

I Believe

Scripture Memory: John 14:6

Step 1

RECITE this excerpt of the Nicene Creed together as a group:

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father.
God from God, Light from Light, true God from True God, begotten,
not made, of one Being with the Father.
Through Him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit,
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.

At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus ~ God With Us ~ Immanuel.

REFER to the 4 faith options below and **DISCUSS** as a group:

Which of these do you think is most prevalent in today's culture? Why?

1. All ways lead to God
2. No way leads to God
3. Some ways lead to God
4. One way leads to God

READ John 14:6 and Acts 4:12. As Christ-followers, we believe #4 - there's one way which leads to God ~ Jesus Christ. It's this very belief which most offends non-believers. This belief is viewed as being intolerant, exclusive, and arrogant. It's becoming more common for some Christians to back away from or downplay such exclusive claims. However:

"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... 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."

C. S. Lewis - Mere Christianity

Who is this Jesus?

Step 2

READ Luke 24:44 and Isaiah 48:3,5. As Christ-followers, we believe.

But this message series is entitled **I Believe**. During this series we re-visit what we (as followers of Jesus) believe, and more importantly we'll move to a deeper, personal consideration of what we (as individuals) personally believe and why we believe it.

In his book, *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism*, Timothy Keller encourages believers (and non-believers alike) to take a second look at doubt -- to not merely hold beliefs because we inherited them, but to make them our own by acknowledging and wrestling with our doubts.

"People who blithely go through life too busy or indifferent to ask hard questions about why they believe as they do will find themselves defenseless against either the experience of tragedy or the probing questions of a smart skeptic. A person's faith can collapse if she has failed over the years to listen patiently to her own doubts, which should only be discarded after long reflection."

Timothy Keller

DISCUSS as a group:

How comfortable/uncomfortable are you with having doubts about your faith? How do you respond to your doubts? How do you respond to others' doubts? Do you agree that it takes faith to manage and acknowledge and wrestle with our doubts? Why? Why not? Do you think it's important to reflect and consider your beliefs? Why? Why not? How might addressing our own doubts or doubts of others strengthen our own faith?

Step 3

READ Isaiah 9:6-7 and Luke 2:8-14.

Was Jesus who He said He was? Who did He say He was? Was He the long-awaited Messiah? Was He God? Was He man? What did the Bible predict about the Messiah? Does that fit Jesus? If Jesus doesn't fulfill each of these prophecies, we should NOT worship Him because he couldn't be the Christ.

CONSIDER these statistics:

- *There are 127 Old Testament verses which make personal predictions about the Messiah.
- *There are 456 Old Testament passages which rabbinical writings have identified as referring to the Messiah and Messianic times.
- *There are 29 Old Testament prophecies which speak of the betrayal, trial, death and burial of Jesus spoken at various times by many different voices during the five centuries from 1000-500BC, yet every one of them were fulfilled in one 24-hour period of time in Jesus' life.
- *The probability of one man fulfilling just 8 of these prophecies is 1 in 10 to the 157th power. Jesus fulfilled every one.

Who is like our God? What is He worthy of?

READ and **DISCUSS** the following:

- *What does it mean if these things about Jesus are true?
- *What should my attitude be regarding Scripture?
- *Is Scripture simply a nice reference guide or should it shape everything I do?
- *How should I live my life? How important should Jesus be in it?
- *Am I living my life as a follower devoted to the Messiah and Lord?
- *Do I prefer living as a casual Christian?
- *Have I accepted the cross of Jesus as my only hope?

Pray: Father God, You are everything we understand and more than we understand. Your Son was before. Your Son was incarnate. Your Son reigns. Help us in our unbelief and doubt. This season, show us how we should live as we follow the Messiah ~ Jesus the Christ. Amen.