level...b/c of the confidence gained by this knowledge...
- B. GET INTO THE DATA & EVIDENCE...later in the series...
 1. but ..we need to start today with some issues or reasons why people don't believe or choose not to...! Apart from the data...!!
- C. Today...let's assume that you or someone you know has some issues with this Jesus thing...
 1. There maybe one or two reasons why they can't move forward with a confident belief in Jesus...
 - a) They have some 'hangup'...and need a little more understanding...
 - (1) That's okay..
- D. We see this with a lot of people...
 1. We even see it in the Bible...
 - a) In Acts 8:26
 - (1) Philip: one of the 12 disciples...
 - (a) Cared for the poor...preached in Samaria
 - b) Angel presented Philip with a task..
 - (1) 'Go south to the desert road...that runs from Jerusalem to Gaza'
 - (a) No explanation
 2. Philip did as told & saw a carriage coming down the road
 - a) Ethiopian official: Secretary of the Treasury...for queen of Ethiopia
 - (1) Eunuch: had gone to Jerusalem to worship
 - (a) Returning...and seated in his carriage
 - (i) Reading aloud from the OT (Isaiah)
 3. Slide:

Acts 8:29-31

29 The Holy Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and walk along beside the carriage."

30 Philip ran over and heard the man reading from the prophet Isaiah. Philip asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

31 The man replied, "How can I, unless someone instructs me?"

(1) Just like some of you or folks you may know...

(a) This guy was stuck...unsure...

E. He was obviously on a physical journey...but he was also on a spiritual journey

1. Something wasn't adding up...not clear

a) Attracted toward God...but had hit a roadblock!

(1) Some issue...objection

(2) A question...a concern

2. That's okay...I pray that you or someone you know is desiring a personal relationship with Jesus Christ...

a) Longing for it...real...personal...their own!

(1) This desire to know the Creator of the Universe..

(a) Something is blocking it...

(i) Can't get past some issue...some reason!

F. Let's look at 4 reasons...that block people from moving forward...from understanding and realizing the reality of Jesus Christ...His life...death...resurrection

1. Some reasons that keep them seeing it a fact...!

III. Slide:

4 Reasons

1. It can't be true

A. There's just no way it's true..!!...can't be!

1. Sometimes this is b/c of someone's intellect...

a) Science: I can't believe in Jesus b/c of science...

(1) How could a man die & come back to life?

b) Mother: Why does my child suffer...when bad people thrive?

c) Lawyer/Investigator: I make no decision w/o evidence, data, logic...I can't believe in something simply on 'religious faith'

d) Prayers: God ignores my prayers...why would I believe in Him...?

2. Guess what?...

a) One of the disciples had the same type of reasoning...!!!

(1) Thomas..."doubting"

3. Slide:

John 20:25

25 They told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he replied, “I won’t believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side.”

4. A disciple...walked with Jesus...still needed evidence...forensic proof!

- a) Better to question...than choose not to believe at all...

- (1) Choose to not even inquire...

- B. That’s what the Ethiopian was doing...he was ACTIVELY...looking for God!

1. Better understanding...clarity

- a) The Ethiopian was searching the Bible...he was going to the temple...he was seeking...looking...!

- b) Here’s what the Bible has to say about us...when we are actively seeking God!

- (1) Slide:

- Jeremiah 29:13

- 13 If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me.

2. Viggo Olsen, one of the first Christians to serve in the country of Bangladesh.

- a) Olsen was a brilliant surgeon, and at one time he and his wife, Joan, were skeptics who struggled with the “I can’t believe”

- b) They couldn’t believe in God because they thought modern science proved that the Bible was based on mythology.

- c) But they didn’t let skepticism stop them cold in their tracks; instead, they let curiosity propel them toward the truth.

- d) They sought answers wholeheartedly. They began to investigate their questions like,

- e) Does science disprove Christianity? Is Jesus’ resurrection true?

3. As Olsen committed himself to pursuing these questions, he came to the same conclusion that so many others have—the story of Jesus is true.

4. “The Agnostic Who Dared to Search”...

