

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

SERMON TITLE: Why I Believe in Jesus Christ

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Would you take God's Holy Word and find with me the Gospel according to John? And turn to chapter 6 if you will, and we'll find verse 66 in just a moment.

Sometime ago, I had one of the most challenging experiences of my life. I was in Moscow, the capital of the former Soviet Union, and I had the opportunity to preach. And I preached in a marvelously beautiful hall. It was called the Red Army Theater. It was a theater for the performing arts. It was a place where they held operas and cultural events, a magnificent structure with a big stage.

First of all, I had to thank God for the privilege to be there; and frankly, spiritually I was trusting the Lord, but in the flesh I was intimidated to be there, because there in that Red Army Theater, there were those massive portraits of Lenin and Stalin. There's the velvet box up there where they would sit to listen to the performances. And in that auditorium were soldiers, army officers, and their wives. The soldiers were all dressed in their military uniforms, and they were sitting out there, rank upon rank upon rank. And God had given me the privilege to preach to them.

First of all I said, "Lord, how did this happen, how did I get here?" And I won't take time to tell you about the circumstances that placed me there. But I realized it was a great challenge because these soldiers, these army officers had been taught from their youth, there is no God. They were raised in an atheistic society. Not only that, they were raised to hate Americans. And I wondered how much of that still might remain in that auditorium. And this place was built to glorify Communism and totalitarianism, to the degree that they named it, "The Red Army Theater."

Now what would you preach if you had an opportunity to preach to a group like that? I mean, what would be the subject matter? What would you say? I knew it was a once in a lifetime opportunity. Never again would I have an opportunity like that. I knew it would be the first time and perhaps the only time some of them would ever hear a message from God.

I prayed, asked God, "Lord, what would You have me to say to these people?" God the Holy Spirit said, "Adrian, tell them about Jesus. Tell them why you believe in Jesus Christ." And that's what I talked to them about, and here's the text that I took; John chapter 6 verse 66 to 69, "*From that time many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, 'Will ye also go away?' Then Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.'*" Peter said, "*'We believe, and we are sure that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.'*"

And I said to those men and their wives assembled, "I want to tell you why I believe in Jesus Christ. And I want to tell you along with Simon Peter why I am sure that He is, '*The Christ, the Son of the Living God.*'" And I gave them four reasons that are found in this chapter.

And they're the same reasons I want to give to you, many of you are already sure that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. But to reinforce your faith and to help you to share with others because we live in a shrinking world and many have never heard the Gospel that we've heard, and many do not take for granted the things today that we take for granted.

Jesus had just fed the five thousand. And there were miracles that He performed that caused people to follow after Him, and especially when He fed five thousand with a few fish and loaves. But then, as the multitudes were following Jesus, Jesus turned to them and began, with a challenging message, to talk about eating His flesh and drinking His blood; that is to partake of Him. The message was so stark. The message was so different. It was so radical, the people began to leave. They were miracle-mongers. They liked the loaves and fish. But they did not like the deeper message that was behind that miracle, and they began to leave Him.

And then Jesus turned to His disciples and He said, "Are, are you going to go away also?" And Peter asked a very penetrating question. And it's the question I'm going to ask you: if not Jesus, then what? If not Jesus, then who? Simon Peter said, "*Lord! To whom shall we go?*" I mean, if not Jesus, friend, if Jesus isn't the answer, **if you turn from Jesus, where are you going to go?**

Are you going to turn from Him to atheism? Are you going to believe that in the beginning the heavens and the earth created themselves, and then created man? I said to these former atheists, "Atheism does not make sense. It's not a sign of intelligence." I reminded them of what I remind you: that the intelligencia of the ages have believed in God. Socrates, Bacon, Galileo, Newton, Pasteur, Einstein, Wernher von Braun, they all believed in God. Can you turn to atheism?

Then I asked them a question: **are you going to turn to philosophy?** If you reject Jesus Christ; philosophy? A system that tells us what we already know in words we can't understand? A former pastor of this church, Dr. R.G. Lee, said, "Philosophy is a chunk of cloud bank buttered with the night wind." Study the great philosophers and see if philosophy satisfied their heart.

Schopenhauer, one of the greatest, said, "Life is a curse of endless craving and endless unhappiness." Aldous Huxley said concerning us, he said, "It seems like we're a cancer on the globe." H. G. Wells tried philosophy, and H. G. Wells said this, "Unless there's a more abundant scheme before mankind, this scheme of space and time is a bad joke, an empty laugh braying across the mysteries." I asked those men, "Are you going to turn to philosophy?"

