



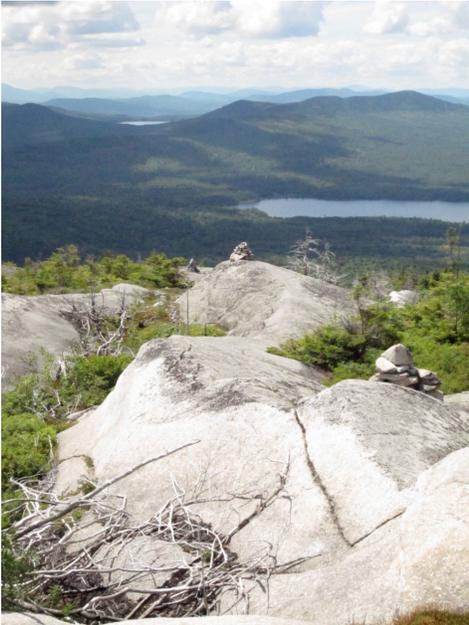
THISTLEBEND
MINISTRIES

Beyond Belief **“Setting the Course”**

*Let me hear in the morning of your steadfast love, for in you I trust.
Make me know the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul. Psalm 143:8*



Our Appalachian Trail Journey Beyond Belief



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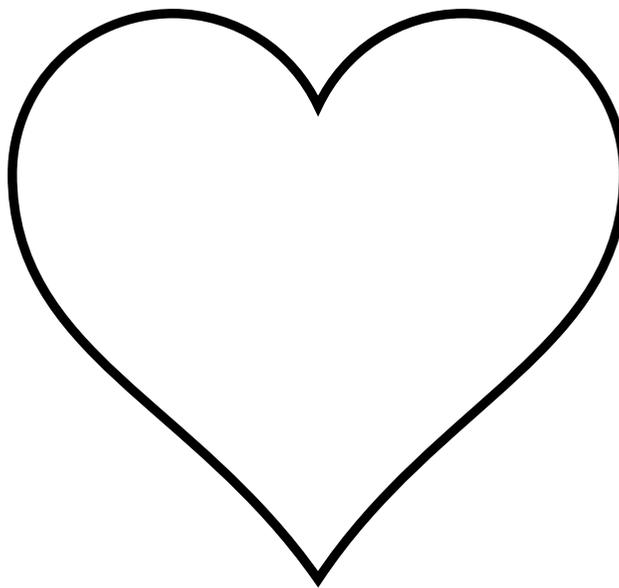
**The Appalachian Trail.
Our journey.
Abrahams's journey.**

**Real people. Real world. Real challenges. Living in a fallen world.
Sinners saved by grace. Saints with a purpose.
Not merely exist or survive, but live and love, because of our belief.
Effervescent. Full of joy. Full of Christ.
Vessels of God's glory—Living Beyond Belief!**

You will not find on this side heaven a holier people than those who receive into their hearts the doctrine of Christ's righteousness. When the believer says, "I live on Christ alone; I rest on him solely for salvation; and I believe that, however unworthy, I am still saved in Jesus;" then there rises up as a motive of gratitude this thought—"Shall I not live to Christ? Shall I not love him and serve him, seeing that I am saved by his merits?" For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised."

-Charles Spurgeon, Morning and Evening, Morning Devotion January 31st

A Matter of the Heart.



THE JOURNEY

What do we believe and why?

Discover. Define. Determine.

God.

Rocks and Roots.

You. Me.

What do we believe?

Why do we believe what we believe?

No condemnation. Rom. 8:1

Christ is our righteousness!

"The Lord our Righteousness" Jer. 23:6

It will always give a Christian the greatest calm, quiet, ease, and peace, to think of the perfect righteousness of Christ. How often are the saints of God downcast and sad! I do not think they ought to be. I do not think they would if they could always see their perfection in Christ. There are some who are always talking about corruption, and the depravity of the heart, and the innate evil of the soul. This is quite true, but why not go a little further, and remember that we are "perfect in Christ Jesus." It is no wonder that those who are dwelling upon their own corruption should wear such downcast looks; but surely if we call to mind that "Christ is made unto us righteousness," we shall be of good cheer. What though distresses afflict me, though Satan assault me, though there may be many things to be experienced before I get to heaven, those are done for me in the covenant of divine grace; there is nothing wanting in my Lord, Christ hath done it all. On the cross he said, "It is finished!" and if it be finished, then am I complete in him, and can rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, "Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

-Charles Spurgeon, Morning and Evening, Morning Devotion January

God loves you. Believe He loves you.

"He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love." Song 2:4

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.

For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever

fears has not been perfected in love. 1 Jn. 4:18

We are not alone! God is our help. God is with us.

