

# Reason To Believe

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning, church. Today we'll be reading from John chapter 5, verse 30 to 47. And if you're reading from the church Bible, it'll be on 837. Yeah. All right. So John chapter 5, verse 30. Witness to Jesus. Jesus said, I can do anything on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just because I seek not on my own will, but the will of him who sent me.

If I alone bear witness about myself, my testimony is not true. There is another one who bears witness about me, and I know that the testimony that he bears about me is true. You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. Not that the testimony that I receive is from men, but I say these things so that you may be saved. He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for all while in his light.

But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me.

And the Father who has sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen, and you do not believe the one whom he has sent.

You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life, and it is they that bear witness about me. Yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. I do not receive glory from people, but I know that you do not have the love of God within you. I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me.

[ 1 : 37 ] If another come in his own name, you will receive him. How can you believe when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you, Moses, on whom you have set your hope.

For if you believe Moses, you will believe me, for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words? This is the word of God. Thanks.

Okay, great. Thank you. Let's pray together, and then we will consider these words. Father God, we come to your word because we want to hear what you have to say. Lord, as Oscar reminded us last week, there are 10,000 voices in our world.

The voice of our parents, the voice of our bosses, the voice of social media, the voice in our own heads and hearts that sometimes condemn us, sometimes accuse us. God, we want to hear your voice. We want to hear and know what you have to say.

So God, come and speak to us, I pray. Let your word encourage and build up our faith, God. And for those of us that are seeking and searching and wondering about faith, Lord, won't you speak to us as well?

[ 2 : 45 ] We pray these things in your great name. Amen. Amen. So in September 28, the year 2000, a man called David Cam returned home from work one day, and he found his wife and his two children had been killed.

They were shot from gunshot wounds, and they were killed. And David Cam believed that his seven-year-old son may still be alive. He tried to do CPR on him, but to no avail. His son passed away.

And so he called 911 frantically, and three days later, he was arrested for the murder of his own family. A state forensic analyst claimed that on his T-shirt that he was wearing was blood stains that was consistent with a perpetrator.

Sorry, the T-shirt he was wearing had been stained with his wife's blood, that it was consistent with that of a perpetrator. And so during his trial, the prosecution stated that David Cam had two motives.

He had a life insurance policy on his wife, and he was apparently having an affair. And so in March 17, 2002, 18 months later, he was found guilty and sentenced to 195 years in prison.

[ 4 : 01 ] It was 200 years. But a few years later, in a court of appeals, overturned the conviction and ordered another trial. And so he had a second trial. And at that trial, new evidence emerged, which showed that there was another career criminal that was in the area, and his DNA was found at the crime scene.

Well, during a third trial, five years later, in 2009, it was shown that actually the blood expert, the blood spatter expert, actually had falsified his own credentials.

He was not an expert at all, and he had zero history and experience in analyzing blood spatter data. Additionally, another forensic expert found further evidence that that same career criminal, whose DNA was found at the scene, was actually found on the bodies of the victims.

And these evidences together, pieced together, put the career criminal as actually the perpetrator. And so in 2015, David Cam, after 13 years in prison, was released and exonerated and acquitted of all charges.

Now, why did I tell you that story? These stories are very common, right? That people are falsely accused and fairly put away. But one of the points is that the evidence is very, very important.

[ 5 : 20 ] What we make of evidence and the evidence we find and where we source that evidence is very important. Overlooking evidence in a criminal case can be deadly serious and lead to grave injustice.

David Cam going to prison for 13 years for a crime he did not commit. But friends, the Bible tells us that ignoring the evidence about who Jesus Christ is and what he says about himself and the claims that he makes can be just as disastrous, just as serious.

And so in the passage that we're looking at today, it continues from the passage that Oscar helped us look at last week. If you were here last week, there was a man, he's a cripple, an invalid.

He is waiting by a pool of water because there's a superstition in their day that at a certain time of the day or certain time of the year, the waters will stir.

And what that means is that angels are stirring the waters. And if you're the first person into the water at that time, God will miraculously heal you. And so all the invalids, the paralytics of the day are waiting beside the pools of the water at Bethesda.

[ 6 : 26 ] And here is a man, he's been an invalid for 38 years. He's waiting by the pools. And whenever he sees movement in the water, he tries to get in first as a way of healing himself, saving himself, solving his greatest problem.

