

I want to believe, but... 3 Goosebump God

I want to believe 3 Bumper

You are here at Redemption Church. My name is Chris Fluitt and I welcome you today from the lovely city of Plano Tx. We are the kind of church that believes Jesus has given us a mission to reach the world with the message of God's love. We believe God has empowered us to to bring the goodnews of Jesus to everyone.

Greetings to everyone in the room. And a big God bless Ya'll to all our friends experiencing the Word of God over the internet.

We are the 3rd week of our sermon series "I want to believe, but..."

I want to believe, but...

I want to remind you that faith doesn't come naturally. Perhaps our faith struggle is not us rejecting the true God, but is us rejecting our false beliefs that have distorted our view of the true God? Most people want to believe in the true God... but there is a distortion or incorrect belief standing in their way.

In week 1 we told you to reject the distortion of an ON-DEMAND GOD.

Last week we talked about moving on from a KILLJOY GOD.

Next week I am going to talk to you about rejecting HEARTLESS GOD. This is a major reason people are having trouble believing in God. I know that you have friends and family that need to hear this sermon. Make up your mind that you will get them here next Sunday. I will be in prayer for you to invite them. I am looking forward to next Sunday... BUT TODAY...

Today I want to tell you about GOOSEBUMP GOD.

GOOSEBUMP GOD

How do you believe in a God you have never seen, heard, or felt? I want to believe in God, but I don't know if He is real because I have never felt Him.

I have never seen God in the physical. Have you?

I have never heard God audibly. Have you?

Now I believe that God could reveal himself in the physical... I believe He could talk to me audibly... but He never has done that to me at this point in time.

Have I ever felt God? I would say I have... but that it is a different kind of feeling. I have never felt a physical hand of God reach out and give me a high five. Have you had a God high five? And you know Church that pastor really likes high fives...

Raise your hand if you felt God today?

- You might say that you felt goosebumps or the hair stand up on your arm. I am not putting that down at all, but let me challenge you a little bit... have you ever had tingly goosebumps while watching a movie or while being around some you really liked?
- You might say that you cried or felt an intense emotion. I am not putting that down at all, but let me challenge you again... Have you ever watched a youtube video that made you cry or feel an intense emotion? When that commercial comes on with the sad puppies and kitties and the Sarah McLachlan song “arms of an angel” starts to play.... I dare you not to tear up... We may use that song at altar today actually...
- You might say you felt peace or a knowledge that everything was going to be ok in your heart I am not putting that down... I love that... but let me challenge you and say that you could feel at peace in a bubble bath while listening to smooth jazz... you could have a good talk with someone wise and feel in your heart like everything is going to be ok...

As cool as FEELINGS are... they cannot be our basis for faith in God.

And if you didn't “feel” God today in service... then whose fault is that?

- Is God just not that into you today?
- Did you not remember to wear your spiritual antennae today? Did you not lift your hands high enough or sing loud enough..?
- It's probably the worship pastor's fault because He didn't play your favorite song...

As cool as FEELINGS are... they cannot be our basis for faith in God.

If you don't always “feel” God, you are not alone.

There are plenty of examples in scripture of people who did not “feel” God.

Psalm 88:13 (NIV2011) ...I cry to you for help, Lord; in the morning my prayer comes before you.

Psalm 88:14 (NIV2011) Why, Lord, do you reject me and hide your face from me?

David wrote this. The great king of Israel. The man after God's own heart. The great worshipper David asked "Lord why do you reject me?? Why do you hide your face from me?"

The same David who wrote in Psalm 139... Where can I go from your Spirit God? Where can I go from your presence God? No matter where I go God is with me...

The same David who wrote in Psalm 23 that although he walked through the valley of the shadow of death, he would fear no evil because God was with him...

This same David in Psalm 88 feels rejected and separate from God.

If you don't always feel God you are not alone!

The well-known Christian author, C.S. Lewis wrote some of the great works... "The lion the witch and the wardrobe," "screw tape letters," and "Mere Christianity." In one of the painful moments of C.S. Lewis' life, he cried out to God and got this response...

C.S. Lewis

"A door slammed in [my] face, and a sound of bolting and double bolting on the inside... There are no lights in the windows. It might be an empty house. Was it ever inhabited? It seemed so once... Why is God so present a commander in our time of prosperity and so very absent a help in time of trouble?"

