

The Existence of God

I Cor. 1:20-25

INTRODUCTION:

We are continuing with "The Basics of Christianity" series. This morning we ask the question: **Does God Exist?**

Most fundamental to all faith questions is the question of God's existence. Without getting a good handle on this question, there is no need to explore the other ones.

Obviously, if there is no God, then the Bible is not God's Word, and Jesus is not God's Son and His death on the cross had no benefit to mankind.

So, I think we all would agree that the question of God's existence is most essential.

All Stand and Read Scripture

1 Corinthians 1:20-25 (NASB)

²⁰ Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come to* know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. ²² For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Prayer

The intent of this message is NOT to try to CONVINCED you of the existence of God because I believe that everyone here already has that belief.

You may ask, If we already know that God exists, why do a sermon on the subject?

The first reason is that we are to be ready to defend our belief to everyone who asks you to give account of our hope.

1 Peter 3:15-16 (NASB)

¹⁵ but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; ¹⁶ and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.

The second reason would be to examine God's Word to see what wisdom we can learn from God on how to deal with this question. In other words, how does God answer this question in the Bible?

There are people in our world who look at what we believe and ask that very question.

They either say they don't BELIEVE God exists (atheists)
OR they say they can't KNOW if God exists (agnostics).

Both groups basically say: "We've not seen enough evidence to believe God exists"

ILLUSTRATION:

There's the story of a college philosophy professor who asked one question on his final exam. He picked up a chair, put it on his desk, and wrote on the board, "Using everything we have learned this semester, prove that this chair does not exist."

The students opened their notebooks and wrote as much as they could think of for a whole hour, some of them churning out 30 pages of heady philosophical debate and logic.

But one student turned in his paper after less than a minute and he was the only one to get an "A." What did he write so quickly that turned out to be just the right answer?

He wrote: (pause and shrug) "What chair?"

Some people, despite the fact that evidence is right in front of their face, will say "What chair?"

ILLUSTRATION:

One such individual supposedly confronted an old Quaker and taunted him:

"Have you ever seen God?

Have you ever felt God?

Have you ever smelled God?

Ha! And you say you have a God!"

In other words: Where's the evidence? Where's the proof?

The Quaker thought for a couple of moments and then replied,

"Hast thou ever seen thy brains?

Hast thou ever felt thy brains?

Hast thou ever smelled thy brains?

(pause for effect) Ha! And thou sayest thou hast brains!"

Now, I don't know if that story is true or not... but Scripture agrees with that old Quaker. In **Psalm 53:1** David declares: **The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."**

Why would such a person be a fool? Well, because, there's more than enough evidence to believe God exists.

Certainly God could make His existence undeniable, indisputable and irrefutable. But if God did this, then there would be no such thing as faith, nor a need for it.

How does God say it in our scripture this morning?

1 Corinthians 1:20-25 (NASB)

For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come to know* God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

God, in all His wisdom and according to His plan, has made faith a foundational and critical part of our relationship with Him. He chose to use the Gospel to supply our belief, faith, and hope instead of man's wisdom.

Hebrews 11:1-6 (NASB)

11 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

6 And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Remember the illustration from last week?

ILLUSTRATION:

The story is told of a Sunday school teacher who asked his class, "What is Faith?"

A young boy raised his hand and answered, "Oh, that's easy. Faith is believing something you know is not true."

Unfortunately, that little boy's definition summarizes what many people think about faith.

So faith is necessary, but as I said last week, the faith that is necessary is not blind faith. It is reasonable faith based upon the evidence of God through His Word.

I believe that God has given us enough evidence that we have reasons to believe, but not so much evidence that faith is not required.

What I want to do with the rest of this sermon, is to share several of the most compelling clues that provide strong evidence for the existence of God.

What is the evidence?

BODY:

I. The Design of Creation Reveals the Existence of God.

Romans 1:18-23 (NASB)

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹ because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. ²⁰ **For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.** ²¹ For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

The universe evidences great complexity and design; thus, it must have been designed by a great Designer or God.

Some have said that it is as if there were a large number of dials that all had to be turned to within extremely narrow limits - and they were - and it is extremely unlikely that this would happen by chance.

When you look from the perspective of a scientist at the universe, it looks as if it knew we were coming.

- If the earth were 1 degree closer to the sun, we'd fry!
- If we were 1 degree further, we'd freeze!
- If the moon was any closer or larger, the tides would destroy the coast lines.
- If any smaller/further away -oceans would die from a lack of nutrient movement.
- If our distance from Jupiter were any greater, asteroids and comets would pepper the earth.
- If we were any closer our orbit would become unstable.
- If earth's surface gravity was any stronger, it would retain too much ammonia and methane and we couldn't breathe.
- If it were any weaker, earth's atmosphere would lose too much water and we'd not have the liquid necessary to survive.
- If the earth's crust were any thicker, it would absorb too much of our oxygen. We wouldn't be able to breathe.
- If it was any thinner; the earth would move and shake beneath our feet and would make life impossible.
- And these facts go on and on, the heavens and the earth all declaring the creative genius of God. That was one of the reasons David lists for his belief in God.

