

Conversion and God's Existence

Building a Christian Mind

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Before we come to the Table, I want to continue our series on how to know that God exists, and in the providential timing of the Lord the subject matter for this morning is a wonderful way to prepare our hearts for Communion. Communion is never to be a ritualistic thing done in a rote manner. The fresh reminder of the Lord's death and the way that he has appointed us to remember him should always be a time special to the heart of every true Christian to remember that our Lord loved us and gave himself up for us, and the manifestation of the love of God through this remembrance is a wonderful time for those of you who join us today with bruised and broken hearts and feeling the weight of earthly affliction and earthly change. You know, this is just a wonderful opportunity for us to draw near to the Lord, and we do so mindful of the promise of the Lord in the book of James where it says, "Draw near to God and he will draw near to you," and draw near to you in the fullness of the wonderful attributes that are intrinsic to his being. And so today we kind of have a dual purpose as we continue our consideration of how we know that God exists, and also as believers we come together in a spirit of love and humility and unity to remember the Lord at the Table he has appointed for us.

Now, if you've not been with us, we've had a series of messages establishing conclusively the existence of the invisible God. We have considered the matter of how God has made himself known in creation, how he's made himself known in the Canon of Scripture, how he's made himself known in the principle of human conscience, and how he has made himself known in the person of Jesus Christ, and those lengthy messages, I say that with a little chuckle in my own heart, those lengthy messages are all readily available, and if you've missed some of them, you've been away because you're sick or whatever, I can't urge you strongly enough to pick up those messages and listen to them. We're in the process over these months of building a Christian mind and hoping that God will use our time in the word of God to help people to think biblically in a very hostile and unbiblical age, and it starts with the adults in our congregation, it starts with you embracing the opportunity, embracing the teaching and making time for it, and even more importantly, making room for it in your hearts, and it filters down to young families, parents making sure that their children are imbibing this material at such a formative age, and at all other points in between. We really need this material. This is urgent. The months that I spent away on study leave all pointed me to do exactly what we're doing in these weeks and so I'm trusting the Lord to honor the burden of my heart with the preaching of his word that he's giving us opportunity to do together. And so I just implore you, I beg you, I ask you,

I encourage you to pay heed to these series of messages and to receive them with an open heart and have your children under the teaching of God's word. Nothing could be more important for them than that.

And so what we're doing here with that little bit of introduction, we are unapologetically giving voice to the self-testimony that God has imprinted throughout the universe. He's made himself known in so many different ways, so many conclusive ways, and those four principles are where you begin in understanding that, but there is for believers, there is a fifth reason that we particularly believe in God, we particularly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and it's related to the title of today's message, which, if you're taking notes you can jot this down, "Conversion and God's Existence." Conversion and God's existence. That's the title of the message and it's also the first point for today, conversion and the existence of God. God has graciously blessed believers with an additional powerful testimony to his own existence and his work in our lives in a way that every Christian should be mindful of, should be thankful for, and should make it part of the spiritual arsenal that you draw upon in times of difficulty and times of doubt, to go back and to rehearse these things. You know, I'm mindful as a pastor that the Christian life is more of a zigzag upward trajectory that takes place, there are ups and downs that come along with it. I'm mindful, and how could I not be, that Christians themselves suffer through times of doubt and conflict of mind for different reasons. We face a powerful foe in the devil who wants to undermine our confidence, undermine our witness, draw us down and hinder the work of God in our lives, and so we are in the midst of a spiritual battle. One of the things that God has done to bless you and to help you and to sustain you in that, is to give multiple evidences to his own existence and to his own character that would reassure your heart in the midst of earthly conflict of the divine reality of a good and gracious God. And so creation, Canon, conscience. Christ, you rehearse these things over and over again in your mind multiple times a day, throughout the week, not just sitting through one sermon and then checking off that box in your life. No, you go over these things again and again and again, and as you do that, as you meditate on the word of God like that, the Holy Spirit will use his word to strengthen your heart and to strengthen your faith in ways that make you a conqueror and overcomer of the world as Jesus speaks so often in Revelation 2 and 3.

