

Readings

Scripture

³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.
- John 20:30-31 (*English Standard Version*)

Reflection

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.

- C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (p. 55-56)

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God...

- John 1:12 (*English Standard Version*)

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

- John 3:16 (*English Standard Version*)

And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

- John 17:3 (*English Standard Version*)

Sermon Outline

So That You May Believe

John 20:30-31

Statements

Brad Anderson

Belief is an inevitable reality of our human design. (Ecclesiastes 3:11; John 20:30)

Why does John write his gospel?

That you may believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God. (John 20:31)

Believing in Jesus Christ addresses the mind, will and emotions, not unconsciously or mechanically, but personally.

That you may receive life in his name. (John 20:31)

Receiving the life that Jesus offers is not a half-life or a partial-life, but a whole life (shalom), a life that answers once again to its author.

Reflection Questions (taken in part from the Serendipity Study Bible for Groups)

- How would you feel if the last chapter of the book you were reading was missing? What would you do? Why does John include some signs and exclude other signs that Jesus performed? How many signs do you need to see to produce belief in a person?
- How have you recognized belief when you see it? What does it look like? Consider not only belief in Jesus Christ, but also belief in anything/anyone? What are the signs?
- Can belief be fabricated? Have you seen a "fake"? Do you think the disciples of Jesus knew the difference between the "real-deal" and a "fake"?
- Why do you think our culture has such a fine tuned meter for hypocrisy? What does our sense of disdain toward hypocrites actually indicate about our sense of what is right and what is wrong?
- Why do religious people often exemplify our personal definitions of hypocritical behavior? What are religious people attempting to do? What are religious people often unable to see about themselves?
- When have you struggled with spiritual doubts? What caused your doubts? How did God deal with you in this time? What have you found most helpful in dealing with your doubts?