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@THEAIMSTUFF



ADVENTURES IN MINISTRY
www.adventuresinministry.com



THEAIMSTUFF@GMAIL.COM

“We Believe” is a five week series that will challenge your students’ core beliefs.

The overall idea of the series is “Beliefs Determine Behavior”. What you believe will absolutely affect the decisions you make and the future you experience.

In this series, we look at five core beliefs:

- God, Jesus & the Holy Spirit
- The death, burial and resurrection of Jesus
- The Bible is the Word of God
- Baptism & Salvation
- The Church

The goal of this series is to not only communicate what the Bible teaches on these subjects and to lay out the evidence for why students should believe these core doctrines, but to also help them see how life should and will be different as a result of believing these core doctrines.

“We Believe” is a collaborative effort by Eric Gray, youth minister at the Creekwood Church of Christ in Mobile, AL, and Connor McLean, youth minister at the Midway Church of Christ in Jasper, AL.

We pray this series strengthens the faith and life of your students!



**WE
BELIEVE**

**WE
BELIEVE**

WE BELIEVE IN GOD

Week 1 — We Believe Series

THP: Every day your life shows whether you believe Genesis 1:1 to be true.

TEXT: Genesis 1:1

OPENING:

A little girl asked her mother, 'How did the human race appear?' The mother answered, 'God made Adam and Eve and they had children and so was all mankind made.'

Two days later the girl asked her father the same question. The father answered, 'Many years ago there were apes from which the human race evolved.'

The confused girl returned to her mother and said, 'Mom how is it possible that you told me the human race was created by God, and Dad said they developed from apes?' The mother answered, 'Well, dear, it is very simple. I told you about my side of the family and your father told you about his.'

When you think about how our world came to be, you can pretty much boil it down to two views.

- (1) It was created by something eternal.
- (2) It was created from nothing.

But regardless of which view you take, we all have something in common: Faith.

- (1) You either have faith that God exists
- (2) You have faith that God does not exist

Tonight as we begin this new series called "We Believe", I hope you will understand that what you believe about the creation or origin of this world and everything and everyone in it absolutely affects your life.

Because...Beliefs Determine Behavior.

— What you believe about God and His Word will determine the way you live.

One question you must answer...

How did I & everything else get here? Your answer to that question will determine how and what you live for.

— If you believe we came from some gigantic, accidental explosion that formed everything we see, then you should live as though this life is all that we have.

— But if we were created by an intelligent, all-powerful God who instilled in us the ability to choose eternity with Him, then we should live for the next life...not this one.

How to prove God exists without using the Bible

1. **Psalm 19:1-4.** 1 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. 2 Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. 3 There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. 4 Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun,

2. **The teleological argument.** The teleological argument states that since the universe displays such an amazing design, there must have been a divine Designer. For example, if the Earth were significantly closer or farther away from the sun, it would not be capable of supporting much of the life it currently does. If the elements in our atmosphere were even a few percentage points different, nearly every living thing on earth would die. The odds of a single protein molecule forming by chance is 1 in 10^{243} (that is a 1 followed by 243 zeros). A single cell is comprised of millions of protein molecules.

3. **The cosmological argument.** Every effect must have a cause. This universe and everything in it is an effect. There must be something that caused everything to come into existence. Ultimately, there must be something “un-caused” in order to cause everything else to come into existence. That “un-caused” cause is God.

4. **The moral argument.** Every culture throughout history has had some form of law. Everyone has a sense of right and wrong. Murder, lying, stealing, and immorality are almost universally rejected. Where did this sense of right and wrong come from if not from a holy God?

Read more: <http://www.gotquestions.org/Does-God-exist.html#ixzz3ErRDESSR>

Believing Genesis 1:1 changes everything.

— If you can't trust Genesis 1 & 2, how can you trust the rest of the Bible?

— If God created the heavens and the earth, then God created me and you. And if God created us, then as Creator, he has the right to determine our purpose here on earth.

Every day your life shows whether you believe Genesis 1:1 to be true.

