

WELCOME TO OUR WEBSITE 'SEEING AND BELIEVING'

Why are we here? To what end? Why are we not here eternally?

These may be questions that surprise you.

Would there be answers to these questions?

We have these questions too. That is why we search for answers; answers which may benefit you too. Answers which we want to share on this website called 'Seeing and believing'. 'Seeing and believing' aims to point in a certain direction in our search for answers. We stand in the midst of life, but at the same time we want to look at what's behind the here and now. That's why!

To achieve this, we have divided this website in five themes:

- God and you: Who is God and who are you?
- Good and evil: Are you good or evil? How can that be altered?
- Faith: What is faith? What do Christians believe?
- Life with God: What does it mean to know God and to live with Him?

The following pages are dedicated to shortly sharing the message of the Bible with you. This will show what it means to 'not see, yet to believe'. This message will undoubtedly raise many questions. We are thrilled to hear your questions. Feel free to ask them!

GOD

God was there before life even existed on this earth. We only came after. If God is not there, we do not exist either. He is the Creator of everything that is alive, of time and of space.

We know this from reading His Book, the Bible. We also see this in nature: the flora and the fauna, all that lives on the land and in the sea. Look up and see the sun, the moon and the stars in the infinite universe. Behold the rhythm of day and night, low tide and high tide. All that is unmeasurable, and in all that we can see God's greatness, wisdom and omnipotence, and know that He is there. Would you dare to acknowledge that?

YOU

God made you too. He wants you to be happy. Perhaps you do not feel happy at all. The feeling of happiness is not constant, and is fleeting. Right? Real happiness is not something we can produce ourselves. True happiness is a gift from Someone else. Only God gives this true happiness. He is the One who can really make us happy. God wants us to see what really matters in this life. Who would not want to know more about that?

INSIDER INFORMATION

To do that, we need to read some inside information about ourselves. Do you want to read along? The first people on this earth lived in a paradise. They enjoyed perfect happiness. They were intimately united with God and they served Him. Unfortunately, they decided no longer to listen to what He had agreed with them. The Bible calls this attitude sin. Because of sin, the world has since

seen pain, trouble and disaster. That is the world you and I live in today. We are all people that do not want to listen to God. People that need to learn to listen to our Creator anew. Or do experience that differently?

THE BOOK

The Bible, the Book we have already told you a little bit about, is the reliable Word of God. Read along with us how He did not leave mankind to its lot. In the Old Testament, the first part of the Bible, God promises that Jesus Christ, God's Son, would enter our world. He wants to restore the broken relationship between God and mankind. We read about the fulfilment of that promise in the New Testament, which is the second part of the Bible. He has come, the Saviour of the world. Whoever believes in Him will find true joy.

"Know that the Lord is God; it is He who made us" (Psalm 100:3).

BROKEN CONNECTION?!

Who is good? Perfect and without flaws? Nobody, right? We cannot imagine there would be anybody who does not have any flaws. Looking around us we see that the world is full of grief and pain because how people hurt other people. This causes the relationship between people to be upset or even to be broken. Sometimes this is forever, but healing of these relationships is possible when people can forgive each other. Now then, what about the relationship between God and mankind, between God and yourself?

GOD AND MANKIND

God created mankind to be perfect and without flaws, with a good relationship between God, the Creator, and us, humans. When we talked about 'Insider Information' as a subheading within the theme 'God and you' we discussed that this relationship was perfect in paradise. In the Bible, God says that everything He created was very good. However, humans wanted to be like God. They wanted to decide for themselves what is good and what is evil, despite everything being good already. They were disobedient and rebelled against God, who subsequently banned them from paradise. The good God-human relationship was broken, and sin and death entered our world. We left the good path to walk onto the evil path, a path that leaves God behind. That has made us sinners without any understanding of the debt we have towards God, our Creator. Humans have thrown away their free will without the ability to turn back. Humans did not offer apologies, let alone show repentance and ask for forgiveness. God needed to offer the solution Himself. He remained faithful to His Creation and promised that despite everything He would restore the relationship.

RESTORATION

And that happened. At the beginning of our calendar God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world. Into a world that was not waiting for Him. He lived in that world without making any mistake or committing any sin. He suffered and died the death of a criminal on a cross, as a completely innocent man. Jesus resurrected from the death and afterwards ascended into heaven to be with His Father again. He voluntarily and completely satisfied God's will for Him. His death was the ransom for the debt of us humans, and His resurrection means that sin and death have been conquered – a new life is possible. He provides perfect redemption.

... AND FOR YOU?

We are not automatically saved. The world that Jesus lived in demonstrated that already. A major part of the people did not want anything to do with Him. They accepted Him healing the sick and doing good, but they did not see the need of Him restoring the relationship between God and people. They thought they could do that themselves, if it was necessary at all. They did not believe in

Jesus as the Saviour. That unbelief is alive and well today. That unbelief is sin, because we do not experience our sin towards God. That all changes when you start believing. At that moment you are deeply aware of the extent to which you have hurt God, that you cannot repair that hurt, and that you need forgiveness. You realise that Jesus earned that forgiveness, and is now our Saviour. The life of a believer is characterised by the way repentance and forgiveness have their place in prayers to God. God answers those prayers graciously, because of Jesus. This is because Jesus saves us through faith in Him, the Son of God (John 3:36). That means that the personal relationship between God and you has been restored.

