



BELIEVER'S FORUM

Volume #28

O ye (we) of Little Faith? (Part 1)

A while back I was riding along with a fellow cyclist near where we live. I didn't know him well, and asked "if he was a church person." Within seconds he fired back: "Absolutely not"--- in an indignant and angry tone. I quickly saw that it would be difficult to engage him in a conversation about God, religion, or spirituality.

Another person and I were talking one day about his background. He'd grown up in the Catholic church, and was even an altar server. Then, something happened to his faith, and suddenly church, religion etc. "made no sense to him anymore." He's never gone back. He's now in his 70's! What has he missed over all these years?

Every one of us is different in terms of our approach to God, religion and spirituality. We all have very different life experiences. Along these lines, I've recently been thinking and praying a lot about Belief in Jesus, Faithfulness, and Following our Lord in all things. Even among Christian people, the following problems are possible (I have been guilty of all these myself at times.)

- We pretend that Jesus does not exist. Some feel He *never* existed.
- We take the Lord of the Universe for granted.
- We stiff-arm Jesus when we are prompted to do something for Him or others. (We ignore the Lord, and refuse His gentle voice to us?)
- We are too busy to even notice Jesus in our lives. We are too busy becoming wealthy and doing everything on our own terms?
- We blame Jesus for the problems in the world, when in fact, the vast majority of the problems are caused by **human sin**.
- We question the relevance of a 2000-year-old figure in our current world. (Our *worldly wisdom* today is "smarter" than the Lord of the Universe?)
- We stick Jesus in a box, only to be visited for one-hour per week (at church?), or when we are in trouble, and demand answers NOW?
- We really have no idea who Jesus is? Matthew 16:13-16 verses offer profound questions to consider: When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, **"Who do people say the Son of Man is?"** Well, they replied, **"some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or any one of the prophets."** Then he asked *THEM*, **"But who do you say I am?"** Simon Peter answered, **" You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God."**

Questions to Ponder:

- Who do you say Jesus is?
- Are you convinced that Jesus is who He says He is?
- Are you following Jesus fully in your life now?
- Do you resonate with any of the statements above?

Let's talk about FAITH for a moment. What do we have faith in?

- Our bank accounts and wealth? Our retirement plan? Our personal comfort?
- Our image and reputation in the world? (Any concern about what Jesus thinks of who we are, and what we are doing?)
- The job titles and the "status" we have— all about us always?

- Our smarts, intellect, charisma and skills to handle anything which comes our way? (By the way, these are ALL gifted to us by God.)
- The cars we drive, and the homes we own? (Like—look at me?)
- My particular brand of “news”—always *believing* what we read and see?
- Our ability to firmly have one foot in our current world, and one foot in the Kingdom of God? We attempt to straddle both at the same time? Are we really an imposter, or lukewarm—just going through the motions?

Matthew 7: 21-27 challenges our faith: “ **Not everyone who calls out to me Lord! Lord! Will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter. On judgment day many will say to me, Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name. But I will reply, 'I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God's laws.'** (Is this us?)

Speaking of Faith in our lives—who was by our side always? (His Name is Jesus!)

- Who got us through very tough childhoods?
- Who did we marry?
- Where did we work along the path of life? (Were some of these jobs “anointed?” Just good luck or good fortune, all orchestrated by us?)
- Who extricated us from troubles and pits of devastation which have occurred in the journey of life?
- Who healed us at our precise moments of greatest need?
- Who sent us mentors, coaches and Godly women and men when we needed them the most?
- Who weeps and mourns when we sin and miss the mark, and are subject to the empty temptations of this world?
- Who loves us more that we can possibly comprehend? (See Ephesians 3:14-21)
- Who has poured out His forgiveness upon us continually?

Abraham Lincoln helps us with these words: **"We have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of own."**

We need to take God at his word: **"Then if my people who are called by name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land."** (2 Chronicles 7:14)

For Our Consideration: Ephesians 4:20-24 provides us valuable instruction: **"But that isn't what you learned about Christ. Since you have learned about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from Him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes (and belief!) Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy."**

In Part 2, we will explore:

- Hungering and thirsting for more of Jesus in our lives. How does this happen?
- Living out the sovereign call of Jesus Do we/I need to make some changes?

Thanks for reading. I'm always interested in your thoughts and feedback. Glory to Jesus!