CONCLUSION:

The Painted Lady is a butterfly that breeds on the edge of the Sahara, flies across the Mediterranean Sea, over the Alps and the Pyrenees, stopping only to lay eggs along the way. She then flies across the English Channel to Scotland and then north to the Orkney Islands where she dies! A God who could put such knowledge in the tiny brain of a bird can surely fill our hearts with spiritual knowledge and wisdom.

I would rather live my life as if there is a God and die to find out there isn't, than live as if there isn't and to die to find out that there is. — [Albert Camus](#)

WE BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION

Week 2 — We Believe Series

THP: If you believe Jesus walked out of that tomb, it changes everything.

TEXT: 1 Corinthians 15:1-10

INTRODUCTION: Think of a time where I or someone else confessed about lying because of consequences...

- Lance Armstrong accused of & investigated for many years of using PED's. For years, he denied it.
- Would he be willing to die for his testimony, knowing that he was telling a lie?

CONNECT: Would you be willing to die for what you knew to be a lie?

- The apostles were willing to DIE while preaching Jesus rose from the dead. Would you be willing to die for a lie? But could a lie really be perpetuated for over 2,000 years? And have changed so many people's lives?
- The resurrection isn't just important to believe. It is the crux of Christianity. Everything hinges on whether or not Jesus walked out of that tomb.

TEXT: 1 Corinthians 15:1-10 (focus on what changed Paul's life)

1 Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. 3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. 6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. 9 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I

am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them--yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.

- **There's medical evidence that Jesus died on the cross.**
 - He would have been in hypovolemic shock (loss of large amounts of blood) from flogging & crucifixion.
 - The soldier who pierced his side proved Jesus was dead because out flowed "blood and water" according to John.
 - "Even before he died — and this is important, too — the hypovolemic shock would have caused a sustained rapid heart rate that would have contributed to heart failure, resulting in the collation of fluid in the membrane around the heart, called a pericardial effusion, as well as around the lungs, which is called a pleural effusion...The spear apparently went through the right lung and into the heart, so when the spear was pulled out, some fluid — the pericardial effusion and the pleural effusion — came out." (The Case for Christ, page 199)
- **There's evidence of the empty tomb.**
 - We know Jesus was buried in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb...who was a member of the Sanhedrin Council.
 - We know a large stone, too big for one man to move...certainly a man who had been tortured as much as Jesus...was placed in front of the tomb.
 - We know guards were put in place just in case the disciples tried to steal Jesus' body.
 - We know the Jewish leaders didn't steal his body because they never produced it.
- **There's eyewitness evidence of Jesus' resurrection.**
 - Specific names were listed of people who had seen the resurrected Jesus, where people could go ask them to verify.
 - Many of these people were still alive when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians!
- **Maybe the biggest evidence of Jesus' resurrection? The Apostle Paul. From persecutor to preacher.**
 - Focus on verses 8-10...

APPLICATION: Because of the resurrection of Jesus, I am what I am.

- There's no denying Jesus was crucified. There's no denying that tomb was empty. The question is, what does it mean for my life if he was resurrected from the dead?
- "I am what I am".
 - Paul is saying, "Look at my life! Look at the changes I've made!"
 - All because of the resurrection of Jesus.
- Because if you believe Jesus walked out of that tomb, it changes everything.
- If you believe it...
 - You should make Jesus your Lord.
 - When Peter preached on Pentecost, a month and a half after Jesus was raised from the dead, and convinced the crowd that Jesus was raised from the dead, they believed it and they wanted to make Jesus their Lord. He told them, "Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins..."
 - You should live like it.
 - The resurrection of Jesus radically changed the apostles' lives. It radically changed Paul's life.
 - Has the resurrection radically changed your life?
 - You should tell others.
 - ILLUSTRATION: In an interview with the Christian Post, Phil Robertson said these words... (<http://www.christianpost.com/news/duck-dynasty-star-fame-is-fleeting-what-matters-most-is-jesus-christ-94805/>)
 - Robertson quoted 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 and cited it as being one of the scriptures he likes to share with people. "So basically, I don't ever move too far past the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, because it's of first importance. And I make sure it's of first importance with anyone I'm talking to. It all comes down to that, really, when you get right down to it. So it's not complex. Jesus removed our sins and guarantees we can be raised from the dead. I'm still waiting on someone to enlighten me on what story beats that one."

