

## **What It Means to Believe**

**John 20:24-31**

### **Okay, we live in a hockey-mad town.**

We have unofficial mascots

We dress our kids in the gear

One thing I noticed at games is this concept of believing.

Of course we want to believe our team is going to win,

We believe that we have a shot at Lord Stanley's cup.

### **Of course the question we have to ask now is, do you believe today?**

The Blackhawks were last year's champions but barely made the playoffs.

Things were looking good the first 3 games but then things changed.

An embarrassing 7-2 loss followed by a 5-0 beating.

So, do you still believe?

I've heard a lot of frustrated people saying all kinds of things

and none of them nice about the 'nucks.

But there are still those of us who still believe.

### **What does it mean to believe?**

But what does the Bible mean when it talks about belief?

Fans believe in their teams.

I'm sure Hawk fans are just as strong in their belief.

There is all kinds of believing when it comes to sports.

Believing in sports means we hope our team wins.

It can be because of statistics or feeling.

### **But what does the Bible mean when it talks about belief?**

The problem we face today as believers (yes, that's we're called)

Is that we say we believe but can we state what we believe?

Is believing in Jesus like believing in the Canucks?

Hoping for something we do not yet have in hand?

Or is it like saying, "I believe it's going to rain."

Belief is like making a guess.

If we're wrong about the cup, there's always next year.

If we're wrong about the rain, it's not big deal.

Those types of beliefs are not going cost us anything.

## **So what does it mean to believe in Jesus?**

First, it's not an inconsequential commitment.

Neither rain nor the Canucks compare.

The Biblical concept of believing is that of commitment, reliance and obedience.

It means that when I believe I live my life according to that commitment.

It affects absolutely everything I do and think.

We believe Jesus is God.

We believe that our sins are paid for by his death.

We believe that he is risen from the dead.

We believe his Spirit is with us and is changing us in our character.

We believe how we live matters.

**Belief is a commitment to way of life.**

Secondly, it's not mere cold intellectual assent.

Believing that God exists is not Christian belief.

James tells us that even the demons believe - it isn't enough.

Real faith is active.

**Belief is an action.**

Finally, Faith is not just going through the motions or following a tradition.

The pharisees and sadducees, people who call themselves Christians fall into this trap.

Belief is a real relationship you have with Jesus in the here and now.

You talk to him, you listen to him, you sense him.

These are the things the Holy Spirit brings to you.

**Without this, we have no faith.**

So belief is a commitment, an action and a relationship.

Easter demands we believe something more than the Canucks winning the Stanley Cup.

What we believe today is the Jesus is risen from the dead.

That sin and death, that evil and darkness, that selfishness and suffering cannot hold us down.

That Jesus is indeed Lord of all.

Do you still believe?