

White Horse Inn

0:00:02 **Michael Horton:** You have to set something before the heart that inflames it. You have to have something objective and what we have today is a lot of affection chasing, a lot of experience inculcating. And people will fly across the country to go have this experience, so that finally their consciences can be assured that they really have whatever that thing is.

00:00:32 **Rod Rosenblatt:** It makes for a wonderful market for counterfeits.

00:00:41 **Narrator:** Five centuries ago in taverns and public houses across Europe, the masses would gather for discussion and debate over the latest ideas sweeping the land. From one such meeting place, a small Cambridge inn called the White Horse, the Reformation came to the English speaking world. Carrying on the tradition, welcome to the *White Horse Inn*.

0:01:09 **Eric Landry:** I'm Eric Landry. I'm the executive director of the White Horse Inn. Tonight, our conversation partners are Mike Horton and Rod Rosenblatt. The topic that we asked them to spend some time thinking about is the relationship between faith and experience. Now, that's something that all of you have a stake in. You also think about faith and experience – what your experience is of God, how you feel when you walk out of a church, and so we really do want you to be part of this conversation. You're going to listen to them talk about this subject for a little while and then we want you to participate in the conversation by sending in your questions and then I will pose those questions to Mike and Rod at the end of the day.

Again, Mike and Rod are going to be talking about the relationship between faith and experience. I'm sure that many of you are like me. There are times in my life when I have felt that I have not felt about what I believe the way that I should base on what I believed, or I've left a worship service feeling cold and lifeless and dull. Many of us have friends or perhaps we're part of religious traditions where they would say there is a one-to-one correspondence between our emotional grasp of things or how we feel at any given time and what we believe. They would say that our emotions might be critical indicators of our spiritual health. And so to kick things off, Mike and Rod, what do you say to those of us here who are wondering about the relationship between faith in Christ and our experience?

00:02:44 **Michael Horton:** Thank you, Eric Landry, and to the parish council here at Grace Lutheran Church in San Diego. It's a pleasure to be in this historic church and to be able to have a conversation with my good friend, Rod Rosenblatt. It's very difficult for us to actually talk to each other normally. We just don't get along very well, don't have much to talk about. It's always fun to get together with Rod and have an excuse for us to catch up.

Faith and experience is our topic tonight. First of all, it might help people right at the outset to define our terms. What is faith? What is experience and what is the relationship between the two? Because I think a lot of people in their minds confuse faith with experience and vice versa.

00:03:34 **Rod Rosenblatt:** Sure. Well, the reformers, when they were pressed to analyze, under the gun from Rome what faith was -- the Bible uses faith in a lot of different ways but

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in the 16th century, it was, what is a saving faith? It really focused laser like. And as Luther was debating it with his Roman protagonists and then in our next century, in the 17th, they spoke about saving faith as having three particular levels or aspects to it, necessary aspects and in a particular way. The foundation of saving faith in Christ was the facts, roughly what we read in the creeds. The facts concerning Jesus of Nazareth and there can't be saving faith without some sort of knowledge of those basics. That was the foundation layer. Then they said, that isn't saving, the devils have that much. They said it's necessary that a person assent to those as true, still not saving but it's a necessary second aspect to what saving faith is. We have to be able to say the Apostle's Creed without crossing our fingers behind our backs. I think that stuff is actually true. And then, they said on the basis of those two, to cast yourself on Christ. Our English word "trust" maybe is as close as we can get. Casting your virtue dead on the floor, all of your good whatever's, giving up on that plan, putting a wooden stake through its vampire heart, and betting all the blue chips on what Christ did on the cross. That is, it's all I've got. I don't have something more. So, I'm taking my chances that he was who he said he was and did what he said he did in his dying and if that's not true, I've lost everything. This is formed hard. It's counterintuitive to begin with, that one man's death is going to save me and it's not going to be the moral plan. The moral plan is already over; we've already all lost on that one. But it's counterintuitive to believe that one man's death one afternoon is enough for the life of sin that I've led.

00:06:08 **Michael Horton:** That brings up lots of examples that we can find in Scripture itself of people who certainly did not regard faith as something that was hermeneutically sealed off from experience, that's actually in experience, the crisis of facing a Holy God and asking, "How on earth is it possible for someone like me to be accepted by him?" How can you possibly -

00:06:34 **Rod Rosenblatt:** I'm always encouraged by that. If people see that as their experience, I am encouraged because there's some doctrine of sin seen somewhere.

