



Sermon Series:

I Believe

What is Belief?

Speaker: Tim Voth

Date: March 24, 2024

GROUP GUIDE

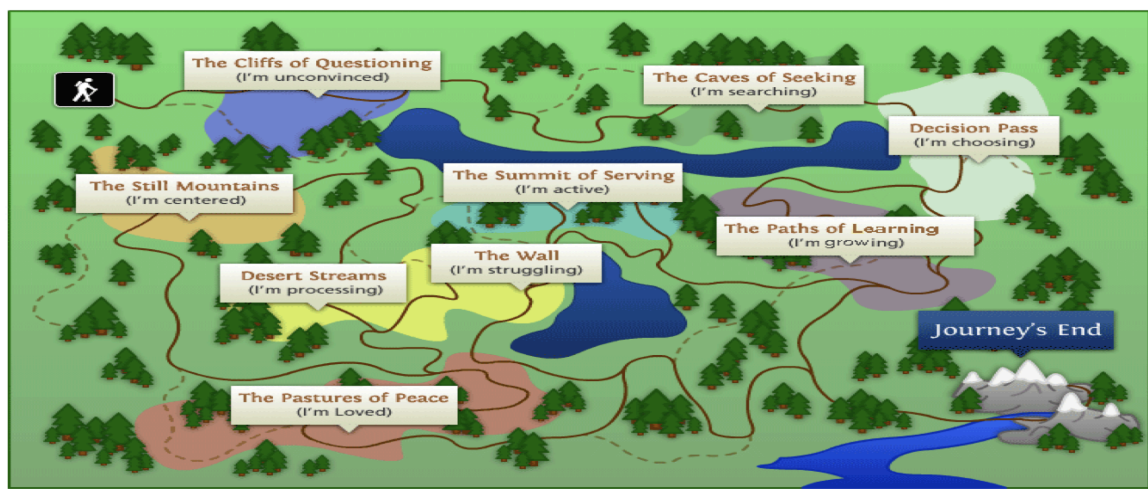


Connect (25 min)

Ice Breaker: What is the silliest thing that you believed (maybe as a kid) that you one day found out wasn't actually real?

Message Discussion (35 min)

1. Take a moment to read Mark 9:21-27. Share any initial questions or observations that first jump out at you from the story. What do you notice about Jesus? Can you relate to the father in the story at all?
2. Tim shared that real belief is grounded - that it isn't wishful thinking, but it is grounded in the reality of God revealed in Jesus life, death, and resurrection. Are there any evidences or assurances that help you trust that God is real and Jesus actually rose from the dead?
3. Real belief isn't about the strength of your belief, but the strength of the object of your belief. Can you think of a time you trusted something that ended up being untrustworthy? Why might we sometimes trust in our own level of belief than in Jesus?
4. Tim shared 2 misconceptions we often have about belief. 1. That it gets stronger and stronger every day. 2. That if it wavers, or if we doubt, there is something wrong with us. Have you ever found yourself believing those misconceptions?
5. Take a minute to look at the "journey map." Do you resonate with the concept of belief as a meandering journey rather than a linear uphill line? If you had to pick, which stage might you most resonate with right now in life? How might true belief look in this stage/season?



6. Tim shared that the stage of “the Wall” or the “Dark night of the Soul/Senses” might actually be a season of life where God is growing deeper roots of belief in us. Have you ever experienced something similar to this on your journey? If so, how might God have used it (or is currently using it) to shape you?
7. In the story, when the man called out, Jesus helped him. He did as the man hoped he would. Have you ever had moments where you called out to God for help and he answered... even if it wasn't how you expected he would?
8. Tim shared this quote from John Swinton: “Faith is not something we do alone. It is a gift of the Spirit; it is something that the church does together. Like joy, we hold faith for one another until the darkness passes.” How does the body of Christ help one another in their faith?

Application & Prayer (20 min)

Praying Together: Choose one area of life where you need to pray “I believe, help my unbelief” and then pray that for each other.