CONCLUSION:

Little Philip, born with Down's syndrome, attended a third-grade Sunday School class with several eight-year-old boys and girls. Typical of that age, the children did not readily accept Philip with his differences, according to an article in leadership magazine. But because of a creative teacher, they began to care about Philip and accept him as part of the group, though not fully.

The Sunday after Easter the teacher brought L'eggs pantyhose containers, the kind that look like large eggs. Each receiving one, the children were told to go outside on that lovely spring day, find some symbol for new life, and put it in the egg-like container. Back in the classroom, they would share their new-life symbols, opening the containers one by one in surprise fashion. After running about the church property in wild confusion, the students returned to the classroom and placed the containers on the table. Surrounded by the children, the teacher began to open them one by one. After each one, whether a flower, butterfly, or leaf, the class would ooh and ahh.

Then one was opened, revealing nothing inside. The children exclaimed, "That's stupid. That's not fair. Somebody didn't do their assignment."

Philip spoke up, "That's mine."

"Philip, you don't ever do things right!" the student retorted. "There's nothing there!"

"I did so do it," Philip insisted. "I did do it. It's empty. the tomb was empty!"

Silence followed. From then on Philip became a full member of the class. He died not long afterward from an infection most normal children would have shrugged off. At the funeral this class of eight-year-olds marched up to the altar not with flowers, but with their Sunday school teacher, each to lay on it an empty pantyhose egg.

Jesus rose from the dead. As little Phillip said, the tomb was empty. God made him Lord over everything. But have you made him Lord of your life?

WE BELIEVE IN THE BIBLE
Week 3 — We Believe Series

For week 3, we watched a video from YouTube that is around 15 minutes long. The students really enjoyed it.

Why Should I Trust The Bible (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XtNcbu5oHQU>)

WE BELIEVE IN BAPTISM & SALVATION

Class 4 — We Believe Series

By Connor McLean

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Matthew 28:19

"Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." Romans 6:3

"...Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Acts 2:38

"I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." Matthew 3:11

These and many other verses tell us all about baptism.

-People like Jesus, Paul, Peter, and John the Baptist tell us everything we need to know, about how essential and important it is.

-Rather than focusing on the evidence, we are spending our time looking at how life would be if we truly believed in baptism – how it would impact our lives, and what change it could make in us.

There are multiple accounts of baptism, and most important is the baptism of Jesus.

Matthew 3:13-17

-Symbolic of his death, burial, and resurrection

-Beginning of his ministry – the start of him doing what he needed to do for us.

We are taught to do what Jesus did.

-That fact alone is enough to know we need baptism.

The Life of Susan Vieira

A little over a year ago, 21 year old nursing student Kristina Chesterman died after being hit by a drunk driver while riding home on her bicycle. The news devastated her family, who knew that she was going to make such a big difference in the world. But Kristina was an organ donor, and 5 people were given a second chance at life because of her decision. One of those people was Susan Vieira. At age 64, Susan was dying with congestive heart failure, and without Kristina's heart, she would have died. But she was given Kristina's heart, and for

that, decided to do something selfless. Susan then made a vow to Kristina's family to complete her bucket list. She was going to do everything Kristina was not able to do because her life was cut short – things like flying a plane, traveling the world, riding on a camel, and flying in a hot air balloon. Susan was determined to carry these out and complete the list. Because Kristina gave Susan the opportunity to continue to live her life, Susan thought it was the least she could do to live for the one who lost her life.

-Like Susan, we are all in this situation

-It is because of someone else that we have a chance of living

-Living for them is the least we can do for the one who gave us life.

SALVATION

“He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” Titus 3:5-7

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:8-10

We are receiving something we don't deserve.

-No matter what we do, we don't truly deserve it.

-Not given to us because of our works.

-It is because of God's grace, because of God's mercy, because of God's love.

Salvation is God's gift.

-A gift we don't deserve.

-We have been created by Him. We've been given life by Him. And we've been saved by Him.

So what can we do? “What must I do to be saved?”