Now let's deal with this matter of conversion, the fifth testimony to God's existence. Technically, the theological term "conversion" means particularly the way that a man turns to God in repentance and faith. There is a converting of his heart and in response to the gospel, in response to the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, a man turns from sin, turns from self, turns from the world, and turns to embrace the Christ that has been presented to him in the gospel and that's the technical sense in the way that the word conversion is used in theological literature. I'm using the term "conversion" here today in a little bit of a broader sense to simply and in part, and I'll be honest with you, I'm doing it in part just to maintain the alliteration of my points. I needed another "c" here and conversion is a worthy one to do. But it shows us that there is a personal aspect of God's self-testimony that we need to be aware of. We have been speaking in such broad, lofty, universal principles as we've been considering this. I mean, look at the heavens and you see the glory of God. Look at the 1,189 chapters of the Bible and you find the self-disclosure of

God. Look at the principle of the hidden operation of the principle of human conscience and the matter of the person of Jesus Christ, the God-man, and it's just remarkable and broad and universal these self-revelations that God has given to us. And if we were only left with that, then there might be a sense where the utter transcendence of it all would almost intimidate us, would almost cause us to shrink back from the majesty of it all and the transcendence of it all, but as we come to the nature of Christian salvation, we find something sweet, we find something spiritually delectable for the believing heart to consider what Scripture says that conversion does, about the point that it makes about the self-manifestation of God.

So as we talk about conversion, we're talking about the fullness of Christian salvation and the work of God in order to draw sinners to Christ in order to save them and bring them into his kingdom, and so a complete view of God's self-disclosure is ultimately going to lead us to the cross of Calvary, what we will remember momentarily in the Lord's Table, and I want to take you to a passage we looked at not long before my study leave began, in Titus 2:11 through 14. I invite you to turn there with me because there is something particularly individual and powerful about the way that God has made himself known in the salvation of each of us who have been led to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. And in Titus 2:11 through 14, we read this, remember we're talking about conversion and the existence of God. Titus 2, beginning in verse 11 says,

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, 13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

And so Christ has come to earth, Christ gave himself on the cross of Calvary in order to purchase his people out of the slave market of sin, to free them and to deliver them from the bondage of self, the bondage of Satan, the bondage of the world, and to powerfully bring them into his kingdom. He did this as an act of grace, as an act of mercy upon those who would believe in him, and so Christ has done a wonderful thing for his people that we will remember in just a few minutes together.

Now as you continue to read on in Titus 3, what you find is this, and now we're speaking on a more, somewhat more individualistic term, as opposed to all of humanity, we're addressing this to the way that God has spoken to individual hearts. Paul says in Titus 3:3, he reminds us of how we used to be dead in our trespasses and sins. He says in verse 3,

3 For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.

Paul looks back to the pre-conversion days of a believer's life and says this is what we were all like, this is what you were like. You were blind. You were foolish. You were sinful. You were slaves to your passions and pleasures. You were full of malice and envy. It's a very ugly picture of the reality of humanity, the reality of our own individual lives before Jesus Christ saved us. And so he looks back and says, "Remember the chains of your slavery to sin, self, Satan in the world. You were utterly lost and you had no power to deliver yourself whatsoever." But he's writing to Christians. That condition, that spiritual condition is not the end of the story for the believer, was it? Your pre-conversion days in the lostness of your sin, the lostness of false religion, the lostness of your arrogance and indifference to God, that wasn't the end of the story for you, was it? God showed grace and kindness and mercy to you. Someone brought the gospel to you. Someone told you about the Lord Jesus Christ, and there was a time when the light bulbs went on for you, where all of a sudden that which you had rejected suddenly made sense, that which you attached no value to now became the most important thing in the world to you. Christ whom you rejected now became Christ your Lord, King, Savior, prophet and priest. What happened? What happened in order to make that change? Some of us can testify plainly and fully that it was not anything of our choosing or our seeking, that the Lord sought us out. You know, "I once was blind but now I see." Here's what happened, the Apostle Paul says in verse 4, he says,

4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared,
5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but
according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal
of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ
our Savior, 7 so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs
according to the hope of eternal life.

