

I Doubt It

I Doubt It series: Week 1

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Thank you to our worship team for teaching us a new song Sebastian, love that little riff-age. Oh, I love our church. I am just... right now I'm just feeling a sense of joy and peace. So I'm just so grateful that we're able to be here together. Amen. I don't take this for granted. Let's go ahead and pray. Father, we thank you for another day of life. And Lord, the opportunity to come together to study Lord as we now begin a new series. One of the things that we sometimes experience is doubt. Lord made the next six weeks seven weeks Lord may be a time of growth and empowerment. Lord, above all, may we understand you in a better way. That Lord you are for us, not against us. In Jesus name, amen.

There was a young boy, his name was not given. So I'm going to make one up. Let's just call him James. James was 10 years old and he was at the grocery store with his mom and his little sister Erica. And as they started going down the aisles the first aisle was one of his favorite aisles. It was the fruit snack aisle. And so as they enter the store, he asked my mom, can we please look down the fruit snack aisle? He thought she said yes. And so he started to wander down the fruit snack aisle. And behold, in the middle of the fruit snack aisle, was the glorious fruit roll up. He loved fruit roll ups. I personally as well. I'm a connoisseur of fruit roll ups. It's one of my favorite snacks. Well, he thought Mom had followed him. When he looked at the fruit roll ups. He grabbed the box. He looked to his left. She wasn't there. He looked to the right. She wasn't there. Oh, no. Where was mom? He thought, "Hmmm That's not normal." So he walked down to the end of the aisle. He went to aisle two wasn't there? Aisle 3. She was not there. All of a sudden he started to in the pit of his stomach started to feel a bit queasy. A little bit sick, wondering. My mom has abandoned me. Oh, poor James. Then he started to feel really scared. And then he wanted to cry, but nope, not gonna cry. The next aisle over in Aisle 5. He saw a man stacking cans. Now if the man was stacking cans, he must work here. He walked over to the man said I've lost my mom. And I can't find her. The man stacking the cans kind of grunted and he said all right. What's your name, Son? My name is James. Alright, let's find your mom James. He got up. He walked over to the next aisle. And over in the next style was the manager. The manager carried what looked like a little radio. The man said hey, this young man James is trying to find his mom. His name is James. James. How old are you? I'm 10 years old. When he said 10 years old. He felt so ashamed because his mom said he was a big boy. And yet he was trying not to cry. Because he was scared. He thought what happened to my mom? Maybe she was abducted by aliens. She left me she's abandoned me. Doubt was seeped in his mind. Well, the manager said well, the mother of James, please come to Aisle Five. Aisle Five. The mother of James he's 10 years old. Please come to Aisle Five. Well, a minute goes by another minute. And another minute until finally he saw his mother. And mom came up She asked James, are you all right? No, Mom, you left me in the fruit snack aisle. And she said, James, I said, No, let's go to the bathroom. I need to change your sister Erica's diaper. Then she then said, Oh, I'm sorry. All of a sudden relief, though, had flooded his mind and his heart. And he realized his mom didn't leave him. He just wasn't listening well to her. Then she asked James, do you think I would really ever leave you? He had to think about it. Well, for a second. I did. Maybe a few minutes. Instead, she said, No, James, I will never leave you. I'm your mom. I love you. And I want to make sure that you are okay. And I want to raise you

to be a strong faithful boy. I would never leave you because I love you. To his shame James said, Okay, can we go back to the fruit snack aisle, please. And they went to the fruit snack aisle where he got some fruit roll ups.

Doubt. James experienced a moment of doubt in his life when he could not find his mom. When you look through the Bible. Did anybody ever doubt God or question God? Okay, how about this? Let's do a little exercise. Let's name some people who've doubted God. Moses, Thomas. Thomas, Doubting Thomas. Right? Even Zechariah John the Baptist dad who laughed at God. Sarah, okay, so Sarah, she didn't just like doubt God, she was like, Haha, right. Anybody else doubt. Okay. How about did any of the disciples doubt? Where were the disciples when Jesus was on the cross? Nowhere to be found except for John, the beloved. Right? Well, over the next six to seven weeks, we're starting a new series called. I doubt it.

