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Herald of Truth program number 535.

00:07

The most important thing about any person is what he believes. And to a frightening degree what we believe depends on what we've been taught. wide areas of humanity realize this. So we have political indoctrination, and religious indoctrination, and brainwashing. We are influenced by what we hear. Our lives tend to run in the direction of our reading, the Bible says. So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ. This month on herald of truth. I'm going to be talking about some of our reasons for believing in God and in his word.

01:03

Hello, everyone, and welcome to our weekly herald of truth program. Each week, we invite you to join us at this time for a few moments of study and bought centering around the word of God. Speaker for this month herald of truth radio programs is Harold Haislip. Mr. Haislip is Dean of the Harding College Graduate School of Religion and Minister of the Highland Street Church of Christ in Memphis, Tennessee. If you'd like to receive a free printed copy of his thoughts today, be ready with your pen and paper, and we'll be giving our address in just a few moments. There is no obligation when you write to us now to visit with you on the topic, the nature of faith. Here again, is Harold Haislip. You will recall that Joseph Jacobs son was sold into slavery when he was 17 years old. Later, the wife of his master Potiphar tried to tempt him to commit adultery. Joseph's response was, how can I do this great wickedness and sin against God, he wound up in prison. Later, through God's providence, Joseph became the highest ruler in Egypt under Pharaoh. He did not lose his moorings during either his sufferings, or this prosperity. His life was stable because of his faith in God, a faith he'd been taught in his early years. When the Israelites were carried away into Babylonian captivity, around 600 BCE, many of them completely acclimated themselves to their new situation in Babylon. We never hear of them. But Daniel was an unusual young man. He resolved that he would not defile himself with a king's rich food, or with a wine which he drank the book of Daniel says, Daniel's life became an inspiration to other people. He was shaped by his faith in God. The New Testament gives us another classic example of the effect faith has on a person's life.

02:58

Saul of Tarsus persecutor of the church, became the apostle Paul, his beliefs changed, and consequently his life changed. Instead of persecuting Christians, he was defending Christ and preaching to the Gentiles. Nothing is quite so fundamental to life, as what one believes.

03:18

Perhaps we need to talk about the word believe for a moment, we use it in so many ways. Someone asks a question, we're not sure of the answer. How many presidents have we had in the United States? 39. I believe the emphasis here and I believe is that I really do not know. I think we've had 39 presidents. This means that I would be surprised if I'm wrong, but not completely upset. If the person who asked me was a student, and he later said to me, I counted on your statement, and I missed that exam question. I would simply respond. I only said I believe we'd had 39 presidents, if it was important, you should have checked.

03:59

This kind of mere belief has little to do with religious faith. But it's one way we use the word belief. We also have a stronger sense of the word believe in our everyday language. We're confident that matter is true. We would be very surprised if we were wrong. This kind of belief has clear characteristics. First, I understand what I claim to believe. If it turns out that I'm only memorizing and repeating words that I don't understand what I'm saying. I obviously do not really believe it.

04:34

When I believe something very strongly. I'll take appropriate action. If I tell you I believe saccharin is related to cancer, but I continue to use it. You may comment, he doesn't believe sacrum causes cancer. If he did, he would stop using it. strong belief implies a course of action. And I should have a reason for this strong belief. It's not merely a hunch. If I tell you I think a person is dis

05:00

honest. And I really can't single out a reason why I believe he is dishonest, you might demand my evidence. If I only have a hunch, a feeling, this is not a strong belief. Now, religious faith is a lot like the strong use of the word belief in our everyday life. The difference is that religious faith is even more personal. Faith in the sense in which the Bible uses it is not simply faith in a statement. But faith in a person in God, in Jesus Christ. It's not just faith that God exists, it's trust in him as a person. If it's saving faith, it's more like a child's faith and his father, or mother. But just as faith in everyday matters implies understanding, we must have some understanding of God in order to believe in Him. Now, our understanding is limited. God is so much greater than we that we can only partly comprehend Him. But if we understood nothing of God, we cannot really have faith in Him. And our faith in God implies a course of action. The person who has nothing for which he will suffer or die, may have a lot of opinions, but he doesn't have real faith in anything. If we really believe Smoking will cause cancer will stop smoking, if we really believe in God will follow an appropriate course of action, obedience to God.

06:27

strong belief in anything in daily life is built upon certain grounds, or reasons. And there are reasons for our faith and God. If we merely have a high probability that God exists, sort of a gamblers chance of being right. We're not speaking of the kind of faith the Bible speaks of Bible characters believed,

because of the evidence that God exists, and that he has revealed his will to us. Their belief was so strong, they could speak of knowing God.

