

Salvation by Grace! Easter Sunday

Prayer/welcome

Intro: Someone asked me, “Do you really believe the Bible true; that Jesus is God, can you prove it?” I think he was surprised by my answer. I don’t think I can prove it, but I don’t think proof is necessary. Not a single person alive today started follow Jesus because they got all their questions answer, they had proof.

Illustrate: Marriage- My wife Tina and I got married 30 years ago and it was a step of faith. I could not prove Tina was trustworthy, I could not prove she would love me, I could not prove she would be a good wife and neither could she. So, we considered the evidence, and took a step of faith. Over 30 years we learned to walk together through good and bad, ups and downs. That’s better than proof; that’s experience, that’s history. Over the last 30 years, my marriage has exceeded my expectations. My relationship with Jesus is just like that. Until we learn to walk with Jesus, without experience and history, we doubt eventually doubt the “proof”. I would encourage you to consider the evidence and take a step of faith.

Is the Bible God’s word? Most people know very little about the Bible.

Bible: The Bible is more than a book; it is a collection of 66 books, written by 40 different authors, over a period of 1,500 years, on three continents, and in three languages. However, there is one cohesive story. What is the story? **It is a love story.** It is the story of God...

- **Genesis 1-2, Genesis 3, Revelation 21-22**
- Does that prove the Bible is the word of God? No, but it does mean it is worth considering because there is not another book like this in history.

History: For the last 150 years, Archeologist have used the Bible to identify and locate ancient civilizations, cities, and historical figures that historians did not know existed. Often there was no other historical record of these people or places. However, based on what the Bible says, they would begin to dig and sure enough them. The Bible has confirmed thousands of pieces of historical information and over 100 historical figures. Does that prove, the Bible is God’s word? No, but it does prove the Bible was written by eyewitnesses and is historically accurate and worth considering.

Prophecy: The Bible also contains approximately 2,500 historical prophecies, The prophets predicted thousands of historical events and sure enough, often hundreds of years later, they came to pass. 300 of these prophesies are about Jesus. For example; the prophets said:

- Jesus would be born to a virgin
- He would be an ancestor of David
- He would be born in Bethlehem

Monthly Practice: Worship

- He would be a Nazarene
- He would come out of Egypt
- He would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver
- He would be crucified
- He would be raised from the dead

What if this information was just added later? The first Greek translation of the OT where all these prophecies about Jesus can be found was completed 250 years before Jesus was even born? Does that prove the Bible is the word of God, maybe not but it is very compelling once again there is not another book in world history filled with prophecy.

Jesus: Jesus is not a legend, he is a historical figure, a religious leader, who claimed to be God. Which means we must decide, was he lying, was he a lunatic or is He Lord. What does the evidence say?

- **Miracles:** He performed dozens of miracles that were witnessed and recorded not only by his followers but also by secular historians.
- **Teaching:** Have you read what He taught? It is brilliant, empowering, & relevant today!
- **Life:** Despite all his fame Jesus was a humble servant, gracious and empowering. Jesus loved the poor, sinners, the sick, tax collectors, women, children and Romans. Jesus intentionally connected with those who everyone else, the religious community rejected.
- **Resurrection: Jesus was publicly crucified and buried. 3 days later He rose!**
 - o Over the next 40 days he was seen by more than 500 witnesses, or 1% of the population of Jerusalem! **The church, that worships Jesus**, was started in the same city where He was crucified, 40 days after his death. **How is that possible?**
 - o After dying on the cross, this a poor Jew becomes the most famous most influential person in world history. He has transformed my life and the lives of most people here. Why? If Jesus only died, it would be sad but not world changing. The resurrection did that.

This is why I decided to take a step of faith, to follow Jesus. We have walked together for 30 years and that's better than proof; that's experience, history, life! Over the last 30 years, Jesus has exceeded my expectations. **Why did Jesus come?**

Read: Acts 15:1-2, 6-11

Jesus was Jewish and most of his early followers were Jewish. However, the message of Jesus was so incredible it spread beyond the Jews to the Gentile world. Gentiles are simply, non-Jews. When the Jews began following Christ, they maintained many of the Jewish traditions but when the Gentiles started following Christ, the question was, do these Gentile Christians, who do not share our Jewish background, need to embrace our traditions. One of those traditions was

circumcision. In the Old Testament, **Genesis 17**, God commanded Abraham to circumcise every male, on the 8th day after his birth. Circumcision was a sign of the covenant. Fast forward to **Acts 15**. The Jews were telling Gentile men, grown men, if you are going to follow Jesus, you must be circumcised. Ouch!

Verse 11, "We believe that we are all saved the same way, by the undeserved grace of the Lord Jesus."

1. What does it mean to be Saved?

Explain: Rescued from danger and death.

Illustrate: Surfing- They needed to be saved!

Argue: **Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, Romans 5:8, Romans 10:9, Romans 10:13, All NIV**

2. What is Grace?

Explain: Grace is the undeserved, unearned favor of God.

Illustrate: Football coach/principal- I deserved judgement, I received grace and that grace changed my life.

Argue: **Ephesians 2:8-9**

Quote: God loves us as we are, not as we should be, for none of us are as we should be.

Apply: Grace is not a license. The grace that saved me is also the grace that is changing me.

3. How can I receive God's grace?

Illustrate: Surfing/rescue

- **Admit:** I broke the rules. I ignored the warning and we are about to drown!
- **Accept:** Help! They called out for help. Save us!
- **Trust:** Let me get them to shore. They had to trust me!

Jesus:

- **Admit:** We ignored the warning sign, we broke God's law, we are drowning.
- **Accept:** Help! Will you ask Jesus for help. **Romans 10:13**
- **Trust:** Let Jesus be the Lord, the guide for your life. **Matthew 4:19**, come, follow me!

Testimony Video (Keys come back after video)

Apply: I know you still have questions. One big question is; if there is a God and he is good and all powerful why is there so much pain and suffering in our world. (Next week) I doubt I have proven anything but the evidence is compelling. The question is are you ready to take a step of faith. Will you follow Jesus

- **I've done that**
- **I have a past, God would not accept me**

Prayer

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- **Does that prove is it God's word?** Worth considering, no other book like it!

History: 150 years...Archeologist...ancient civilizations, cities, and historical figures... **Does that prove is it God's word?** No, but historically accurate and worth considering.

Prophecy: 2,500 historical prophecies, 300 of these prophecies are about Jesus. For example:

- Jesus would be born to a virgin, ancestor of David, Bethlehem, Nazarene, come out of Egypt, betrayed for 30 pieces of silver, crucified and raised from the dead
- Added later...Greek Translation 250 years before Jesus was even born?
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Jesus: Not a legend...historical figure, a religious leader, who claimed to be God. **LLL**

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 - o 40 days, 500 witnesses, 1% of the population.
 - o The church, that worships Jesus, was started in the same city where He was crucified, 40 days after his death. How is that possible?
 - o 2000 years later... most influential person in world history. My Life...

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Old Testament, **Genesis 17**, circumcision...Ouch!

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