00:06:43 **Michael Horton:** Yeah. So, it's not experience that's wrong. It's when people use experience to judge the truth and that's what often happens when people talk about faith these days. Well, you have your faith; I have my faith. Richard Dawkins, one of the premier atheists of our day says that faith is a cop-out. Faith is basically what you do when your brain goes on holiday. You go into a subjective place where you don't make any arguments. You're not looking to something of objective that can be publicly argued and demonstrated. You are simply going on your feelings and at that point, all you should be allowed to say is, "This is *my* faith," not this is something that you ought to believe.

00:07:32 **Rod Rosenblatt:** Right. The tooth fairy will work just fine. I intensely believe in the tooth fairy and it's none of your business and you can't have any criticism of it because it's private.

00:07:44 **Michael Horton:** And even though Dawkins of course is caricaturing the great pastors and thinkers and Christians of the ages, there is a certain truth about what you find on the street among a lot of Christians today, isn't there?

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00:07:58 **Rod Rosenblatt:** Well, in many ways, the church has in some of this have been a problem rather than an answer. I think of Sunday schools where kids learn very quickly there are some questions you don't asked. Instead of it being encouraged to ask almost anything. And there's you're set up, "I'll hide." Church is where I hide from others, lest they find out just how filled with doubts I am. And I think church ought to be the place where doubts are wide open.

00:08:33 **Michael Horton:** If not there, where?

00:08:35 **Rod Rosenblatt:** Yeah.

00:08:36 **Michael Horton:** Another example of the sort of integration of faith and experience is when Isaiah is called as a prophet and he has that famous vision of God in all of his holiness and the only thing that he can -- he's prepared to go pronounce judgment on the nations but now that he is actually objectively encountered the holy God, he says, "Woe to me! I'm undone for I am a man of unclean lips and dwell among people of unclean lips, for I have seen the Holy One of Israel," and it's only when God forgives his sins and tells him, "You are forgiven," that he then says, "Here I am, send me." You can't really tear apart experience from faith there but it's an experience in faith of something other than your experience.

00:09:36 **Rod Rosenblatt:** Right. It isn't the analysis simply of something inside of you. Luther was very distrustful of that. We are a generation of the wonderfulness of the self. To Luther, the self was a problem, not an answer. We could drive deeply into the self and he would have said, "Oh, you have no idea what you're going into."

00:10:00 **Michael Horton:** I love that line of C.S. Lewis and I always love it when I can get in a C.S. Lewis quote before you, where he says that good experience at least is never something that you're looking for. It's always something that you have when you're looking for something else.

00:10:17 **Rod Rosenblatt:** Yes, you can't go after it directly and you spoke of it with joy. And the moment you try to go after it directly, it will elude you every single time. But if you are looking for Christ, some of that will spill over from that.

00:10:35 **Michael Horton:** Isn't the goal again for us too as the psalmist says, have our heart stirred by a noble theme? In other words, you have to set something before the heart that inflames it. You have to have something objective and what we have today is a lot of affection chasing, a lot of experience inculcating, a lot of people trying to gin up experiences so that they can climb up to heaven with a certificate and hand it to God and say, "I am sure now that I have had the right experience. I'm sure I have true saving faith because I've looked inside my heart. I've had this experience," and people will fly across the country, around the world to go have this experience so that finally their consciences can be assured that they really have whatever that thing is that makes them truly saved.

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00:11:41 **Rod Rosenblatt:** And it makes for a wonderful market for counterfeits. In the Reformation, the pastor is called to preach law, full tilt law, not water it down, not Norman Vincent Peale, you know, the real thing. Commandments of God and to not leave people there but to those who have heard that law, to placard Christ and what he was doing for them on the cross for free, to rescue them freely and without cost. That I think doesn't exactly characterize American Protestantism today, but it should.

00:12:21 **Michael Horton:** Do you think that distinction between law and gospel plays an important part here that the place where experience goes by default, its default setting is toward law because that's what it knows best?

00:12:37 **Rod Rosenblatt:** Yes. It's in us and it's our default setting.

00:12:41 **Michael Horton:** And faith is directed toward the gospel. We don't have faith in the law. We have faith in the gospel. The right response to the law is obedience. The right response to the gospel is trust. And so, if we trust our experience, our experience will always lead us to question our trust in the sufficiency of the gospel and will always encourage us to found our salvation somewhere within ourselves.

