

The Hard Truth

Week 3: We Suffer From a 'Belief Crisis'

(from the message dated June 28, 2015)

The Study

"I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"

Mark 9:24 NIV

In the verse that precedes our text above Jesus had just stated that "everything is possible to the one who believes". We, like the father who's son was possessed by an evil spirit, want to believe this truth, but, honestly, we need reassured that this is true.

In this life we place a lot of emphasis on faith and trust that the (unknown) future will be without complication, pain and fear. We translate this truth out of the reality of the physical and material things of our life. In doing so, we miss the deeper connection with the teachings of the Lord. Are we going to suffer? Yes. Job spoke of the anguish of this decaying life (**Job 30:16**); *"And now my life ebbs away; days of suffering grip me."* Where did this come from and how long will it last? It will last throughout this age of depravity. The hard truth is we are going to experience pain, loss, confusion, rejection, disappointment, fear and heartache. According to **Genesis 3** – the story of the original sin – God introduces the natural consequences of disobedience, and it is centered on pain and death. These consequences remind us that our lives without faith and trust in His commands and provisions are empty and void of lasting value.

So what are the deeper teachings from Jesus about faith and belief?

Faith is described in **Hebrews 11:1** as "**confidence** in things hoped for and **assurance** about what we do not see". Is it possible that having faith IS believing? It stands to reason, but I would say that belief comes from having faith.

BELIEF PRODUCES OBEDIENCE

Abram was a man of faith and when told by God to take a hike without knowing the destination; he did it (**Genesis 15**). Why, because his faith allowed him to believe the command of God. He trusted God to be faithful and so he exercised his own faith by believing whatever God told him to do – (v.6) "Abram believed and was considered to be righteous!"

July 15, 2015

The Hard Truth

BELIEF POSTURES US FOR WORSHIP

When the children of Israel cried out to the Lord He sent Moses to rescue them. Standing with Aaron before the elders of Israel Moses shared what the Lord had told him and the purpose of his coming to them and he also performed miracles that God had empowered him to do. The people bowed down and worshiped the Lord (**Exodus 4:31**) because they believed! (Also read **Exodus 14:31** and **Psalms 106:12**.)

DISBELIEF LEADS TO DISOBEDIENCE

The Israelites were, by God's description, "*a stiff-necked people*" (**Deuteronomy 9:13**). They were rebellious and stubborn to the ways of God, impatient with His plan, idolatrous and disobedient. Moses said to them, "*you rebelled against the command of the Lord your God. You did not believe Him or obey Him*" (**Deut. 9:23** HCSB).

The fall of Israel in **2 Kings 17** was because the people "*did not listen ...were obstinate ...did not believe the Lord their God. They rejected His statutes and His covenant He made with their ancestors and the decrees He had given them. They pursued worthless idols and became worthless themselves, following the surrounding nations the Lord had commanded them not to imitate.*" (**2 Kings 17:14-15** HCSB).

Believers are difference makers (**Matthew 5:13**) who pray without weakness, doubt or double mindedness – not wavering (**James 1**).

Look back over this study and accept the *Hard Truth* that convicts us in our areas of disbelief. And let us lift a prayer of confession to the Lord that we need help in our unbelief.