What God did and what God had planned before the foundation of the world, is that there would come a time in your own life, I'm speaking to Christians here today and offering the same hope to those of you that are not yet in Christ, God came to you in the midst of your hostility before you took a step toward him, the Spirit of God opened your heart to the Lord Jesus Christ. He graciously influenced your heart. He graciously took away your heart of stone and put in a heart of flesh, as the prophet Ezekiel speaks of, and the Spirit of God took the redemptive work of Christ that was accomplished 2,000 years ago at Calvary and he applied it to your heart. He made you a new creation, 2 Corinthians 5:17. He opened your eyes. He gave you a new heart. And in that change, in that new birth, in that regeneration by the work of the Holy Spirit, your eyes were opened. You saw things anew. You saw things for the first time. There's a hymn that we sometimes sing,

"Heaven above is softer blue,
Earth around is sweeter green;
Something lives in every hue
Christless eyes have never seen:
Birds with gladder songs o'erflow,
Flow'rs with deeper beauties shine,

Since I know, as now I know,
I am His, and He is mine."

The work of salvation gives you a new mind, a new understanding to be able to appreciate and to see all of the things of creation, Canon, conscience and Christ that were there all along but there had been blinders on your eyes so that you could not see. And so what did God do for you, Christian believer? What did God do to you in the sorrow that life rained down upon you? What did God do for you in the midst of your loving sin and rejecting him? God looked on you with mercy. He looked on your broken life, your hopeless, doomed future, and he intervened. He intervened in a direct, personal way by name. It's not simply that the gospel is preached indiscriminately to all men, which it is and which it should be, we preach the gospel to all men, but as we preach not everyone believes. What's the distinguishing mark that brings a person from death and sin to life in Christ? It's not, first and foremost, the choice of the man or the woman, it's that God showed mercy to you and the Holy Spirit did a work in your heart to graciously ensure that infallibly, without fail, you would come powerfully to Christ and be forever saved and forever changed.

And that is a reflection, look at verse 4 with me again, the fact that God saved you says so much about his character and says, really in some ways it says nothing about ours except for the darkness from which we needed to be saved. Look at these attributes of God that Paul piles up as he remembers the work of Christ and the work of the Spirit to save us. He says in verse 4, "the goodness and the loving kindness of God our Savior appeared." He's good. He says in verse 5, he said he did this "according to his own mercy." Not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy the Holy Spirit washed you in regeneration and renewed you. In verse 6 he says that he poured out the Spirit "richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

Beloved, this melts my heart and I hope it melts yours also to remember what you used to be like, and even if you were outwardly a moral person, as some of you I know were, you were raised, you were a good boy, you were a good girl as you were growing up, but you were still dead to true spiritual life, you were still a sinner in your own right and in your own way. All of us were dead in trespasses and sin. All of us were foolish. All of us were disobedient. All of us were slaves having no God and no hope in the world and having no claim on God, having forfeited any claim on God. You know, from the fall of Adam none of us had any claim on his mercy. The only claim we had on God was an expectation of the fury of his justice against all of our iniquities against him. And so God in the wonder of the Triune Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit working together in perfect harmony to show grace to you, God saved you and you are on the receiving end of goodness, loving kindness, mercy, grace and hope. And those of you that have been born again, you know within your heart, you know by the operations of your own mind and affirmed to you by the ministry of the Holy Spirit bearing witness with your spirit that you are a child of God, you have an additional revelation and manifestation of God that has been done to you in your soul.

Beloved, as Christians, as Christians we know that God exists because he made us alive in Christ. Let me say that again, it's really, really important. Christians know God exists. Yes, for the sake of creation, the Canon, conscience and Christ, we know on those bases and we affirm every one of them enthusiastically and without qualification. As the foundation for what we have in conversion, Christians know that God exists because he made us alive in Christ. The Holy Spirit opened our blind eyes so that we could believe the gospel and truly know God. This is not some irrational, mystical experience that we're speaking about. This is the God-authored faith that comes through the testimony of the word of God and the work of the Holy Spirit. This is not somebody saying, "Oh, you know, a vision flashed in my mind and now, you know, I have a new perspective on life." No, we trace our new life – it's so important for you to grasp this and understand it, I can't emphasize this enough – it is so crucial to understand that the position that we have in Christ we can trace to objective factors outside of our own experience and say, "This is what happened in my life and this is where we find it in Scripture. This is where it is testified to. This is what undergirds it, authorizes it and authenticates it. It's rooted in the word of God, not in simply my subjective self-testimony about what I believe in my heart. But I do believe it in my heart." Beloved, we know, we know that God exists because of God's work in our hearts.

