

## Love and Belief

By Alan Bush

What does it mean to be a Christian? How do you know that you are one? Ask many professing Christians today in America and you will likely get a myriad of answers that all include some version of "believing in Jesus." It's not a wrong answer, but I don't think that answer gets to the heart of the question, nor does it explain the breadth of the correct answer fully. What must we believe about Jesus? Is it simply an epistemological pragmatism that some have been taught since birth, and one that others have adopted later in life to help quell dolorous notions of atheistic atomic determinism? Is there another kind of knowledge or way to decipher truth outside of pure pragmatism and reason that would be more reliable than simply our personal feelings? The notion that mankind is in a very real sense fallen, and in need of saving, is not exclusive to Christendom. The answer to what or who we have fallen from, what or who we need to be saved from, and what or who saves us, differs vastly in biblical Christianity as opposed to every other ideology known to man.

Genesis 1:26-31 explains that God made mankind in His image. Romans 3:23 tells us that "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." Revelation 21:8 tells us that our sins of cowardice, unbelief, unjust hatred of others, lies and general immorality are deserving of and will be punished by fire. Isaiah 53 explains how Christ's sacrifice atones for the salvation of those who would be saved. Ephesians 2 reveals that we are saved by faith alone, in Christ alone, by the grace of God alone, and for the glory of God alone. All of this is according to scripture alone (just to get all five solas in there). Then the whole chapter of John 14 explains in great detail that after God the Father grants you faith in Christ through the Holy Spirit, you and I are one with Christ the way that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all one in nature while being separate beings. John 17 has this magnanimous prayer where Jesus breaks down the order of salvation and what it looks like to be in fellowship with Christ. These passages, along with the rest of the Bible, are the core tenants of what a Christian must believe in order to be a Christian as defined biblically.



**Join the Men's Breakfast at Princeton Diner for fellowship and encouragement on Wednesday mornings at 7 am. Contact Tom Taylor (guytmt@gmail.com) for more information.**

That brings us to our last question, how do we know that we believe? In the passage below, Jesus gets to the heart of this question using a different and much more simple question, "Do you love me?"

*When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs."*

*He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep."*

*He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."*

*Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go."*

*(This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, "Follow me." John 21:15-19*

Some context helps us understand this passage. All three synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) recount Jesus changing Simon's name to Kephas/ Cephass in Hebrew, Petros in Greek, or Peter for us English speakers. He is often referred to Simon Peter. The name Peter means "rock." Jesus gives Simon this name after he correctly answers the question of who he believes Jesus is

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## “Love and Belief,” continued...

in Matthew 16:16, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus goes on to say that this belief in Him as the Messiah, Savior, and Christ is the foundation on which He will build His kingdom. Eight verses later in Matthew 16:22, Simon Peter will go on to attempt to rebuke Christ when He speaks of having to go to the cross. Then later in Matthew 26:69-75, Peter denies knowing Jesus three times. Jesus would go on to be crucified, resurrected three days later, and then Acts 1:3 says He spent forty days with the disciples and others before going back to Heaven. John 21 takes place during this forty day duration.

Peter, like every Christian, had shown great love and faith at times for Christ. He had also betrayed Christ, denied Christ out of a fear of man, gone back to his old life and ways, and felt shame for his sin against Christ. Jesus opts not to use the name He gave Simon Peter here, and instead calls him Simon son of John. It is as if Jesus is starting the conversation by pointing out to Simon Peter his consistent regressions and lack of faith and love. Simon Peter had been fishing the night before as if going back to his old life before Christ (John 21:1-14). There is nothing wrong with fishing in and of itself, but Jesus had other plans for Simon Peter. Simon Peter’s fishing would take time away from what Jesus was calling him to do. We will get to what Jesus would call him to do shortly. First, we have to look at the question Jesus proposed to Simon Peter, “Do you love me?” The term used for “love” here is the word “agapao” which is the highest form of love there is. It is the type of love that God tells us He has for us. It is the kind of love that drove Jesus to the cross to die for our sins. It’s a selfless love. The kind of love Paul speaks of in 1 Corinthians 13 to describe the attributes of true love.

