



In the old practices of the Jerusalem Temple, a high priest would enter the holy of holies once a year to present an animal sacrifice on behalf of the entire community. The writer of Hebrews contends that Jesus himself has now entered the “inner sanctuary” and has presented himself on our behalf as an eternal sacrifice that cleanses us and opens the doorway to “the throne of God.” This is the hope that provides an anchor for our souls.

*In our readings about “belief” this week, we have looked at an instance of one of Jesus’ own disciples struggling with doubt. We have looked at the spirit’s involvement in forming our beliefs and the practices we must adopt to grow in trust. As you understand them today, how would you describe your beliefs about God? How are those beliefs providing an “anchor for your soul”?*

MESSAGE

“Do You Believe This?”  
Rev. David Alexander, Teaching Pastor  
david.a@firstmethodistmansfield.org

SCRIPTURE

Mark 9:14-24

Things I'd like to remember from today's sermon:

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**GPS for Families**

*GrowPrayStudy.org/family*

For young children, belief in God is easy if you include Him in your everyday life. You can do this by singing songs, quoting scripture, reading storybook Bibles and bringing up God and Jesus in your everyday conversations. They are concrete thinkers and do not need much explanation until they are around 7 years old.

Around that age, their brain changes, and they can begin to think outside of their own world. They will begin to question concepts that seem unbelievable to them. They may ask things like “Who made God?” or “What is heaven like?” When this happens, don’t feel like you have to have all of the answers. It is okay to say “I don’t know” or “What do you think?” It’s important that you let them know it’s okay to question. Even the disciples who were with Jesus every day had questions.

Around age 11, they begin more abstract thinking, and they will hear their peers’ ideas on faith, which may not agree with yours. Continue to encourage their questions, but they need your clear, honest explanations of your beliefs. If you have made God a part of your daily life, this will be easier. Let them ask and help them find answers in the Bible, with pastors or other trusted adults. Then remind them that we may not understand everything. Say, “Do you know that I love you? You can’t see my love, but it is there, just as God is there for us.”

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

*Jesus, help me today to trust you with my life. I pray that everything I think or do this day would testify to my solid belief in you as savior of my life. May your kingdom come, may your will be done in me in such a way that others may see the faith I have in you. AMEN.*

This scene takes place after the resurrection of Jesus. After walking through what must have been the darkest days of their lives, these men selected by Jesus as his disciples were once again reunited with him. Thomas, one of the last to see the resurrected Jesus, had his final doubts removed as he placed his hands on the places where Jesus' body had been wounded.

*Hebrews declares that "faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." This stands in stark contrast to the popular phrase "seeing is believing." What might have led Thomas to his continued feelings of doubt?*

*Having the kind of faith that is "certain of what we do not see" may seem like an impossible task. What encouragement can we find in the fact that even Thomas, a disciple of Jesus, struggled at times in his belief?*

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**Romans 8:12-17**

The book of Romans is often a starting point for new believers as they seek to understand in a deeper way the core beliefs of Christianity. The apostle Paul presents in Romans his most comprehensive teaching on the beliefs and practices which serve as the backbone of true Christian faith. In chapter 8, Paul is contrasting a life lived according to "the sinful nature" with the new life offered in Christ that is lived "by the spirit."

*In verse 16, Paul writes, "The spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children." What do you think Paul means here?*

*The language of chapter 8 presented in our text for today is a reminder that belief in Jesus is born out of the work of God's spirit in our lives. How would you describe the connection between your own beliefs and God's spirit at work in you?*

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**Deuteronomy 6:1-12**

The first five books of the Old Testament are referred to within Judaism as the "Torah" because of their primacy within the Old Testament. Deuteronomy, the last of these books, contains the last instructions of Moses to the Hebrew people as they prepared to enter the land that God had promised them. In chapter 6, Moses addresses the need of the entire community to take responsibility for remembering God's laws and promises for future generations.

*Moses' words capture the idea that there is an element of perseverance necessary in order to maintain our beliefs and to pass those beliefs on to future generations. What practices does Moses' recommend to keep the commandments of God fresh in the hearts and minds of God's people?*

*What are the key practices which you have deliberately committed to in order to help you "persist" in your beliefs?*

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**Proverbs 3:1-6**

One of the byproducts of the scientific revolution was that the whole notion of "belief" was redefined around the idea of separating fact from fiction. A hypothesis, otherwise understood as a proposed explanation, was proved or disproved according to the facts that could be discovered using a particular scientific method. As a result, some refuse belief because they cannot "see" the facts.

*Proverbs talks about belief in a different way. Love and faithfulness cannot be seen with the eyes. Instead, they are discovered and experienced within a relationship of trust. How would you describe your level of trust in God?*

*Take some time today to rewrite the final two verses [5 and 6] in your own words. If possible, share what you have written with a friend. After doing so, consider this question: How might these instructions help you to trust God more?*

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