- C. Sir Lionel Luckhoo: skeptic (great attorney)

1. Guinness Book of World Records: won more murder trials than anyone in history...brilliant legal mind...
 - a) Took his legal knowledge and applied it to investigating historical record of Jesus' resurrection
 - b) "I say unequivocally that the evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is so overwhelming that it compels acceptance by proof which leaves absolutely no room for doubt."
2. If your reason for not moving forward...
 - a) "You can't believe it's true"...
 - (1) Take comfort in knowing that God is there...
 - (a) That nudge: He is drawing you near to Himself
 - b) God seeks you first!
 - (1) Just as it was no accident that Philip was sent to the road of the Ethiopian...
 - (a) It is no accident you are where you are today...
 - (i) Hearing these words!!!
 - (2) Jesus Christ was real..and it is TRUE...whether you believe it or not!!...
 - (3) Next...
3. Slide:
 - 4 Reasons
 1. It can't be true
 2. I don't want it to be true
 4. This is tough...difficult...few people admit this...but this is a reason that stops them in their beliefs & growth
 5. Some people: just aren't interested in hearing any proofs...or information about the evidence of Jesus!
 - a) They simply assume there is no real hard evidence and refuse to listen to anyone or ponder it for themselves
 6. On the surface: this looks like an intellectual hangup
 - a) But dig a little deeper...we see there is something else holding them up..
 - (1) There's a good chance...it is a moral issue in their life
 7. Might be: adulterous affair
 - a) Unethical business practice or some other sin in their life
 - (1) The result:
 - (a) They reject any evidence or proof of Jesus as a FRONT...
 - (i) For their real concern...

- (a) Which is they are afraid that they may have to change their lives...
 - (i) Not sure what that might to do them...
 - (ii) Their relationships...their business...whatever..!

(2) Sadly: sometimes...we as mortals...

- (a) Love our sin...more than we love the truth
- (b) John chapter 3...encompasses this very truth..that still exists today!

D. Slide:

John 3:19

19 And the judgment is based on this fact: God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil.

- 1. People who struggle with the reason..."i don't want it to be true"
 - a) Not a knowledge problem...it's a lifestyle problem!
- 2. Few are honest about this...

E. Another reason...some don't want this to be true...

- 1. Their fear of intimacy...not necessarily afraid of Jesus changing their lives..
 - a) They simply afraid of INTIMACY...
- 2. They may feel an attraction toward God...
 - a) But back away from ever having to relate to anyone on a DEEP LEVEL...!
 - b) Their life reflects this fear:
 - (1) Superficial relationship with their spouse
 - (a) Friends...
 - (b) Kids
 - (2) The crux of Christianity is a deep...growing relationship with Jesus...
 - (a) They've gotten good at finding excuses to avoid another PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP
- 3. If you keep friends and family at arms length...you going to do the same with God!
 - a) Final variation of "NOT wanting it to be true!"
 - (1) Authority issues
 - b) Nobody tells them how to live their life...how to do their job...where to go...what to do...

- (1) Even the Creator of the universe...
- (2) Even the One who created them...
 - (a) Missing out:
 - (i) God doesn't want to BOSS us around...(free will)
 - (a) He wants to guide us towards our greatest purpose & potential!

F. Slide:

4 Reasons

- 1. It can't be true
- 2. I don't want it to be true
- 3. I'm not sure what is true
 - 1. Let's go back to the Ethiopian...
 - a) Remember: he needed more information...someone to help him understand
 - b) He was reading Isaiah 53:
 - (1) Prophecy foretelling the suffering of Jesus...the Messiah
 - (a) 100's of years before Jesus was ever born...

Slide:

Acts 8:34-35

34 The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, was the prophet talking about himself or someone else?" 35 So beginning with this same Scripture, Philip told him the Good News about Jesus.

- 2. Philip answered his questions and explained that Jesus was the Righteous Sufferer...
 - a) In this instance: Philip clarified the concerns...the hangups for the Ethiopian...
 - (1) But sometimes...people get confused and hear all kinds of different ideas about the Bible or Jesus
 - (2) See different interpretations
 - (3) Different denominations
 - (a) Is is literal or figurative?
 - (4) They read OT laws...and give up!
 - (5) Try to build the ark to scale and run out of wood...!
 - (a) Basically they just
 - (b) DON'T KNOW WHAT TO BELIEVE?
 - (6) Confused by how some people use the Bible or talk about Jesus..!!!!