How many of you have experienced a sense of when I doubt it? Maybe recently. Okay. Has your skepticism maybe been elevated recently? I think more so I think a lot more people are starting to ask more questions, not just in faith, but everywhere in their lives. Right? Well, doubt is actually a Well, I wouldn't I don't know if I call it a theme. But it is prevalent throughout the Bible. Even the most faithful believers and followers of God had moments of doubt in their life. Amen. Now, let me ask you this. Does this make you feel like you could question God more? Or does that actually bring you a source of hope? Oh, to me, and actually tells me Hey, if they can doubt and still overcome, there's still a possibility for me. Amen.

All right, let's do this. Let's go to the Word of God. Let's go to Matthew 14:22-32. 14:22 to 32. This is a passage we have gone over it was the first passage I preached from, but it's always a good reminder, there's some good lessons that we can take from this story. Matthew 14. Okay, so whether you got the analog, literal Bible or if you have a phone or a tablet, let's go there. Verse 22. Alright, be there. Amen. All right, verse 22. Immediately, there's a sense of purpose. Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side while he dismissed the crowd. And after he dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night. He was there alone, and the boat was already in considerable distance from the land buffeted by the waves, because the wind was against it. And shortly before dawn, Jesus went out to them walking on the lake, when the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were afraid and terrified. It's a ghost they said and cried out in fear. But Jesus, he immediately said to them, Take courage it is I don't be what Don't be afraid, Lord, if it's you Peter replied, tell me to come to you on the water. Love Peters just sense of boldness. Yes, Jesus said, Come. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water came to Jesus came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and he began to sink. He cried out, Lord saved me. And immediately Jesus reached out his hand and he caught him, you have little faith, he said, Why did you doubt? When they climbed in the boat, the wind died down. And just for bonus credit, verse 33, then those who were in the boat worshiped him saying, Truly, You are who? The Son of God.

So we have this experience where Jesus he takes time, he needs to commune with God, he needs to step away from the ministry of healing and teaching and listening. Even Jesus needed time alone, to pray and to commune with the Father and just to find rest. I think when we're so tired, that's when doubt tends to seep in easily, especially when we're exhausted, we can't think clearly. Or maybe even in the middle of the night, I found that when I'm most nervous is actually when I wake up in the middle of the night, not getting a good night's sleep, you can't make good decisions when you can't sleep properly,

right? Or you'll make decisions that may not be the best decisions. And we find that Jesus goes and walks across the water. Now, at the time, many people believe that there were there were demons and ghosts and sea monsters below. And when they see Jesus walking, they think he's a ghost. Jesus calmly but firmly, comforts and reminds them hey, it's just me.

But I love Peter's response. Because he's thinking, What if Jesus can do it? Why can't I? And so he asks Jesus, Jesus, please, can I can I walk out on the water? Jesus says, yeah, so he puts his two feet over the railing. And he gets in the water. And as he starts to walk, he thinks caught, this has to be amazing. I've never done this before. And his eyes were on Jesus. But then he noticed that the wind started to pick up and when the wind picks up, suddenly, it's not a calm piece of water. There's ripples and maybe even waves. I don't know how strong the wind was. But it was enough to break Peter's concentration on Jesus. And it was there, that he became afraid. And so he starts to sink, he's scared. And he says, Lord saved me. Jesus reaches out and grabs Peter, and when. When Jesus catches Peter, what was Jesus response? You of little faith. Why did you doubt? Now this is in chapter 14. So there's been Jesus has been with the disciples, for some time, this was not just a normal walk on Sunday out, you know, they had experienced much together. Peter was walking on water. And yet he began to doubt.

Here's a question for you. When it comes to doubt, are all moments of doubt equal? No, I don't think so. Because I think that there's certainly there's some moments where it's like, I don't know if I'm gonna make it up over this hill, when you're driving and your car's not strong and equipped, and it's about to die. That might be a moment of doubt. But then there are some who had asked serious questions of am I going to be around in a year? Why is this happening? God, why do you allow this? Why do you allow certain things to happen? And others not? These are questions that we're going to be tackling over the next six weeks.

