



14 May 2023

Truth 1 | Hitting Bottom

John 18:37-38; 1 Peter 3:15

### Key scriptures

**John 18:37-38** Pilate asked him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.” Pilate asked him, “What is truth?”

**1 Peter 3:15** Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you.

### Summary | foundations for belief

In this message, pastor Mike provides an introduction to this new series on the reason why we believe in and follow Christ.

We live in crazy, uncertain times, a time when the foundations of meaning are being rattled. Everything looks like it is changing, which means that we are, like Pilate, asking “What is truth?” Many claim that we can’t really know what truth is. But even in the midst of the myriad of questions about what is and is not true, this is a great opportunity for us. The things that are true should stand up to scrutiny. We should never be afraid of being challenged. We need to ask if our beliefs are true. Peter wrote: “Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15).

Unfortunately, for a lot of Christians, their faith isn’t standing up to scrutiny. Many are abandoning the faith all together.

- Some leave because of bad experiences with church.
- For some, the strong alignment of evangelicals with right wing politics has been a deal breaker.
- For others it is the lack of love expressed by the church,
- the suffering of the world,
- issues with the Bible,
- perceived conflicts with science,
- traditional patriarchal systems,
- religious violence.

This raises legitimate issues. We need to ask what is it that has allowed us to continue to believe when so many others are not? This often requires a deconstruction and reconstruction of faith. We must be willing to wrestle to the point where we “hit bottom.”

What do we really believe and why do we believe what we believe?

4 parts of a foundation for explaining the hope that lies within us.

- The first part of the foundation is **love**.  
Life has a purpose and this purpose is about love. If not, how did an irrational, amoral, meaningless cosmic burp evolve beings who try to make rational sense of things, long for meaning and have moral convictions? We long for love and live for it, even when we don't have a rationale for why we search for it like we do. There is a point to our existence and the point is about love.
- The second layer of this foundation is that the purpose of love has a “**purpose-er**.”  
We cannot have love as the point without someone who is the lover. There must be a “God,” ultimate intelligence, behind physical reality, and this ultimate intelligence must be perfectly loving.
- The third layer is **Jesus**.  
If God is personal and therefore purposeful, and if we are created for the purpose of love, it makes sense to wonder if God has ever communicated with us. It's significant to note that the Gospel story, if understood correctly, is the greatest love story ever told. God set aside the bliss of heaven, made himself into human being and then offered up his life on the cross, bearing the sin and curse for his bride. But it's not just a story; history has shown us that Jesus actually did these things out of love for us.
- The fourth layer is **scripture**.  
If we trust that Jesus did what he did, then it is logical to trust in the things that he trusted. And one of the things that Jesus trusted was Scripture. Jesus viewed the entire Old Testament as the word of God. Not only this, but Jesus promised his disciples that the Holy Spirit would come remind them of all Jesus taught, and he promised that the world would come to believe in him through the word of his disciples. This implies that later generations would believe through their written words.

## Reflection | Discussion Questions

- What impacted you the most from this sermon?
- Why is it important to know what you believe and why?
- How would you explain the four layers of the foundation of faith that Mike introduced?
- What happens when you are in a setting where you cannot ask honest questions?
- What is/are something(s) that have caused you to question your faith in the past?
- How did you work through your questions?
- Why is it important to be free to ask hard questions about our faith?
- What are some questions that you would like to see addressed in this series?