But he can't. It never works out. The timing doesn't work out. Someone gets in before him or whatever happens. But he's tried everything possible and nothing goes his way.

And while he's there waiting for maybe a future day where maybe something will go right, Jesus walks up to him and doesn't touch him or anything, just with a simple word, speaks to him, it says, be healed.

And in a moment, his whole life is turned around. And the point is that Jesus has the authority and the power to give life and to take life away. Jesus has the power and authority to talk to us about sin.

Jesus has the power and authority to give resurrection life. Why? Because he claims to be the son of God. Jesus says, I and the father are one. Look at what he says in verse 19.

[ 7 : 29 ] If you've got a Bible, he said this. Jesus said to him, truly I say to you, I, the son, can do nothing of my own accord, but only what I see the father doing, whatever the father does, that the son, I myself do likewise.

Jesus claims to be the son of God. And that has a profoundly important implication. It means that Jesus shares the same divine nature with God the father. It means that he is one with the father. God the father and God the son are not two different gods. They're not competing. They're not in partnership. They are two persons of the same triune God, father and son. It means that what Jesus does is what God the father is doing.

What Jesus says is what God the father says. It's kind of like when the crown prince of a country or state or an empire goes on business and visits another country and meets with maybe the chief executive or the president and engages in trade negotiations or bilateral agreements.

The crown prince is not the king, but he represents the crown. He has all the authority, all the power of the crown of the throne. Jesus, the crown prince, the son of God comes and he speaks for God.

[ 8 : 38 ] He acts for God. He is God. When Jesus speaks, he's not the words of a well-informed prophet. These are the words of God himself. When Jesus acts, these are not the actions of a mere mortal.

These are the actions of God himself. And in John's gospel, the miracle is never the main thing. The miracle leads to the explanation. And Jesus does this amazing miracle.

And what's the explanation? Because I am the son of God. I am God. Now, here's the question.

Jesus makes this remarkable claim. But why should we believe that claim?

What evidence does he have to back that up? What happens if any person came and said, I'm the son of God? Should we believe him? Where's the evidence? Where's the testimony? What is it that we should base our belief on?

Well, C.S. Lewis said this. Christianity and the claims of Jesus Christ, if false, are of no importance. But if true, are of infinite importance. The only thing they cannot be is moderately important.

[ 9 : 37 ] That's absolutely right. Christianity and the claims of Jesus. If they're true, they are infinitely important. Because Jesus makes a radical claim. If they're not true, they have zero importance whatsoever.

They cannot be moderately important. So what do we do with the claims of Jesus? And is there any evidence to back it up? Well, in this passage, Jesus is concerned with that. He wants us to believe and to see.

And so he gives us three pieces of evidence. And in this passage, what we're going to see is that belief in Jesus is reasonable. It's difficult, but it's near.

It's possible. In other words, it's within reach. It's within grasp. It's close at hand. Reasonable, difficult, and near. So let's dive in and look at it. Firstly, belief in Jesus as the Son of God is reasonable.

Now, this is in some ways the main point of this passage. Many people hear Jesus' claims, and they find it outrageous. They think Jesus is blaspheming.

[ 10 : 35 ] And so in verse 18, it says here, This is why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him. Because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even claiming God, his own Father, making himself equal with God.

And so everybody knows when Jesus says, I am the Son and God is my Father, they know what he's saying. He's claiming to be God. And they don't like it. They want to kill him. But Jesus wants him to see that these are not the claims of a delusional man.

These are not the claims of someone who's suffering from excess pride or self-importance. Jesus wants that for those who to, he wants us to follow the evidence, to follow the science, to see where does the evidence lead, and to see that it leads to that which is rational, reasonable, and believable. So verse 31, look at what Jesus says. He says, If I alone bear witness about myself, my testimony is not true, but there is another who bears witness about me, God the Father.

And Jesus is saying, Don't just take my word for it, follow the evidence. Look at what it says. Look at what the evidence says. And Jesus here gives us three strands of evidence. First he says, Listen to John the Baptist.

[ 11 : 39 ] What is his message? You might remember from earlier in John chapter 1, crowds of people go to listen to John the Baptist. There are thousands flocking to him. And the religious leaders, the Pharisees, they themselves are pretty impressed with John.

