

Amazing Unbelief

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[0 : 00] Thanks for that, Charles. It's a long reading. Now, guys, tonight what I need is a bit of crowd participation, so don't be shy. What we're going to do is we're going to play a game called True or False.

Basically, I am going to tell you a statement, and you have to tell me whether I'm telling truth or not. So I'm just going to get you to raise your hands to indicate whether you believe me. The first one, when I was in Year 10, I was riding my horse like you do, and I was jumping, and I fell off my horse, and I landed on the jump, and although I tore my kidney and had internal bleeding, I got back on my horse and completed the rest of my show jumping course before going to the hospital.

True or false? Who thinks it's true? All right, false people, put your hands up. It's true. Absolutely true. Sorry about that.

Okay, next one. And got to, you know, waitress for people like Eddie Maguire and all those kind of cool footy heads.

And this one time we had a Prime Minister's lunch at Colonial Stadium, and being the VIP person, I got to serve Johnny himself. True or false? True? False?

[1 : 29] It's so true. Oh my gosh. No one believes me. It happened. Okay, my final one. Oh, actually not. There's two more exciting ones. When I was in Year 10, I went over to England to play netball on a netball hockey tour.

And, well, I won't say much about the standard of the English and Scottish netball teams that we played, but every single match we played, we beat them by at least 50 points. True?

Or false? It's so true. They were hopeless. Oh my gosh, they couldn't play. Final one. I'm good family friends with Guy Sebastian. True? Or false?

It's false. It's false. I'm sorry I had to put that one in there. Look, the point I basically want to make is that I think naturally we're quite sceptical people. I don't actually think we believe it when people tell us things.

And I think we have good reason for this, because we all have somewhere in our past a person, or it might be a sister. For me, it's a sister. It might be a brother for you or a friend, who abused our trust.

[2 : 35] And I remember this one time when I was little, and my big sister, my older sister, she was a lot older than me, pretended to have her foot stuck in a drain.

And I'm little, and I'm freaking out because there's this water there, and I think she's going to drown, and I'm just like running to mum, I'll help you. I won't say names. I'll help you, my big sister. And, you know, she's complaining and stuff, and then she just pulls her foot out and starts laughing at me.

You know, and I'm just like, the butt of the joke. Or, you know, when your sister say, oh, come here and give me cuddle. Just give me a hug. And I'm like, no, you're going to tickle me. I'm really ticklish.

And they're like, I promise I won't tickle you. It's like, you're going to tickle me. I promise I won't. And so I'm like, okay. And I just lift my arms up. I trust, and I lift my arms up. And it's all fine. They give me a hug.

I'm loving it. To right last minute. And then I'm like, ah, I just jump because they always tickle me. And that happens to all of us. People abuse our trust. And it's hard to believe everything that people say.

[3 : 37] Well, what if I changed my tone slightly and told you a couple of other stories? See whether you think these are true or false. You don't have to put your hands up for this. Just think about it. When I was little, I used to have headaches sometimes.

And I'd quite often be lying in bed at night. I'd have these headaches. And I would pray to Jesus and ask him to make it better. And he did. True or false? I think this is true.

When I was 20, I got quite sick for about two weeks. And I couldn't get out of bed. And I went to the doctor a few times. And I just couldn't work out what was wrong with me. I had lots of blood tests.

And nothing was showing up. And I basically couldn't get out of bed. I was sleeping all the time. At the end of those two weeks, I thought, maybe I should talk to God about this. And I did. And he told me that he was going to make me better.

And I went back to sleep. And in the morning, I was up and about and running around with my housemate around the city all day. True or false? I think that's true. Sometimes I have visions in my head about different things in my life.

[4 : 41] And I know that God's speaking to me about things. And sometimes I even have visions for other people. True or false? Not so sure about these ones. I believe they're true.

But that's my experience. And you guys weren't there. And you can't see inside my head. So do you believe it or not? Naturally, we're quite skeptical people. Well, in this story, in the book of Mark, it deals with this issue of unbelief or skepticism.

And we're going to have a bit of a read of this passage. We're going to deal with one to six. So I'm just going to put it up. And I'll have a bit of a read through it for you. Because it was a long passage that we went through. But this one's a short section.

One to six. He left that place and came to his hometown. And his disciples followed him. On the Sabbath, he began to teach in the synagogue. And many who heard him were astounded. They said, Where did this man get all this?

What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joseph, and Judas, and Simon?

[5 : 43] And are not his sisters here with us? And they took offense at him. Then Jesus said to them, Prophets are not without honor except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house.

And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. And he was amazed at their unbelief. Well, Jesus arrives at his hometown.