We are talking about a thought leader whose writings brought many to faith in God. Yet during this portion of his life, he questioned if God was ever real.

If you don't always feel God you are not alone!

If David & CS Lewis aren't good enough examples... how about this one...

Matthew 27:46 (NIV2011) About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?").

Jesus Christ the Son of God who was always in perfect union with the Father, as Jesus hung on the cross and the sin of humanity was placed upon him, he cried that he was forsaken by God.

If you don't always "feel" God, you are not alone.

Sometimes we Christians can be so annoying with the “I FEEL GOD” stuff. Imagine how annoying it may be for someone who is struggling to believe and hasn’t felt God’s presence in a while or maybe ever... Imagine how annoying it may be for them to hear us say...

“I am so blessed and highly favored. Woke up this morning and God was there. I reached into my closet and thank you lord my favorite shirt was wrinkle free. I drove to the Walmart and every song on the Christian station was my absolute favorite... and then at Walmart God’s special parking lot angel saved me a spot near the front. While I was checking out without having to wait in line I got 2 phone calls that my boss was giving me a promotion and my son was getting a free ride scholarship to that Ivy League University.”

That person can come across anyong to the person who replies...

“I woke up late and didn’t feel God. My favorite shirt somehow had turned pink in the wash. On the drive to Walmart I hated every one of those songs. The Parking angel made sure I got extra steps in from the back row... and while I waited in line for 30 minutes I received calls that I got fired and my son was rejected from community college.”

We need to believe in a God who can be felt, but we also need to realize that there are times where David, CS Lewis, & even Jesus did not feel God’s presence. Just because you don’t feel God, does not mean God has left you alone.

Why don’t we always feel God?

1 Maybe you are over sensationalizing it

Feeling God is sensational... but sometimes we may OVER sensationalize it.

John 6:30 (NIV2011) So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?”

John 6:31 (NIV2011) Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’ ”

Earlier in the chapter Jesus miraculously fed thousands of people with a few pieces of fish & bread. That wasn’t enough for this crowd of people. They now demanded ANOTHER SIGN...

What sign will you give? Yeah we ate a few hours ago... but what will you give us now so that we will see and believe? “WHAT WILL YOU DO?”

Instead of receiving God's miracle they became over sensationalized by the miracle. The SIGN of the miracle became more important than the actual presence of the savior, Jesus Christ!

The crowd is not thanking God for what they have received... they want to know what trick will He perform next?

God doesn't let you feel His presence in order to impress you with His power. The fish & bread was not the true display of His power. The truth of who Jesus was... that is where the power is. Realizing that God loves you enough to send His only son into the world... that is where the power is.

The Goosebumps are not powerful. The revelation that you are in His presence... THAT IS THE POWER!

Sometimes we have powerful encounters from God's presence, but it is not enough for us... we need another sign. NO! YOU NEED TO BELIEVE! You need to have a rock solid faith in Jesus. You need to believe that you are loved by God. That is where the real power is!

Sometimes you will feel God, but if you always felt God you would not need faith!

2 Corinthians 5:7 (KJV) ...we walk by faith, not by sight:

We do not walk by feeling... We don't walk by sight... Not by hearing an audible voice... We walk by faith!

Stop demanding another sign from God! He already sent His son to the cross for you! Start walking by faith in the Gospel of Jesus!

Perhaps you aren't feeling God... or hearing God... or seeing God because it is time for you to operate in the realm of FAITH!

Why don't we always feel God?

2 Maybe our heart is hard?

Maybe your heart is no receptive to God's presence?

Matthew 13:14 (NIV2011) In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.

Matthew 13:15 (NIV2011) For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.'

The problem is not the hearing... there was plenty to hear... “YOU WILL BE EVER HEARING...” the problem was the lack of understanding!

The problem is not the seeing.... There was plenty to see... “YOU WILL BE EVER SEEING...” The problem is not perceiving.

Eyes to see and ears to hear... but a calloused heart... a hard heart causes them to not see, hear, or feel.

A heart that no longer feels will not feel God.

Sin hardens our heart. Sin separates us and destroys intimacy.

We are all sinners. I will make a mistake this week I am almost certain. I will do something I didn't mean to do and will need to repent... I am not talking about OPPS SINS... I am talking about being comfortable with sin. I am talking about no longer feeling conviction over our sin. A heart that no longer feels sorry for sin.

