

Dealing with Doubt, Outline Part 1

What is Doubt?

Matthew 11:1-6

INTRODUCTION:

This morning I want us to turn our attention to a very important issue in our Christianity journey. An issue that often gets overlooked but all of us, if honest, have dealt with. Many of us have dealt with it without real answers in how to address it. It is the awful experience of living in or with some form of doubt.

I want to begin with a story from an excerpt of a book I am writing:

I remember when I was in youth group back in Junior High, we would have youth events or what we called back then, youth revivals. The music would be moving and the evangelist that seemed to come back year after year was very smooth and “cool” in his presentation to all of us kids. I would describe him as a list of one liner clichés in his talk. Not to say there wasn’t good stuff in his message, but it was his ability to throw out these one liners that made him interesting to listen to as a teenager. The thing I noticed though is that it seemed that every year the same people would go down to “get saved.” I was like, “Weren’t they saved last year when he was here?”

Pastors loved him because there would be great numbers to talk about after one of his revivals to share with the local association and many of the other pastors would bring him to their church. What seemed like the next “Great Awakening” was actually more of a revolving door. I remember myself, after one of his visits, struggling immensely with doubt. Again, I was in Junior High and was just brought to tears and my mind being completely jacked up feeling the horror of going to hell when I die. The problem was I also remember sincerely coming to faith earlier in my life. So, what I had was a severe case of doubt, and like many of us I let my doubting debilitate me, and my mother had to walk me through the questions I had regarding my doubts. It was a very emotional experience! I had to go back to my own first experience with Christ at a young age, fall back on what I knew to be true which was the fact I had come to know Christ, I didn’t need to walk the aisle again, but I did need to grow in my faith to sure up some of the questions that assisted in creating my doubts! I did in fact know Jesus according to His Word. This is key! Knowing Jesus according to His Word and not through merely our feelings.

Now as a preacher myself I am very aware that what I say can cause uncertainty in some of the listeners unnecessarily if I'm not careful with how I use my words. It is true that I want to create doubts where there should be doubts, but I don't want any careless words to create doubts where there shouldn't be, but as I just stated earlier what creates many doubts for people is their lack of growth and lack of bearing fruit. This is not always the case, as we shall see in the passage this morning, but I would say that is where most of our doubts come from. The wonderful thing about the Lord is that He wants us to have assurance that He has everything under control, even the salvation of our souls.

Matthew 11:1-6

When Jesus had finished giving these instructions to his twelve disciples, he went out to teach and preach in towns throughout the region.² John the Baptist, who was in prison, heard about all the things the Messiah was doing. So, he sent his disciples to ask Jesus,³ “Are you the Messiah we’ve been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?”⁴ Jesus told them, “Go back to John and tell him what you have heard and seen—⁵ the blind see, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor.”⁶ And he added, “God blesses those who do not fall away because of me.”¹

I. What is Doubt?

¹ Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Mt 11:1–6). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

II. Two Types of Doubt

A. Intellectual Doubt

B. Emotional Doubt

Learning How to Think

1. Learn Awareness
2. Learn Context
3. Learn to Triage
4. Learn to Question with a Purpose
5. Learn to Listen

The Emotional Companions of Doubt

1. *Fear*

A natural emotion to experience when experiencing emotional doubt is fear. But where does fear come from? It comes from two main elements:

A.) Lack of control

B.) Unknowns

2. *Anxiety*

3. *Anger*

4. *Sadness*

5. *Confusion*