



SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

WHAT IT MEANS TO BELIEVE IN JESUS

KEY PASSAGE: John 3:16 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Matthew 7:21-23 | John 1:12; 10:30; 12:46; 16:7-11
Acts 16:31 | Romans 1:16; 5:1; 10:9-14 | Ephesians 2:8-9 | Hebrews 9:27 | 1 John 5:13

► SUMMARY

What does it mean to believe in Jesus Christ?

Throughout the New Testament, we find verses on this topic. It's obvious from Scripture that to be forgiven of our sins, we must place our faith in Jesus Christ. But what exactly does that mean, and how can we be sure we have done it? Is it enough to intellectually agree that the Savior came to earth and died for our sins?

► SERMON POINTS

The Bible clearly states that we can know how to spend eternity with God, and that assurance of salvation comes by placing our trust in Christ. In Chapter 3 of the Gospel of John, Jesus said, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life" (v. 16).

We can know that we are in Christ.

Verse after verse in the New Testament focuses on believing in Jesus. In other words, we must place our trust in Him.

- **John 1:12.** "As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name."
- **Acts 16:31.** "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved."
- **Romans 1:16.** "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes."
- **Romans 5:1.** "Having been justified by faith, we have

peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

- **Ephesians 2:8-9.** "By grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

Reasons for False Security

- **Some people believe facts about Jesus but haven't yet trusted Him.** They genuinely accept that what the Bible says about Christ is true, and so they think they are saved.
- **Others think that they will get into heaven because of the faith of their family.** But coming from a spiritual background doesn't guarantee your salvation.
- **Another problem is expecting that heaven can be earned by good deeds.** But Matthew 7:21-23 indicates that even the most impressive good works can't earn us a place in His kingdom.

Causes of Deception

- **People genuinely misunderstand what "believe" means in Scripture.** They think it's nothing more than our everyday use of the word.
- **Some deliberately limit what their faith encompasses.** They may attend church, and perhaps on a regular basis, but avoid making any genuine change in their lives.
- **Others have been misled by spiritual leaders.** If the invitation isn't clear, or people respond only emotionally, they may repeat a prayer without understanding salvation.

Consequences of Not Trusting Jesus

- **In personal life:** Someone who only knows facts about

Jesus isn't saved. Spiritually speaking, they are walking in darkness (John 12:46). That person can never be a good testimony of life in Christ.

- **In church life:** These people are characterized by:
 - Frequently being the source of conflicts.
 - Acting as spectators of church life.
 - Setting limits on faith and refusing to let it affect their lifestyle.
 - Attempting to serve spiritually without the supernatural help of the Holy Spirit.
 - Irritated by the gospel when it's presented.
 - Distress and confusion due to their unsatisfied expectations of church life.
- **In eternity:** We will all stand before the Lord and face judgment (Heb. 9:27). If a person dies without relying on Christ for forgiveness of their sins, Scripture says they will not be righteous enough for entrance to heaven. Mere intellectual belief in God is inadequate, and no one, without trusting in Jesus as their Lord and Savior, is good enough to avoid eternal separation from the Father.

What does it mean to place our trust in Jesus Christ?

The Lord wants us to have absolute assurance that we have a secure relationship with Him. First John 5:13 says, "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life."

Here are three words that sum up the aspects of believing in Jesus:

- **Knowledge:** Our faith must be based on some facts about salvation. (See Romans 10:9-14.)
 - First, Jesus is God. Our Savior claimed to be one with God (John 10:30). If He's just another man, how could He save us?
 - Second, before salvation, each person is a sinner and separated from God.
 - Third, Jesus died on the cross for our sins.
 - Fourth, Christ rose from the grave and is alive today.

The resurrection validates His claims. If He didn't rise from the dead, how can He be Lord of anyone's life?

- **Conviction:** This word means to be fully convinced of something. Knowing the facts about how to be saved won't do us any good unless we truly rely on them. Jesus talked in John's gospel about how the Holy Spirit would convict the world of sin (John 16:7-11). We must be fully persuaded that we need God and that the death of Jesus Christ paid for our sins so we could have a right relationship with the Father.
- **Trust:** We must move from factual knowledge to inner conviction, and then place our trust in Jesus. Faith can't be inherited from parents; it must always be a personal decision. Of course, we don't have to understand everything fully to be saved. However, we must take action by putting our trust in Jesus and committing our lives to Him, not simply believe He exists.

What does it mean for me to believe in Jesus Christ?

To believe in Jesus is to have a confident conviction that He is who the Bible says He is. He will keep His promises; He will do what He says He'll do. And upon placing my trust in Him, I am entering into a personal, eternal relationship with the Son of God.

► RESPONSE

- Have you moved from being an observer of the life of faith to entering into a personal relationship with Jesus and trusting Him as your Savior? If not, ask God to help you remove any barriers to Him.
- Even as believers, we can grow distant from the Lord and become spectators of others' faith instead of staying intimate with God. Spend a moment in quietness before the Lord, asking Him to reveal any hindrances to closeness with Him. Thank the Father that by trusting in His Son, you can enjoy daily fellowship with Him and have the assurance of heaven one day.

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