Let me pause here for just a moment to make a really important point. I was thinking about this driving home from someplace yesterday. You know, the traditional way, the evidential way that the existence of God men have tried to establish over the course of time, you know, looking at, you know, different evidences and without going into all of that, the whole point that they're trying to make is a probability case, and this is the point that I want to get to with you. We are not saying that it is more probable than not that God exists. We haven't made a probability case here that, you know, since it's more likely than not then you ought to believe in God. You ought to believe that there is a God that exists. No, that is not what we are saying. That is not the testimony of the God of truth and the God of certainty. The testimony, these things of which we speak are things of certainty and conclusive evidence for which there is no justification to reject them, and the refusal to receive this testimony is morally culpable by those who reject it. What Scripture has given us is not a probability case, Scripture has said these things are true. These things are conclusive. You must believe them or you will perish in your sin. That is the reality of the testimony that God has given to us of his own existence.

Now what I want to do is we think about this matter of conversion just a little bit more, is to take you to a handful of other passages that make this same point. So if you would, turn back in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 2. 1 Corinthians 2. These are the things that create conviction in your heart. These are the things that give you assurance. These are the things that make a man courageous in the face of the opposition of the world. This is what gives a man boldness in the pulpit and gives people confidence in their evangelism. These are the things that raised up men, godly men like John Knox and John Calvin and others like them, to be strong and courageous in the face of even the most horrific hostility from human authorities.

Look at it in 1 Corinthians 2, beginning in verse 9. The Apostle Paul says,

9 ... as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him" [Then he goes on and he says,] 10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

Now look at what he says here in verse 12 as he speaks to Christians to build them up, to edify them, to establish them in the faith. He says,

12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.

Paul says the Spirit of God has given to you new life. He has given to you salvation to the end that you would know and understand the things that God has freely given to you. The Spirit works in our heart in order to create a certain knowledge that we have, and I say certain, I mean a conclusive knowledge, not simply, "Oh, there's a kind of knowledge, a certain kind of knowledge." No, it's a knowledge of certainty that God has done, that God has put into the heart of every one that he has saved.

Look over at 2 Corinthians 4:6, and as we're so often doing, we're taking these various passages of Scripture and building a comprehensive case, a comprehensive argument for the fullness of the conclusions that we set forth before you. So that in 2 Corinthians 4:4, let's say, because it gives us both the before and after, the darkness and light aspects of this, going even back to verse 3, Paul says,

3 ... if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

Now look at verse 6 in light of everything that we've been saying here this morning. Look at verse 6 and may the Spirit of God open your mind and your heart to understand the fullness of the significance of it that it would hit your heart with great power. "For God," verse 6,

6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

See what he's saying? He says, he makes the contrast that he does so often. There's the world, those blinded by sin. They're blinded by the prince of the air. But Christians, as I speak to you, understand that something different has happened to you. God has done

something for you. God, through the Spirit of God has done something in your heart. God, as it were, shined the light of truth into your heart by the Spirit of God. God took the word of God and created faith in your otherwise dead heart and now through that infallible, powerful, irresistible work of the Holy Spirit, God has put into your heart the knowledge of his own glory. It's powerful. And I can only ask you at this point, you know, do you know something of that spiritual reality? Do you know in your own heart something of the power of the work of God that goes beyond political motivations, for an interest in the gospel that goes beyond mere morality and trying to be a good person? Do you know something that goes far, far beyond that? Do you know something of the beating of a new spiritual heart that has new affections, a love for Christ, a love and a submission to the word of God? Do you know something about that? That's the pulsating work of the knowledge of God that has been implanted in your heart by the Holy Spirit.

