

I was talking with a young person the other day who was somewhat confused. She had watched a documentary on TV the other night that did not exactly paint an endearing picture of the Bible and the origins of many of the stories in it. She said she came away from that show questioning how reliable the Bible can be given the many inconsistencies they have discovered.

I just smiled and told her that's why they call it Faith.

I've seen many of those programs myself and am not afraid to say that I rather enjoy them. But I think it's important that you watch them with a certain degree of hesitation. The truth is that both sides of the story generate more questions than answers.

On the one hand, you have a lot of historians sitting in front of the camera sharing all this knowledge with us and they throw in a nice re-enactment to show us just how these events occurred. But it really is simply an educated guess based on fragmented information gathered that is clearly open to interpretation. It's an understanding of these events based on the information we have at the time, but that information is changing constantly with new discoveries which can, and often does, change the interpretation of how we see those events.

I read an article once that said that eighty percent of science is merely disproving past theories. Only twenty percent of science actually moves us forward in our knowledge and understanding. At first that seems shocking to me, but when you think about it, it kind of makes sense. If we take a snap shot of the knowledge and understanding we had twenty years ago, given what we know today, we would see that a majority of the theories and beliefs we so strongly promoted are no longer talked about. They have quietly faded because we have progressed enough to prove those theories incorrect. This is not a bad thing, it's just a fact of life. Who knows what these documentaries will be telling us twenty years from now. I'm sure it will be different from what we understand today.

On the other hand, let there be no doubt about the reality that the first hundred years after Jesus died was full of chaos and contradictions. What the Christians believed and how they practiced their faith completely depended on where they came from. They didn't have CNN, cell phones and the internet to help them create a consistency of teachings from community to community. When Paul left Rome to go talk to Peter in Jerusalem, we have to remember that he

was on foot. It may be merely a couple of verses in the Bible, but it covered several weeks and months in real time. The Bible doesn't give us all of the details, it gives us a snap shot that reflects the point of what they want to tell us. There is plenty of opportunity to interpret the Bible stories differently. Heck, when they finally got together to create the one Bible as we know it today, they had over 50 gospels to choose from. They decided on the four we have, but certainly you can assume that the many other gospels could have given us a wide ranging view of the early church of that time.

Though there are many - like this young lady I was talking to - who would find all this disturbing, I think it's wonderful! Thank God Jesus didn't come to this world in today's hi-tech environment of instantaneous gratifications. If Jesus came here today, he could not build a church because the most important ingredient of religion is faith and in today's world, we have been so saturated with technology that we have nearly eliminated our ability to develop faith.

I will continue to watch these documentaries and enjoy them. And I am not concerned about what they can prove or disprove. Religion is based on faith and my faith is based on how God has touched my heart. It's all the wonderful senses that I see, feel and hear throughout the day that re-enforces my faith in God, not watching some documentary that will likely be obsolete twenty years from now.

We make the mistake of thinking that we know everything. We become smug in our new technology in thinking that we now have the tools to completely understand the world we live in. But as you get older, you certainly understand that today can become obsolete in a hurry.

Faith is faith. It's not something you can prove or disprove. You don't have to understand faith, you just have to feel it and experience it and let it become the building blocks of your life.

Just A Thought