



# INSIDE OUT STUDENTS

*est. 1996*

## TALK OUTLINE

TITLE	DATE
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Stranger Things (Week 1)

10/23/2016

BOTTOM LINE	SCRIPTURE
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Don't let what is strange; keep you from believing what is certain.

John 9

### CONNECTION

Open with a story of something that was strange but it happened. If you just heard it, you'd never believe it, but you were there, you know the person, you are the person and so you are certain that it actually happened!

-Insert personal story here (I will probably talk about the time a Goose flew through the front windshield of my Aunt's Mazda Miata and almost killed her. Sounds ridiculous, and yet, it happened)

Now that story is so ridiculous that for many of you it's hard to believe, isn't it? It's bizarre, I know, and I'd probably doubt it too if I hadn't been there for myself! Some things are so strange you'd never believe them if you didn't experience them. Some things are so strange you'd never believe them if you didn't know the person it happened to.

Some things are so strange they are just flat out difficult to believe.

### TENSION

And the truth is, the stranger something is, the harder it is to believe, isn't it?

In fact, this is why many people say they struggle with Christianity, because let's be honest, Christianity is full of some strange things. Christians do and believe some pretty strange things, right?

(insert list of odd things in the bible, odd things that we believe as Christians...)

Stuff in the bible...

- Moses parting the red sea?
- Noah built a boat big enough for every animal to join him?
- Elijah prayed it wouldn't rain and it didn't for 3 YEARS?
- Joshua prayed and made the sun stand still???
- Jesus was born to a virgin mom?
- Jesus walked on water???

Christians believe and do some pretty strange things. Some things that are hard to comprehend, hard to believe and buy into. For some of us we've considered walking away or have walked away from our faith because of some of the stranger things in Christianity.

That's what we're going to talk about tonight.

What do we do about the strange things in Christianity? The things that are hard to explain, maybe even hard to believe? Should we just toss out our faith because there are strange things that we can't explain?

Or, maybe just maybe, could Christianity still be true even though at times it can seem so strange? (How can I believe in something that at times seems so strange? Just because it's strange does that mean it can't also be true?)

## TRUTH

Tonight I want to show you a story of a guy who had a very strange experience with Jesus. It was something that he couldn't really explain. Something many people found hard to believe. Let me show you this story, it comes from the letter of John, chapter 9 (John was one of the best friends of Jesus and he wrote this short letter to document some of his time spent personally with Jesus to help others and ultimately us to get a glimpse of who Jesus is and what he's like)

Here's what John says...

### **John 9:1-5**

Summarize the first 5 verses. Explain that Jesus has encountered a man born blind. A man that everyone would have known as "the blind guy." Setting up what Jesus is about to do.

And now Jesus does something very strange...

### **John 9:6-7**

***After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of***

***Siloam" (this word means "Sent"). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.***

- Spit's and makes mud (ya'll think Drake spits fire, he's not spittin' nothing like ya boi Jesus)
- heals the blind man

#### **John 9:8-9**

***His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" Some claimed that he was. Others said, "No, he only looks like him." But he himself insisted, "I am the man."***

- Isn't that the blind guy???
- No way, just looks like him!
- Because that's ridiculous, there must be another explanation. That's way to weird, that's way too strange. I just don't know if I can believe that!
- He says, "no it's me!"

#### **John 9:10-12**

***"How then were your eyes opened?" they asked. He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see." "Where is this man?" they asked him. "I don't know," he said.***

- Explains how it happened (this guy Jesus, spit, made mud, I know it's really strange, but then he said go wash my face and I did and then boom I can see)
- THATS CRAZY, where did he go?
- (I dunno I didn't see 😊)

#### **John 9:13-17**

***Paraphrase this verse and explain what was going on with the points below.***

- Take him to the Pharisee / can't be from God because he did it on the Sabbath
- This didn't fit in their God box
- We all have a God box...how we think God does, should or could work, the way things are supposed to happen.
- This miracle didn't fit in their God box. It was too strange!