Then I asked this question: **are you going to turn to materialism?** Is that the answer? If not atheism and philosophy, is it materialism? Is that where you're going to go? Do you think that things can satisfy you?

I went into the mayor's office of Moscow. I went up that red carpet, walked across those marble floors, went into that big conference room, sat down there with

the leadership of the heart of Moscow, looked across the table from those men, and I said, "Sirs, I want to tell you something. The Soviet empire has dissolved as such. Communism has come crumbling down." But I said, "If you follow the West with economic ideas and that's all, and you say, 'Capitalism is the answer rather than communism.'" I said, "Both capitalism and communism are both two forms of materialism, and they will never satisfy the deepest longing of your hearts! God made you for God. He made you for Himself. And even if you have material things, you will still find your hearts and lives empty." They nodded their head, and by the way, we gave them some good books, some Bibles, some books by C. S. Lewis, some books on the home by James Dobson, and some other things to help these men to begin to build their lives on the Lord Jesus Christ. Will you turn to materialism? Is that the answer?

Or **will you turn to false religions?** You know, man is incurably religious. And if he goes away from Jesus Christ, he's going to go to some other false religion. But remember what Peter said to Jesus? "*To whom shall we go? You alone have the words of eternal life.*"

If you go to Confucius' grave, it'll be occupied. If you go to Buddha's grave, it'll be occupied. If you go to Mohammed's grave, it will be occupied. If you go to Jesus' grave, it's empty. It's empty! Jesus came out of that grave. You can take Buddha out of Buddhism and still have Buddhism. You can take Confucius out of Confucianism and still have Confucianism. You can take Mohammed out of Islam and still basically nothing has changed. But you can't take Jesus out of Christianity and have Christianity.

Christianity is not just a creed or a code or a cause or a church; it is Christ. It is a vital relationship with Jesus Christ. And Simon Peter asked this question, "Well, where should we go? We go to atheism, we go to philosophy, we go to materialism, we go to false religions. Where shall we go? You alone have the answer."

Now let me tell you something about Jesus Christ. People, listen to me. If those of you who are listening on television, listen to me. **Jesus Christ alone, only Jesus has the answer** to the things that really matter. Only Jesus can meet the deepest hunger of the human heart. Only Jesus is the answer to man's sin. Only Jesus gives meaning to life and death. Only Jesus can take the sting out of sin, the gloom out of the grave, the pain out of parting, and give hope that is steadfast and sure. "*To whom shall we go?*" He alone has the answers of life and death.

But that brings a question. How do we know that Jesus is who we say He is? Why do we believe in Jesus? Why have I given my life to Him? Why do I serve Him? Why would I be willing to die for Him if necessary? Why? Four reasons, four reasons that we can know and be sure that we believe and are sure that, "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.*"

The first reason that I shared with these, and I shared with you is **the historical reason**. Jesus Christ is an F-A-C-T, fact of history.

Now I don't care whether you're a believer or whether you're not a believer, whether you're a Christian or someone else. You must admit, you have to admit the man named Jesus was here upon this earth. All of the secular historians that have any merit at all admit the fact of Jesus Christ, regardless of what they believe about Him.

H. G. Wells in his *Outline of History* listed the ten greatest men of history, and number one on the list was Jesus Christ. He's a historian. Sir J. G. Frazer, a historian, you certainly wouldn't call him an evangelical Christian, a born again Christian, said this and listen to it, "My theory assumes the historical reality of Jesus of Nazareth as the great religious and moral teacher who founded Christianity, and was crucified at Jerusalem under the governorship of Pontius Pilot. The testimony of the Gospels, confirmed by the hostile evidence of Tacitus and Younger Pliny, appears amply sufficient to establish these facts to the satisfaction of unprejudiced inquirers."

What's he saying? He's saying, if you're a historian, you have to admit, you have to admit that the man Jesus, regardless of what else you think about Him, that He was here. His birth and life splits history. Every time you put your date on a check, or on a letter, you're giving testimony to the fact that a man named Jesus of Nazareth was here. Regardless of what you think about Him, He is a fact of history.

