

## **[Day #17] Part 2: No Graven Image – Crises of Faith**

**Read: Jeremiah 1:4-10; John 6:60-69**

Anyone walking in relationship with the invisible God has suffered when their inaccurate conceptions of God – called “graven images” by Elisabeth Elliot – are exposed. For many this constitutes a crisis of faith, of which it could be said that if it doesn’t kill you it will make you stronger. Sadly not everyone’s faith survives.

**EARLY FOLLOWERS** One time after Jesus taught a really hard lesson that some of his followers didn’t understand, some turned away. John 6:66-68, “From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.” The Twelve were equally as baffled by Jesus’ hard teaching as were those who turned away, but their faith held up. Jesus asked, “You do not want to leave, too, do you?” Peter answered, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” True disciples survive the test, but usually not without scars.

**JEREMIAH** Jeremiah’s crisis of faith came when he realized that the task he thought God had given him turned out to be something quite different. He cried out, “O, Lord, you deceived me, and I was deceived; you overpowered me and prevailed.” (Jeremiah 20:7) Certainly Jeremiah knew God wouldn’t trick or overpower him, but sometimes what we *know* and what we *feel* can differ greatly. At times like these, survival requires a trust rooted not in what we feel, but in who God is and His ability to hold us fast to Him.

**MOSES** One of Moses’ crises of faith came when God responded in a way Moses didn’t expect. God told Moses He would use him to deliver Israel from Pharaoh’s hand. With the hopes of Israel raised, Moses confronts Pharaoh *exactly as God instructed*. Imagine Moses’ alarm when this encounter results in Pharaoh increasing Israel’s hardship! The Israelites hearts are now soured toward Moses, who cries out to God, “Lord! Why have you brought trouble upon this people? Is this why you sent me?” Disillusionment... It hurts.

God is who He is, not who we imagine Him to be. He does as He wills, not always as we expect. While clashes between the God that is and the God of our imaginations often go without being resolved in reason, they will always be resolved in a stronger faith in the true God...as long as we don’t let our faith die.

**WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

Can you relate to the experiences of the men cited here, who were disillusioned by God? Describe an experience when the “God that is” clashed with the “God of your imagination”.

How did you survive this crisis of faith?

What advice could you give others who are in the midst of this kind of crisis of faith?