00:13:20 **Rod Rosenblatt:** Yeah. With my students, college students, they haven't read a lot of C.S. Lewis but when I tell them about Lewis talking about these things that have to do with for instance in the case of experience, we're in many ways captive to what we ate yesterday, how we slept last night, our blood sugar level. We're captive to it. And Lewis was saying, "This is no certain place to plant your flag." If your diet yesterday was three times pizza, you might end up not having very great experiences today, or if you're getting some coal or -- anything and he just sort of hammered away at this that you've got to have a sure foundation and experience seen in that way isn't going to do it. It will be all over the map.

00:14:23 **Michael Horton:** So the two extremes here, and it can both lead to a kind of legalism would be to say on one hand, you should feel guilty for having certain experiences, or on the other hand, a kind of legalism that says you have to have these experiences that you see other people having and that you heard the preacher telling people, the truly spirit-filled people have, and that's actually worse than the law because at least the law is objective, I can look at that and say, "How have I done today?" Wow! When you go inside it's like --

00:15:01 **Rod Rosenblatt:** Yeah, Lewis said it was a surefire -- the surefire method for the pastor to cut off the sheep from feeling anything was to tell them what they should be feeling.

00:15:12 **Michael Horton:** Yeah. Don't you find it significant that when you read the New Testament, the apostles who walked with Jesus, who talked with Jesus who actually could say, "I go to the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses and watch with me and talk with me and rebukes me for falling asleep." They actually did handle him, touch him, see him, hear him, they had firsthand experience of Jesus. There is nothing about Jesus from

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the apostles that would make up enough material for a full Oprah show. The focus is entirely on who Jesus said he was, what Jesus accomplished, how Jesus proved that he was who he said he was and what's next on the agenda when he returns. It was all on Christ's personal work.

00:16:06 **Rod Rosenblatt:** And if anybody could have gone out and preached their experience, guess who could have done it? Those 12.

00:16:12 **Michael Horton:** Yeah, you could imagine Peter saying --

00:16:13 **Rod Rosenblatt:** But they didn't.

00:16:14 **Michael Horton:** Peter is saying, "Look, I once was a cursing fisherman and a denier of Jesus and I gave my heart to Jesus, made him my personal Lord and Savior and my fishing industry just expanded and I have all sorts of locations now and it's just gone really well for me." You don't hear Peter talking about his experience. I would like to know, I'm curious. I'd like to know. Tell me about how exciting it was to see Jesus after he had been in the tomb for three days. But they don't, they talk about Jesus' resurrection appearances. Actually when they do focus on their own experience, it is the doubt. It is the unbelief. They thought they had seen a ghost. They thought that they were experiencing a hallucination or something.

00:17:16 **Rod Rosenblatt:** Yeah, it's interesting and there have been many, many good works on the preaching of Christ in the Book of Acts and what characterized it all the time was his identity, who he was, his what we call priestly function, his saving work, his dying for sinners and that being enough and the call to reorient away from virtue and toward Christ's virtue instead as being what saves. Ours has got to fall by the wayside and be replaced by his virtue being credited to us as if really ours, and that's what they preached again and again and again. And the vindication for knowing that it was true was that the Father raised him again after three days dead. That was how we know that what took place on the cross actually worked. You couldn't see your sins on him, nobody could, but the resurrection, one of the things we learned by his resurrection from the dead is that what he claimed on the cross actually took place. But that's what they were preaching, not come and have the same wonderful experiences that we had, even inward.

00:18:36 **Michael Horton:** Yeah. And a lot of young people growing up in churches today, there's sort of an assumption about them that in a lot of circles, not all circles but a lot of circles that well at least they're in the youth group, at least they are going to that camp where they're going to have that experience, and at least they are kind of associating God with warm fellowship and all of these are good associations. But don't you think what actually happens is they grow up?

00:19:11 **Rod Rosenblatt:** Yeah, I wish that those dreams always came true. They don't. And part of it is that we haven't spent the hard work doing with them while they're young, I'm thinking middle school and high school, of wrestling together with them, is this thing true? None of us wants to buy a counterfeit. Is it true and how do we know it? And

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apologetics is falling on hard times, but our kids need it desperately. It's not everything, but it's got to be one piece of the puzzle when they're surrounded 360 degrees by various sorts of unbelief in the whole culture.