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LEADER GUIDE



Connect (25 min)

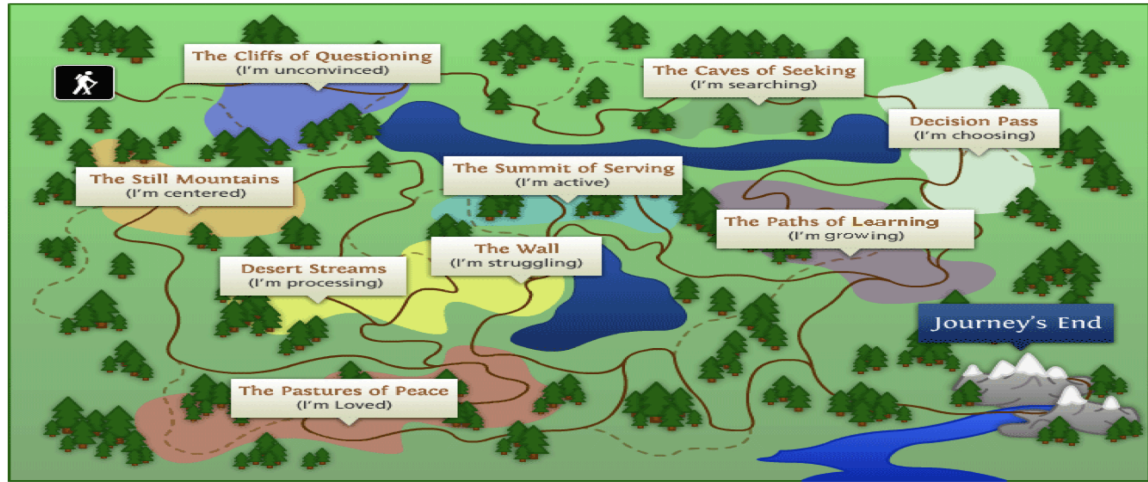
Ice Breaker: What is the silliest thing that you believed (maybe as a kid) that you one day found out wasn't actually real?

Pray: *Heavenly Father, you see us here gathered together and you are in our midst by your Spirit. As we meet, point us to Jesus. He is the beginning and the end of our belief. Help us all here to believe and help us in our unbelief. We want to know you more. Lead us as we learn about you and experience you. Amen.*

Message Discussion (35 min)

1. Take a moment to read Mark 9:21-27. Share any initial questions or observations that first jump out at you from the story. What do you notice about Jesus? Can you relate to the father in the story at all?
2. Tim shared that real belief is grounded - that it isn't wishful thinking, but it is grounded in the reality of God revealed in Jesus life, death, and resurrection. Are there any evidences or assurances that help you trust that God is real and Jesus actually rose from the dead? **This could be anything from intricate arguments for the existence of God or the resurrection, assurances from reading Scripture, deep inner affirmation, confirmation of experience, and so on.**
3. Real belief isn't about the strength of your belief, but the strength of the object of your belief. Can you think of a time you trusted something that ended up being untrustworthy? Why might we sometimes trust in our own level of belief than in Jesus? **Consider that we want to be people of strong faith... and sometimes even faith can become a work when we feel we need to muster up a ton of faith.**
4. Tim shared 2 misconceptions we often have about belief. 1. That it gets stronger and stronger every day. 2. That if it wavers, or if we doubt, there is something wrong with us. Have you ever found yourself believing those misconceptions? **Explore the idea of feeling like doubt is bad. Give credit to the fact that it can be in some instances and that we do have an enemy that makes us "doubt our beliefs and believe our doubts" But reassure that these experiences are part of the journey and are normative.**

5. Take a minute to look at the “journey map.” Do you resonate with the concept of belief as a meandering journey rather than a linear uphill line? If you had to pick, which stage might you most resonate with right now in life? How might true belief look in this stage/season?



6. Tim shared that the stage of “the Wall” or the “Dark night of the Soul/Senses” might actually be a season of life where God is growing deeper roots of belief in us. Have you ever experienced something similar to this on your journey? If so, how might God have used it (or is currently using it) to shape you?
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8. Tim shared this quote from John Swinton: *“Faith is not something we do alone. It is a gift of the Spirit; it is something that the church does together. Like joy, we hold faith for one another until the darkness passes.”* How does the body of Christ help one another in their faith?

Application & Prayer (20 min)

Praying Together: Choose one area of life where you need to pray “I believe, help my unbelief” and then pray that for each other.

(If helpful, break into groups of Men/Women or 3-4 people. I would also recommend not simply listing many disconnected things from far removed aspects of your life, friends, or family, but focusing on those things in your own lives that need prayer that come out of this message or that come out of your ‘highs and lows’, and if necessary a few brief requests for other things going on)

Resources

Hyperlinked Scripture:

[Mark 9:24 \(I believe, help my unbelief\)](#), [Hebrews 11:1 \(Faith is...\)](#), [Psalm 104:33-34 \(I will sing!\)](#), [Psalm 22:1-2 \(Why have you forsaken me?\)](#), [Isaiah 42:3 \(A bruised reed\)](#)

Resources:

[Sermon Podcast](#)