The answer is Baptism.

-To do what Jesus did – spending the rest of his life doing what he needed to do – including dying and giving his life for us.

In 1989, a woman named Janie Tinklenburg asked a friend to make a few hundred bracelets with the initials WWJD to give away to children at the church she attended (during this time friendship bracelets were a big deal, so that's why Janie went with the bracelets rather than something like a T shirt or hat). The children were given the bracelet and in return they committed to wearing the bracelet for 30 days to remind them of their commitment to God, and as a

reminder of what Jesus did for us. Word spread about the bracelets and the meaning behind them, and over the years gained popularity all throughout the United States. Factories began making them in large quantities, and by 1997, and estimated 50 million bracelets were sold in the U.S.

-Make the same 30 day challenge. 30 days of making an effort to truly do as Jesus would do. To truly be Christ-like, and to think about Baptism, what it means, and to think about the one who lived and died for us.

Why do this? Why make this commitment?

Because we believe.

WE BELIEVE IN THE CHURCH

Class 5 — We Believe Series

October 29, 2014

Text: Matthew 16:13-19

THP: The church is a community of believers, not a building.

OPENING:

- Talk about when I was a little kid I enjoyed going to church but then when I reach the age of 8-9 I did not enjoy going to church.
 - Talk about my excitement on Wednesday nights when my parents would say we weren't going.
- And then around the age of 13 I enjoyed going to church again.
- The difference is at age 13 I was baptized into Christ. And church became more than just something I did. It became a part of who I was.

CONNECT:

You are here tonight for probably one of these reasons...

- Your parents made you come.
- Because you would feel guilty if you didn't come.
- You want to hang out with your friends.
- You think someone here is hot and you want them to notice your hotness.
- You are curious as to why your friends come here every Sunday and Wednesday and wanted to check it out.
- You love God and church is a part of who you are.

If you don't enjoy coming to church it's because you think church is something you're supposed to do instead of something you're supposed to become. You probably think the church is a building instead of a lifestyle.

Jesus did not give up his life for us to have something to do and a place to go. He gave up his life so we could be a part of something greater...the Church.

TEXT: Matthew 16:13-19

- Jesus would build his church, his ekklesia, on this rock that he is the Christ.
 - "Ekklesia" means the called out.

- It wasn't a new term to them. It was commonly used to refer to an assembly, or a meeting.
- Jesus is saying that he is going to build his own assembly, or congregation, or gathering of people.
 - In essence, Jesus is starting a movement. A community.
- Jesus is predicting that he will build a community of believers who follow him. This "called out" community would soon become known as "the church", a separate community of believers, as described in the book of Acts.

APPLICATION:

- The church is a community of believers, not a building.
 - In fact, for the first 300 years the church didn't meet in buildings. They met in homes, synagogues, caves, and even tombs when they were severely persecuted.
 - A picture of the early church: Acts 2:42-47
 - Church is not something you do on Sunday's and Wednesday's. Church is a group of people who share life together.
 - Do you see the community that these people shared? Or the common unity?
- The church is a hospital for sinners, not a museum for saints.
 - It's not a place for us to grow old and wait to die or for Jesus to return.
 - It's a hospital in the middle of a battle. And we are medics who are bringing spiritually wounded people to the Great Physician so they can be healed from their sins.
 - It doesn't matter if we call ourselves a "church". If we aren't following Jesus, we are nothing more than a social club or community center for people to hang out.

CONCLUSION:

Coals, Church and Christianity

D. L. Moody was visiting a prominent Chicago citizen when the idea of church membership and involvement came up.

"I believe I can be just as good a Christian outside the church as I can be inside it," the man said.

Moody said nothing. Instead, he moved to the fireplace, blazing against the winter outside, removed one burning coal, and placed it on the hearth. The two men sat together and watched the ember die out.

"I see," the other man said.

Keith Long, Room to Grow (Hendrickson, 1999), quoted in Men of Integrity (3.2)

If you are a Christian, you can't live without the church. You can't live without your community of believers.

I believe in the church that Jesus established.

And I believe that we should strive to be that community of believers, that church of Christ, every day.