

# Questions for God

## Part 1 – Is it okay to Doubt?

### Matthew 11.1-15

There is a kind of doubt that is sinful and a kind of doubt that causes double-mindedness

- John the Baptist didn't have this kind of doubt

#### **If you doubt, you're in good company**

- John was family, baptized Jesus, first person to receive Trinitarian revelation, declared Jesus the Lamb of God, sent disciples to Jesus, and decreased so Jesus would increase
- Sources:
  1. Personal Situation – when you think you're doing what you're supposed to be doing but still end up in jail
    - Satan: if God was good or was for you, this wouldn't be
  2. Disengaged – he was unable to do what he had always done
    - Satan: "You've been put out to pasture and there's no real use for you anymore"
  3. Physical Environment – our physical circumstances can impact our spiritual outlook
    - Satan: "Here's a fantasy you can escape into"
  4. Isolated – without the perspective being around others can bring (Prov. 18.1)
    - Satan: "God has left you" (possibly "because He doesn't love you")

#### **If you doubt, do what John did – take it to Jesus**

- If you can't get there, find someone who can (importance of being connected)
- Instead of disregarding, Jesus deals with John's doubts (v.4-5)
- Instead of disowning, Jesus affirms John's identity (v.7-9)
- Instead of disqualifying, Jesus confirms John's calling (v.9-10)
- Instead of distancing, Jesus declared the relationship was firm (v.11)
  - Our doubts are met with compassion instead of condemnation

#### **Jesus paints a picture (v.4-5, 12)**

- He knows our doubts are heart issues, not head issues
- He is looking to inspire, not to inform (pictures stick with us)
  - Clearing road blocks w/ logic is good but pictures foster faith (and destroy doubt)
  - Whatever the cause of John's doubt, the remedy was a clearer picture of Jesus and His work
    - No new picture – clear references to Isaiah 61 – because faith comes by Word (Rom 10.17)

### **Jesus makes a promise (v.6)**

- His promises always invite our faith (and often collide with our doubt)
- His promises shine when darkest
  - Nowhere is this more clearly seen than the cross

### Questions for Discussion

1. What's the most honest question you've ever asked God? What's the most honest doubt you have ever had the courage to express to Him?
2. When you think about your spiritual struggles and doubts, can you categorize their origin into one of the 4 areas mentioned in part 1 of the sermon? If so, which? Why do you think that is the source? If not, to what would you attribute your doubt or struggle? Depending on how you answered, does it change the way you address the doubt or bring it to God?
3. Reread the story in Matthew 11. What kind of picture did Jesus paint for John (v.4-5)? What about for the crowds (v.12)? How does the portrait Jesus paints reflect Isaiah 61.1-3? Why do you think Jesus was using the same kind of language for John?
4. Knowing that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ (Romans 10.17), what are two ways you can "up" your Bible intake in order to bolster your faith? How can you implement those ways?
5. What promise(s) from Jesus are you holding on to right now? How are they shaping your faith? What's different in your week because you are holding on to them? What promises might you need someone else to help you believe? Who will that person be?