06:59

The Bible defines faith in more than one place. These definitions should help us see the nature of the faith God wants us to have. The 11th chapter of Hebrews begins. Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. By faith, we understand that the world was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made out of things which do not appear. And without faith, it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists, and that He rewards those that seek Him.

07:36

This chapter describes a number of heroes of faith in the Old Testament, as they're presented one by one, we're told what faith really is. As we read these brief descriptions of their lives, we discover that faith is not a hunch, not an intuition. It's certainty. Faith is a conviction and assurance about certain things which is so strong, that he cannot be shaken by any circumstances of life.

08:03

There is no more reliable knowledge available to the human being, than the faith which is built upon the promises of God.

08:11

Paul gives another definition of faith in Second Corinthians, he'd been discussing his sufferings for the cause of Christ, he writes, so we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away. Our inner nature is being renewed every day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory, beyond all comparison, because we look not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient. The things that are unseen, are eternal. For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God,

08:51

a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, for we walk by faith, not by sight.

08:58

Now Paul is saying that faith is a vision of eternal reality. This reality is greater than what we see or touch or measure with our senses. People often suppose that we know for sure, the facts which come by scientific observation, but that faith is second rate. Scientific knowledge is extremely valuable. it attains a high degree of accuracy in many areas, but it's still dependent on our limited observation. When better instruments are developed. Scientific knowledge is often modified drastically. Astronomers do not think of the moon or a mercury in quite the same way since man landings and satellite observations.

09:41

Our instruments are better and our knowledge has been modified. The Christian believes that God has been perfectly revealed in Christ. No one's understanding is going to improve or modify the understanding of God, which Jesus has given us. The truths we believe about God

10:00

and Christ are more certain than any other knowledge we possess.

10:05

If what I've said about faith is true why doesn't everyone believe

10:10

I'm going to look at some of the objections to faith in God with you in just a moment

10:21

God

10:24

we pray see Oh God

10:29

God God God God God

10:35

God God

10:39

glory

10:46

to Glory

10:52

to God

11:16

three

11:32

y'all

11:49

y'all

11:59

I'm going to suggest three contemporary objections to faith and God. One group of philosophically inclined people suggest that religious doctrines are nonsensical claims. They believe that any statement which has meaning must be capable of being proved or disproved by the methods of science or mathematics. If I say, God he is this person objects that I cannot prove the existence of God by my physical senses. However, this philosophy has itself been severely criticized. Scientists speak of subatomic particles which they cannot directly observe with the senses. We all speak of love and hate emotions which we cannot test with the senses. And of course, the very claim that any statement which has meaning must be provable or disprovable by the methods of science or mathematics. This is a statement which cannot be proved or disproved by those methods. It's a faith statement, hardly a legitimate objection to Christian faith.

13:06

Others who have a psychological interest sometimes say that religious faith is wishful thinking, we want God to exist. We're afraid of being alone in our world. So we imagined him into existence. But wishful thinking works both ways. There's good reason to believe many people deny God because they wish he did not exist. They do not intend to live by His will.

13:33

Those who see a conflict between physical science and religious faith, and this by no means includes all scientists

13:41

charge that the Christian has been gullible when he believes in miraculous creation of the world, and a man. But the alternatives to belief in creation are often not advertised. There is the chance view which says that our orderly universe came from elements of unknown origin, through no pre designed by anyone. Does this make more sense than the belief that the universe was created by an intelligent creator?

14:10

There is the deterministic view, which shows that the universe is working through laws that are somehow inherent in its own nature. These laws are not the result of an intelligent mind. Rather, intelligent minds came from the working out of these blind deterministic laws.

14:28

There's also a mixed view which shows that the universe has certain laws inherent within itself, which determine the course of the universe. But the chance also takes over at times. But neither of these views explains the origin of the universe. Where did it really come from? The person who does not believe in God has his own set of beliefs. He must believe in the eternal existence of matter. If spirit existed before matter, the spirit which existed might well be

15:00

God,

15:01

the person who does not believe in God must believe that our highest abilities, consciousness, thought speech, spontaneously came about from lifeless matter, by sheer chance.

15:15

In this system, there are no moral values, there's no one to set them. Everything is matter in motion. Man is a material machine without responsibility for his conduct.

15:26

This view that everything in our orderly universe came about by chance, without any intelligence to guide, it seems to me to require a great deal more faith than my belief that God is and that He created the world, as the Bible says

15:42

that we've been talking about some rather complex ideas, reasons for faith and objections to faith. If you will ask the average Christian why he believes in God, he probably would not give you a detailed philosophical argument at all. He likely would tell you that this is the only view which makes sense of life. That the very character of Jesus Christ and the Bible have convinced him of the truthfulness of Christianity,

16:07

that he has tested the realities of God's promises in His own life.