3. If that's your hangup...or reason for not believing or moving forward..
 - a) Remember:
 - (1) The way to understand the Bible...is the same as understanding any kind of communication
 - b) You must study to determine what the writer meant
 - (1) Not what you WANT it to say
 - (2) NOT for your benefit
 - (a) Don't read your own biases into it
 - (3) But figure out...what the writer intended to communicate
4. If you don't do that:
 - a) Run the risk of letting what YOU WANT the Bible to say get in the way of what the Bible is actually SAYING...
 - (1) EXAMPLE:
 - (2) Lev. 19:28
 - (3) 28"Do not cut your bodies for the dead, and do not mark your skin with tattoos. I am the Lord.
 - (4) 27"Do not trim off the hair on your temples or trim your beards.
 - (5) Lord gave Moses these commandments...

G. Depending on our motives...we can interpret things kinda to fit our agenda!

1. Sometimes...people do that to get around teachings that are in the Bible that don't line up with their cause...
 - a) Something very clear can become murky...!
 - b) Honestly: there are difficult sections of the Bible...(Practical Theology)
 - (1) And smart, well-informed and well-meaning people can debate the finer 'fringe' points...
 - (a) But the central message of you and I need is CLEAR!!!
2. Slide:

Romans 6:23

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.
3. The price of sin is death...but God's gift is eternal life...
 - a) Found only in Jesus Christ...!

(1) Don't need to know the entire Bible to understand that's where we can clearly start!!!

H. Slide:

4 Reasons

1. It can't be true
2. I don't want it to be true
3. I'm not sure what is true
4. I believe it's true...now what?

I. I think I get the Gospel...i believe it to be true

1. I don't know to do next...I feel like i'm not experiencing the same relationship with Jesus that I hear others talk about
 - a) God seems distant to me...!
2. I want to connect...WHY CAN'T I CONNECT WITH GOD?

J. Here's your 'now what'

1. Just knowing and agreeing with the gospel...that's not enough..

Slide:

James 2:19

19 You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror.

2. We can't just say..." i concur"...

a) That's not enough...it's more than an intellectual understanding

(1) More than just academic...logical...historically accurate

3. Slide:

John 1:12

12 But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.

4. All who BELIEVED...

a) That's the 1st step...Belief

Romans 6:23

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

5. Let's us know it's a FREE GIFT...!

a) EXAMPLE: Christmas present

(1) It doesn't become your present until reach out and receive it!...

(a) Just sits under the tree: unclaimed!

K. John 1:12

12 But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.

1. Believe in Jesus...intellectually...proof..evidence
2. Receive: His forgiveness..
 - a) RECEIVE: his leadership...personally!

IV. Wrap up with this...b/c that is what the Ethiopian did..!

A. He learned the meaning of the Scripture...He sought it out!

1. Next: he BELIEVED...
2. RECEIVED: free gift of salvation by trusting in Jesus
 - a) Even demonstrated his belief and reception by being BAPTIZED
3. With belief and receiving...He became a child of God
 - a) Forgiven and now living a new life in Jesus

B. Slide:

Acts 8:36-38

36 As they rode along, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "Look! There's some water! Why can't I be baptized?," "You can," Philip answered, "if you believe with all your heart." And the eunuch replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." 38 He ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.

C. Where are you in the journey?

1. What is your reason for either not believing or not moving forward?
2. 4 Reasons
3. 1. It can't be true (i've personally know medical doctors..specializing in cancer who didn't believe b/c of what they thought they knew scientifically...
 - a) Their journey changed when they saw someone of faith!
4. 2. I don't want it to be true (I don't want to change my lifestyle...change my business model...what might I have to give up?
 - a) Seen God grow a business exponentially
 - b) Change a person's heart...by the time it was over...they were so glad that it was true!
5. 3. I'm not sure what is true (heard so many different things...confusing...
 - a) You're bright...seek and you will find...pray for God to lead you down the right path

6. 4. I believe it's true...now what? It's about more than just 'knowing'...more than just understanding...more than just believing...
 - a) Get to the place...that you RECEIVE this free gift...
 - (1) It's a gift just for you...but you haven't opened it yet...
 - (a) It's still sitting under the tree..!
 - (2) RECEIVE it and become a child of God...!!!
7. Whatever the REASON...the 'hangup'...the question...
 - a) God has the answer...and you wouldn't be here this morning if He was drawing you to Him...
 - (1) That's how much He loves...You feel His presence in your life...
 - (a) Now...RECEIVE it...!
- 8.