



Finding A Grounded Faith

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It is senseless to follow Jesus because of family, culture, comfort, or even science. No, we are to follow Jesus because he rose from the dead, revealing to all mankind that God exists, is good, and wants to be known.

Our faith hinges on the Resurrection. According to Scripture, Jesus died and was buried. Three days later he rose again, and was seen by many (I Corinthians 15:3-8). This claim, of a man named Jesus raising from the dead, is an unavoidable and important factual claims about what has happened in the physical world. When we respond in trust to Jesus, the Gospel continues in us, and we too join the many who see him.

The Resurrection is not a fact-free leap of faith. There is evidence. There is reason. Science, however, does not and cannot affirm.

God comes to us through a man in Galilee, not science. The Resurrection of this man is the Gospel, the Good News, that began the Christian faith and sustained it through thousands of years of history. The invitation to all of us: will we respond to God's act in history with trust?

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In junior high, someone asked me why I was a Christian. I responded that I believed that Christianity was true. He suggested that the only reason I thought this was because my parents told me so. Would I follow Jesus if my parents were not Christians?

This question haunted me for years. Certainly, I could not have trusted Jesus as a toddler had my family not been Christian. In this hypothetical world, perhaps with Hindu parents, would I have the wherewithal and courage to find and follow Jesus? Who could know? I turned the question around. If I found that my faith was senseless, would I be willing to part ways with my family and leave it? I resolved the answer had to be "yes," and that I needed to know for myself if Jesus was worth following. Yes, my parents believed, but that was not enough for me. Not anymore.

In many ways, my Christian faith was senseless at the time. I was surrounded by Christians at a private school, but was very lonely. I was the only Indian kid in my classes, and none of us understood the cultural conflicts that constantly arose. I was awkward and did not

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have many friends. Church was no better. Knowing most of the facts in the Bible already, Sunday school was mind-numbingly boring; I knew all the stories. I did know Jesus too, and felt his presence when I prayed at night. Still, I was lost, sad and alone.

I was silent with my doubts, unsure of how my family would respond. My doubts drove me inward and I read voraciously. My search continued for over a year. Somehow, a turning point came when I picked up *More than a Carpenter* by Josh McDowell. In this book, McDowell starts with his personal story. In college, he met a curious group of Christians.

They challenged me to make a rigorous, intellectual examination of the claims of Jesus Christ—that he is God's Son; that he inhabited a human body and lived among real men and women; that he died on the cross for the sins of humanity; that he was buried and was resurrected three days later; and that he is still alive and can change a person's life even today.¹

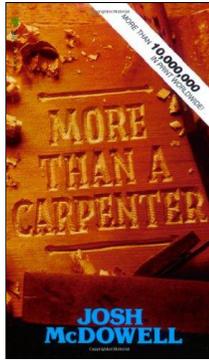
This challenge sent him down a path of study, so much like my own. It consumed him for months. In this study, McDowell encountered Jesus, finding him to be more than a carpenter. Jesus was all he claimed to be. As McDowell puts it:

I want to share with you the core of what I learned in my months of research so that you, too, may see that Christianity is not a myth, not the fantasy of wishful dreamers, not a hoax played on the simpleminded. It is rock-solid truth.²

1. Josh McDowell, *More Than a Carpenter* (Carol Stream, IL : Tyndale House, 2009), 5.

2. McDowell, *More Than a Carpenter*, 7.

McDowell learned that the Gospel story makes sense through the lens of history. Jesus inhabits a singular, unique moment. After his execution, belief in Jesus should have died for good. Instead, the Resurrection inspired and sustained his previously terrified and scattered followers. This moment is confirmed by prophecy from centuries before. It is confirmed by the testimony of all believers over thousands of years and across many cultures. And it is confirmed in McDowell's search, when he discovered Jesus' presence in his life. Here, I saw and trusted Jesus too. As a timid, lonely eighth-grader, I responded again to the Gospel, thus marking the beginning of my independent faith in Jesus. My faith was not rooted in scientific arguments against evolution. It was not rooted in clever philosophy or worldly intelligence. And it was not rooted in my family. Instead, with proper confidence, my faith was rooted in the real person and work of Jesus.



This is the book I read in Junior High that pointed me to the reasons we follow Jesus. Here I found a grounded faith in the Resurrection of the Son of God.

That summer I went to a weeklong camp. Arriving in the mountains, I was dismayed to discover that the program was full of Bible studies and church services. I expected to be bored out of my mind. I was wrong.

A “short, fat, bald man” (as he introduced himself) took the stage in an outdoor amphitheater. He opened with a ridiculous story about a defecating cow, and then set in to explaining from Jeremiah how God shapes us as a potter shapes clay. My eyes were opened. I saw God's hand at work in specific details of my dark loneliness. I saw him hold my past and my present. I saw hope in my future, as he held my life to mold and use me. The moment was anointed, channeling something otherworldly. Words are inadequate to describe this moment. It was worshipful. I had gone to church before. I had sung the songs. I had prayed. I had read the Bible. Somehow, up in the mountains at this camp, God opened the heavens and revealed Himself to me.

I struggle to understand my experience to this day. Though not illogical, it was not driven by logic. I cannot scientifically prove it. I do not fully understand it. Something mysterious is here. Nonetheless, Jesus encountered me; he silenced my doubts.

References

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