And, you know, it's a quaint little place called Nazareth. It probably actually wasn't that quaint. It was probably a bit of a hole, not much happening in Nazareth. It wasn't the center of all the action. But that's where Jesus was born, and that's where he grew up.

And I'm not sure when he was home last, but it was probably away for a little while, and he came back. And last time he was home, he wasn't in the synagogues teaching like all the knowledgeable teachers of the law used to.

And last time he was home, he actually didn't have any of these rumors flying around about him, about how he was raising people from the dead, and how he was freeing people from demon possession, and how he was curing the sick, and calming storms.

[6 : 49] There wasn't those rumors going around about him. In fact, last time he was home, Jesus was just a carpenter. He was just a builder, just going about his ordinary work, building things.

I'm sure he was a pretty nice guy, but that's how people knew him. So you can probably imagine the people then when he came back, and he's teaching in the synagogue, and he has power.

And they're like, wow, where does all this wisdom come from? Where is this authority? Are these rumors true? These miracles that he's been doing. People have been saying that he's been doing all these miracles. How's that going on?

This is just Jesus the carpenter. I'm not sure if you guys ever think about your high school, 10-year high school reunion. I'm not sure if you've had it yet. I haven't. And I quite often think about what it's going to be like.

You know, how is everyone going to turn out 10 years after high school? I often wonder, you know, what will happen to the beauty queen of the class, or what will happen to the ducks of the school, or, you know, maybe even the cool kids, or, you know, the shy kid in the corner who's a bit, you know, doesn't really get along with people, is a bit, you know, weedy and geeky and all that kind of stuff.

[7 : 58] What's going to happen with those people? Playing up microphone. Imagine this, right? Imagine that geeky sort of weedy kid leaving school, putting on a few pounds, going to the gym, buffing up, spiking his hair a bit, getting rid of his glasses, putting some contacts in, putting on a power suit, and stepping into a Z3 convertible, and then rocking up high school reunion.

And it's like, hi, Rose, long time no see. Hi, Amelia, good to see you. And you're like, who are you? And they're like, oh, blah, blah, blah.

It's like, gosh, freak out. You never thought that would happen. Well, this is kind of what's happening with Jesus, okay? This is Jesus the carpenter, just a nice guy, comes back home, and all of a sudden, pow, he's got this power, pow, he's got this wisdom, he's got this authority, he can teach.

What's happened? I mean, it's even more extreme than extreme makeover, perhaps, or, you know, queer eye for a straight guy. Or it might even be more amazing than this picture that's going to come from a data projector very, very soon.

It might be more amazing than seeing the transformation between this person and the clean cut youth minister that stands here before you now. I mean, who would think that they're the same person? Transformation, indeed.

[9 : 18] Indeed. Thank you. You can put that down and never show it ever again. I asked for that, didn't I? Okay, so the point is that they couldn't really believe that Jesus was for real, you know?

Although they acknowledged he was doing some cool things, like he was doing some, he had done some miracles and that he could actually teach, they wouldn't accept that he was doing it. They're like, in verse 3, if we can go back to that passage on that first page, this is what it says.

It says, is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, brother of James and Joseph and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us? And they took offense at him. You know, in some ways they were probably right to do that.

Because Jesus was just a carpenter. And he was doing all these amazing things. But he was just the son of Mary and he was just brother of James and Joseph and Simon and Judas.

This Jesus, Jesus the carpenter, actually couldn't do anything. But the problem with these people of Nazareth was that they failed to acknowledge where this power was coming from.

[10 : 24] They failed to see that the power that Jesus had actually had come from God. And that was the divine power that was coming out through him when he was healing the sick and raising the dead and calming the storm and freeing people from demons.

He had power over everything. But the people of Nazareth were skeptical. And they were full of unbelief. Quick to disbelieve the things of God.

So what are we like? You know, are we natural skeptics? Are we quick to disbelieve? Who do we actually think Jesus really is?

You know, perhaps you think Jesus was just the carpenter. Like, you know, Mary and all those guys thought that Jesus was just a carpenter. Or perhaps you think Jesus is the crazy demon-possessed Jesus that the Pharisees thought he was earlier on.

Or perhaps you think, like so many people do today, that Jesus is just a good guy, a good teacher. You know, we'll pick up some of his morals and we'll put them into our lives that that's all he was.

[11 : 30] Or perhaps you believe, like this passage shows, that Jesus was slightly more than that. Perhaps you believe that Jesus actually is the Son of God.

So quite often we want people to show us something before we believe in it. Sometimes we fear to trust it until we can have a logical explanation or a logical reason. But that's why faith is so hard for us.

Because faith doesn't give us a logical explanation or a logical reason. Faith is just stepping out and not always knowing what's going to happen. You just believe. We're just going to watch a quick film clip and I'll turn off the lights.