They send a delegation to him. They say, John, you must be the Christ. Tell us. I mean, you're doing these miracles. You're so full of God. You're full of the Spirit. Your teaching is amazing. You must be the Christ. And John says, No, no, no, no. I'm not the Christ. I'm nothing important. I'm just a voice in the wilderness. I'm just someone that's calling out. But I'll tell you who is the Christ. Jesus who comes after me, he's the one that you're looking for. Listen to him. And so Jesus says, You were impressed with John, but listen to what John says. John told you he's not the Christ. I am. Listen to John. Or look what else what Jesus says. Think about my miracles. Jesus says, Verse 36. He says, The testimony I have is greater than John.

[ 12 : 37 ] John was just a mere mortal. The works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works I'm doing, they bear witness about me that the Father has sent me. In John's gospel, miracles are always called signs.

There's seven signs. Signs. And what do signs do? Think about you're hiking somewhere and you see a signpost. What does a signpost do? It tells you where to go. It points you in the right direction.

It says, Keep on going.

You're on the right track. Or wait, you're off track. This is the way to go. This is where you need to go. The miracles, the works that Jesus does, are like signs pointing in the right direction. And what do they do?

They're telling us that this man is no mere mortal. What kind of man touches a leper and rather than being condemned or being made unclean, heals him perfectly, makes him absolutely clean?

What kind of man says to a paralytic, Your sins are forgiven. And just to prove to you that I can forgive your sins, rise up, pick up your mat and walk home. What kind of man says to a paralytic who's been waiting 38 years for the right moment, for the waters to be stirred, says to him, he heals him in an instant without even touching him.

[13:45] Jesus says, Follow the signs. Look at what the signs are saying. What are the signs telling you? And of course, the greatest sign is still to come. Jesus told us four times, There's a day coming when I'll be arrested, I'll be put on trial, I'll be killed and crucified on the cross for the sins of the world.

But don't worry, I will rise again. And three years later, that happens. Jesus dies as a substitute for our sins and he rises from the grave for our justification, our acquittal.

Jesus says, Follow the signs. What do the signs tell you? I am who I said I am. Friends, if you're a spiritual seeker here today, follow the signs. What do the miracles tell you? Well, they tell you about Jesus. Jesus is who he said he is.

Jesus says, Examine the evidence. Listen to the eyewitness testimony. Cross-examine the data. Who do you say that I am? Jesus, the Son of God. That's who. What kind of man loves people like this?

What kind of man dies for the sins of the world? What kind of man forgives sin? And then Jesus says, there's another sign. The scriptures. Look what he says in verse 39. He says here, You search the scriptures because you think that by them you will have eternal life.

[14:50] Yet it is they that bear witness about me. If you had believed Moses, you would believe me for Moses wrote of me. So Jesus says, You guys, I know you love the Bible. You're Old Testament scholars.

You're Pharisees. You study the Bible night and day. But you're so close to studying the Bible. You analyze every word and every grammar and punctuation mark. But you're so close to studying it. You can't actually see what it's about. Can't you see? What are all the sacrifices and the temple and the worship and the priests and the offering? What are they all about? What is the ransom and the forgiveness of sin and the liberation from Egypt and forming a new community?

What's it about? It's about me. It's about the fact that the Son of God has come into the world to save us from our sins. And Jesus says, all of this, it points to something.

Verse 31, If I bear witness about myself, my testimony is not valid, but don't rely on me. Rely on the evidence. Look at the evidence. Examine the evidence. Jesus, I am the Son of God.

[15:50] And C.S. Lewis was still right. The claims of Jesus, if they're true, are infinitely important. If they're not true, of zero importance, they cannot be moderately true. Friends, do you know why you believe what you believe?

If you're a follower of Jesus, why do you believe what you believe? Why are you a Christian? If you're a spiritual seeker, why have you not crossed the line of faith? What does the evidence say? What do you believe?

Francis Collins was a leading scientist in the Human Genome Project. I'm sure many of you know Francis Collins. He was the longest serving member of, I think, the National Institute of Health in America.

And he writes this. He tells his story and he says this. In the home where I grew up, faith was not something that was talked about very much. And I assumed that every religious feeling that anyone had must be on the basis of some emotional experience.

