

## A robust, healthy faith is:



✓ Intellectually **convincing**.

✓ Emotionally **satisfying**.

✓ Morally **transforming**.

✓ Socially **connecting**.

✓ Culturally **inspiring**.

### 1 Peter 3:15

“but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense (**apologia**) to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, ~~with convincing logic, absolute certainty, and bold power.~~”

### 1 Peter 3:15

“but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense (**apologia**) to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness (**meekness**) & reverence (**fear**).”

## Two Great Gospel Mysteries

### Election

The freedom of Man's choice?

How is human choice related to God's choice?

### Grace

The extent of God's Mercy?

Who are the recipients of God's grace through Christ  
- confessing Christians, God fearers, Everyone?

# Is God fair?

### Romans 11

“<sup>1</sup> I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. <sup>2</sup> God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? <sup>3</sup> “Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, they have torn down Thine altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life.” <sup>4</sup> But what is the divine response to him? “I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” <sup>5</sup> In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to **God's gracious choice**. <sup>6</sup> But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace. <sup>7</sup> What then? That which Israel is seeking for, it has not obtained, but **those who were chosen** obtained it, and **the rest were hardened**; <sup>8</sup> just as it is written, “**God gave them a spirit of stupor, Eyes to see not and ears to hear not, down to this very day.**” <sup>9</sup> And David says, “**Let their table become a snare and a trap, and a stumbling block and a retribution to them. <sup>10</sup> Let their eyes be darkened to see not, and bend their backs forever.**”

On the one hand it is  
God's choosing  
or hardening.

On the other  
hand it is man's  
faith or unbelief.

### Romans 11

“<sup>20</sup> Quite right, they were broken off **for their unbelief**, but **you stand by your faith**. Do not be conceited, but fear; <sup>21</sup> for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you. <sup>22</sup> Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, **if you continue in His kindness**; otherwise you also will be cut off. <sup>23</sup> And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again.”



**On the one hand it is  
God's choosing  
and hardening.**

**On the other  
hand it is man's  
faith and unbelief.**

*Romans 9*

**"<sup>16</sup> So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. . . . <sup>18</sup> So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. <sup>19</sup> You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" <sup>20</sup> On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it?"**

**Rembrandt's Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard**

**Matthew 20:1-16**

"Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with what is my own? Or is your eye envious because I am generous?" vs.15

**"For My thoughts are not  
your thoughts, nor are  
your ways My ways,"  
declares the LORD.  
Isa.55:8**

**Observation #1**

***There are no innocent people in  
the world,***

*Romans 3:23*

**"for all have sinned and fall  
short of the glory of God,"**

***therefore assume that everyone has  
a deep need for the Gospel of Christ.***

**Observation #2**

***Everyone has had some kind of witness  
of God's presence and authority,***

*Romans 1:21*

**"For even though they knew God,  
they did not honor Him as God or  
give thanks, but they became futile  
in their speculations, and their  
foolish heart was darkened."**

***therefore assume that people know  
something about God, guilt, & grace.***

**Observation #3**

***It is only Christ's substitutionary death  
and His resurrection that provide  
salvation for sinners,***

*Acts 4:12*

**"And there is salvation in no one else; for  
there is no other name under heaven that  
has been given among men by which we  
must be saved."**

***therefore preach Christ as the Gospel  
of reconciliation with God.***

**Observation #4**

***Sinners are saved by grace through  
faith in a Redeemer, Savior, God; not  
by their own moral merit.***

*Mark 16:15*

**"<sup>15</sup> And He said to them, "Go into all the  
world and preach the gospel to all  
creation. <sup>16</sup> He who has believed and has  
been baptized shall be saved; but he who  
has disbelieved shall be condemned."**

***therefore preach grace, faith,  
and repentance from dead works.***



### Observation #5

*God's sovereign grace and choice works through human decisions to bring saving faith.*

*Philippians 2:13*

"for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."