Can Peter lay claim to this kind of self-sacrificial love for Christ after all that he has done wrong? In comparison to the love that Simon Peter saw Christ display on the cross, is it even possible to feel anything other than hopelessly deficient? Simon Peter answers by saying, “Yes Lord, you know that I love you.” What is striking though, is that Peter answers Jesus’ question of “agapao” love, with a much different “phileo” love. Phileo type of love is the kind of love one would have for a

friend. Phileo love is more akin to a fondness toward someone. Jesus isn’t thrown off at all though, He instructs Simon Peter to feed His lambs (John 21:15). In John 21:16, Jesus again asks Simon Peter if He has this agapao love for Him, and Simon Peter again uses the term “phileo.” Jesus’ instruction is the same. The passage then says that Peter was grieved because Jesus asked him a third time. In actuality, Jesus asks Simon Peter if he “phileo” loves Him the third time. Peter seems embarrassed and hurt at the question. In comparison to God’s love for us, what can we claim?

You watched a man you believe to be your Lord and Savior be beaten, stripped naked, hung on a cross, have a crown of thorns buried into His head, with a sign mocking Him above His head as His enemies gloated over Him. You then see Him risen from the dead, He forgives you and embraces you after your disobedience, your abandonment, your desire to hold onto the fleeting moments of your earthly life, and He asks you if you love Him with an “agapao” love. What is your response? You like Him? You are fond of Him? What’s it going to take for you to love Him the way He desires to be loved? We know how Simon Peter’s story ends. Jesus tells him in John 21:18-19. Jesus would leave at the end of the forty days to return to His Father’s side in heaven (Mark 16:19-20). All believers receive the Holy Spirit (John 16:5-15); Peter would go on to spread the Gospel of Christ far and wide. He would lead the disciples, perform miracles, write one to three books of the Bible, and his entire life would be devoted to preaching and teaching the Good News of Christ in agapao love to any who would listen. He would eventually be carried off to the place he did not want to go and his arms would be stretched out. He would be crucified upside down and die a glorified saint.

So what does it mean to be a Christian? It means that you can answer Jesus’ question with a life devoted entirely to Him. A life lived to preach of His agapao love for you. A life devoted to telling your children, extended family, friends, acquaintances, and even enemies of His love. How He made us in His image. How we fell through sin. How He has loved us through it all, and how He offers forgiveness if we simply acknowledge His love, repent of our sins, and believe/return His agapao

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## Elders' Corner

By Ken Bills

*Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,  
whose hope is in the LORD his God,  
who made heaven and earth,  
the sea, and all that is in them,  
who keeps faith forever;*  
Psalms 146:5-6a



Recently, Cindy and I had the privilege of spending a few days at the shore with our grandchildren. Born and raised in New Jersey, I love the Jersey shore. No doubt that's partly due to my childhood memories of vacations at the beach. For me, though, it is also one of the places where I feel God's presence most strongly. The ocean is immense, beautiful and mysterious, and I am in awe as I stand in the sand at the edge of the waves and look out at its vast expanse – and I am in awe of the Creator who made the sea.

*O LORD, how manifold are your works!  
In wisdom have you made them all;  
the earth is full of your creatures.  
Here is the sea, great and wide,  
which teems with creatures innumerable,  
living things both small and great.*  
Psalms 104:24-25

One of the joys of visiting the shore with grandchildren is experiencing the beach through their eyes. Walking along the water's edge, we marvel together at the number, variety and beauty of shells that have washed up on the shore. And those are just the tiniest fraction of the innumerable creatures that live in the ocean's depths—each one a testament to God's abundant creativity.

*Mightier than the thunders of many waters,  
mightier than the waves of the sea  
the LORD on high is mighty!*  
Psalms 93:3

I love the roar of the waves. I love their ceaseless motion. One of the joys of swimming in the ocean for me is feeling the power of the waves as they break, a small reminder of my weakness in comparison to the power of the water. Swimming in the safety of the shallows, battling the waves is a fun challenge. For young grandchildren, that same power can be not just thrilling, but terrifying. So the young ones want an adult to carry them into the surf. What a privilege to have a child trust you enough to cling tightly to you for protection! How God must long for me to trust Him the same way and to cling to Him!

Further out in the ocean in a storm, the power of the waves can be terrifying for anyone. We read in the Gospel of Luke of a time when Jesus and His disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee. Jesus had fallen asleep in the boat. A storm came up. The winds blew. The boat was tossed by the waves, which were breaking over the boat. The disciples were understandably panicked. In their terror, they woke Jesus who stopped the waves and wind with a command. No wonder the disciples were in awe: "Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?" (Luke 8:23-25) The ocean is a powerful reminder of my weakness, of God's power and my need to trust in Him— and not just when boating in a storm.