And I wasn't willing to trust those. Or on the basis of some childhood indoctrination, which I felt I was very fortunate to have missed. Okay, so he grows up. He becomes a medical student and he says, religious faith, no evidence, it's either emotion or indoctrination, but I dodged both of those.

[16:59] Okay, I'm okay. But one day he's in the hospital and he's at the bedside of an elderly lady and she's just gone through a painful procedure. And she looks at him and she says, you know doctor, all you doctors don't really do much to help me.

I'll tell you what really helps me in difficult times is actually my faith in Jesus Christ. And she shares her testimony with him and then she asks him this question. She says, what do you believe, doc? And he says, those five words, what do you believe, doctor, startled him.

And he goes home and this is what he says. He says, ultimately, I had to admit to myself that I had arrived at an answer to the most important issues that we humans ever deal with. Is there a God? And I'd arrived there without ever really looking at the evidence. And I was supposed to be a scientist. If there's one thing scientists claim to do, it's to arrive at conclusions based on evidence. And I had not taken the trouble to do that.

And so as a 25 year old, a researcher, scientist, medical doctor, he starts to look at the evidence. And he says he believes Jesus was a myth of history, but he looks at it and he finds his veracity, her historical documents for the life of Jesus and then the death of Jesus and then the resurrection of Jesus.

[18:06] And he comes to a place of belief and follows him. Richard Dawkins said, faith is belief without evidence or without reason. No friends, not at all. If you're a person of faith, faith is grounding your beliefs on evidence and on reason and taking a standard.

It's putting your weight on the evidence of who Jesus is and what he says about himself. Friends, look at the evidence. Look at the our testimonies. Why do you believe what you believe? Jesus wants us to have a firm certainty in our convictions and our belief and to bank our life upon it.

So belief in Jesus is reasonable. But secondly, that's the longest one. Belief in Jesus is difficult. Now, if everything I've said is true, if there's so much evidence, it should be a no-brainer.

We should all just say, okay, it's obvious. Jesus is who he said he is. What's the problem? But Jesus concedes that data alone is not enough to convince you of the veracity of Christ and his claims because belief in him is also difficult.

For all the eyewitnesses that Jesus gives here, notice that all of them, the Pharisees, the religious leaders, the people of his day stumble over all of them. All of them trip him up in some ways or trip them up.

[19:18] Listen, John the Baptist, right, they liked him for a while. The crowds went out to him. They were all amazed at him. But how did John the Baptist's life end? He was beheaded, right? Eventually, his message got a little bit too close for home and Herod says, that's enough and beheads him, chops off his head at one of his lavish parties.

Or think about the miracles, the works that Jesus do. Jesus is doing these miracles. The crowds love it. They're amazed. But what do the Pharisees, the leaders say? They accuse him of witchcraft, of demon possession.

They say, by the prince of demons, he casts out demons. They write it off, say, you can't trust this guy. He's filled with demons and witches. That's why he does these miracles. And what about the scriptures? Jesus says, all the scriptures are about me.

But what do they say? Jesus says, you search the scriptures because you think that in them you have life, but they bear witness about me. But you refuse to come to me. You've decided whatever happens, you will not come to me and believe.

Now we're going to get into this a lot more over the next couple of weeks. But Jesus is making a profound point here. Jesus is saying that though there is more than enough evidence, testimony, veracity, data, the back of the claims that he really is who he said he is, what Jesus is saying here is that rational thinking is not sufficient to learn.

[20:37] And the reason is this. Samuel Butler was an English poet and he wrote this. He says, a man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still. You heard that saying? A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still.

So this is another quote. Don't worry about that. In other words, you can bring someone, present all the evidence that you want to someone, but if they don't want to believe it, they'll find a reason not to believe it. I don't know if you've ever had a conversation with a conspiracy theorist, right?

I struggle with these. And they say something outrageous and you say, but here's the data. Look at the data. And they'll say, that's what they want you to believe, right? It's like, it doesn't matter what you say, they're going to find a reason not to believe what the evidence is.

