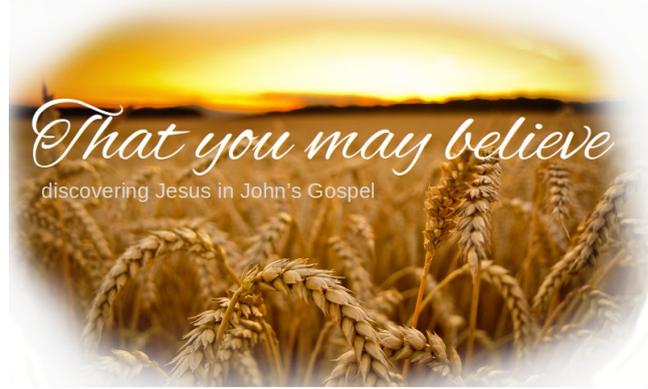


Week 1: *That you may believe*

The reason so many people are easily talked out of Christianity is because they were never talked into it in the first place.

—Frank Turek



Whether you would say you are a believer or not, this series is for you. If you are looking to see why Christians are so fixated on who Jesus is, or you have been a follower for many years; this series has been put together so that you may believe.

John was a disciple of Jesus and an Apostle, but he liked to describe himself as a friend of Jesus. Towards the end of his life John wrote an account of his time with Jesus and today we call it John's Gospel ("Gospel" means good word). Almost at the end of his book, John explains why he wrote it. John 20:31, "*But these (things/signs) are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah.*" That is what we are going to explore together.

Read John 20:24-31

There are some questions below to help work through this passage. The first question seeks to define the difference between faith and belief. Very often we think of faith and belief as the same thing, but John doesn't do that. The purpose of his gospel is for you to have all the evidence you need to believe.

1. How would you describe the difference between faith and belief?
2. What is something you once believed without any evidence?
3. Why did you believe it?
4. Do you still believe it?
5. How does what we believe shape the way we live?

John describes Thomas' doubt, how he came to believe, and how others will come to believe without seeing the things Thomas did. Why do you think John focus' so intently on belief?

Look up John 3:16 – Is it 'faith' or 'belief' that is important? Why?

Deeper In

So, the series starts with a study on what it means to believe. The Greek word John uses is πιστεύω (pist-yoo-o) and in this context 'believing' is an ongoing thing (aorist).

So, we can read John 20:31 as "*But these (things/signs) are written that you may **start and continue to believe without end** that Jesus is the Messiah.*" Belief is not a tick in the box, a one off event, but an ongoing thing. So we tell these stories to remind ourselves of what we believe.

1. Why did John think believers would need these stories to continue believing?
2. Genesis 3:1 What were the first four words evil spoke?
3. How does John's Gospel help us to confront our doubts?

Next Week: John 2:1-11 – Where we meet