Dilemma = It was really strange buuuuuuuut it was all certain! He was blind but now he sees???

- What are these people going to believe???

**John 9:18-23**

*They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. "Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?" "We know he is our son," the parents answered, "and we know he was born blind. But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. That was why his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."*

Still doubting, call for his parents.

What's the hang up???

- It's just too strange. It's down right unexplainable. It doesn't make any sense. It does not seem rational. It does not fit in their box. It seems absurd! This is one of those stranger things! We don't have an explanation for this!

And let's be honest, isn't this is the tension we all have to deal with in choosing to believe in Christianity? It's strange but there are things that are certain! What do we do???

Some of you, a big barrier between you and God, is that there are things in the Christian faith that are really strange and so they seem absurd...

- Take for example...
- Creation - really??? An invisible God just decided one day that he'd create all this.
- Sounds absurd.
- Abraham - 100 years old having a kid
- Moses parting a sea
- Noah and his floating zoo

Let me show you what this man does...

**John 9:24-34**

*A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God by telling the truth," they said. "We know this man is a sinner." He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"*

- Things get heated here but I love this mans final resolution...

"I was blind (that is for certain) but now I see (as strange as it is, it's also for certain)"

For this man...

Certain > Strange

And for us here is what is CERTAIN...

- it's certain that we're here, on this planet, the only planet in the universe where life is known to exist. Against all mathematical odds, in all of our complexity, Here. We. Are. Everything working together so intricately it's as if it was by design and not mere chance & natural selection.

- It's certain that you and I have hopes and dreams and aspirations for purpose and meaning that are unique to us as humans (my dog isn't losing sleep wondering "why am I here???" )

- It's certain that there was a real man named Jesus, who lived in Israel, who taught and had followers and did enough remarkable things that he gained a notable following.

- It's certain that Jesus was in fact crucified by the Roman government and buried in a wealthy Jewish officials family tomb.

- It's certain that 3 days later men and women who knew him and saw him dead (including his closest friends and even his very own brother) believed and claimed to see him alive and they would take that message, spread that message and most would die proclaiming that message of a resurrected Jesus! (Who would knowingly die for a lie?)

The reality is that because there are strange things we can still believe because we know of the certainty that is Jesus. In fact you don't even have to understand to believe and that is beauty of what Jesus has provided for us.

- in fact, we believe and trust things all the time without fully understanding them (iPhones, internet, cruise ships, etc.)

What do you do when things are so strange they seem hard to believe but they are also certain?

Yeah I know it's strange but it's certain and certain trumps strange any day of the week. Just because something is strange doesn't make it false. Don't let the stranger things keep you from believing the certain things!

Had a girl come talk to me one time, she was really bummed, she told me, because she was struggling with doubt. She thought she couldn't be a Christian if she had questions or doubts. She said, I just wish I could have faith like you, without all these doubts.

But you know what, can I be honest? I doubt too. I question too. Sometimes I struggle

with what to believe too.

- you know when I doubt the most?

- I doubt when I focus on what's strange and unexplainable and lose sight of what's certain and undeniable.

- I doubt when I forget what God has done, because I can't get him to do something now.

- I doubt when God does or allows things that I don't think he should.

## APPLICATION

You know what I've learned from this man's story and from my own life experience? You don't have to understand everything to believe in something.

So do we have to throw out our faith because there are some strange things that we can't quite explain? Absolutely not. We can trust what is certain and continue to wrestle with what is strange, because certain always trumps strange.

Here is what we want you to do tonight and throughout this week:

1. Think about the #1 thing causing you doubts
2. Which category is it more in: something that's untrue (and you know it) or something that's just strange (and hard to believe).

My hunch is that most of us will find that the things that are bugging us or keeping us from faith aren't problems because they're proven untrue, but simply that they're just strange and therefore hard to believe.