Jesus says that actually as humans, we have the tendency to do the same. That you can look at the evidence, you can physically see Jesus risen from the dead. You can put your hand in his marks. And if you don't want to believe, you'll find a reason not to believe. The man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still. In other words, if you don't want to accept what's being shown to

you, no matter how persuasive or substantial, you'll find a way of dismissing it.

[ 21 : 43 ] Because belief in the God of the Bible requires more than just intellectual understanding and acceptance. It does require that, but it requires more than that. It requires acceptance at a heart level.

It requires our hearts to say, not just I believe you are who you say you are historically, I believe you are who you say you are now. And that makes a demand of us. Because it demands that we don't just believe in him, but we worship him.

And that's hard. And that's hard. Belief in Jesus requires a willingness to receive him. That's the word he keeps on using here. Will you receive me? Will you receive me? Receiving not just the facts and the data, but receiving Jesus himself.

And so actually, if you look at all these evidences that Jesus calls upon, the fact that they don't just say that Jesus is the divine Messiah, they all say something else. They say that we are sinners and need a savior.

And that's hard to accept. Think about John the Baptist tests me, right? The people come to John and say, John, are you the Messiah? And he says, no, no, no, I'm not the Messiah. But Jesus, the Lamb of God, behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

[ 22 : 49 ] John says, you don't just need a teacher, or a preacher or a prophet. You need a savior, someone who can deal with your sin. And we don't like to hear about that. Or think about the miracles, right? What were the miracles all about?

Think about this miracle in John chapter 5 here. Here's a man, he's an invalid, he's lying behind the pool. Why does Jesus do this miracle? Jesus is not just being compassionate or social justice or trying to heal those that are down and out.

Jesus comes to man, he says, you have been trying all your life to save yourself, to help yourself.

You've got some superstitious notion that if you can get in the waters, you can save yourself.

And Jesus comes to him and says, I've got another solution. With simply a word, simply the power of my voice, I will do for you what you've been trying to do your whole life but are unable to do.

What's Jesus saying? The miracles are saying, you need a savior and I am he. I can do it. Well, think about the scriptures. What are all the scriptures saying in the Old Testament? They're not just rules and regulations for how Israel should run.

[ 23 : 49 ] These are telling us that all of us are sinners as Neil said. We've all got things in our lives that we're embarrassed about but there is one who can deal with it and he's come to us. Jesus says, verse 34 here, not the testimony that I receive from man is important but I say these things that you may be saved.

That's why Jesus came but we struggle to believe that. Elders Huxley, I think the quote is up there, Elders Huxley was a British philosopher in the mid-20th century.

Very, very brilliant writer but he was an atheist and he espoused the philosophy of meaninglessness and listen to what he writes. He writes this amazing confession in his book called Ends and Means.

He says this, I had a motive for not wanting the world to have any meaning and consequently assumed that it had none for myself as doubt for most of my contemporaries. The philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation from a certain system of morality. We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual and political freedoms. He goes on. The supporters of this moral system claimed that it embodied the meaning, the Christian meaning of the world.

[ 25 : 02 ] There was one simple method for justifying ourselves in our erotic revolt. We would deny that the world had any meaning whatsoever. It's a remarkable confession. He says, listen, the Christians of our day were telling us there's meaning in the world, there's purpose, and if there's a meaning, we've got to behave accordingly.

But we didn't want to behave accordingly. We wanted to do whatever we did. So, we just rejected the premise that there is any meaning in this world. And by rejecting the premise, we reject the morality that told us how to live.

Jesus comes to the religious leaders and says, here's the evidence, here's the witness, here's the testimony, but I know you don't want to believe. And so you're going to find a way to reject it, right? Belief in Jesus is rational, it's reasonable, but it's hard.

Friends, do you find belief hard? Can I confess something? I sometimes find it hard. Not because intellectually it's hard, but because I find it hard to surrender. Sometimes I want to be my own God. I want to be my own king. Sometimes there are things that I want to do and I know that it's wrong and I don't want Jesus telling me that it's wrong. I sometimes find it hard. But the good news of Jesus is that he is so for us, he so wants us to succeed, he wants us to live in freedom, to trust him and to find life in his name, that he comes to us that we may experience him and freedom.

[ 26 : 20 ] And that leads to the third point, which is that belief in Jesus is near. What I mean by near is it's not hard, it's not impossibly to reach or grasp, it's within grasp. In this passage, there are a number of times that Jesus says the Father has sent me, the Father has sent me.