We're not talking about external ritualistic religion where people just go through the motions on a Sunday or other times, and never change, and never think differently, and with no passion, no desire, no love for the Lord Jesus Christ. Even if that kind of religion is done in the name of Christ, it's a false religion. And even if the church in which you attend has these things vibrantly as a corporate testimony, it still must be real and true in you. And if you are lacking that and you have lacked that and you have never known the kinds of spiritual affections of which we speak from the word of God today, beloved, I say it in love and for the benefit of your eternal soul, you need to examine your heart and ask God to show you what's wrong, that things like this would be so dead to your heart. Christian, if you can say, "Yeah, I do know those things," then all of the grounds for joy and confidence and assurance, the fountain has burst open and you can drink freely from it.

Look over at the book of Ephesians 2. Ephesians 2:1 through 5, let's just dive right to it.

1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience- 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

You see, don't you, the pattern by which Paul presents these truths? He did it in Titus, verse 3. He did it there in 2 Corinthians 4. Here he's doing it again in Ephesians 1. A before and after. The switch was off, the switch is on. It was dark, now it's light. And how did that happen? Is this something in which we boast about our own attainment and our own superior insight? Perish the thought. Out on the suggestion. No, in that condition of deadness God did something for us, to us. Verse 4,

4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ--by grace you have been saved-- 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7

so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Discouraged Christian, look at the flowing words of the goodness of God to your soul in what we just read there. He's rich in mercy, great in his love toward you. He made you alive together with Christ. It's by grace you've been saved. He raised you up. He seated you with Christ in the heavenly places. And there's more to come, the best is yet to be for those of us that are in Christ because in the coming ages he is going to show us the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. As wonderful as it is to be a believer now, as great as it is to be in Christ now, this is just a foretaste. This is a modest appetizer compared to being in the fullness of his glory in heaven and seeing the face of Christ face to face with our own eyes and looking into the face of the one who gave himself for our sins. God has shown you all of that as a manifestation of his love, his grace, his mercy, his kindness, the hope that he's given to you. Whether you're on the front end of life or at the very tail end of life, God has been good to you, God is being good to you, God will be even better to you, so to speak, in the ages to come. These things as Scripture speaks to our heart this way, and the Spirit affirms it to our heart, this is showing to us inside in a manifestation to the depths of our being, there is a God, he exists and he has been good to me in the Lord Jesus Christ. He saved me and I belong to him.

One more passage. Colossians 1, Colossians 1:24. Paul says, "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known," see, God is causing this knowledge to be born into the hearts and minds of believers, "to them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles," that's almost all of us, there are very few, if any, Jews in the audience here today. We were Gentiles excluded from the promises of God, outside the covenants, having no hope, having no knowledge of God and no hope in the world and yet God reached out to you. God ensured that the gospel came to you. God did a work of the Spirit in your heart so that it wouldn't be left to your dead mind and to your fickle will to choose him. God said, "No, I chose you. I will bring you and make you my own. I will make sure that you could never be lost." Verse 27, "the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ."

For purposes of today, one day soon enough we'll come to this text in the exposition of Colossians, but for purposes of today notice that God chose to make known Christ in you. God has done something in Christians to make himself known in a saving redemptive way that goes beyond the general revelation in creation, that goes beyond the written word, that goes beyond conscience, that goes beyond Christ, maybe better stated, in addition to all of those witnesses, God for the Christian has put his knowledge in your heart directly to you by name. That's the thing I never get over. That's the thing I never get over, that Christ loved me and gave himself up for me.

When we come to the Table, when we remember the Table, Christ didn't just die a general death for mankind and then leave it up to men to decide whether they'd take it or leave it. "Christ loved me," Paul said, "and gave himself up for me." There is a personal aspect to this. In the counsels of God before the beginning of time, if you are Christian you were in the mind of God to be included in the plan of redemption. In the redemptive work of Christ as he suffered on the cross, somehow in a way that I can't begin to understand or explain but he was suffering for your sins. Somehow he thought of you in his redemptive work. Somehow all of your wrongs were laid on him and he gladly bore them and said, "I'll take these sins for Paul, for Tim, for Becky, for Jim. I'll take those sins. I'll take the responsibility for them, Father. You can punish me for them just so long as they go free. Just so long as they're forgiven." For a wretch like me? A wretch to save? "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me." He did that for me? The eternal Son of God did that for me?

