

EFCDP SERMON NOTES • February 4, 2024

Series: *Help My Unbelief* # 1

“Doubt—Your Doorway to Discipleship” • Matthew 11:2-15

The Big Idea: *Don't ignore your doubts—pursue them.*

1. Your doubt can lead you to solid faith. **Vv. 1-3**

2. The Christian faith can withstand any honest examination. **Vv. 4-6**

3. God loves doubters. **Vv. 7-15**

Digging Deeper

A guide for personal and small group study for the week of February 4, 2023.



→ Was any part of the message unclear? Which aspect of the message do you think will be the most challenging to apply to your own life?

→ Do you agree with the “big idea” of this passage? Why or why not?

1. What are some things you once believed that you now know are not true? (E.G. Santa Claus, elves, the Easter bunny, tooth fairy, etc.)

→ Describe how you felt when you realized you had been believing something that was not true—by what process did you come to understand the truth about it?

2. Define doubt.

3. Is there a difference between doubt and unbelief? If so, describe.

4. Is there a difference between the doubt Thomas expressed when he wanted to examine Jesus’ post-crucifixion hands (John 20:24-29), and what Pontius Pilate expressed in John 18:33—19:16?

→ Would you say one is doubt and the other unbelief? Does making a distinction matter? Why or why not?

5. Read Matthew 11:20-24. Is Jesus making a distinction between kinds of doubt in this passage? If so, what are the consequences?

6. What are some things you personally hear that people have doubts about (global warming, God's existence or his love, bigfoot, UFO's, the cancer-causing effects of certain foods/products such as non-stick cookware, round vs. flat earth. etc.)?

→ Are the doubts you hear expressed doubt or unbelief? Explain.

7. Describe the difference between the three kinds of doubt Pastor Steve mentioned in the sermon: intellectual, emotional, moral.

A. Intellectual:

B. Emotional:

C. Moral:

8. Have you heard these kinds of doubts expressed by friends? If so, give some examples:

A. Intellectual:

B. Emotional:

C. Moral:

9. Read Job 1:13-22 and 2:7-10. What kind of doubt must have been a real temptation for Job?

→ What does Job's response to adversity reveal about his faith?

10. Read John 1:29-34. How would you describe John's faith in Jesus as the Messiah? On what was his belief based?

11. Compare the basis for John's faith in the previous question, and the basis for faith of John's disciples that Jesus noted in Matthew 11:4-5. Are they the same or different?

12. Read Isaiah 35:5-6 and 61:1 and Luke 4:16-30. Why is it significant Jesus applies these Old Testament to himself? Why would

this matter to John the Baptist? Why did the people who heard Jesus speak in the temple try to kill him?

13. How could a Christian today follow the example of Jesus' response to John's doubt in talking with skeptics?

14. If someone has doubts about the character or existence of God because of their emotional pain/physical suffering, what approach would you take in ministering to them?

15. If someone has doubts about the claims of Jesus being the only way to eternal life, what approach would you take in ministering to them?

16. Describe the expectations John the Baptist probably had about the Messiah, based on scripture such as Isaiah 11.

- How do you think John's imprisonment impacted those expectations?

- Why did Jesus not fulfill everything prophesied in Isaiah 11 during his earthly ministry in the first century A. D.? (See also Rev. 21:1-8.)

17. Review Jesus' words about John the Baptist in Matthew 11:7-15. Summarize how Jesus regarded him:

18. What did Jesus mean by saying that Christians today can be even greater than John the Baptist (Matthew 11:11)?

19. How can doubt strengthen a Christian's faith? How can doubt weaken a Christian's faith?

20. What doubts do you struggle with today? What is your plan to address those doubts? What expectations do you have about God that have yet to be fulfilled?