*and they shall call his name **Immanuel**" (which means, **God with us**). Matt. 1:23*

"I am the one who helps you, declares the Lord." Is. 41:41

...let us hear the Lord Jesus speak to each one of us: "I will help thee." "It is but a small thing for me, thy God, to help thee. Consider what I have done already. What! not help thee? Why, I bought thee with my blood. What! not help thee? I have died for thee; and if I have done the greater, will I not do the less? Help thee! It is the least thing I will ever do for thee; I have done more, and will do more. Before the world began I chose thee. I made the covenant for thee. I laid aside my glory and became a man for thee; I gave up my life for thee; and if I did all this, I will surely help thee now. In helping thee, I am giving thee what I have bought for thee already. If thou hadst need of a thousand times as much help, I would give it thee; thou require little compared with what I am ready to give. 'Tis much for thee to need, but it is nothing for me to bestow. Help thee?' Fear not! If there were an ant at the door of thy granary asking for help, it would not ruin thee to give him a handful of thy wheat; and thou art nothing but a tiny insect at the door of my all-sufficiency. I will help thee."

O my soul, is not this enough? Dost thou need more strength than the omnipotence of the United Trinity? Dost thou want more wisdom than exists in the Father, more love than displays itself in the Son, or more power than is manifest in the influences of the Spirit? Bring hither thine empty pitcher! Surely this well will fill it. Haste, gather up thy wants, and bring them here—thine emptiness, thy woes, thy needs. Behold, this river of God is full for thy supply; what canst thou desire beside? Go forth, my soul, in this thy might. The Eternal God is thine helper!

*"Fear not, I am with thee, oh, be not dismay'd!
I, I am thy God, and will still give thee aid."*

God's providence.

The beautiful, awesome, merciful, gracious, praiseworthy providence of our loving,
all-wise, all-knowing, all-powerful Father God.

"If we understand the providence of God and love the God of providence, we are able to worship Him with the sacrifice of praise He inherently deserves when things occur that bring pain, sorrow, and affliction into our lives. This understanding of providence is vital to all who would worship God." - R.C. Sproul (The Invisible Hand)

"Because the word providence is rooted in the Latin term for seeing or vision, we may be tempted to restrict its theological application to God's mere observance of human activity. It is not merely that God looks at human affairs. The point is the He looks after human affairs. He not only watches us He watches over us. The child's most simple prayer is, "Please watch over Mommy, Daddy, Grandma," etc. It is watching over us that goes to the heart of divine providence. It is God's father care of His creatures that the word providence encompasses. This means God is involved in human affairs. He is not like Aristotle's god, the Unmoved Mover, who remains aloof and totally uninvolved with human history. The biblical God is not unmoved. He is a moved and moving Mover who rules as well as reigns." – R.C. Sproul (The Invisible Hand)

CHRIST! It is Christ. All Christ!

Not by my might, but by His power! *"I can do all things through him who strengthens me"* Phil 4:13. *"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me"* Gal. 2:20.

Rocks and Roots in our Thinking that Can Trip Us Up

What are the obstacles that cause us to doubt, mistrust, waiver in belief, wander, let go of the truth?

1. Feeling that we need to be perfect or get it all right
2. Negative thinking/wrong thinking/believing lie of the enemy
3. Worry & fear
4. Guilt
5. Legalism
6. Giving into feelings/emotions
7. Don't see any change
8. Circumstances of life/trials/pain/sorrow/suffering
9. Vacation and sickness throwing us off course
10. Comparing
11. Distractions
12. Unbelief

7 Pieces of Spiritual Armor to Put On as You Travel on Your Journey

- A. **Belt of Truth:** "Paul seems to have in mind the confidence that comes from certainty about the truthfulness of God's Word."
- B. **Breastplate of Righteousness:** "Believers are protected by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and they can stand up to the accusations of the devil, whose title in Greek means 'slanderer.' Simultaneously, Paul sees believers taking on the righteous character of Christ while their growing conformity to His image gives them confidence in resisting temptation. Believers are to identify with this armor God's righteousness in Christ."
- C. **Gospel Shoes of Peace:** "Paul has in mind the messenger who takes the gospel to others...the peace that comes from the gospel readies one for war against evil."
- D. **Shield of Faith:** "The Roman shield was large enough to cover the whole body, it was made of wood, covered with animal hide, and bound with iron at the top and bottom. When dipped in water before a battle, it could extinguish arrows that had been dipped in pitch and set ablaze. In the OT, the Lord is the 'shield' of His people."
- E. **Helmet of Salvation:** "For Paul, salvation is a present experience as well as a future hope. The believer's final ground of confidence is the faithfulness of God to complete the salvation He has begun."
- F. **Sword of the Spirit:** "The one offensive weapon in the believer's arsenal is compared to the Roman sword, short and designed for hand-to-hand combat. Jesus used the Word of God in His battle against the temptations of Satan in the wilderness."
- G. **Prayer:** "The battle theme in this passage ends with an urgent call to militant prayer ("keep alert") on behalf of all believers...It is possible that, together with "the sword of the Spirit", prayer is one more offensive weapon in the believer's arsenal."