Why do we believe in God? The true Christian can rightly say, "I believe because God opened my heart to believe. God has made himself known to me through the Spirit of God in a way that is made manifest and is perfectly consistent with the written word of God." God opened our eyes, beloved, God opened our eyes to see – this is really important to understand – God opened our eyes so that we could see what was there all along. The whole time, all of this testimony had been vibrating throughout all of the universe, creation, Canon, conscience, and Christ. It was there all along but when God opened your heart to believe it came to you with power. And now as you study these things with a new heart and with the indwelling Holy Spirit, you can grow in the knowledge of them in a way that you can know for certain what the truth is and not be shaken, cast down, rattled by opposing voices. This is what God has given to us in Christ, and it's what we celebrate at the Lord's Table. The God of creation, Canon, conscience, and Christ not only revealed himself to humanity generally but, Christian, he revealed himself to you personally and if that knowledge isn't enough to make you grateful and joyful, I don't know what I can say to you. I don't know what else I can say to you in light of the glories of all of that and to be secured for all of eternity. Isn't it obvious that the things of this world either personally, nationally or in the church, are secondary to the glory that is yet to be revealed to us? The fact that God loved us by name and saved us by name and made all of this known to us, isn't that enough to approach the Table with a chastened, humbled, grateful heart?

Matthew Henry, the great Puritan commentator, said this. He said, "The gospel of Christ has influenced my soul. It has had such a command over me and been such a comfort to me that it demonstrates to myself, though it cannot be so to another, that it is of God. I have tasted in it that the Lord is gracious. No one can convince a man who has tasted honey that it is not sweet." He's saying, "I know the influence of these things in my own soul. I know these things in my own heart. And because I know these things in that way, it demonstrates to me that this is all from God." Now this inward work in my heart is not conclusive in the same way to another man's heart, but he has the other four aspects of revelation that he needs to deal with. God has given us, Christian brother, Christian sister, he has given us something so precious, so sweet, so kind and loving and merciful in

addition to everything else. He's given himself to us in Christ in the depths of our soul and has promised us, "I will never, ever, ever leave you nor will I ever, ever, ever forsake you," Hebrews 13. "For I am convinced that neither life nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor any other created thing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

James Boice says this, and the writings of James Montgomery Boice, incidentally, every one of his books is valuable. There's not a book that he has written that you should avoid. You should read them all if you could. But James Montgomery Boice, said this. He said, "God exists. He has not hidden himself, rather he has made himself known in multiple ways that commend themselves to our minds, hearts, and conscience." The good news is that God forgives sinners just like you, that God sent Christ to the cross to bear the punishment for all of the sins of anyone who would ever believe in him. So gracious. This same message, you could preach the same message in Tibet. You can preach it in Houston. You can preach it in Alberta. You can preach it in Peru. Without change because it's the love of God revealed to humanity in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Do understand, my unsaved friend, you need to do more than believe in a generic god of some kind of your own making. You need, you must have Jesus Christ. And in Christ, your fight against God can turn into peace with God. Scripture says you may believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved today, right now, with a full complete justification that will survive the judgment of God because it's based not on your righteousness, but on the righteousness of Christ. All of your sins today, past, present and future, forgiven. No fear of mortal sin. No fear of venial sins. No fear of anything to come that someone will take it away from you. No, secure in the hand of Christ who said, "I hold them in my hand and no one can pluck them away." That's what we celebrate as we come to the Lord's Table today. Would you bow with me in prayer?

Gracious Father, these are sober truths for sure but for the Christian they are the most glorious truths that could ever be known, that could ever come forth from our lips, that could ever settle with depth into our weak and trembling hearts. O God, O God, with joy we say and affirm that an invisible God clearly exists and there is no excuse for anyone anywhere to say otherwise. And yet, Father, as Christians, we go further and we say that our Christ clearly exists. He was crucified, buried, resurrected and now ascended on high where he intercedes for us without fail, in an ongoing ministry of intercession to ensure the completion and the full revelation of our salvation in the final day, and in that we rejoice and give you great great thanks. We worship you, O God. We thank you that you went beyond our guilt and sin in Christ to show us loving kindness, goodness, mercy, grace and hope, and pray, Father, that you would bless this time of remembrance that is just ahead.

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