At the start of Hebrews 11, this is what it says about faith. It says, Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. Being certain of what we don't see.

Let me give you an example of this. I really didn't want to move to Doncaster. You know, when I was thinking about applying for this job, it seemed like an exciting sort of opportunity.

[12 : 38] And I applied and I got this job. But once I got it, I really didn't want it because, well, I was a bit uncomfortable about moving out to the suburbs really. So I had a bit of a faith problem.

I just looked at what Doncaster would be. And I focused on what I could see rather than what God had in store for me.

So what I focused on was that I had to move out to the suburbs. And that I had to leave my community at church at St. Jude's. And that I'd have to leave a job that I was comfy in and happy to do.

And I'd have to leave lots of close friends and leave Ligon Street Coffee. Leave a lot of my dreams, actually. And move out of the city and live in the suburbs.

And that's all I could see. So I was a bit angry with God all summer, actually, for sending me to Doncaster. Because I knew that he wanted me to be here. But I was just a bit grumpy with him. And because I was totally focused on all these things that I thought would happen.

[13 : 38] See, faith, unbelief causes you to fear. And that's what I was experiencing. I wasn't trusting that this place would be good at all. What I couldn't see was that out here I'd have a new community of people.

And what I couldn't see is that I would have a chance here to have an important role in the lives of lots of teenagers by being here. And that there actually are some really good places to have coffee around Doncaster if you take the time to look.

I couldn't see these things. I couldn't see the opportunities God would give me to share the good news with people. And I couldn't see that a slower pace, which is in Doncaster, was exactly what I needed in my life.

And I really love that now. The first night that I moved out to Doncaster, my family came and helped me move all my boxes and my heavy things. And then I sat down. They left.

I sat down in my lounge room on the couch with my boxes around me. And I just cried that I was in the suburbs. I know that's... And it sounds absolutely crazy now.

[14 : 44] Because I had no idea what God had in store for me here. I had no idea. And had I known then, I wouldn't have been crying. Because it's just been such an amazing blessing to move out to Doncaster. But I was just focused on all these things I could see.

And didn't trust that God had something great in store. But something I learnt through all that was that when you step out in faith and actually trust God with things, that He doesn't leave you empty.

Like He's not just going to leave you lonely or hurt and all that kind of stuff by yourself. He's actually there for you. And He's always there. But most importantly, one of the biggest things I realised was that I'd forgotten who Jesus was.

I know it sounds silly. I was moving out here to be a youth minister. But I'd forgotten about who Jesus was. Because I was looking at Jesus, the carpenter. I was looking at ordinary Jesus who builds houses.

And I'd forgotten that just a prayer away, that I had all the power and all the strength and all the energy and everything that I ever needed. And all the courage particularly.

[15 : 50] Just by asking Jesus that I have all that right there. Because if He's able to calm a storm. And if He's able to walk on water. And if He's able to raise people from the dead.

And even raise Himself from the dead. Then He can be there for me. And I can just pray to Him. And I don't have any reason to disbelieve. When God's asked you to do something, you've got no reason to fear.

Because Jesus is the Son of God. And He's greater than all things. And He loves you. And He loves me. Well, the question that it all comes back down to, which we asked earlier, is who do you think Jesus is?

Who do you think Jesus is? Because if Jesus is who He says He is, which is the Son of God, then there's a huge call on all of our lives here tonight to do something about that. You know, to believe that or not really.

And that's your choice. And no one can really make that for you. But you might be sitting here tonight and saying, yeah, well, I've believed that since I was, you know, born basically. Or that's something that I decided a long time ago, that Jesus actually is the Son of God.

[16 : 54] Well, this is a reminder for you. You see, if you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, then there's a whole package parcel that comes with that. It means that you accept His reign and His power over all things.

Okay? Over, you know, death and disease and demons and nature and all that kind of stuff. And, you know, I hear you say, well, that's not too hard because it's good. That's a good thing that Jesus is more powerful than that. I can accept that.

That's good. But we have this tendency to say that Jesus has all power and authority. But then actually in our own lives, we pretend that we have all power and authority.

And I know that sounds crazy because we're like, we don't have all power. We know that we don't have all power and all authority. But so often we act like we do towards Jesus and we put ourselves first in our lives.

Because if we actually believed that Jesus was the Son of God and He actually did have power and authority over everything, then we'd be on our knees every single day, desperately dependent on Him. We would be.

[17 : 58] Because we would be so, we'd recognize how we can't do anything without Him and how He has the power to do all things in our lives. And we would be dependent on Him every single moment of every single day.