Or he says, I have come, I have come. Why did Jesus come? Why did the Father send him? Well, Jesus tells us not to accuse us, not to point the finger at us, but that we may find life in his name. To many of the Jews in the first century, belief in God or God was kind of distant, he was far away, he was shrouded in mystery behind a veil, he was behind a temple court, he was behind teaching that the religious leaders espoused, but it was hard to understand.

And God was hard to grasp and if you could somehow find your way to God, he was scary and beyond reach. And Jesus comes and says, I have come to you that you may know me.

Look what he says in verse 37, the Father has sent me and he has borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen. Here was a problem. God wanted a relationship with his people, but they couldn't find him, they couldn't see him, they couldn't touch him.

[ 27 : 29 ] Well, how do we know where this God is or what he's like? But Jesus says, this God has sent me, God the Father has sent me that you can see me, that you can know me, that you can touch me, that you can believe in me.

Verse 36, the works the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works I'm doing, bear witness, that the Father has sent me. Verse 37, the Father has sent me to himself to bear witness.

Verse 43, I have come in my Father's name. Friends, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was sent by the Father and has come to us, not with a pointed finger, he tells us, not to accuse you, not to tell us how bad we are, how immoral we are, not to tell us to sort our lives out or pick ourselves up.

Jesus has come not to give us a new religious standard or religious KPIs to meet. Jesus has come in order that we might know him and believe in him and find life and healing and freedom and joy.

Verse 34, the testimony, not that the testimony I receive is from man, but I say these things that you may be saved. Friends, Jesus wants us to be saved and to be liberated and to be set free.

[ 28 : 41 ] Jesus says in verse 39, you search the scriptures because you think that in them you'll find life, but they bear witness about me. Jesus wants us to find life and so he has come to us.

Jesus comes to people like the invalid at Bethesda. He comes to outsiders like the woman at the well. He comes to seekers and skeptics like Nicodemus. He comes to those who carry great guilt. He comes to those who are paralyzed with fear. He comes to those who are weighed down by shame. Jesus comes and he asks and he says, I have come to you. Will you come to me and trust me?

In the New Testament, there's a, the Apostle Paul writes this. He says, do not say in your heart who will go up to the heavens to find God. Do not say who will go down to hell to try and atone for your own guilt.

Why? Because that is to bring Christ down. He says, in other words, you don't need to go search for God up there or search for God there. Rather, verse 8, what does he say? The word is near you. Friends, you don't need to go searching for God.

[ 29 : 45 ] God has come to you. God has come to us. Do not say in your hearts who will ascend to the heavens or who will go into the grave. What does it say? The word is near you. It's in your mouth. It's in your heart.

Because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you too will be saved. Friends, in this passage, Jesus wants us to believe in him because he wants us to find life in his name.

He wants us to have certainty and conviction around the things we believe. He wants us to know why we believe what we believe so that we can be confident and bank our lives in it. Jesus says that faith is not unreasonable.

It's not a blind leap of faith into the dark. Jesus says all the signs, the evidence is there, the testimony is there for those who are willing to receive it. But belief is not automatic. It requires a heart posture, a posture of surrender.

The posture says, okay Jesus, I will take you at your word. Come and have your way. God our King and God our Savior. For this reason he came to make known to us that we can come to him.

[ 30 : 46 ] So why don't we do that now? Why don't we come to him in prayer and ask him to reveal himself to us and make himself known and then we will close in reflection. Let me pray for us.

Father God, as we come to you, Lord, we, many of us in this room have discovered the reality that Jesus is not just a man of history, not just a great prophet.

You are God, the Son of God. You are the wonderful Savior of the Lord. And Jesus, we know this and many of us know this and believe it. But God, we admit that faith is still sometimes difficult. God, maybe at a high level we believe that you are who you say you are, but at a granular level and in the day-to-day trenches of life when you've got to make decisions around parenting, around money, around career, around who to date and marriage and these big things.

God, belief in you is hard. Faith in you is hard. Surrender is hard. God, we believe but help our unbelief. Help us to grow in faith, God, and trust and to know that you really are who you say you are and that you really do offer life in your name.

May God help us in your name I pray. Amen. Amen.