We don't serve them well when we skip that whole enterprise, especially early in their formative years, and teach them while doing it when you have your next question come and ask me. I may not know the answer but I'll see what I can find for you, where it's wide open, not closed.

00:20:16 **Michael Horton:** Not only doing catechesis but doing it well by provoking the questions and being there to listen to their struggles.

00:20:25 **Rod Rosenblatt:** I'm much more concerned with my children or I was when they were growing up, not that they go through the program, maybe organization of a good church even. I was always kind of suspect but I was very interested in the conversation going on about is the gospel true or not? Forty ways from Friday. That I thought was worth the time.

00:20:51 **Michael Horton:** Yeah. The question arises too about experience in our culture, why has experience become so central? Why is everything in experience? You have a shopping experience. You know you have a travel experience. You don't actually care about where you're going, it's a travel experience. Everything is an experience. We have a worship experience. Is there a kind of impatience with the discipleship that goes from womb to tomb, the idea of discipleship as sort of like being a winemaker of learning your trade, making violins?

00:21:35 **Rod Rosenblatt:** Well, what does Peterson call it, "A long walk in the same direction"?

00:21:38 **Michael Horton:** Right, and being formed overtime where you say, you know what? Sometimes I'm not that excited about my marriage. Sometimes I'm not that excited about my children. I'm sure sometimes they're not wild about me. That's okay because a good marriage and a good family life is made up of all sorts of daily decisions, daily just presences, daily things that you don't even know you do that are bound up with other people's lives and the church has to be intentional about that and not have these long periods where people just sort of float out there on their own, looking to Joel Osteen for inspiration and then find some worship experience on Sunday where they can have what you call a liver shiver and suddenly send themselves up to the heavens in ecstasy. There's got to be that normalcy that look, it's not the spontaneous, God has ordained in the covenantal development of his church, of his people, God has ordained ordinary means of grace, week in, week out and we can say, you know what -- I mean... my wife and I can walk out of the same service and she can be completely blown away by the sermon, yeah I agree everything that you're saying about it, I got that, that's really exciting. And then, the next Sunday it will be reverse, I'll be all excited. Experience has all sorts of factors involved but the Word is the Word regardless of what you experience.

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00:23:33 **Rod Rosenblatt:** Yeah, and both the reformers who would have agreed on that in an instant, the external Word, the printed one.

00:23:41 **Michael Horton:** Faith comes by hearing the Word of God.

00:23:44 **Rod Rosenblatt:** And they would have been -- though it was 200 years earlier, they would have been very suspicious of John Wesley where there were these crises experiences that were formative. And it was sort of designed like that. You know better than I the history of revivalism and the pushing of somebody toward a crisis and then the resolution supposedly of the crisis. This sort of thing doesn't do well in long human living.

00:24:15 **Michael Horton:** You can only have a certain number of crisis experiences before you break, just psychologically.

00:24:23 **Rod Rosenblatt:** Yeah, you're jaded. This is not the sort of thing that is healthy food for a lifetime, but the hearing of the gospel is. There's a certain amount of surprise to it every time. Even for somebody who deeply believes it. It comes in ways pastor can't predict and they are assured that in their case, Christ died for them and it's going to work. If I hit a bulwark on the 405 tonight and die instantly in the crash, at least I don't have to be anxious about that. Christ has made me his own. That's a long ways from getting the next thrill. Americans are sensate. We become very sensate and it's not good for us to be sensate in that way. Let joy or sorrow take care of itself but as Luther and Calvin would say, be under the preached gospel. Let that pastor announce to you again from another text this Sunday morning, the glories of Christ and his suffering for you and that it's going to be enough. Just that will be enough. You'll go wandering out in 40 different ways, forget the wanderings. Even if you are wandering, it's still going to be enough. But this is where you want to be. Having him tell you that for sure Christ died for you and it's enough even in your case and it's complete and it's sufficient and it's going to work.

00:25:56 **Michael Horton:** And it's not enough for me to be told, I need to fix my eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of my faith. It is his job to put my eyes there.

00:26:07 **Rod Rosenblatt:** Yeah. To hear the Word actually -- we call it absolution, to be actually absolved, not talking about the forgiveness of sin but to actually say, because of Christ your sin is forgiven.

00:26:23 **Michael Horton:** Yeah, right now.