- Have you grown comfortable with that continual porn addiction. Do you not even pray about it anymore?
- Are you lazy? Do you not even feel in your heart that it is displeasing to God anymore?
- Is your heart calloused about gossip or lying?
- Do you no longer feel the need to repent over your sin?

If you turn off your heart, you will not feel God.

3 God wants us to draw near

There is no “MAYBE God wants you to draw closer.” There is no MAYBE about it.

You can never be TOO CLOSE to God. You can always be closer to God.

And there are times when God may withdraw in order to allow you seek him.

Have you ever had a 1 sided friendship? Have you ever found yourself the only one to initiate the relationship? The only one to call or text? The only one to make the plans to hang out? That is a one sided relationship.

I have had some of those relationships where I am the only one initiating... I stop calling... I stop texting... I stop making the plans... NOT OUT OF ANGER, but to give them a chance to initiate. By withdrawing I allow space for them

to initiate. If they do initiate it makes the relationship that much closer. I answer that phone ready to hang out!

God does this. He withdraws, not out of anger, but to give us space to initiate.

“God I haven’t heard your voice in a while...” God says “Yeah I have been waiting for you to pray.. I have been waiting for you to pour over my Word. I was waiting for you to call me.”

Do you have a 1 sided relationship with God? Is He the only one who initiates your relationship?

I also have some relationships that only call when they need something. Have you ever experienced that? Have you ever looked down at the caller I.D. and thought... “Wonder what they want now?”

Are we that way with God? Do we only talk to Him when we need a miracle? Do we only open up the Bible on a last ditch effort to know what to do because we tried everything else? Have you ever pulled out a Magic 8 ball scripture??? Do you know that is? That’s when you ask God a question and then randomly open your Bible to see if it answers...

“God I am soo worried about my finances. I might not be able to afford the iPhone 12 when it comes out. What should I do?” You open the Bible and it says “Jesus said to the rich young man... Sell all you have and follow me!”

You decide that you need to try again because that couldn’t possibly be what He meant to say...

Sometimes God will be silent because all you do is ask for stuff. Your relationship has become one sided and all about what He can do for you... and not what you can do for Him.

If God has withdrawn because He is waiting for you to initiate then I have great news.

James 4:8 (NIV2011) Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Jeremiah 29:13 (NIV2011) You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

Psalm 145:18 (NIV2011) The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

Matthew 28:20 (NIV2011) ...surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Hebrews 13:5 (NIV2011) “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”

Acts 17:26 (NIV2011) From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands.

Acts 17:27 (NIV2011) God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us.

Draw close and he will draw close!

Seek Him with all your heart and you will find Him!

God wants you to initiate! God wants you to seek Him! God wants you to talk to Him!

Matthew 7:7 (NIV2011) “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.

Matthew 7:8 (NIV2011) For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

GOOSEBUMP GOD

Musician

Just because you have not felt Him does not mean He is far. The idea of Goosebump God is that if you don't have the goosebumps, then you don't have God. That is wrong. That is a distortion.

You need to reject Goosebump God and declare that your God is real, even when you don't feel Him.

There are times when I preach to you that I absolutely feel the goosebumps! ...then there are times when I don't feel the goosebumps! God's word is powerful no matter what I am feeling!

There are times I pray where I absolutely feel the goosebumps! ...then there are times when I don't feel the goosebumps. I pray anyway because I want to draw close to God.

There are times when we worship together that I feel the goosebumps! ...then there are times when I don't feel the goosebumps! I praise Him anyway because He is worthy no matter what I am feeling!!

I am about to come to this altar... I am coming, not because of a goosebump, but because I love God and I want to initiate my relationship.

You are going to find me in the first 2 feet today... Not because I feel a goosebump or because I need to beg God for a miracle... I am coming to draw close to Him.

I am going to worship God in this altar today... Not because of a goosebump but because I want to respond to His Word.

I am coming to this altar... Not because of a goosebump but because I WALK BY FAITH!

Redemption Church am I going to meet you in this altar today. Am I going to run into anyone in this altar that just loves Jesus Christ? Am I going to see anyone in this altar that is not satisfied with where they are in God and they want to be closer? Will this altar be filled with people desperate for God? Will you come and repent of your sin today? Will you ask Him to touch your hard heart? Will you seek God with all your heart today?