

teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, “...***we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard***” (Acts 3:20). The Apostles were eminently believable then, and they remain entirely believable today.

The way Jesus taught.

Another reason to believe in Jesus is how and what He taught. The gospel of Matthew devotes three chapters—5, 6, and 7—to the Sermon on the Mount and concludes with this sentence: “And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who has authority and not as their scribes” (Mt 7:28-29). The role of the scribes was to comment on the Scriptures; the role of Jesus is to challenge us to live the divine truths about human love.

The Commandment of Love.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught about love. “...Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you and pray for those who persecute you and tell lies about you” (Mt 5:44). At the Last Supper, Jesus gave us the great commandment: “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you (Jn 15:12).

What does it mean to believe in Jesus?

To “believe in Jesus” means to believe that Jesus is the Christ foretold by the prophets. It means to believe that he is true God and true man, and that he is our Savior. It also means to be his disciple and to believe all that Jesus teaches including what he teaches about himself.

The truth shall make you free.

In a long discourse with Jewish leaders and others, Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples and you will know the truth and the truth will make you free” (Jn 8:32).

The saying, “the truth will make you free” is first and most importantly about Jesus. “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

The challenge of Christian discipleship.

Jesus calls you and me to be his disciples, and he knows that we will find this to be difficult. “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” Then he clarifies the choices. “For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?” (Lk 9:23-25).

Why should you believe in Jesus?

The Lord Jesus loves you and calls you to be his disciple in this life and to be with him in heaven for all eternity. “Repent and believe in the gospel” (Mk 1:15). Pray for guidance. “Lord, I believe, help thou my lack of faith” (Mk 9:24). Persevere: “He who perseveres to the end will be saved” (Mt 24:13). Contact a Catholic priest or deacon for further instruction.

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Why Jesus?

Why should you and I believe in Jesus?

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten son, that those who believe in him may not perish but may have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Jesus loves you so much that he suffered and died for you. He wants you to be with him in heaven for all eternity.

The death and resurrection of Jesus.

Jesus is totally unique. No one else has ever predicted his own death and resurrection—and then fulfilled that prophecy. Jesus claimed to be equal to God and was put to death on a cross for making that claim. His first words on the cross were, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.” His next words were spoken to the repentant thief crucified on his right: “This day you will be with me in paradise.” Jesus came to save sinners. That was Good Friday.

Easter Sunday

On Sunday morning, Jesus rose from the dead, thus proving the truth of his claim to be true God as well as true man. The Gospels tell us that some women went to honor his body, but the tomb was empty. An angel told them, “He is not here; He is risen as He said” (Luke 24:6).

The women ran to tell the Apostles who were skeptical at first. After all, this had never happened before in all human history. John and Peter ran to see for themselves. They saw the empty tomb and then told the others.

That **Sunday** afternoon, Jesus appeared to two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus, but they did not recognize him. They explained their disappointment in the death of Jesus and their astonishment at the report of his resurrection. Jesus explained it in terms of the Old Testament. “Did not the Christ have to suffer these things before entering into his glory?” And beginning then with Moses and with all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things referring to himself (Luke 24:26-27).

Those Scriptures would have included “they have pierced my hands and my feet” and “they divide my garments among them and cast lots for my cloak” (Psalm 22:17-18). He also would have showed how he had fulfilled the “suffering servant” prophecy in Isaiah 52-53. “Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows, and we thought of him as if he were a leper...He was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins...and by his bruises we are healed” (Is 53:4-5).

That Easter evening, Jesus appeared to the disciples but the Apostle Thomas was not with them. When the other Apostles later told Thomas, “We have seen the Lord,” he did not believe them and said, “Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe” (Jn 20:24-25).

The next Sunday, Thomas was with them when Jesus appeared to them a second time. He said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand and place it in my side; do not be unbelieving but believing.” Thomas answered, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed” (Jn 20:26-29).

The importance of the resurrection.

So crucial is the resurrection of Jesus for Christian faith that St. Paul wrote, “If Christ is not risen, your faith is in vain and you are still in your sins” (1Cor 15:17). Authentic Christian faith is based upon the person of Jesus Christ and upon his teaching and his death and resurrection.

Prediction of his resurrection.

Early in his public ministry, Jesus did something that was tremendously unusual. When he saw all the business activity at the Temple in Jerusalem, he overturned the tables of the money changers and told the pigeon merchants to go somewhere else. “...do not make my Father’s house a house of trade.”

The Jewish leaders then asked him, “What sign do you show us for doing these things?” Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.” The Jews then said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?” But he spoke of the temple of his body.

After his resurrection, the Apostles could see that claim in a new context. “When he had risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken” (John 2:13-22)

Miracles.

Miracles are signs of God’s power, and Jesus worked many of them. Most of the miracles of Jesus were healings, but some were also to show his divine power as in the healing of a paralytic. Jesus told a paralytic who had been carried by four others for a healing, “My son, your sins are forgiven.” He then sensed the skepticism of the scribes, so he challenged them. “Why do you question thus in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say ‘Rise, take up your mat and walk’? But that you may know that the Son

of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the paralytic—“I say to you, rise, take up your mat and go home.” And he did. (Mk 2:1-12).

Why should I believe the Apostles?

What we believe depends on **who** we believe. And the Apostles are eminently believable. They were testifying only to their own experience, and they would suffer and die for that witness. They had no material reason to try to deceive anyone.

Furthermore, although the apostles could not deny their own experience, at first they didn’t know what to do. So they went fishing. It would take the special gifts of the Holy Spirit on the Jewish Feast of Pentecost to get them to preach to their fellow Jews.

On Pentecost Sunday, the Apostles and Mary were together in a room, and they heard something like a great wind. “And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance” (Acts of the Apostles 2:1-4).

An apostolic miracle of healing.

A few days later, Peter and John were going up to the temple, and a man who was lame from birth begged for alms. “But Peter said, ‘I have no silver or gold, but I give you what I have: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.’ And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. And leaping up he stood and walked and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God” (Acts 3:1-10).

A crowd assembled and Peter explained that this healing was done by the power of Jesus. He explained who Jesus was in relation to Abraham, Moses, and the prophets.

Peter and John were then arrested for preaching about Jesus and were commanded not to speak or