*Let heaven and earth praise him,  
the seas and everything that moves in them.*  
Psalms 69:34

The Bible tells us that creation declares the glory of God. With each crashing wave, the ocean is roaring its praise of the Creator! To God be the glory!

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### "Love and Belief," continued...

love for us. To believe is to love. Do you agapao love Him? Do you believe Him? Is the defining characteristic of your life, your agapao love for Christ? I pray it is.

*Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from  
God The Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace  
be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love  
incorruptible.*  
Ephesians 6:23-24

## Worship Team News

By Allan Ventura



### What About Worship

One of the subjects I love listening to contemporary preachers expound on is the subject of worship. Personally, it helps me be grounded and motivated to keep doing what God has allowed me to do every Sunday morning.

When we think of worship we immediately think of music and songs, since these are the most common expressions of worship. Johann Sebastian Bach is credited with having composed the most church music: over 1,000 pieces. He once said, "Music's only purpose should be for the glory of God and the recreation of the human spirit." I agree wholeheartedly. But I've also learned there is so much more to worship.

An archbishop of Canterbury by the name of William Temple (1881-1944), in his book, "Nature, Man, and God," describes it this way: "Worship is the submission of all our nature to God. To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God."

This tells me that unless the conscience, the mind, the heart, and the will are bound in adoration to the Heavenly Father, we cannot fully express the worship He deserves from us. Worship, therefore, is a selfless act. In Paul the Apostle's first letter to the Corinthians, he urged them that, "Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

Let us be reminded why we worship. Skip Heitzig, pastor of Calvary Chapel in Albuquerque, New Mexico, said the following: "We worship God for who He is and because He is worthy. Revelation 4:8 expresses this in the refrain: *"Holy, holy, holy, is*

*the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"* God is worthy of worship because He did what no one else could ever do: He created all things, and He continues to sustain them. But more than that, He also redeemed us through His Son, Jesus Christ, and He deserves never-ending praise and worship for it."

There are many activities we do in this present life as Christians that we won't do in heaven. However, there is one activity we will continue to do in heaven: worship. We will worship God forever. Given this, we can look at worship in this life as a kind of practice for eternity.

### Perisseia

Our women's growth group will begin a six-week series on Thursday, September 16, 7:00-8:30 pm. We will conclude our study of prayer with a look at the prayer lives of the Apostles. Given the current COVID situation and the recently updated CDC guidelines, we are planning to conduct our series via Zoom. If you are interested in joining us and did not participate in our last series, please contact Cindy Bills so that you can be on the Zoom invitation list. Also please feel free to contact Cindy ([cynthialbills@gmail.com](mailto:cynthialbills@gmail.com)) with any questions about our upcoming series.

### Praise!



**Through patience, endurance, helpful assistance from others and lots of paperwork, Daniel Mark happily received his green card in July.**

## Further Up and Further In

*Inviting dialogue to encourage growth in and among us*



By Cindy Bills

### Back To School

September. Regardless of our age or family/life circumstances, it is difficult to walk into September without some Back To School thoughts. And so here we are.

Some of us are, in fact, returning to school, either as students or teachers/staff. Others of us are sending children back to school. Some of us are relieved to have put our school years behind while others look back with longing for those good old days. Regardless of our current situation, September stands as a reminder of our continual need to grow and as an invitation to do so. This is a wonderful time to consider going back to school, so to speak, under our spiritual Schoolmaster, Jesus Christ. The Bible reminds us that a life of faith is a life of learning and growing. We are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling as the indwelling Holy Spirit does His work in sanctifying us (Philippians 2:12-13).

Our faith-work takes multiple forms, but one of the most significant and powerful elements of Christian growth remarkably echoes our school years: Bible study. Reading, studying, and meditating on this Book is our foundation for a growing life of faith. God has provided His Word for us, that we might learn who He is, who we are before Him, and what a faith relationship with Him looks like.