16:13

The Bible is filled with beautiful promises which the Christian sees fulfilled in his daily life. Paul's words Romans 8:28, are an example. We know that in everything God works for good with those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose. Paul does not say that we should relax and leave everything to God, or that faith in God guarantees that everything in life will be lovely. Instead, he says that God works with us in everything for good. Faith does not substitute for obedience. But God helps those who help themselves. He works with us and the Christian can look back over his own life and see God's providence at work.

16:54

God made another promise to the prophet Isaiah. Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator, the ends of the earth. He does not fail to grow weary, even use your feet and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted. But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. God has made us free persons. But if we wait for him in Isaiah's words, a description of prayer and worship, he will give us strength. We often flap our wings like frightened chickens. But Isaiah says that God will help us to rise up and soar like eagles, if we will depend upon him. Christians have found this promise of strength to be true in their own lives.

17:50

And Jesus made a promise, I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. Faith in Christ, following his way brings new life, new meaning, joy, satisfaction.

18:04

We human beings have a basic instinct, the quest for meaning in life.

18:09

Virginia Woolf was a gifted but very disturbed English novelist. She took her own life a generation ago. Her diary recounts her longing for a sense of real meaning. She spoke of wanting something one can lay one's hands on and say, This is it.

18:28

What I'm saying to you is that Jesus Christ is something one can lay one's hands on and say, This is it. The Bible gives us reasons and then asks us to believe in Him as God's Son, to turn away from sin by repenting, changing our minds and wills, to acknowledge Him as the one who God raised from the dead, and to be buried with him in baptism, so that we too may be raised from the dead, from a death to sand to a new life in Christ.

18:57

Faith in Christ means that you and I should take an appropriate course of action through His grace. Let's follow his teachings as responsibly as we possibly can.

19:09

If I can be of help to you and your search to know His will, and Dewey's will write to me, Mr. Hayes, look, we'll return in just a moment to share some additional thoughts with us on today's lesson. As we mentioned earlier in our program, we'd like to give you our mailing address, and offer you a free printed copy of today's program. If you'd like to study the thoughts presented a little further, or if you'd like to pass these thoughts on to a friend. We hope you'll feel free to write. There is absolutely no obligation. Our addresses simply Mr. Hayzlett herald of truth, Abilene, Texas. That's Mr. Hayzlett herald of truth, Abilene, Texas. And be sure to mention today's program number 535. When you write

20:00

We'd also like to offer you some additional free material for your study in the form of a short six Lesson Study piece on the life of Christ. This booklet is designed to be used along with your Bible as you consider the life of Jesus and its meaning to your life. Once again, we stress the fact that there's no obligation on your part. If you'd like to receive this study piece entitled Jesus the Christ, simply address your postcard or letter to Mr. Hayes look, Harold of truth, Abilene taxes. That's Mr. Hayslip. Herald of truth. Abilene, Texas, mentioned the study on Jesus the Christ, and program number 535. When you right

20:50

now, in the remaining moments of today's program, Mr. Haislip returns with a special guest. Together, they'll discuss today's topic of the nature of faith a bit further to introduce his guest. Here again, is Harold Haislip.

21:06

I have as my guest in the studio today, Neil Pryor, who is professor of Bible at Harding College in Searcy, Arkansas. Neil, I'm glad you were able to come by Thank you very much. Appreciate it. I want to talk with you about the nature of faith for a while I know you teach college students regularly and any minister is in a kind of conflict with unbelief, because he's trying to further the cause of belief.

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How would you begin with a student who's kind of struggling with whether to believe or not to believe?

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First thing I'd point out to him, I believe, is that whatever task he takes, he has some sort of faith. If he believes there's a God, then that's faith, if he believes there's not a God, well, he still has a faith, faith is going to be impossible to avoid, then everybody's going to have a faith position. Absolutely.

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I've been kind of impressed at what unbelievers believe at times. I remember a quotation from Bertrand Russell, where he commented that the whole universe man, everything in it is the product of no prevision. That seems to me to be quite a faith within itself.

22:12

Absolutely, it's quite a statement for a man to say that he knows exactly how the world came about, and sounds as if he may have been there. His own statement is evidence of a fact that he is assuming a great deal.

