GUIA DE ESTUDO

Can you really trust the Bible?

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New Hope Fulton · doxus.org

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BIG IDEA

The Bible can be trusted because its honest, messy, and difficult details fit faithful eyewitness truth.

Can God Communicate?

The preacher begins with a simple but weighty question: if there is a God, wouldn't it make sense that God would communicate with us? He argues that God did not simply wind everything up and leave humanity alone, but gave revelation through creation and, ultimately, through Scripture.

Why the Bible Matters

He challenges the idea that the Bible is trustworthy merely because the Bible claims it is true. He cites John 17:17, but notes that in context the phrase "your word is truth" refers to teaching, not a shortcut proof-text. His point is that truth is not proven by repeating "the Bible says so"; it must be supported by better reasons. He then points to manuscript abundance, archaeological verification, historical confirmation from sources outside Christian authors, and the internal consistency of Scripture across 40 authors over about 1,500 years.

> *Just saying something is true doesn't make it true.*
>
> — Truth Needs More Than a Claim

Embarrassing Details About the People

One major reason he gives for trusting the Bible is that it includes embarrassing details about its own key figures. Abraham, called the father of faith and a friend of God, lies twice about Sarah and then joins Sarah in trying to "help God out" through Hagar. David, the great king and "man after God's own heart," sees Bathsheba, takes her, and arranges for Uriah to be killed. Peter, the outspoken spokesman for Jesus' disciples, rebukes Jesus publicly and later denies even knowing him when questioned. The preacher argues that if the stories were fabricated, the authors would not have written themselves this way.

> *The embarrassing details about themselves.*
>
> — How the Bible Describes Its Heroes

PARA REFLEXÃO

Discussion Questions

1. Why does the Bible's honesty about Abraham, David, and Peter matter for its trustworthiness?
2. What difference is there between Scripture claiming truth and Scripture showing truth through its content?

3. Which example of embarrassment felt most convincing to you, and why?
4. How does the preacher's point about manuscript evidence and historical verification strengthen confidence in the Bible?
5. What kinds of resistance do people have when Scripture confronts them with truth?

REFLEXÃO

Looking at the Honesty of Scripture

Where do you see yourself wanting the Bible to be cleaner, simpler, or less confrontational than it actually is? When you read about Abraham, David, or Peter, do you feel challenged by their failures, or encouraged that God works through broken people? What does it mean for your confidence in Scripture if the Bible does not hide the flaws of its heroes?

The Hard Things Said About Jesus

He also says the Bible is trustworthy because it includes difficult things about Jesus and his teaching. In Mark 3, Jesus' own family thinks he is out of his mind, and some religious leaders accuse him of being demon-possessed. In John 6, many followers stop following him after a hard teaching about eating his flesh and drinking his blood. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says lust is adultery in the heart, divorce is seriously sinful, retaliation must be resisted, lawsuits should not control believers, and enemies must be loved and prayed for. The preacher stresses that these are not the kinds of statements someone would soften if trying to make faith easier.

> *another reason to trust the Bible is the difficult things that Jesus said.*
>
> — Hard Sayings of Jesus

The Resurrection Witnesses Are Not Polished

The preacher next points to the resurrection accounts. Mark reports Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the Sanhedrin that had voted to kill Jesus, asking Pilate for Jesus' body. Matthew records the priests creating an opposing explanation and paying the soldiers a substantial bribe to say the disciples stole the body while they slept. The preacher asks why anyone would include an alternative explanation unless that really happened. He argues that the Bible does not hide opposition, confusion, or even ugly attempts to cover up the resurrection.

> *Why include an opposing explanation?*
>
> — Why Include Competing Stories?

PARA REFLEXÃO

Why the Difficult Resurrection Details Matter

1. Why would the Gospel writers include Joseph of Arimathea and the bribed soldiers if they were inventing the story?
2. What does the presence of an opposing explanation suggest about the early claims of resurrection?
3. How do the soldiers' and priests' actions make the resurrection account feel more historically grounded?

4. Why do you think the preacher emphasizes that the Bible does not hide conflict?

Messy Eyewitness Differences

He then addresses apparent contradictions in the resurrection narratives. Mark names Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome; Matthew names Mary Magdalene and another Mary; John mentions Mary Magdalene; Luke speaks more generally of “the women.” Rather than seeing this as proof of unreliability, he says these differences fit what eyewitnesses normally do: they remember different details. He recounts an incident in college where 100 students who witnessed the same gunman gave different descriptions, showing that honest accounts naturally vary.

> *What if that's exactly what we should have what we should expect from eyewitnesses?*
>
> — What Eyewitnesses Do

The Principle of Embarrassment

He explains that historians call this pattern the principle of embarrassment: if a source includes details that make it look bad, it is probably telling the truth. People usually edit stories to make themselves look brave, wise, and successful. But the New Testament keeps the disciples looking confused, sleeping, fleeing, and failing. The preacher says that if the writers were making the story up, they would have cleaned all that up. Instead, they wrote with the kind of honesty that signals faithfulness to what happened.

REFLEXÃO

Do I Want a Cleaned-Up Story?

Do you tend to trust accounts that are too neat and polished? How does the Bible’s willingness to include confusing, awkward, and humiliating details affect your reading of it? Are there parts of Scripture you are tempted to dismiss simply because they are uncomfortable or difficult?

APLICAÇÃO PRÁTICA

A Simple Next Step

He closes with a practical challenge: read the Bible five minutes more each day. He suggests starting with Luke because Luke investigated carefully, interviewed eyewitnesses, and gathered many accounts. As you read, ask three questions: What’s going on? What is this about? What if this is true? He says the issue is often not whether the Bible is true, but whether people are willing to respond if it is true.

> *read it for five minutes more each day?*
>
> — A Daily Practice

PARA REFLEXÃO

Group Practice Questions

1. What book of the Bible would be the best place for you to begin reading this week, and why?

2. Which of the preacher's three reading questions—What's going on? What is this about? What if this is true?—is hardest for you?
3. If Scripture is trustworthy, what response might God be asking of you right now?
4. What is one concrete way you can give the Bible five more minutes each day?

ORAÇÃO

Response in Prayer

Lord, help us trust your Word not because it flatters us, but because it tells the truth. Give us humility to receive the embarrassing details, courage to face the difficult sayings of Jesus, and openness to respond if Scripture is truly your communication to us. Help us read, understand, and obey. Amen.