Bible study is more than the book learning that my Back To School analogy would suggest. The ultimate goal of Bible study is to be transformed by the renewing of our mind and to be conformed to the character of Christ and

His kingdom. As we immerse ourselves in God's Word, our minds and hearts are touched. We become better able to love as Christ loves and better able to explain Truth to others. We become informed and wise, yes, but we are changed from the inside out for all eternity. This is a far greater reward than the grades we earn/earned from our school studies. May we eagerly and gratefully return to the Lord's schoolhouse of His Word, sit at our Teacher's feet, diligently study His Word, and humbly submit to His work in us.

*Please feel free to contact Cindy (609-275-8557 or [cynthialbills@gmail.com](mailto:cynthialbills@gmail.com)) to continue the dialogue...*



Blessings to all who celebrate a birthday this month. May you feel the love, joy and presence of the Lord as we all celebrate your special day with prayers and warmest wishes.

Elizabeth MacQueen	September 1
Dmitri Morozova	September 1
Esther Dada	September 8
Yvonne Ritchie	September 10
Jean Warner	September 15
Emily MacQueen	September 23
Elena Morozova	September 26
Cindy Shaw	September 26

### Financial Update

(Through July 31, 2021)

*"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want..."*

	Actual	Budget
<b>Income</b>	\$140,628	\$128,331
Other income (PPP loan)	\$29,458	
Total Income	\$170,086	
<b>Expense</b>	\$142,676	\$128,340

Windsor Chapel has sent \$17,324 to our missionary partners this year. That is 12% of your giving!

## Look For God

By Janet Berrill

In July my son, Stephen, his wife, Rikki, and their 14-month-old son, Luke, moved in with us. They are going through a particular situation where they need some extra help, so we were glad to open our doors to them. Previously they lived in Ohio, and because they were so far away, we did not get to see our grandson nearly as much as we would have liked. But now that they are living with us, we get to see Luke every day. In a short time he has come to know and to trust us

One Sunday Stephen brought Luke to church, and after the service we were standing in the back of the sanctuary visiting with people. I was holding Luke, and he decided he wanted to get down and explore. So I put him down and he began to walk around the sanctuary, and I followed right behind him. As he walked and explored the steps up front and the window on the side, he would occasionally turn around to see if I was there. Then, as he was walking toward the back, he passed a pew row that was wider than the rest. There was a woman sitting in the pew and Luke walked right past her and I followed him. When he got to the end of the row, he started to get scared. He began to cry as he turned toward the back of the church and ran to his daddy. Stephen picked him up in his arms and gave him a big hug, assuring him he was safe. I walked up to Luke and said, "I was with you the whole time. I was right behind you. I would never leave you." Luke got scared because he thought he was alone; he did turn around and see me with him.

Scary things happen, and not just to one-year-old toddlers! The things that scare us as adults can be very serious. Someone loses a job and can't find another one; someone gets very sick; a loved one is held captive by an addiction; a teenager makes bad choices that could negatively affect the rest of her life; etc. These are scary situations, but we are never alone in them.

In Hebrews 13:5, God says to us, "*Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.*" This is His promise to us; He will always be with us. But we

need to look for Him. We can't expect to feel His presence if we are looking only at our situation and trying to solve it ourselves. When we believe that God is with us in the situation, we can look for ways that He shows up. An unexpected check shows up in the mail for the person who lost his job; a specialist whose calendar was completely full suddenly has an opening; the addict has a chance meeting with someone who previously overcame an addiction; the car breaks down so the teenager can't go away with her new, older boyfriend for the weekend. That's God working! God can show up in many ways, but we need eyes of faith to see Him.

Luke forgot I was with him so he got scared; he did not see me, because I was behind him. If he had just turned around, he would have seen me and been reassured. God has promised that He will never leave us or forsake us. So when you go through a scary time, look for God with eyes of faith and you will see Him; you will find that He is right there with you.

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## 11<sup>th</sup> Hour Sunday School

Our adult Sunday School Class will resume its study of the Gospel of Luke on Sunday, September 19, via Zoom. The teachers are Larry and Janet Berrill and Ken and Cindy Bills.

Those who participated in last fall's study of Luke will receive a Zoom invitation. If you did not participate last fall and would like to join us for this term, please contact Cindy Bills at [cynthialbills@gmail.com](mailto:cynthialbills@gmail.com). We hope you can join us!

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**If you have any items or information you would like to share in the newsletter, please e-mail:**

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**Dorothy Soi at**

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