There's no way to explain the Christian church, the fact that we're here, apart from the fact that Jesus Christ was here. And what did the early church begin to preach? Not only that the man was here, but that Man walked out of the grave. That was the central fact of the preaching of the early church. How do you explain that? How do you explain, not our church today, but that church back yonder that grew out of the life and times of Jesus Christ? Those who were eyewitnesses, they believed in His resurrection.

Someone says, "Well, they were hallucinating." Well, He appeared to more than five hundred at one time. That's a lot of hallucination. Somebody says, "Well, He was a ghost." No, He ate with them. They felt Him. They touched Him. Somebody says, "Well, they just made up a story. They said they touched Him. They said they ate with Him." Oh? These men who died for their faith? Do you think they would die for a lie willingly, knowingly? A man may live for a lie. But few may die for a lie. These early Christians paid with their lives for their faith.

How do you explain the historical fact of Jesus Christ and the church, apart from the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ? I believe in Him for historical reasons. It is well been said there is more proof that Jesus Christ rose from the dead than that Julius Caesar lived. Romans 1 verse 4 says, "*He has shown to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead.*" And the Bible says Acts 1:3, "*He showed Himself alive with many infallible proofs.*"

Here's the second reason I believe in Jesus Christ. And by the way, let me give you some Scripture. Look if you will in chapter 6 verse 38. This deals with the historical fact, "*For I came down from Heaven.*" He was here. That's the historical fact.

Now let me give you the second reason I believe in Him. Not only for historical reasons, but I believe in Him for **scriptural reasons**. Look if you will now in John chapter 6 verse 44 to 45. This Jesus who came down from Heaven said, “*No man can come to Me except the Father which hath sent Me draw him and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets and they shall all be taught of God.*”

Now here’s the second reason: not only the historical reason, but the biblical, the scriptural reason. I told those men and I tell you today that I believe in Jesus Christ, because I believe the Bible, the Word of God. Well you say, “Pastor, that just moves the question back a little bit, because to say that you believe in Jesus Christ because you believe the Bible causes us to ask, “How do we know the Bible is true?” That’s a good question. And I talked to those men and I said, “I want to tell you,” and to those ladies, and to those Russian soldiers, and army officers. “I want to tell you why I believe the Bible is the Word of God.”

And I took time to explain to them how I know that the Bible is the Word of God. And I gave them the great five proofs of the inspiration of Holy Scripture. And what are they? Number one: **fulfilled prophecy**. Number two: **the wonderful unity of the Bible**, written over fifteen hundred years by at least forty different authors in three different languages, on all kinds of subjects, sixty-six books that make one book, the wonderful unity of the Bible. I talked to them about the **longevity of the Bible**, how the Bible has lasted through the centuries and how men have made laws against it and how even there in Soviet Russia it was a crime to bring Bibles into Soviet Russia.

And I reminded them, every one of them there that I had a Bible for them to give them when they left, and they broke out in applause. To give to them the Word of God. How do you explain the longevity, the ever-living quality of the Bible? I talked to them about **the accuracy of the Bible** and the scientific and the historical accuracy of the Bible.

Then I talked to them about **the power of the Bible**. Jesus said in John 6 verse 63, “*The words that I speak unto you they are spirit and they are life.*” And I told them how the reading of God’s Word transformed my life. And I told them that we know the Bible is the Word of God. And I told them, as I tell you; **the central theme of the Bible is Jesus Christ**.

Now if you read the Bible and you don’t find Jesus Christ, go back and reread the Bible. He is the hero of the Bible. The Bible is His story. It is the story of Jesus Christ. Put this verse in your margin, Acts 10 verse 43, “*To Him,*” that is to Jesus, “*give all the prophets witness, that through His name, whosoever believeth in Him shall have remission of sins.*” And so Jesus said here in John 6 verse 45, “*It is written in the prophets, and they shall be taught of God.*” Jesus called upon the Scriptures to testify of Him.

And how do the Scriptures tell us of Jesus? What Jesus do these inspired words tell us about? Well, they tell us about the virgin born Son of God. **His life began with a miraculous birth. Then He lived a miraculous life.** I told them as I'm going to tell you how Jesus Christ is absolutely unique as He's presented in the Bible.