00:26:24 **Rod Rosenblatt:** Right now. Just being linked to that in the weakest of ways, we don't encourage weak but it will work. The simplest of faith in that death, that blood, that afternoon, for you and connected to your sin is the gospel and a pastor should be absolving his people. "Be of good cheer, your sin is forgiven," just like Jesus said to the guy they brought on his cot, "Be of good cheer my son, your sin is forgiven."

00:26:55 **Michael Horton:** Yeah, it's always amazing to me how rich and experienced it is when Christ delivers himself to us through the audible Word and then through bread and

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wine and in such a way that the holy, sovereign, transcendent God is “hav-able,” the incomprehensible is graspable and he condescends to do that for us and the experience that that produces.

We can swap stories back and forth of people who came out of a revivalistic, pietistic, evangelical background who heard this kind of preaching of Christ for the first time, not just about Christ but Jesus himself standing there delivering himself into their hands for their salvation and then they came up and received the Lord's supper and they could hardly make it back to their pew. And you thin -- now you don't base your view of the gospel or of the means of grace on that experience but at least it proves the point that immediate, direct, self-generated, spontaneous, momentary excitements are not the only way to have an experience.

00:28:35 **Rod Rosenblatt:** Oh no. And the old saints know this, having been baptized and then attended the preaching of Christ weekly for years, decades and being at the Lord's Supper over decades, they know this in a way that the young don't. There's a reason that those people are there for the good of the young. Now, many will blow it off but some won't. They'll say, there's something there that I don't have and it's developed in him or her and it's over years and years and years and maybe I should listen to that. Christ has been delivered to them in his saving office, not just Christ's ethics or lawgiver or any of that stuff, but in his saving office, dying for you and solving the problem you don't even know you have.

You don't even know your problem and I'm going to die for it. You forget what your problem is every week. I know you. That's not me, that's Christ. I know you and I'm going to solve your problem for you for free anyway. That's what I did. And I'm going to tell you again and again and again, I'm going to tell you again, this is what you need and I'm going to give it to you and I'm going to give it to you through common things, water and bread and wine and the preached gospel, the announcement that it's going to be okay if you're in him, it's okay. How are you prepared to die? By believing in Christ and not in yourself, not in your virtues, but in what he did one afternoon. That's preparation for death and you don't want to add anything to it, Galatians, don't add anything to it. That's it, you got it, that's it. Christ in his dying for you, yours, for free, stay there.

00:30:33 **Michael Horton:** We both have this in our catechisms in defining faith. In the Heidelberg Catechism it says that “Faith is a sure assurance created in my heart by the Holy Spirit through the holy gospel that Christ has died not only for the sins of people but for my sins and brought me forgiveness.”

00:31:07 **Rod Rosenblatt:** Yeah, *pro me*. The turning point for Luther was you can know all the history but have you ever considered or do you believe that it was for you? And all of a sudden it gets non-theoretical. It almost sounds cognitive, like yes or no, but Luther thought this is where it turns, this is the lynchpin of it. I believe he died. I even believe he rose again and Luther would say, “Do you believe it was for you and your sin?” And you go, “I haven't even thought of it that way.” And Luther would say, “You should.”

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00:31:49 **Michael Horton:** And if you don't define assurance as part of the essence of faith itself, isn't there a danger of separating faith and assurance so that yes, faith is not -- based on my experience, faith is not based on my moral improvement. Faith is based on the soul sufficiency of Jesus Christ for that split-second that I exercise it for justification. And then the whole Christian life is about finding assurance which is a completely different matter. Finding assurance on a completely different basis than you found faith in Christ. Isn't it dangerous for us to separate faith from assurance?

00:32:37 **Rod Rosenblatt:** Yeah, we don't use those categories but I think if we broke it down, Luther when he was to the wall had tried all the inward answers and he was driven to his baptism and to the Lord's Supper because all the inward things of memory collapsed underneath him under pressure. He tried them all. So, he was driven to an external thing for assurance because the other ones didn't work. His moral progress, he's confessing every sin or trying to, it all fell flat. So, he would, if pressed on this say, "I'm depending on what God did for me with water and the Word, or I'm depending on what he did for me in delivering Christ to me – again last Sunday, his body given into death for me and his blood shed for me – and that he promises that that's going to be enough and that my imagination has got to evacuate all the other plans. The other plans have to go. They have to die.

