Defense: How Can You Be So Sure That You’re Right? Memory Verse: John 14:6

July, 27th, 2025 Scripture Reading: Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:1-4

**[SLIDE 1]**

 Today we will be closing out our series on apologetics. We have tackled a lot of important questions that non-believers tend to have about faith. We looked at the question of origins, the reliability of the bible, we talked about if God is good and loving, how can evil and hell exist. We looked at why be believe in miracles, why being a good person is not all the matters, and we faced the critique that Christians can be narrow-minded hypocrites who just use their faith a crutch. Overall, I have tried to encourage you in your faith by offering good reasons to believe that things that we do and I also hope that you have felt equipped to engage with non-believers in some of these conversations. All that we have talked about so far culminates into our final question today. If all that we have said so far is true, even if all that we have said has been accepted by the person we may be talking to, this question still remains: **[SLIDE 2]** How can you be so sure that you’re right?

 My wife works as a nurse in St. Paul and one night during her shift she got to talking about my sister who, about a year ago, moved with her husband and kids to another country in Central Asia. They are there in the mission field, trying to translate the Bible into the common language of the people. In the conversation, it came up that we support some other missionaries engaged in similar work. Upon hearing this, my wife’s co-worker was almost offended. She objected to such missionary activity because it was presumptuous for people to come into another culture and tell them that they are wrong. Why should we be able to tell others what to believe and how to live? What makes us right and everyone else wrong?

 This brings us into a discussion about one of the big problems people have with Christianity and that is its **[SLIDE 3]** exclusivity. To be exclusive is to be closed off to some. An exclusive golf course, for example, is not just open to the public. You will not be able to enter unless you are a member. All the services, all the supplies, all the benefits are closed off to you unless you pay to become a member. Some would say that scenario sounds a lot like **[SLIDE 4]** the church. We have membership after all. We have services and some supplies. Our members do pay, not a fee per se, but their money is what supports the functioning of this church.

 Well of course, everything we do is open to the **[SLIDE 5]** public. People are invited to come and join us for our services and events. We don’t demand that members give a certain amount, and we don’t withhold anything from anybody. But, when it comes to exclusivity, we do have to contend with some hard things that Jesus says. There is no getting around a verse like John 14:6, **[SLIDE 6]** “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” In other words, we come to the Father exclusively through Jesus. This statement from our Lord draws a line in the sand whether we want it to or not. He claims exclusivity. Jesus does not share his role here. He stands alone as the way, the truth and the life. If we desire access to God in any capacity, we must go through him: the way, the truth and the life.

 ((**[SLIDE 7]** So many people, my wife’s co-worker included, love to picture God on top of a mountain. And from the top of that mountain run many paths. Some are straight-forward and some are winding, some are more cleared out and some are grown-over. But all these different paths represent all the different religions and they all eventually lead up to the same summit where we can all encounter the same God. This picture is a **[SLIDE 8]** fallacy. It is an acute misunderstanding of any religion. Hinduism, for example, does not even believe in a personal God at all, so how would their path lead to the same God that we serve? For someone to claim that every path leads to the same location means that that individual has personally trekked every path and arrived at the same place. This is foolishness. In reality, Jesus stands as the only way…all other paths lead to other gods, idols and shams. Jesus is the way.))

 Let’s consider Jesus’ claim about being **[SLIDE 9]** the truth. I want you to think back and try to remember when you were a small child. As a small child, where did you think **[SLIDE 10]** babies came from? There are stories told about the stork stopping by with a special delivery, or a certain seed that the mother eats in order to grow a baby in her belly, or maybe babies are bought in the hospital and then brought home. I heard one little boy, with all the confidence in the world, explain that the uvula in the back of the throat drops into the mother’s stomach and that creates a baby. So many options, so many theories…why did we think these ridiculous things? One, we didn’t know any better. We were just kids trying to make sense of the world. And two, someone, likely another kid, told us that is how it all works. So, we went with the explanation for a while content to think that we understood reality a little better. But as we grow older, we learn a very important lesson:**[SLIDE 11]** *consider your sources!* Not everyone who gives you information should be trusted. A peer on the school bus spouting information about human reproduction is not going to be as trustworthy as a parent or our health teacher. This seems pretty obvious when it comes to the question about babies, but what about the question of **[SLIDE 12]** worldviews? What about religion and faith? What are the sources that inform these things? Where can we obtain truth about what we should believe? How can we avoid ridiculous theories?

