“What do you believe in?”

Many of you know that I am a mental health counselor. Early in my sessions with new clients I ask them all the same question; “What do you believe in?” In most cases, they do not understand what I’m asking and I have to clarify by saying, “What do you believe is bigger than you?” Not surprisingly, in many cases my non-Christian clients believe in nothing that is bigger than themselves.

When I ask Christian clients the same question most of them can rattle off the typical “religious speak” about what they believe. Some of them even talk in “creed”; “I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ his only son our Lord who was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; the third day, he rose from the dead…”

Don’t get me wrong, creeds are important; they give us a means of putting theology into manageable pieces. But when I get this sort of response from a Christian client, I patiently wait until they are finished then say, “Yes, but what do you BELIEVE?” You’ve told me what you know, now tell me what you believe!

Matthew 9: 27-30 says:
As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!” 28 When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” “Yes, Lord,” they replied. 29 Then he touched their eyes and said, “According to your faith let it be done to you”; 30 and their sight was restored. Jesus warned them sternly, “See that no one knows about this.”

These men did not need to actually see the miracles of Jesus to know that he was the promised Messiah. They began to call out loudly, “Son of David, have mercy on us”. Notice they did not address him as Jesus or Teacher or Rabbi, they addressed him as Son of David which is a reference to his royal kingship.

When the blind men finally got the attention of Jesus he looked at them and asked one simple question, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” Jesus’ question seems unnecessary in light of the men’s obvious proclamation that he was the Messiah. The blind men knew who Jesus was in their heads, but what Jesus wanted to know was what they believed in their hearts.

Many Christians know a lot about Jesus, but when it’s time to believe in what they claim to know, they discover a faith that is lacking. It is in the times in our lives when all of our knowing makes no difference and all of our doing is in vain that we come to truly believe in a God we cannot see.

This is why Jesus asked the blind men, “Do you believe I can do this?” Perhaps Jesus stands in front of you now and asks the same question, “Do you believe I can do this?” Do you believe I have all power in heaven and earth and can heal your body, heal your soul, redeem and transform your life? What do you believe?

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