00:33:47 **Michael Horton:** Yeah, part of it is definitely cultural – narcissism. We're obsessed with our beautiful, little inner selves until the law comes and kills us, and also the culture's obsession with instant gratification that we talked about. But isn't it also this history of fanatical Protestantism that basically is Gnostic. It contrasts everything internal with everything external, basically saying an experience you have inside of you is worth more than an external Word or sacrament because it's autonomous. It's within.

00:34:32 **Rod Rosenblatt:** Self-validating!

00:34:33 **Michael Horton:** You ask a lot of Christians today, what do you think when the Bible talks about being baptized for the forgiveness of sins? What do you think when Paul says this cup that we blessed is a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break is a participation in the body of -- what do you think about that? There's nervousness, an immediate desire to explain that away and to say -- well but that doesn't mean that you actually experienced the forgiveness of God.

00:35:06 **Rod Rosenblatt:** Whatever is true, that can't be it!

00:35:07 **Michael Horton:** Right and isn't it that same Pietism, that same sort of Pietism gone to pot, that bad kind of Pietism, also eventually going to push us not only from Christ coming to us today through the physical created means of water, bread and wine, and Word but also eventually at some point get us to the point where we're going to say, "It's not what happened over there then, 2,000 years ago in Bethlehem, but whether he has been born in your heart this day." I mean there are Pietist songs that go like that or you ask me how I know he lives, he lives within my heart. Is it surprising then that yesterday's pious Pietists became the next day's Protestant liberals? That's not a very happy note to

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end on but we have to end somewhere. Faith and experience, both integrated, both important but it is the object of both that is determinative.

00:36:16 **Rod Rosenblatt:** Yeah, God will not ask you if you had great experiences.

00:36:20 **Michael Horton:** Or even great faith. He's going to ask you, "Who do you say my Son is?"

00:36:28 **Eric Landry:** We have time for just a few quick questions. Several have come in. One of the most important ones I think is something that both of you men have already touched on, but can you spend just a few more minutes talking about how the sacraments really are in some sense the great equalizer of experiences? So, it's not my internal personal experience but it's both of us coming and receiving together Christ's body and blood. It's both of us not only being baptized but also remembering our baptisms.

00:37:01 **Rod Rosenblatt:** Luther was pressed on this because he tried as I said, so many internal answers and they all collapsed. So, when he was at the edge of the abyss, he reached for something external. The preached gospel, I was baptized and put into Christ, all the benefits were mine for free, and at the Lord's Supper, all the benefits the gospel promised to me again, only this time through bread and wine and it's somebody standing outside of me and putting that cup to my mouth or putting that bread to my tongue and saying the promise, "This was for you and it's enough."

00:37:39 **Michael Horton:** I don't care how deeply you feel it or what experiences you've had this week, and everybody is getting the same thing. That's the thing, the good thing about liturgy is you see it, there in Acts 2, they gather regularly for the apostles teaching in fellowship. That was in common. They didn't each get their own doctrine just for me like my own personal reading of my palm. They weren't just narcissistic people doing something privately with Jesus together. We all pray these prayers together. We confess our sins together, we heard the absolution together. We confess our faith together. We do all these things together and then we get exactly the same thing together. All of this you'd say equalizing, all of these says, look, stop one upping each other. That was the problem in Corinth. People were doing American Idol performances instead of singing as a choir, they were doing these virtuoso performances one upping each other on are you higher up the spiritual food chain than the other people. And he said, "Don't even celebrate communion. Put a stop to it until this stuff is settled. You guys are profaning the Lord's table."

And so I think that if we really recover this objectivity, the objectivity of the story happening 2000 years ago, outside of me, being true whether I believe it or not – and if we get back to the objective means that God uses to tie me here and now to that, then and there – we're all in this together and we'll all have different experiences that vary from week to week but that's just not the main thing.

00:39:27 **Eric Landry:** Mike, you mentioned earlier that your wife Lisa would walk away from a sermon feeling or saying or -- she got one thing out of it and you maybe didn't get that same thing. How do we distinguish between true experiences and false experiences?

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Obviously, the great story of Wesley, feeling his heart strangely warm as he heard Luther's Galatians read. But our Mormon friends have a burning in their bosom, our Roman Catholic friends have crying saints, what are true experiences, what are false experience?