22:25

Well, the student then is going to have to look at some evidence on both sides of the question, all of us are in a kind of search for the position where we can let our whole weight down, the person who chooses to live instead of to die has a faith position. So we're all in a in a search? Yes, really, in the universe, we have clues that God has given us or what being if we believe in a being. And from these clues, I think that we have evidence that can give us the best explanation of our being upon this earth and our reason for being here. And you put all these clues together, and really the one that has the fewest problems is the faith in the God of the Bible.

23:12

It's the absolutely safe position for a person to occupy but not only. So it's the the rational, a reasonable explanation. It's just so hard for me to imagine that a human eye or

23:27

an animal with instinct, could have come about from a certain collocation of atoms with no design. Right, Harold, whenever I get the thinking, Now, how do I really know there is a God, the thing that I go back to is the order of the universe. The fact that we have the world fixed just like it is the fact that the human body is such a marvelous machine as the psalmist said, I'm fearfully and wonderfully made. The creation itself demands an intelligent creator, at least in my mind.

23:55

Now I've talked today a little bit about the psychologists explanation, we've had it around ever since Sigmund Freud that God is the product of our wishful thinking. But you and I are both saying that underlying faith, there has to be some factual evidence here to

24:13

do you want to comment about what may happen as people turn the search light on the Bible or on Jesus Christ? Do we need to worry about what's going to happen as a result of research? Or?

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I'm glad you asked that I have some strong feelings on that subject. First of all, if I have a faith that I'm afraid to investigate, then I best get rid of it. And what I believe is true, then the more I investigate it, the more it's going to be shown to be the truth. Like a brass doorknob the more you polish it the more to shine. Yes. And if I am believing things that are not true, then the sooner I discard them, the better off I'll be. And I certainly don't want any faith that I'd be afraid to investigate.

24:53

I think that's true. In fact, the Bible so often says test the spirits whether they're of God. We're called on to

25:00

Prove all things and hold fast, what is good? Or Jesus said, You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. The whole scientific spirit of our time is pretty much the spirit of Christianity, and its approach to truth. Absolutely to search for the truth. And that's exactly what the Scriptures teaches. Well,

25:17

I recall reading somewhere, I'm not really sure where the order of facts and faith and feeling. And the author was insisting that we can't start with feeling, I feel good, there must be a God, we have to start with facts. And out of that fact, or those facts, faith comes. And then we feel good, having found the evidence of truth, which is there. So the factual basis of Christianity is, is what we're really relying on here.

25:48

Our faith is built upon facts. I don't think there's any doubt about there. Hebrews 11. One faith is the substance of things hoped for, in the evidence of things not saying, faith is not just following a hunch or some blind feeling we have sort of a wishful hope. But faith is actually based upon the evidence that we have when we investigate the evidence for a god as we've already talked about in the creation or, or the evidence for the resurrection, and render the Christian faith cannot be successfully refuted until those grain facts have been proved to be false.

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I recall of Hallford luck once suggesting that so many believers in Christ seem to sort of park their minds as they go into a worship service. And what's the same way as they leave the overcoat in the lobby?

26:34

And that's an unfortunate thing people tend to think because I haven't made a study of the evidence to say there isn't any evidence. And I'm just believing because I'm keeping my child who had faith. But there is evidence and what we really need is a search. Yeah, one thing I really do among the young people I teach at Harding, I really stressed the importance of them finding these reasons for themselves. I feel very strongly about parents inheriting their religion from the grandparents and then children inheriting it from their parents. Really, God doesn't have grandchildren and everyone has to investigate for himself. And if a person really investigates he can find for himself reasons for believing, and the faith isn't any good until it's a personal faith a personal conviction. Well, I really appreciate your stopping by and visiting with me about the nature of face today. It's good to have you on herald of truth. Thank you very much, and we'll be back with you next week.

27:39

We hope the time we spent together today on herald of truth has been helpful to you. And we'd like to remind you of our address. If you'd like to receive a free printed copy of Mr. Hazel hips lesson today, as well as the six Lesson Study piece we mentioned on Jesus the Christ. We hope you'll feel free to write the addresses simply. Mr. Hayzlett herald of truth, Abilene, Texas. Be sure to mention today's program number 535. And the study on Jesus the Christ when you write. We also encourage you to write if we can be of help to you in your personal study. Your letters will be treated confidentially, and there's never any obligation on your part.

28:23

We hope you'll plan to join us for next week's Harold of truth program. Mr. Hayes lips thoughts on reasons for believing will continue and his lesson will be Jesus rediscovered. Harold of truth is produced by the Highland Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas, and is supported by churches of Christ and interested individuals around the world. Until next week's herald of truth program. This is Eric Fletcher.