

How Can I Be Sure?

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[0 : 00] that Christianity is the way. In particular, they were looking at Judaism, the Jews, which if you think about it, is a religion pretty similar to Christianity.

It's got a fair bit of differences as well, but they have the same Old Testament that we have. Their faith is based on the same promises of God that we have as well.

And as they looked at the Jews and they maybe scratched their heads and they thought, well, if these guys aren't going to be saved, how can we be sure that we are going to be? And Paul wrote this letter. So I want to read through it tonight.

And as Tim said, we're just going to explain it a bit so we can find out how we can be sure. If you pick up your blue sheet, it starts off, Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they might be saved.

For I can testify about them, the Jews, that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Now, you might read that and you think, wow, that's pretty arrogant of Paul.

[1 : 05] That's pretty rude to say, you know, this other religion has got it wrong. To say that this other religion is not based on knowledge. How can he say such a thing?

Is he a Jew hater? Is he against them? Well, no, Paul was actually a Jew himself and he became a Christian. So therefore, when he says, I can testify about the Jews, we can believe that he knows what he's talking about.

They're his own people. And he says, I can testify about the Jews that they're zealous for God. He says they truly love God. They're enthusiastic about him.

They're into him. They sincerely love him. But, he says, their zeal, their enthusiasm, their sincerity is not based on knowledge.

And hence my first point there on that sheet. Christianity is based on truth, not just belief. What I mean by that is Paul looked at the Jews and he said they might passionately believe it, but in the end, it's not the truth.

[2 : 10] When you came in tonight and picked your chair, unconsciously, consciously, you decided to believe that that chair would hold your weight. Now, whether you're 50 kilos or 100 kilos, you looked at this chair that you're presently sitting on and you said, I believe that this chair will uphold me and promptly sat down.

But if it wasn't true, no matter how deeply you hold that belief, no matter how passionate you are that this chair is going to hold me up, if it had been rotted by white ants, if it hadn't been put together, I'm not trying to undermine your, you know, confidence in the chair you're sitting on, but it would have made you fall down.

And in the same way, you can believe all sorts of things passionately, sincerely, zealously, but if it's just not true, it's going to fail you. Take the belief that the world is flat.

People believe that so much that they would want to kill people who denied it. We know it's not true. Christianity is based on truth, not just belief.

We can therefore be sure that we can get to heaven, that it is the right way. You might be thinking, how do I know it's based on truth?

[3 : 30] You haven't actually, you know, said all that much to me. You might be sitting there thinking, and doesn't science disprove Christianity? Isn't the truth of the Bible sort of primitive culture and not really relevant to us today?

I say you can be sure that it's based on truth because in my second point, it's based on Jesus. The Bible tells us Jesus came down to earth. It says, no one has ever seen God except for Jesus who was with God in heaven.

Therefore, he's the one that can really tell us about God. It says, Jesus is full of truth. More than that, Jesus makes the claim, if you believe my teaching, he says, the truth will set you free. He says that his teaching is the truth and that it frees us. He even went further than that. He said, I am the truth. Jesus claimed to be the only way to God, the only way to get to heaven, to be saved. Christianity is based on the truth because it is based on Jesus. It comes from Romans 10 as well. If you read the next paragraph with me, since the Jews did not know the righteousness that comes from God and they sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. [4 : 52] Christ is the end of the law for everyone who believes. Now, there's some big words in there. Righteousness is basically goodness. It says there's a goodness that comes from God but the Jews didn't submit to it.

That goodness is Jesus. You see, the Jews received God's law. They wanted to know, how do we get to heaven? And God says, well, if you keep my law, that's the sort of rules, that's the sort of structures in religion that you want to follow.

And Jesus, it says, is the end of the law. He fulfilled it. He completed it. It's all over Red Rover. He's done the good that God requires.

But Paul says, the Jews sought to establish their own goodness. They're trying to be good by themselves. They missed the whole point of what Jesus was about. Do you miss what Jesus was all about?

Do you try to get to heaven by yourself? By your own goodness? If you do, I want to ask you a question. On a scale, say, of one to ten, one being, you know, you need to do good barely in your life, ten being, you have to always be good, how good do you think you have to be to get to heaven?

[6 : 13] I think most of us would probably say, oh, you know, around six, seven, eight. Some of us might set the standard really high and say, nine. Some of us might be more generous and say, well, God is a God of love, you know, if I'm good on the three, four end of the scale, you know, I'm sure he will probably let me in anyway.

But the Bible says that's not right. If you want to be good enough, if I can read the next verse to you from Romans 10, Moses describes the righteousness that is by the law.

Moses describes trying to be good by keeping God's law. the man who does these things will live by them. Paul says, if you want to be good, you've got to live being good over and over, again and again, continuously.

It's not a case of sort of doing some good and then moving on and getting on with life. It's not a case of mostly being good. You need to be good and live by it every minute of every day for the rest of your life.

Now, my father happens to be a maths teacher and I think I've got a bit of it in me so I actually worked out how many minutes we're going to be alive as you do in your spare time. 37 million minutes. That means if one minute in those 37 million for the rest of your, say, 70 years of life, you get angry at your wife and yell at her, you've failed.

[7 : 43] If one minute in those 37 million you yell at your kids because they're just frustrating you and you're rude to them, you haven't met God's standards.

The Bible says if you want to be good enough to get to heaven on the scale of 1 to 10, you need to be 10. You need to be perfect as God is perfect.

So often when we think about being good enough for heaven, we sort of look at somebody else and we think, well, I'm as good as them, you know, I'll get to heaven. Or we might say, I'm better than them, I'll be sure to get to heaven.