 Well, let us consider our sources: The oldest religion on earth many would say is **[SLIDE 13]** Hinduism. Who would we name as it’s source? Well, there is no one person. Hinduism is really a collection of various cultural practices and philosophies that developed over thousands of years. Some Hindus believe in 300 million gods and some in no god at all. Brahman, the ultimate god is really a conglomeration of all out souls Hinduism may be the most accommodating of all world religions, but it’s hard to know what is true when so many different views are accepted. Hinduism does not strike me as the greatest source.

What about **[SLIDE 14]** Buddhism? Buddhism began with the teachings of a man named Siddhartha Gautama. He taught people how to overcome suffering and achieve Nirvana. Siddhartha was a rich and privileged prince who realized that his wealth could not solve the problems of sickness and death. It is true, even the very wealthy and powerful will pass away. He decided to renounce his worldly life and eventually embarked on a road to enlightenment though mental discipline and meditation. For Buddhists, there is no God per se, rather personal liberation through self-enlightenment. So a prince who gave up everything does sounds pretty compelling. He might be a reliable source, but in the end, his teachings lead back to myself. Besides, Buddha himself never claimed to be God and he taught that you are your own way.

 **[SLIDE 15]** Islam is another source of purported truth. The prophet Muhammed claimed to have received visions and to have interacted with the angel Gabriel. Muslims believe he stands as the last and greatest prophet of God, in line with Moses and Jesus. But Muhammed’s life and behavior was far from perfect. His married life and war practices were far from exemplary. Then again, Mohammed did not claim perfection or claim to be God.

 **[SLIDE 16]** There are various other religions or even cults that we could mention, and we could consider their sources as well, but how do these founders stack up to **[SLIDE 17]** Jesus? Some of these founders claim to know the way, to know the truth and to know the life…but none of them say that they are the way, the truth and the life. In the end, the truth is not a formulation of facts, it is a person. Jesus is the truth. He has always been and always will be. Consider what the very earliest Christians were saying about their founder in **[SLIDE 18]** Colossians 1:15-20 READ.

 When we consider the source, we see that Jesus is God, eternal, omnipotent. He is literally the only source as all things were created through him. He holds all things together. In him is found the fullness of God and by him and him alone comes peace through his own blood. Can anyone else make such claims? Does anyone else even try? If they did, we would likely treat them for mental illness. Well, so maybe Jesus was crazy. Maybe he suffered from delusions of grandeur. Worse than that, maybe he was a liar. Maybe he duped everyone both then and now. Sure, Jesus claimed some amazing things about himself, and sure, the early church bought it and continued to sell that same message. We still are faced with the question: How can you be so sure that you are right? How can you be sure that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life?

 I think we answered this question weeks ago when we talked about the miracle of the **[SLIDE 19]** resurrection. Through the person and work of Jesus, God has supernaturally intervened in our world in order to make known to us the way to be with him, the truth of who he is and the life that can be eternal. So let us consider the source. No other source of any other religion or worldview or philosophy or way of life can claim to be God and then live up to those claims. And again, when it comes to Easter morning, we have very good reasons to believe that Jesus actually, physically rose form the dead, as he said he would. Historically speaking, there is no other accounting for the facts. The only story that makes sense of all the data is exactly what we find in the gospels themselves. **[SLIDE 20]** For a breakdown of some of the reasons why the resurrection is the only plausible answer, I invite you to refer back to my sermon from June 29th as there I talk all about the resurrection of Jesus who proves he was more than a man.

