
The Gospel of John: That You May Believe
“Belief: Holding on to the Hands of God Holding You”
John 10: 22-30

Thoughts to Shape and Spark Discussion:

“If God really exists, why in Heaven’s name does God not prove that he exists instead of leaving us here in our terrible uncertainty? Why does he not show his face so that at last a despairing world can have hope? At one time or another, everyone asks such a question . . . We all want to be certain, we all want proof, but the kind of proof we tend to want — scientifically or philosophically demonstrable proof that would silence all doubts once and for all — would not in the long run, I think, answer the fearful depths of our need at all. For what we need to know, of course, is not just that God exists, not just that beyond the steely brightness of the stars there is a cosmic intelligence of some kind that keeps the whole show going, but that there is a God right here in the thick of our day-by-day lives who may not be writing messages about himself in the stars but who in one way or another is trying to get messages through our blindness as we move around down here knee-deep in the fragrant muck and misery and marvel of the world. It is not objective proof of God’s existence that we want but, whether we use religious language for it or not, the experience of God’s presence. That is the miracle that we are really after. And that is also, I think, the miracle that we really get.”

“In contrast to the Synoptics and Paul, John's Gospel never uses the noun ("faith, belief"), but *only the verb* ("to believe; to trust"). Believing is an *action* that one *does*, not an object or thing that one possesses; thus, the translation "*believing*" is better than "having faith." Since believing involves *relationship*, an even better translation in English would be "*trusting*" or "*entrusting oneself to* [God or Jesus]." - Felix Just

“You wanna be held? You gotta hold still.” - Taylor Leonhardt

Themes and Questions to Guide Reflection and Response:

What from the Scripture passage or the sermon made an impression upon you? Are there lingering questions to be answered? What is God showing you about Himself and yourself in this passage?

How does the desire for God to give “proof that would silence all doubts once and for all” resonate with you? Is that the same thing the religious leaders are asking Jesus for in John 10?

Is Christian faith or belief more a noun or verb for you? What do you make of Felix Just’s paragraph above that offers some interesting insight into the way John uses the concept of belief in his gospel?

How are you “listening” to the voice of the Good Shepherd? How are you following what He says? Where is the friction? Where is the forward momentum for you in those evidences of belief?

Do you struggle with assurance that God holds you in a way that you are un-snatchable from his hands? What drives that struggle? When do you sense more security and calm?