*therefore those who freely believe may not fully understand how and why.*

### Observation #6

*There are those (in the past) who had saving faith but did not know about the cross and resurrection of Christ,*

*Romans 4:3*

"Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

*therefore God's mercy may be wider than we believe.*

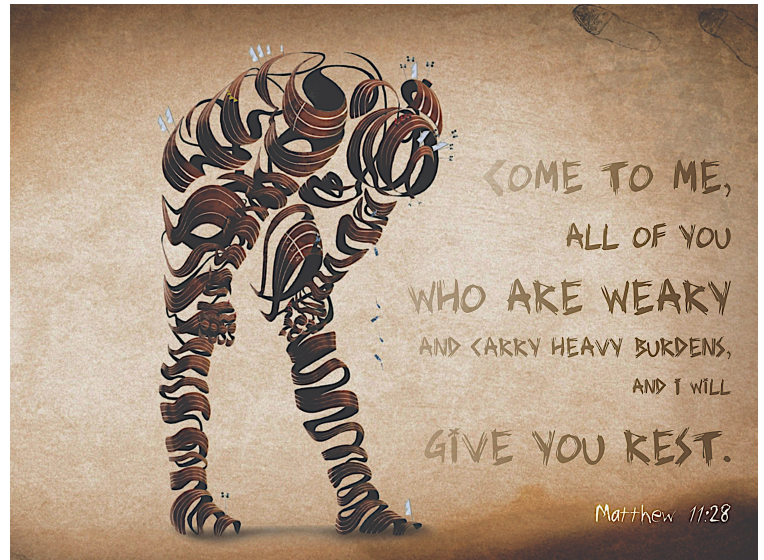
### Observation #7

*Christian commitment is a heart response to a hunger for freedom from alienation with God, self, and others,*

*John 6:68*

"Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life.'"

*therefore recognize that we make faith commitments with our heart, not just our head.*



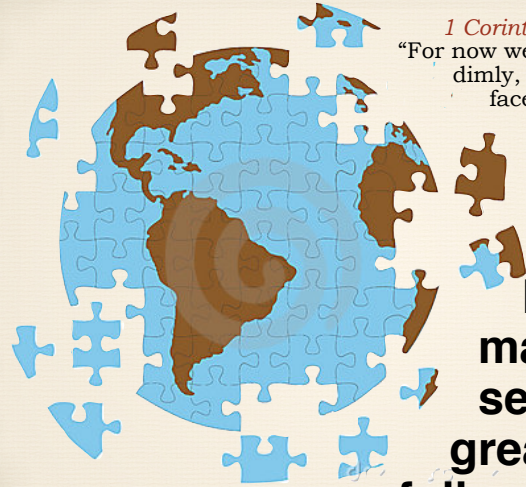
### Consider

1. How much exposure to God does one need? Will there ever be enough?
2. Is our challenge - evidence, rebellion, or what?
3. How much knowledge of God's dealing with others do we need to understand?
4. If not the Gospel - what do we propose as a meta narrative for life's meaning?
5. Is the real question - How can I explain this? or is it - What is the nature of the human dilemma and its solution?





**Some pieces seem  
incompatible  
to us now**



*1 Corinthians 13:12*  
“For now we see in a mirror  
dimly, but then face to  
face; now I know in  
part, but then I  
will know fully  
just as I also  
have been  
fully known.”

**but they  
may make  
sense in a  
greater and  
fuller context.**

*Deuteronomy 29:29*

“The secret things  
belong to the Lord our  
God, but the things  
revealed belong to us  
and to our sons forever,  
that we may observe all  
the words of this law.”

*John 21*

“<sup>21</sup> Peter therefore seeing him said to  
Jesus, "Lord, and what about this  
man?" <sup>22</sup> Jesus said to him, "If I want  
him to remain until I come, what is  
that to you? You follow Me!"”

**My job is not to figure God out  
but to recognize my role in His  
kingdom and show up to do it.**

**God's Grace should inspire  
awe and worship  
for all who are convicted of sin  
and who hunger for  
righteousness.**

*Romans 11:33*

“Oh, the depth of the riches  
both of the wisdom and  
knowledge of God!

How unsearchable are  
His judgments and  
unfathomable  
His ways!”