Doubt. Doubt can sometimes be easily prevalent. It's something that is catchable and if we're not careful if we don't get our hearts and our minds, it can affect us. Now, another question. Is there any good that comes from doubting? Maybe... that's alright, let's have a conversation. Is there any good that comes from doubt? Potentially? Okay, good response. When you doubt, what are you doing? You're asking questions. And how do you grow? By asking questions. Is it better to ask questions and think about it and wrestle with the question or the topic than just to be told, okay, this is what you need to know and believe. Because when you wrestle with the question, you have to think about everything, you have to think about the consequences before after who went, what, when, why and how. Whereas it's one thing for somebody to say God loves you, believe it. Okay, I can say that, and I can believe. But does God really love me? If I'm dealing with a bout of cancer, if my son has rejected me, you think of all of these situations that could easily come up? And I honestly believe that faith can only come from challenges. And sometimes in those challenges, there are moments of doubt. If we're being honest, as humans, we're prone to doubt. And I think that there's this false narrative that well, as somebody said, you just got to believe. And yes, we have to believe, but we have to know why we believe. Just being told something, and we're supposed to believe it isn't going to take a strong effect, until we actually have to wrestle with the challenges. Now. I think, Gary Parker, I think it was Gary Parker. He said, If faith never encounters doubt, if truth never struggles with error, if good never battles with evil, how can faith know its own power? In my own pilgrimage, I have chosen to choose between a faith that has stared doubt in the eye and made it blink or in a naive faith that is never known the firing line of doubt. I will choose the former, every time. So doubt can be a catalyst for faith. Okay. Doubt forces us to ask questions. So we've already talked about there's several people who've experienced down to the Bible, I think, the one

person in the Bible who I think probably is, probably struggled, one of the most who struggled the most was the story of Job. Job loses all of his kids. He loses everything. In fact, not just that his body is wracked with, as it boils, right. And you would think that after all of that time, he would question and as Mrs. Job said, why don't you just curse God? Just thank you just curse God and die. And we better off that way. You won't have to suffer anymore. And yet Job still as much hardship as he faced. He still was faithful to God, even in those moments of challenges. But you know, there are many people, even the disciples, they all fled except for John. And then when Jesus meets them later, you look at that experience of how their minds and their lives were transformed. Because when you look at the book of Acts, look at all the hardship that they faced. What was the conclusion for everyone except for John? They were all murdered. Right, John? At least he died when he was older, but every one of them died in early death.

Change, hardship, things that can cause doubt. So where are you going? When I look back At the story of Peter, when it comes to doubt, I think the one thing that he, the mistake that he made was he took his eyes off of Jesus. And he looked around and he saw and experienced that the wind was building up. And the waves perhaps started to get bigger. And that's where he lost faith. When we're dealing with doubt, ultimately, it as faithful believers, may we always have our eyes on Jesus. Always have our minds on Jesus.

But you know, I also love Peter's, I don't want to call it boldness, but maybe his curiosity. We all could learn from Peter, that we should be curious, curious to ask questions. That faithful three letter word that my grandmother hated when I was growing up. Why? Why? Why? Why? Because if we don't know why, and especially even as leaders if we don't explain why, then people are going to question everything we say, and do we have to be able to explain the why. And may we be curious, like Peter, none of the other disciples thought, hey, I'm gonna ask Jesus, if I can walk on water. Peter's curiosity at times, was a moment of source of great faith, and also probably put him in situations where he thought about I should have thought about that ahead of time. Right. But where are you going? I love Peters curiosity. And yet he got distracted. Have you been distracted lately? Is it easier to be distracted? More? What distractions Do you experience right now? Clickbait what's on this, the headlines? Could be anything. Even trying to listen to the radio news. There's so many distractions, people vying for your attention. Even when you're looking on your screen, whether it's your phone, your tablet, they can sense where your eyes are going. Isn't that crazy? That's how far we've come in technology. They know what you're looking at, as you're scrolling down. And they know what they're they're trying to predict what you want to see. It's rather distracting at times.

