

CONQUER YOUR DOUBTS

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Text: Matthew 11:2-6

Helen Roseveare writes, “As I came home from church one evening, I was struggling to recognize God's guidance for my life. Suddenly, I drove into dense fog and could see nothing. Poking my head out the window, I noticed a tiny light from the road ahead. As I inched my car forward, it blinked out and another set of oncoming headlights took its place some yards ahead. I crawled along, following just the short distance I could see--one light after another--until the fog cleared. Then I realized that this is how God guides me. He shows me how far I need to go at any given moment. And step-by-step, I move from one light to the next. Confident of God's guidance, I let go of the need to see his complete plan.”

-- Helen Roseveare, Living Faith. "Heart to Heart," Today's Christian Woman.

In our text, John the Baptist finds himself in a fog of sorts. Things have not turned out as he thought they would. The story of his life seems to reveal an unexpected twist. And in spite of all that has transpired in his life previously, now he finds it difficult to see clearly the plan of God.

At times, we too may face *circumstances* that cause us to doubt the Lord's plan or maybe His purpose. We may feel that our spiritual vision has been impaired. At this point, maybe more than any other, we must hold to the truth and assurance of God's word.

I. NEVER ALLOW YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES TO MAKE YOU QUESTION YOUR FAITH (Matthew 11:2-3).

‘When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, he sent his disciples to ask him, “Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?”

A. John's question came at the lowest moment of his life.

Note the context of John's question, “*When John heard in prison...*”

Unbelief always comes to us in our lowest times, never the less; it must be rejected as any other evil.

The late Dr. Heugh, of Glasgow, a short time before he breathed his last, said, "There is nothing I feel more than the criminality of not trusting Christ without doubt—without doubt. Oh, to think what Christ is, what he did, and whom he did it for, and then not to believe him, not to trust him! There is no wickedness like the wickedness of unbelief!"

-- Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *The Quotable Spurgeon*, (Wheaton: Harold Shaw Publishers, Inc, 1990)

Why do is it that we as humans always need proof?

■ In 1983, the U.S.A. issued a postage stamp commemorating the building of the first steel bridge in America. It was built across the Mississippi River at St. Louis. Many said it could not be built. They said it would never support its own weight. So James Eads, the builder, ordered fourteen locomotives to stop on the bridge at once. Then people trusted the bridge. They called it the eighth wonder of the world. The Lord Jesus Christ is the bridge between sinning man and a sinless God. We must trust him in order to cross it.

-- Robert C. Shannon, *1000 Windows*, (Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing Company, 1997).

B. John must have wondered if things were as God said or as they seemed.

We may not always realize it, but it is always as God has said. So when doubt battles with your faith always remember what God has said and cling to God and His promises.

It has been said that...

Doubt makes the mountain which faith moves.

Doubt sees the obstacles; faith sees the way.

Doubt sees the darkest night; faith sees the day.

Doubt dreads to take a step; faith soars on high;

Doubt questions, "Who believes?" Faith answers, "I."

Every step toward Christ kills a doubt. Every thought, word, and deed for him carries you away from discouragement.

Theodore Ledyard Cuyler (1822-1909) -Edythe Draper, Draper's Book of Quotations for the Christian World (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1992). Entries 2937-2940.

II. NEVER ALLOW YOUR EXPECTATIONS TO DETERMINE YOUR FAITH (Matthew 11:4-6).

Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me."

A. John needed to be reminded of what God had said in His Word.

The central and possibly most important truth here is that we must base ALL that we believe on the Word of God.

Jesus said in Luke 24:13-27, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

Jesus was the One because He fulfilled the Word! We believe and can have faith because of Him!

Robert Shannon writes, "English is a strange language. You would think that full of faith and faithful would be the same thing. They are not. They are related, but they are not the same things. To be full of faith is to have faith. To be faithful is to keep the faith. It is being true to the trust placed in us by others and by God. Everybody appreciates the person who is faithful, who will never betray a trust and never fail to keep a commitment. When we have not been faithful, it is because some doubt, however momentary or tentative, has crept in.

-- Robert C. Shannon, *1000 Windows*, (Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing Company, 1997).

B. The blessings go to those who refuse to doubt God's Word.

Oswald Chambers had this to say, "The rationalist demands an explanation of everything: The reason I won't have anything to do with God is because I cannot define him. If I can define God, I am greater than the God I define. If I can define love and life, I am greater than they are." Oswald Chambers (1874-1917)

-Edythe Draper, *Draper's Book of Quotations for the Christian World* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1992). Entries 9394-9395.

The writer of Hebrews warns us in chapter 3:12-14 "See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first.

CONCLUSION

In his book *Wind and Fire*, Bruce Larson writes, "A few years ago I almost drowned in a storm at sea in the Gulf of Mexico when I found myself swimming far from shore, having tried to reach my drifting boat. I got into that predicament through my own stupidity, something not unusual at all. I can remember saying, "Well, this is it." The waves were seven or eight feet high, and the sky was dark with gale force winds and lightning. I was drifting out to sea when the Word of the Lord came to me and saved my life. What I thought He said was, "I'm here, Larson, and you're not coming home as soon as you think. Can you tread water?" Somehow that had never occurred to me. Had I continued my frantic effort to swim back to shore, I would have exhausted my strength and gone down.

In all sorts of situations we can make matters worse by our frantic efforts to save ourselves when God is trying to tell us, "Stand still."

--James S. Hewett, *Illustrations Unlimited* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988) p. 189.

What do you do when doubt wants to creep in because of your *circumstances*? Go to the Word.