You know, if we think that Jesus has power over all things, then why do we call our friends first on the phone when we've got a problem instead of talking to Jesus first? Do we think that our friends have more power to solve our problems than Jesus does?

Or what about our prayer lives? You know, why are our prayer lives a bit limited or a bit sporadic or a bit non-existent sometimes? Do we think that Jesus hasn't got the power to answer our prayers?

Why do we care so much about what our friends think of us? Do we think that our friends can make us more secure and feel more loved than Jesus can?

Why do we worry about money or making our ends meet? And that kind of stuff. Don't we trust that Jesus can provide for us? Why do we put schoolwork and sport and music and our dogs and our cats and our friends and our family and every single thing in our life?

[19 : 07] Why do we often put that before Jesus? Do we think that our enter score at the end of year 12 can give us more of a secure future than Jesus can? Because if you believe that Jesus has all power and all authority then it means that you just trust him.

You trust him with all of that stuff. And it means that he comes first in your life. So if that's you and you think that Jesus is the son of God then I want to ask you to be serious about that and show him in your own life that you think he is the son of God and he has all power over your life.

You know, the faith that we have inside it actually should be the thing that makes us different. It should be the thing that makes us different from everyone else in this world.

It should make us different from our neighbours and our friends our workmates because faith means that we have a complete surrender to Jesus every day and that should make a big difference in our lives and that should mean that we look different when we hang out with our friends the way we love them the way we're there for them all that kind of stuff that should be noticeable.

Unbelief says that's impossible. Faith says with man that's impossible but with God all things are possible. I want to end on a quick story when I was a little kid.

[20 : 33] When I was little my dad used to take us swimming my sisters and I to the pool and you know it was always fun we used to splash around a bit but the best part of the pool was when dad would take us down the deep end and we could go swimming with him because we weren't allowed down there by ourselves because we were too little and we didn't really know how to swim properly and as I think back now I don't really know how he managed to take us down there with three sort of wrestling girls hanging on to any part they can so that they don't, you know, fall off but he did and he made it and he kept us safe and he would take us deeper and deeper but we would never be scared we'd never be scared and it wasn't because we thought dad was an awesome swimmer and you know that he could swim well although he could swim well and it wasn't because he hadn't drowned any of us yet although he hadn't drowned any of us yet it was simply because he was our dad and we just trusted him that he wouldn't take us anywhere that we couldn't where he couldn't handle and that when we were with him that we were safe and that's what faith is why do we put more faith in our earthly parents or our friends or that kind of thing than in God because the truth is that our earthly parents or our friends they're not reliable but God is 100% reliable 100% of the time verse 4 from the passage says then Jesus said to them prophets are not without honour except in their hometown and among their own kin and in their own house and he could do no deed of power there except he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them and he was amazed at their unbelief in verse 5

Jesus says that he could do no deed of power you know Jesus wants to work in your lives he actually wants to work powerfully in your lives but we have to let him the people of Nazareth shut Jesus out they didn't accept who he was and they didn't accept the power that he had for them and that's why he couldn't do anything in that place they didn't want to receive it I guess the question for us tonight for everyone I don't care if you're a Christian or not the question is will you have faith will you have faith in Jesus who's the son of God and that's the question I want to leave you with what I want to do now is I'm going to do some praying but I just want everyone to close their eyes for a moment just everyone shut your eyes I just want you to have a think and yeah if you if you're in a place where you want to have faith maybe there's areas in your life that you hold back and you haven't surrendered over to

Jesus' power maybe you know deep down inside that you have plenty of those areas and you you don't want to hold on to them anymore you don't want to have control you want to hand them over to Jesus or perhaps tonight you're thinking that I haven't actually ever acknowledged Jesus as son of God at all and tonight I actually want to tell him that I think he is and I want to give him power in my life if that's you I just want you to inside of your hearts just tell him that I'm just going to stand here just tell Jesus in your own words Lord Jesus we we come here tonight recognizing that we are weak without you yet we try and take control of so many areas of our lives for some reason we think that our power is okay and that we can trust ourselves but really deep down

Lord we know that we need you in our lives God we're sorry for the times that we hold on to things and just try and control things ourselves and really we just need to give them over to you Lord you know every single person's heart here and you knew it even before they came in tonight and God you've heard their prayers that they've prayed and Lord I pray that your power would be the thing that reigns in our lives Jesus every single day help us to wake up and surrender to you and be completely dependent on you alone thank you so much that you are powerful and we can completely trust you every single day Amen I'm just going to get the band to come up we're going to sing a song it's called Hungry and it's really just a song that says I'm coming before you God and I want you and it's a real just surrender and it's ahh and it's really so coming up

I'm getting I'm going to sing