 So we have confidence about the truthfulness of our faith because we have an unrivaled, immaculate source. We can trust what Jesus says **[SLIDE 21]**. We are not just getting our information from the big kid on the bus who thinks he knows so much. We have historical evidence, philosophical consistency, theological revelation that all play into cementing Christianity as the one and only viable belief system.

 That brings us back to our missionary conversation. If it is true that Christ is the only way, then we, as Christians, are tasked to inform anyone and everyone about what we know. It’s not a matter of being smarter or better people. It is not a matter of culture or importing some other forms of traditions. It is a matter of sharing with the world the ultimate solutions for what ails us. The cure for every man, woman and child: Jesus Christ, the way, the truth and the life. And as the cure, he calls each his followers to go and make other disciples. Proselytizing has become a bad word in our Western culture, but Jesus has sent us explicitly to share inclusively an exclusive message. We tell one and all an exclusive message: There is one way, one truth, one life. And we love people enough to share our source with them.

 There is one other piece that I would be remiss in omitting from this discussion. We have considered our source, we have resolved to declare what we know to the nations. But we cannot neglect the veracity of personal testimony. Christians everywhere can attest to the reality of knowing Christ and walking with him in a daily relationship. We proclaim that he has been resurrected. He is no longer dead! He is not a faint memory! Jesus is alive and present with those who believe. He is active and moving within his body, the church. He is still healing people, and forgiving people and challenging people to die to themselves so that he can shine through them. Jesus is still casting our demons and bringing teaching about the kingdom of God! He is still calling us to holiness and teaching us how to pray and feeding his sheep.

 I am so sure that Christianity is right because I know the source. The truth of the matter is, in fact, a person. I know Jesus, and he knows me. I can’t deny what I know. Other religions offer teachings from a person, thoughts about God from a person, doctrines about what is really real from a person, moral guidelines from a person. I say, go to the source. Go to the one who actually did something, the one who defeated death and took care of our sin. Pastor James Kennedy puts it this way, **[SLIDE 22]** “Other religions are based on their founder’s teachings; Christianity is based on its Founder’s life…That is why the center of Christian belief is not a list of rules to be followed but a person to be experienced.” It’s not about rules, it’s not about teachings…it’s about a person.

 Maybe you are sitting here this morning, and you are currently engaged in a battle with doubt. If the question were posed to you, “How can you be so sure you are right?” Your answer might be, “I’m not so sure…” Let me assure you that you are not alone. Doubt creeps in at times for anyone who has faith. But there are some things that we can do in these seasons when we are less than sure. As I’ve been saying, we believe, not in teachings or dogmas, we believe in a person – we have a relationship with a person: Jesus Christ. It’s difficult! It’s hard to understand sometimes since Jesus is not physically across from the table I am sitting at. It’s hard to hear from him sometimes since he doesn’t speak audibly in my ears, but it is still a personal relationship nonetheless. There are times of joy and gratitude. There are times of anger and arguing. If you are experiencing doubt, you probably need to re-engage in your relationship with Jesus. Commit to reading his word and spending time in prayer daily. Keep worshipping! Press into what the church can offer. Stay connected to the body of Christ. It’s hard for a rejoicing heart to doubt for too long. Lastly, I’ll add, get angry. Come before Jesus honestly and tell him about your doubts. “I can’t see you Lord! Where are you? I feel left alone! I feel like you are far from me!” Such a prayer is powerful. It’s hard for an angry heart to doubt for too long.

 I encourage you to join with two biblical characters in your doubts. One, from **[SLIDE 23]** Mark 9: A man asks Jesus for an impossible request to rid his son of an oppressive demon. The man says to Jesus, “I believe, help my unbelief.” That is a good prayer for any of us. The other character is the apostle Peter. In **[SLIDE 24]** John 6, as people begin deserting Jesus, Peter declares, “To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We know you are God’s holy one.”

 “I believe, help my unbelief. Where else could I go anyway? You have the words of eternal life. You are the source.”

 Seek out Jesus himself. He is the way, the truth and the life. And no one can come to the father except through him. Amen.