God says if you want to compare yourself to anyone, he says compare yourself to me. God says if you want to be good enough, be as good as I am. And God is perfect.

We know that we just can't live up to that. Christianity is based on Jesus' goodness, not our own. We can be sure that all those minutes in our lives when we haven't met God's standards, Jesus has died for them.

[8 : 47] He's been raised to life so that we might live with him as our Lord. And Paul picks this up next in his letter to the Romans. If you follow on, it says, but, we've just read, the man who does these things will live by them, but, he's drawn a sharp distinction here, the righteousness that is by faith, that just means being good by believing Jesus has done it for you.

It says, you don't have to say in your heart who's going to get up to heaven by himself. He says, no, Jesus has already come down, he's already done the good for you. You don't have to say who's going to descend into the deep.

You don't have to do some superhuman deed, some heroic feat, go on some fantastic journey. You don't have to keep some structures, some rituals, some rules.

of any religion. It says, no, what does it say? The word is near you, it is in your mouth and in your heart. He's talking about the word of faith that we are proclaiming, that if you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. If we can be sure because Christianity is based on truth, because it's based on Jesus and not ourselves, then Paul says here, you can be sure because getting saved by just believing in Jesus is so simple and it's so certain.

[10:17] He says it's so simple, all you have to do is believe and confess. Believe and confess. Just believe that Jesus has paid for all those minutes when you haven't lived up to God's standards.

believe that he has been raised back to life and confess you're going to make him the Lord of your life. How easy is that? I've got a mate called Fat Phil.

It's a bit of a flattering nickname. He's about 150 kilos and he's about 6 foot 4. He's a big guy. I got to share the good news with him one week and I said, you realise that Jesus has done it all for you. Believe in him. He's taken away all those minutes when you don't meet God's standards and he's like, there's got to be something more to it than that. He said, no, that doesn't sound right.

You know, surely I've got to do more. It can't be that easy. I pointed out to him that it has to be that easy. When you stop and think about it, if God loves us, if God desires all of us to go to heaven and be with him, then it's got to be easy to get there.

[11:26] What I mean by that is trying to be good all of your life is just way too hard. A three-year-old can't do that. If God wants everyone to be in heaven with him, that includes mentally disabled people.

Having faith in Jesus, believing that he has done the work for you to live up to God's standards is that easy. It's that simple. Believe and confess. Believe and confess.

You can also be sure because Christianity is a certain thing. If I happen to be an insurance agent and you were trying to get to heaven by keeping the rules or the structures of a religion, you were trying to be good enough in yourself, I don't think I'd ensure you that you would get there.

If I was a gambler or a bookie, I think I'd probably take the odds that you would not be perfect. That makes far more sense, doesn't it? But look at these certain promises we have from God.

I'm picking it up, a couple of lines up. It says, as the scripture says, anyone who trusts in him, that's Jesus, will never be put to shame. There's no difference whether you're a Jew, whether you're not.

[12:41] It says, the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him. Another certain promise. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

I like guarantees. I break watches, I have a few car accidents in my time. I like to know that the thing that I've bought, whether it's a new car or a new kettle for my kitchen, is going to last.

You have no guarantee if you're trying to get to heaven by simply being good enough. But these promises are certain. God himself says, everyone who calls on the name of Jesus will be saved.

I don't know if you ever stop to think about what God can't do. The Bible says God cannot lie. He restricts himself. If he's perfect, he is going to keep his word.

And if he says to me, to you, everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved, that's a certain thing. You can definitely be sure. If we can be sure because Christianity is based on truth, if we can be sure because it's based on Jesus and not ourselves, if we can be sure because it's simple and it's certain, then I want to say to you tonight, brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for you is that you will be saved.

[14:10] If you can be sure, take that next step. Believe that Jesus has died for all those minutes when you haven't met God's standards.

Believe that Jesus has been raised from the dead and confess him as your Lord. Make him the most important person in your life. If you can be sure, what's stopping you?

As we shared the good news with people this week, we talked to some kids who said, you know, my parents don't really believe that, you know, I'll think about it later. I wonder if they will.

We shared the good news with some teenagers who seemed to be having so much fun that they said, you know, we'll think about that a bit later. Again, I wonder if they will.

We shared the good news with some young dads and some young mums who were snowed under with work and mortgage and taxing their kids around. They'll think about it later. I wonder if they will. [15 : 15] We also shared the gospel in a nursing home. I was impacted there by some old ladies who couldn't remember the names of their children, couldn't remember the house where it was that they'd lived in for 20 years.

They're still not going to get around to believing and confessing. tonight, my heart's desire, the heart's desire of our team from Sydney, the heart's desire of your friend who may have brought you tonight is that you will be saved.

We pray for you that you will believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and confess him as your Lord. If you want to do that tonight, if you look in the stack of papers you got as you walked in the door, there's another blue piece of paper and it says, today I prayed the prayer for the first time.

I'm about to pray and if you want to be saved, pray the same thing in your mind. It's not a magic prayer, we're just talking to God and at the end I'm going to say amen which means I agree with all that I just said.

Therefore, as I say my prayer, which is going to go something like this, Lord Jesus, thank you that you died for all those minutes where we haven't been good enough.

[16 : 37] Lord Jesus, thank you that you were raised to life to be our Lord. Can I make you my Lord? I want you to say amen after that. Let's pray now.

Lord Jesus, thank you so much that you did die for us for all those times that we haven't met God's standards. Lord Jesus, thank you so much that you were raised back to life to be the Lord of us. Please help us make you our Lord. Amen. hoes in mic