

Text: John 14:5-11

Title: “Explore God ... Is There a God?”

I want to welcome guests who have come today because you’ve heard about “Explore God.” You have questions; we all do. And we’re glad you’ve come today. We’re addressing ...

Seven Big Questions!

Does Life Have a Purpose? Is There a God? Why Does God Allow Pain and Suffering? Is Christianity Too Narrow? Is Jesus Really God? Is the Bible Reliable? Can I Know God Personally?

VIDEO - Today we’re talking about the question, “Is There a God?”

God is not a passive reality, like Mt. Everest, waiting scaled by some brave souls wanting to know what it is like. God is a Person who comes looking for us. The Bible teaches us that God created the universe and the human race. He even determined when and where we would live out our lives. And...

Acts 17:27 - God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.

So we have this invitation from Scripture to “Explore God,” but it is based on the fact that God has made Himself known to us. That’s the only way we would ever know anything about Him. And the main way that God reveals Himself to us is in His Son Jesus Christ. Open your Bibles to John 14:5. I want you to know where I’m coming from and where I’m going. The answer to these questions is found in a Person, not in an argument. That person is Jesus Christ. We all have these questions, and these questions have been around a long time. Even some of Jesus’ disciples struggled with this question. **Read John 14:5-11.**

So through the life, the teachings and the miracles of Jesus God revealed Himself to us. And he went even farther. By the death and resurrection of Jesus the Father made it possible for us to have a relationship with Himself. So God has revealed Himself through His Son Christ, but before Christ came into the world there was plenty of evidence that God existed.

STARTING POINT: We are surrounded by abundant clues to the existence of God.

IS ANYONE HOME? - ILLUSTRATION – We look at the world we live in and the universe out there and we wonder, “Is anyone home out there?” Suppose you come home from work or school or whatever and you wonder if your husband, your wife or your parents are at home. In my case, I would look for clues that would tell me that my wife Nan was home. When I pull into the driveway and put up the garage door one of the first clues I would look for is whether or not her car is in the garage. As I walk into the house I would glance around for the clue that there are lights on. I would listen for the sound of the television or music playing. If it’s dinner

time I might sniff for the clue that she's home and is cooking supper. Now, none of these clues are absolute. Her car could be in the garage, but she might not be at home because she walked across the street to visit a neighbor. The lights or TV may be on simply because she forgot to turn them off when she left. (That would more likely be me.) So none of these clues are absolute, but if I see her car in the garage, the lights are on, TV is on and there's the smell of food cooking, then there's a pretty good chance she's home.

And we can ask the questions: Is there anyone home out there in the universe? That's a haunting question. Is there someone bigger than me out there? Does he or she care about me? Are we here alone like billions of ants crawling around trying to establish some kind of order to life, but in the end we'll die and rot in the ground as other ants come and take our place on the ant hill?

There are dozens of clues that scientists, physicists, philosophers, theologians and other smart people have identified that point to the likelihood that someone is home in this universe ... that God does exist. I don't have time to present or discuss them all (and to be honest many of them I don't understand). But here are a few of the more obvious clues that Someone is home.

CLUE #1 – THE EXISTENCE OF THE MATERIAL UNIVERSE POINTS TO AN ORIGINATOR.

PHOTO – BIG BANG - Now the prevailing theory among scientists is that our universe began with a huge explosion of light and energy ... often called the "Big Bang." This was where the universe started ... this is the beginning of everything that exists, including space and time.

Astrophysicist Robert Jastrow doesn't really know if there's a God, but he stated this: "The seed of everything that has happened in the Universe was planted in that first instant; every star, every planet and every living creature in the Universe came into being as a result of events that were set in motion in the moment of the cosmic explosion...The Universe flashed into being, and we cannot find out what caused that to happen."

Ah, so one split second there was nothing and the next split second there was everything. But what (or Who) caused it, the scientists don't know. Something or someone had to cause it. So the existence of a material universe points to an Originator ... a cause. That's the first clue.

CLUE #2 – THE COMPLEXITY OF OUR PLANET POINTS TO A DESIGNER.

There are so many examples of this, but let me just mention a few:

PHOTO – PLANET EARTH – Our planet is the perfect size. Earth's size and the level of gravity holds a thin layer of atmosphere without which life could not exist on the earth. There's the perfect mixture of nitrogen and oxygen. If Earth were smaller scientists tell us we would have no atmosphere. If Earth were larger the atmosphere would contain harmful gases like hydrogen which would not sustain life. And Earth is located just the right distance from the sun

to have just the right temperature to support life. If Earth were farther away from the sun we would freeze. If Earth were any closer to the sun we would burn up. Earth also rotates on its axis, which allows the entire surface of the Earth to be properly warmed and cooled every day. It's like our universe put out a welcome mat for human beings and other living creatures to exist.