Now it's one thing to believe that Jesus was here, but what kind of Jesus does the Bible describe? It describes a sinless man, a man who never modified or withdrew any statement that He ever made. A man who never apologized for anything He did, though He were often misunderstood. A man who never asked for advice from anybody, even though He walked among the Pharisees and the scribes and the doctors of the law. A man who never troubled to justify His actions when many people misunderstood what He did, like when He delayed to come to Lazarus' sick bed. He never tried to justify or say "I'm sorry," or "I hope you'll understand." He never confessed sin one time! Never asked forgiveness about anything. What an incredible life He lived! That's presented in the Bible. What strong points did Jesus have? None, because He didn't have any weak points. Every life, every part of His life was completely, totally balanced in perfect symmetry.

The Bible presents His miracle birth. The Bible presents His miracle life. The Bible tells about His **sacrificial death**. Let me tell you what was unique about the death of Jesus Christ. Not that He died; other martyrs have died. He was the only one who chose to die. You say, "Well, other people choose to die." Oh no. Even a suicide doesn't choose to die; he just chooses to die early. A new statistic out on death: one out of one people die. Everybody's going to die except Jesus. There was no sin in Him. There was no reason for Him to die. Jesus said in John 10:18, "*No man takes My life from Me. I lay it down of Myself.*" He was the only man who chose to die.

The Bible presents Him as the one who came out of that grave. He is the only one who has been raised from the dead. You say, "Now wait a minute, Pastor. Other people came back to life. What about Lazarus?" Lazarus was resuscitated to die again. Jesus was resurrected, and He lives in a glorified body and has become the first fruits of all of those of us who sleep. And Jesus said in John 6 verse 54 He will, "*Raise us up at the last day.*"

What I'm trying to say is: I believe in Jesus Christ because He is an historical fact. There is no way that you can explain the church of Jesus Christ apart from the history of Jesus, who lived, died, and rose again. And I believe in Him because of the Bible. The Bible, a miracle book, that has stood the test of the ages, presents Jesus Christ as absolutely and totally unique.

Let me give you the third reason that I believe in Jesus Christ. And I believe in Jesus Christ for **spiritual reasons**. Look if you will now in John 6 verse 63 of this same chapter. Jesus, presenting Himself to those multitudes said, "*It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.*" You will never with your human mind comprehend who Jesus Christ is. It is the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, that quickens,

that helps you to understand, that gives life. Jesus said of the Holy Spirit in John 15 and verse 26, *“He will testify of Me.”*

Just put your bookmark there, and turn, if you will, to another book that John wrote. Turn to First John chapter 5, if you would. Let me show you how the Holy Spirit of God will convict you and convince you as to who Jesus Christ is, if you want to know. Look if you will in First John 5 and verses 6 to 8, *“This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood.”* He’s talking about the water and the blood that came out of Jesus’ side when He was crucified.

Now notice in verse 6, *“And it is the Spirit that beareth witness because the Spirit is truth. There are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. And these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, the water, and the blood. And these three agree in one.”*

“Now, Pastor Rogers, do you expect me to believe in Jesus Christ, just because you say that He was a historical fact? Even if I believe that, I’m not going to trust Him.” Or, “Do you believe that I’m going to believe in Jesus Christ just because your Book says that He lived and you have evidence for the inspiration of the Bible? That’s not enough for me.”

I will agree. You need something else. You need the Holy Spirit of God to say, “Amen” to these other facts. You need the Holy Spirit of God to take you and convict you and convince you. I’ve told you before, anything I can talk you into; somebody else can talk you out of. But now notice in verse 9 of First John chapter 5, *“If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. For this is the witness of God which He hath testified of His Son.”* God the Holy Spirit will testify in your hearts. I mean, we receive the witness of men. Somebody tells us something is true, and we believe it.

I flew on an airplane; I had to trust the pilot. I ate in a restaurant; I had to trust the cook. You read a map; you trust the map maker. I mean, you’re trusting the engineer that built this building. That’s a pretty big span across there. It may come down in three seconds. I hope you’re ready to go. What am I saying? I’m saying we trust people every day. *“If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.”* And the word “if” there may be translated “since.” “Since we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.”