So distractions. Think about this to Apple, okay. Many of us have an iPhone in our pockets or purses. When Steve Jobs was creating an iPhone, did he just come up with it and say, Hey, this is what we're going to do. And this is what we're going to come out with next year. And then the following year, we'll do something else. No, Steve Jobs, he was intentional. We're going to put something together where you can not only make calls, you can listen to music, you can make notes. And I can't remember did early generation iPhones? Did they have Google Maps on it yet? Came Okay, thank you. I was not one of the first Apple kind of source. I waited a little bit. I love my Blackberry and I still do. But eventually, you were able to put Google Maps on it. There's so many things. And in many ways our lives are tied to these devices, right? I mean, can you imagine? See, it's 2022. So 1982 Could you imagine having something handheld? That has the ability to make calls to FaceTime with people around the world send messages, and you know, show you where to go and even tell you verbally. I remember when I was

starting to drive back in the 90s back in the day. You maybe had a Thomas guide, or you printed on... No, no, let's even go deeper. Maybe you printed directions on Mapquest while trying to juggle changing a CD and then maybe drinking Mountain Dew out of a Slurpee cup. Right? Oh, those were the days. I'm not advocating doing that being distracted driving, by the way. But it's amazing how far we have come. And yet Steve Jobs had a vision of where he knew where the company he was building. He was where he wanted to go. And just like in our own lives, we need to know where we're going, obviously, where are we going with Jesus? May our hearts be intertwined with Jesus May Jesus be the goalpost of where we are headed, that we may spend eternity with Jesus and not just me, but all of us. And all of those who are seeking who are hurting, who need Jesus. Amen.

So, just wrap up because my time is short. A couple of very Bible verses that you can look at when dealing with doubt, obviously, the book of Job, Luke 8:5-15, Romans 5:3-4, and James 1:3. Now, just to just to kind of really quickly Romans 5:3-4, it says not only so. But we are also we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance character and character hope and hope does not put us into shame. Because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. In our doubts, may we be reminded that God truly does love us. And that even though we sometimes experience hardship, do we so that we experience challenge. It also creates strength, endurance, and perseverance. In fact, even Paul, James sorry, and James 1:3, it says, or verse 2 Consider it pure joy, pure joy, my brothers and sisters whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance and that perseverance, work its way so that you may be mature and complete, and not lack anything.

So what should we do with doubt initially? Well, number one, pray. And ask yourself, why are you doubting? Am I doubting because it's something that I'm emotionally responding to? Or is it something that I have to think about? Maybe when we're dealing with hardship, and doubt we sometimes we want to feel it, but maybe just let's look at the facts. Why am I feeling this way? Why am I doubting, and take action steps to help you overcome your doubt? To not maybe put your place put yourself in places where it causes you to doubt? Or at least be reminded that no, there is challenges, but yet I know that I have a God who loves me, has died for me, and wants to be with me, and spend eternity with me. And that this world is only a temporary world. Amen.

And when God brings you out of that debt, may you be like the disciples in verse 32. And it says, when you climbed it, the boat, the wind died, then those who are in the boat worshipped Him saying, truly you are the Son of God. May you give God praise and glory, when God has helped you to overcome. So reflection, think about maybe write down where in your life have you doubted and questioned God. And how did God help you to overcome the moments of doubt? Okay, where in your life, in faith or just in regular life? Where have you doubted? Where has God helped you to overcome? What was different about that moment?

Finally, write down one doubt in your life right now. And ask yourself, Is this doubt that I'm experienced? Is it is it emotional or is an intellectual point of view? And then pray and take action steps to overcome your doubt? Amen.

All right, I look forward to studying with you all the next six weeks, may the Lord bless you lead and guide you. May you overcome. Don't doubt about it. Father in heaven, Lord, we thank you for life for your love, Lord and opportunity to once again come together as a church family, to sing and to pray and to study, Lord, as we begin this series, Lord, as we're talking about doubt, Lord, may You help us to

overcome and see that your plan is much better than we could ever think of. And Lord, where there are moments of doubt, may we not be distracted low, but may our eyes and our vision be upon you. May we trust in You. May we be faithful to you. In Jesus name, everybody said Amen.

Grace and peace, everybody.