FAITH

The theme 'God and you' includes words as 'faith' and 'believing'. Words that many use often, and that you may use yourself too. For example, when someone asks: 'Will it rain tomorrow', you will answer: 'I believe so'. On that occasion, you mean: 'I am not completely sure, and I do not really care either.'

The verb 'believe' (faith) in the Bible means something completely different. Imagine a good friend is being accused of a crime and he denies the accusation. You know your friend and know he is not lying; you trust him. When people try to accuse him, you could cry out: 'But I believe him!' That cry could come from the bottom of your heart, and be founded on the firm conviction your friend is speaking the truth. This example comes much closer to the Christian faith. Faith is the firm conviction that what God has said is true. It is the conviction that everything the Bible says is true. The word 'faith' basically means the same thing as 'trust'. Faith is trusting God's Word and trusting in Jesus. It is a trust so strong that you surrender your whole life into His hands. In the Bible we read that God calls us to believe the Lord Jesus and you will be saved – be eternally be happy (Acts 16:31). This is a call that needs an answer from you: believe and return to God, repent!

WE BELIEVE

Centuries ago, Christians first wrote a summary of what we believe. This summary is based on the Bible. While its language may be a bit dated, its content is as true as it was then. We want to share it with you. Please pay attention to the use of the pronoun 'I'. That's how personal it is! Pay attention to Jesus too: the Christian faith centres around Him.

1. I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
2. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord;
3. Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,
4. suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; He descended to the dead.
5. On the third day He rose again;
6. He ascended into heaven, where He is seated at the right hand of God, the almighty Father,
7. and He will come to judge the living and the dead.
8. I believe in the Holy Spirit,
9. the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,
10. the forgiveness of sins,
11. the resurrection of the body,
12. and the life everlasting.

RENEWAL

Is that new for you? Faith changes your life and it causes renewal. Daily life in faith is a learning process. The content of God's intervention in this world by sending His Son will get more and more meaning in your personal life. Faith will lead to worship, to repentance, to thanksgiving and to

following Jesus. You will continually fall and rise again, but it is a glorious life!

In the New Testament you can read what Jesus has done for you and what it means to follow Him in your life. That is the practical side of faith. It changes your thinking, your aims in life and your actions. That is when you're on the path to Life.

We will still need to part with this earth and die, but after that we will arrive in a place of eternal life – without end, without disappointments. In the last Bible book, called Revelation, we read: “Behold, I make all things new” (Revelation 21:1-5).

CONNECTION

Good relationships are extremely important to us. They provide support, care, trust, protection. Think about friendship and familial relationships, but employer-employee and teacher-student relationships too. Humans cannot do without relationships; they colour our lives and give it meaning. Unfortunately, relationships between people are often imperfect. How do we keep relationships whole? We do that by listening to each other, by communicating with each other, by taking time for each other, by setting boundaries and by keeping yourselves to them. Obviously love and forgiveness play a big role too.

Relationships are very important for people, as God has made people for relationships – with each other and with Him. Through faith in Jesus the relationship with God is restored. God tells us in the Bible that He wants to be our Father – a Father who wants to forgive, a Father who is always there.

How do you live with God? By listening to Him, to His Word and His commandments. By telling Him everything in prayer. That is how you live with God.

LIVING WITH GOD

When you live with God, you experience that your life is in God's hand, in the hand of Him who has all power in heaven and on earth. It is safe there, whatever happens.

Life with God means to love God above everything, and to love our neighbour as ourselves. It is the Ten Commandments that we will want to use as the measure to know how we ought to live, despite how big your mistakes may be. Those will be there as long as your live. We shouldn't forget that, nor use it as an excuse. To live a life that honours God, you will want to work towards more and more living according to God's commandments. In prayer you may confess your sins and expect help from Him. In faith united to Jesus, God will always hear and answer you. God has promised that those who believe in Jesus Christ will eternally live with Him. The Bible shows the way towards eternal life. That's when you're eternally free.

PRAYER

Life with God is not just taking into account what He asks of us, but also living in dependence on Him. You cannot do it on your own. You have questions. You need His help. You need daily forgiveness for your sins, for the things you have done wrong. You need God's grace daily.

Life with God is a prayerful life. But what is prayer? Prayer is acknowledging He is there. Prayer is turning your thoughts towards God. You cannot see Him, but He is everywhere, and knows us. That miracle asks us to be still before God. Fold your hands, close your eyes, and ask: 'Lord, let me see and teach me to believe'. It is not just asking, but telling Him that you will listen to His Word, requesting His help with that. It is also thanking Him for how you could experience His presence in the circumstances you found yourself in. It is the Holy Spirit that teaches you to pray. You're not alone in this!

WHAT'S NEXT?

Will your prayer be answered by God if you believe in Him? Are all your prayers answered by God? When you don't experience answers to prayer, it becomes interesting. Your faith is being tested. Only true faith will pray to God even more while it is being tested. Therefore, do not lose your head, but open the Bible and take courage.

Will you never know disappointment, grief or suffering in your life? No, but God hears! Life with God also means thanking Him for what He gives you, whether it is exactly what you prayed for or not, knowing that He knows exactly what is best for you.

Will you get what you want? Yes! We will still need to part with this earth and die. However, in your thoughts you may already see the Fatherland where Life is – without end, without disappointments. If you desire to be with God, you will finally receive all you want, because being with God is everything!