00:40:02 **Rod Rosenblatt:** There's just no way out of that. There just isn't. That's a hole that has no bottom. And a return to sanity has to do with, what has been delivered to me that's truly what it says it is? We even ask you even more basically now, what makes me think Scripture is true? Even asking that. How do I know that? And then when the pastor is delivering to me the Christ out of Scripture, how am I sure that's true? The Christian faith can take this. It is completely capable of answering or working with things that are that hard and that basic. But if you cut yourself lose from what happened that afternoon 2000 years ago or what the Old Testament said and was and pointed to, and just start comparing experiences, you're lost.

00:41:02 **Michael Horton:** I think we've got to realize that Satan is much more interested in getting us to ask that question than almost anything he does in a given week, because that one will take our focus off of Christ in him crucified in a pious way. That's not the focus. We can go around trying to judge each other's experience or trying to judge our own experience and at the end of the day, as pious as it seems to do that, as pious as it seems to do that, it's going to take us off of Christ and keep us from helping others to fix their eyes on him.

00:41:45 **Rod Rosenblatt:** Yeah, couldn't agree more.

00:41:46 **Eric Landry:** The older Roman Catholics said that you had to have faith in the church, British pop star George Michael just says you got to have faith. What do you have to have faith in?

00:41:59 **Michael Horton:** My favorite one is Prince Charles has announced that when he is unfortunately crowned, he will take the definite article out of his title, "Defender of the Faith" will become "Defender of Faith." And I think that says everything about our culture, everything about our culture. We talk about the faith traditions or the Abrahamic faiths when Paul clearly says that if you trust in Christ, you are the children of Abraham. If you don't, even if you're Jewish, you are the children of Hagar in bondage to the earthly Jerusalem. Everything turns again on Christ and being united to him.

00:42:48 **Rod Rosenblatt:** What was the one from Eisenhower? That it's very, very important that the American people hold deeply to faith. It doesn't matter really which kind.

00:42:59 **Michael Horton:** Which one it is, yeah.

00:43:00 **Rod Rosenblatt:** Or that great theologian Marilyn Monroe, "I believe everything just a little bit."

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00:43:07 **Michael Horton:** Or the bumper sticker years ago, "You got to believe in something. I believe I'll have another beer."

00:43:13 **Rod Rosenblatt:** Yeah. We treat this as if it's some sort of self-validating spiritual virtue. The New Testament could care very little about it, cares a lot about Christ and he's dying in his blood and his death and being buried and being raised again in history and faith to the Christians was believing that was for you and embracing it and saying no to all work plans, earning your way in, that's got to go. But in the New Testament, preaching Christ as the savior involved that kind of content and not what Marilyn Monroe said.

00:43:55 **Michael Horton:** Can I throw in one more example? In John 15, Jesus comes to Lazarus' tomb and there's so much there to unpack that's amazing and marvelous but what's really significant on this point is that Martha, after she gets over his frustration at Jesus is interrogated by Jesus. Jesus says, "Do you believe that your brother will live again?" And she says, "Yes, he will be raised in the general resurrection at the end of time." And Jesus pressed her further, "I am the resurrection and the life. Do you believe this?" And she said, "I do." See, that's what we're talking about here where faith meets experiences. That's the issue right there, not just I believe in the doctrine of the resurrection of the body and life everlasting but that Jesus who is speaking to me now is my resurrection and my life and what's significant there is it wasn't about Lazarus' resurrection. It wasn't about Lazarus' experience. It wasn't even really about Martha's experience or the experience of the people who were looking on. It wasn't about the dazzling display of the miracle that would cause everybody to shiver in their seats and say, "Wow, that was a spectacle." The whole point of that was getting this one woman, Martha and through her witness, all the people around to come to that confession of faith which is more important than any temporal resurrection for a few more years, namely that would reconcile them to God so that they would be raised forever with Jesus Christ. That was the point of that whole day and that has to be the point of our whole lives, that confession.

00:45:58 **Eric Landry:** Thanks Mike, thanks Rod. Can you give them a hand?

00:46:07 **Narrator:** The *White Horse Inn* is a listener supported broadcast. For more information about this program, visit us online at whitehorseinn.org. If you sign up as an innkeeper, architect or reformer, not only will you get a complimentary subscription to our magazine *Modern Reformation*, but you'll also get longer editions of every *White Horse Inn* broadcast. To find out how to join one of these support programs, click on the support tab of our website, whitehorseinn.org. You can also give us a call at 1-800-890-7556. That's 1-800-890-7556. We'll see you next time at the *White Horse Inn*.