God the Holy Spirit, I told these and I will tell you. If you want to know who Jesus Christ is, ask the Holy Spirit. God doesn’t just say that, “You must believe, and if you can’t believe that’s your hard luck.” God says, “If you want to believe I will help you to understand, and to know that these things are true.” And don’t anybody in this building tell me you cannot believe. You may refuse to believe, but I will tell you this: that if you want to believe in Jesus Christ, if you seek truth, God the Holy Spirit will speak to you and confirm to you that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

He witnesses to you, and then He witnesses in you. Look if you will in First John 5 verse 10, *“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.”*

Verse 9 speaks of His witness to us. Verse 10 speaks of His witness on the inside. You see, why do I believe in Jesus Christ? Well, first of all, the Holy Spirit said to me, *“He is the Son of God.”* And once I received Him into my heart, now I have the witness in myself. And you could argue with me all day long and never convince me against Jesus Christ. You could bring sophisticated arguments to me, but I have the witness on the inside. And a Christian with the witness in his heart is never at the mercy of a man with an argument in his mouth. Learn that, my friend. The Bible says in Psalm 34:8, *“Taste and see that the Lord is good.”*

And I gave my testimony to these in the Red Army Theater, and I’ll give my testimony to you. I have tasted and I know. And if you were to tell me that apple pie is not good, or there is no apple pie when I’ve just eaten a piece of apple pie, you can argue all you want, but I’ve got the evidence on the inside, Amen? *“Taste and see that the Lord is good.” “He that believeth hath the witness in himself.”*

Why do we believe in Jesus Christ? The historical reasons, *“I’m that bread that came down from Heaven.”* The scriptural reasons, *“The prophets testify of Me,”* He said. The spiritual reasons, *“The words I speak unto you, they’re Spirit and they are life. The flesh profiteth nothing. It is the Spirit that quickeneth.”*

Then I gave them the last of these reasons that I want to give you why I believe in Jesus Christ. I believe in Him for **personal reasons**. Notice what Peter said here, again; go back to our text if you will. Go back to John chapter 6, and look for just one more moment. Look if you will in verse 68 and 69, *“Then Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.’”*

What was Peter saying? Peter was saying, *“I know it personally. I know it personally. I have proven it.”* Not only does history tell me that He’s the Son of God, not only does the Bible tell me He’s the Son of God, not only does the Holy Spirit tell me that He’s the Son of God, but I know through personal experience, for personal reasons. I can testify. I’m sure.

I prayed with a young man to receive Christ. He was searching. I’ll never forget his question. He looked at me. He said, *“Pastor, tell me, is He real to you?”* And I said, *“Yes, He’s real. Yes, He is real! He is real to me! I know! I am sure that He’s the Christ, the Son of the Living God.”*

I want to tell you something else. The best people I know know Him. The best people I know love Him. I mean I’ve met a lot of folks. I’ve met some charlatans. I’ve met some hypocrites. I’ve met some imposters. And Jesus in this sixth chapter of John talked about Judas who was a false apostle. But I’m going to tell you one thing folks, you live a few years, travel around. Meet God’s wonderful, wonderful family. See how

He changes lives. See what He means to you. Be able to sing it, say it, and mean it, “Victory in Jesus.” And He does give the victory.

And I said to those men what I want to say to you, “This is why I believe in Jesus, and I want to ask you to believe in Him. Bow your heads and pray,” and they did. Then I said, “If you prayed that prayer and asked Christ into your heart, would you lift up your hand?” And it looked to me like more than half of those soldiers there lifted up their hand, and they prayed to receive Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. And I wonder, oh precious friend today, do you know Him? He alone is the answer to your heart’s need. There’s nowhere else to go. Where else will you go if you don’t go to Jesus? No one else has the answer to your sin. No one else can fill the longing of your heart. Nobody else can give you peace that passeth understanding. Nobody else has the words of eternal life! No one else walked out of that grave. But Jesus did. And I want you to know and be sure that He’s the Son of God.

Would you bow your heads in prayer? And I’d like for you to pray and ask Him into your heart today. I’d like for you to trust Him and be saved today. Would you pray a prayer like this? Just bow your head, and pray it out of your heart. “Dear God, I need You. I want You. I need to be saved. Jesus, I believe You’re the Son of God. I believe You paid my sin debt with Your blood. I believe that God raised You from the dead, and now I repent of my sin. I open my heart, by faith like a child. By faith like a little child I receive You as my Lord and Savior. Come into my heart; forgive my sin, save me, Lord Jesus.” Would you pray that prayer? “Come into my heart; forgive my sin, save me, Lord Jesus.”

Then would you pray this prayer? “Lord Jesus, give me the power, and help me to obey and to make it public what I’ve done. Help me not to be ashamed of You. In Your name I pray, Amen.”