PHOTO – DNA – Every single cell in your body has a tiny computer system installed that contains very detailed information ... an instruction code. Code in a computer tells the computer what to do. This code in the cells of our body, called DNA, tells the cells what to do. It's full of instructions and information for exactly how a person's body should develop. So how did this information get into the human cell? Most scientists are at a loss as to the source of this code. This leads many to assert that someone had to write the code. We are not alone. So the complexity of our planet and our bodies point to a Designer.

CLUE #3 – THE CONSISTENCY OF THE UNIVERSE POINTS TO AN ARRANGER.

PHOTO – PHYSICS – Has it occurred to you that there are so many things that we can count on happening every day in exactly the same way: You don't walk out of your house one day and float up to the sky because gravity remains consistent every day. A hot cup of coffee left on the table at Starbucks will get cold, every day. The sun doesn't suddenly go down at 2pm one day because the earth rotates in the same 24 hours, every day. Tonight we get to see a total eclipse of the moon. Astronomers know exactly when the next one will occur. Why is the universe so consistent and orderly? Scientists have no explanation ... and there is a clue that there is an Arranger who has created things.

CLUE #4 – THE QUESTIONS OF OUR HEART POINT TO AN ANSWER.

PHOTO – QUESTION MARK

QUOTE: Former atheist Marilyn Adamson tells about her intellectual struggles in a blog she wrote: “The reason the topic of God weighed so heavily on my mind, was because God was pressing the issue. I have come to find out that God wants to be known. He created us with the intention that we would know him. He has surrounded us with evidence of himself and he keeps the question of his existence squarely before us. It was as if I couldn't escape thinking about the possibility of God. In fact, the day I chose to acknowledge God's existence, my prayer began with, ‘Ok, you win...’ It might be that the underlying reason atheists are bothered by people believing in God is because God is actively pursuing them.”

ILLUSTRATION – So back to my illustration about trying to find out, is anyone home? So I'm looking for clues that Nan is home. Her car is in the garage ... that's a clue. Lights are on in the house ... another clue. The TV is on ... that's a clue. It's dinner time and I smell something cooking ... that's a clue. All of those things together provide some pretty compelling proof that Nan is home. But I don't know for sure until she walks around the corner and I see her ... face to face.

And when it comes to the existence of God, we never know for sure until we meet Him face to face. And that's why God sent His Son Jesus. The Bible explains it this way:

John 1:17-18 - For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side (Jesus Christ), has made him known.

Now Jesus lived 2000 years ago. If God introduced Himself in the person of Jesus Christ, then I missed the introduction because I wasn't around then. No. Today, 2000 years later, we can still know God through Jesus Christ by two means: the *Scriptures* and the *Spirit*.

First, let's talk about the Scriptures. History shows that Jesus of Nazareth was an historical person. We'll talk more about this in a few weeks in our "Explore God" series. But that's what the Bible asserts. God is infinite in His being so He is beyond the reach of our comprehension. So God took the initiative to show us who He is by becoming a human being in the person of Jesus Christ. So the way we know God is through Jesus. How do we know Jesus? One way is through the New Testament. If you are struggling with the existence of God I challenge you to read the first four books of the NT called the Gospels. They introduce Jesus to us. If you read it honestly and humbly Jesus is able to reveal Himself to you and He will make God real to you. This is what is happening in John 14, the passage we read at the beginning.

John 14:6 - Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

So the first way we see Jesus is through the historical record of the New Testament. And the second way that we know Jesus Christ is by the Holy Spirit who comes to live in us when we place our trust in Christ and commit our lives to Him by faith. Jesus comes to live in us by His Spirit and that is how we know God. Yes, it requires faith because you're never going to have 100% certainty that God or Jesus exists. We all in our deepest, most private, moments have to admit that we have doubts. But that's OK, because in so many of the really rich experiences in life we don't operate with 100% confidence.

ILLUSTRATION –Just think about marriage. If you're married you probably would echo my sentiments about this. When Nan and I got engaged I was pretty sure that she was the one. I had never married anyone before so it was a step of faith, but I was pretty confident. We were about as sure as we could be. We did our research for the eight months we were engaged. And with each passing month the clues added up and we felt really confident we were meant for each other ... we would be a good match for each other. We were so young, but we were pretty sure that we were getting it right. But did we have 100% certainty? Probably not, but that didn't keep us from making the commitment. Standing at the altar of First Baptist Church in Wichita Falls we committed our lives to one another. And now we're certain. We have 38 years of proof. You don't have the confidence (the certainty) until you make the commitment.

That's what the Bible means when it says...

Hebrews 11:6 - And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Now there's one more twist to this. The Bible explains that our problem is not a lack of knowledge or information. Our problem is that we suppress the truth that we do have. There are all of these clues out there; so why can't we believe? Unbelief is not a mental problem; it is a spiritual problem. We can't find God for the same reason a criminal can't find a policeman. We don't want to. Our problem can't be corrected by more information. Our problem can only be corrected by the salvation that comes through Jesus Christ. This is where the Gospel comes in. Religion is man trying to get to God with his good deeds and intellect. Christianity is God knowing that we could never be good enough or smart enough to get to Him. So He comes to our rescue by sending His Son Jesus Christ.