II. Natural Law in Creation Reveals the Existence of God.

There is another aspect about nature that may be as convincing that it required a creator as its design - it's regularity or natural law.

Whether we want to admit it or not, we all live by a higher law.

ILLUSTRATION:

Ask three men, "What the speed limit of street in front of church?"

1. Believes it is 25 MPH, but is not sure.
2. Pretty sure it is 30 MPH.
3. Is certain it is 45 MPH.

If all three of them were stopped by the local police for going 35 MPH, would #1 (who thought the speed limit was 25) get a higher ticket than #2 (who thought the speed limit was 30)? Would #3 not get a speeding ticket since he thought he was under the speed limit?

No, because despite what we believe, we are bound by the laws of the land.

The basis of godlessness is to ignore God. And at the heart of godlessness is ignoring nature's clear declaration that there is a God and you will one day have to deal with Him.

In their mind, Creation could not have a Creator because that would require something beyond a **natural** explanation for why the world existed. It would require a SUPER-natural explanation. And so they reject God on that theological basis.

But down thru the ages, scientists, who didn't entirely embrace atheism, recognized God's hand in creation. They see natural law as something that had to be designed.

Our science is based upon the laws of nature. Three people may calculate the speed of the rotation of the earth at different speeds. Does the earth turn at a different speed for each of them based upon their calculation? No. The laws are set. We only observe them and try to understand them.

But how did these laws of nature come to be? And why do they continue with such regularity? The probability that it just happened is astronomical. There must have been a lawgiver.

ILLUSTRATION:

Imagine a man dealing himself 20 straight hands of royal flushes in the same game of poker.

As his opponents reach for their six-shooters the poker player says, "I know it looks suspicious! But you have just experienced the one chance where I always dealt myself royal flushes without cheating."

This argument will have no effect on the other poker players, even though it is technically possible that a man might have just happened to deal himself twenty straight hands of royal flushes without cheating. It could happen!

It takes far more faith to believe that the laws of nature happened by accident rather than by design.

III. The Historical Facts of Christ Reveal God.

If man **WANTED** to write the scriptures based on his knowledge, he would not be able to. If he **COULD** write the scriptures, there would be no need to.

I know this is not a normal argument for the existence of God. But, let's consider how we can know that God exists by looking at the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

The historical person Jesus of Nazareth was by all accounts a remarkable individual. Jesus came on the scene with an unprecedented sense of divine authority, the authority to stand and speak in God's place. He claimed that in himself the Kingdom of God had come, and as visible demonstrations of this fact he carried out a ministry of healing and miracles.

But the supreme confirmation of his claim was his resurrection from the dead. Now a lot of people would think that the resurrection of Jesus is something you just believe in by faith.

But, there are three facts I would like for you to consider:

1. On the Sunday after his crucifixion, Jesus' tomb was found empty by a group of his women followers.
2. On separate occasions different individuals and groups saw appearances of Jesus alive after his death.
3. The original disciples suddenly came to believe in the resurrection of Jesus despite the fact that they didn't expect it.

Attempts to explain away these three great facts—like “The disciples stole the body” or “Jesus wasn’t really dead”—makes no sense when you consider the fact that the disciples would have no reason to dedicate their lives to a lie. Nor would the Jews and Gentiles have committed their lives to Christianity, if these things did not happen. They would have just laughed it off.

The simple fact is that there just is no plausible, naturalistic explanation of these three facts; and therefore, it seems to me, the Christian is justified in believing that the best explanation of the evidence is that **Jesus rose from the dead and was who he claimed to be**. But that entails that the God revealed by Jesus of Nazareth exists. And thus we have a good inductive argument for the existence of God based on the resurrection of Jesus.

CONCLUSION:

So have I proved that God exists? No I have not, but I hopefully have demonstrated that God has left us clues that help solve the mystery of our existence. He has explained to us through the scriptures things we cannot possibly know from our own experience and knowledge. Such as why He has chosen to not fully reveal Himself in order that we could accept Him by free will through a reasonable faith.

The clues about the design of our universe point us to a Creator and Designer.

The clues about the laws of nature point us to Creator and Lawgiver.

Read God's Word regularly because it is through God's Word, that you will find God. The more we read His word, the more you KNOW it has to be from God! As we read in this morning's scripture:

1 Corinthians 1:21 (NASB)

21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

If you do not know Christ as your Lord and Savior, I invite you to come forward this morning and place your faith in Christ and be obedient to Him through immersion in baptism. Don't wait until you have cleaned up your life. **You don't clean yourself up to come to the Christ; you surrender yourself to Christ, to let Him clean you up!**

I encourage you to allow Christ to make you righteous before God by stepping forward this morning during our invitation hymn.

God Be with You till We Meet Again

God be with you till we meet again, By His counsels guide uphold you,
With His sheep securely fold you, God be with you till we meet again.

Till we meet...Till we meet, Till we meet at Jesus' feet;

Till we meet...Till we meet, God be with you till we meet again.