

Community Group Discussion Questions

“No Doubt” Matthew 11:1-6 August 3, 2019

Getting Started

Today we discover that when “in doubt” there should be “no doubt” about how we should respond! Doubt takes places when mental expectations go unmet in a physical reality.

Sometimes we project or expect something to go a certain way, and then it doesn't. At other times, tragedy strikes and we are left wondering how and why this can happen. In today's passage, John the Baptist has to face a very uncomfortable situation, his own imprisonment! How he handles it, and how Jesus responds to him can teach us a valuable lesson.

Going Deeper:

1. **The Existence of Doubt:** *“Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” (Vs. 2-3)*
 1. Circumstantial Doubt: “prison”
 2. Experiential Doubt: “deeds”
 3. Intellectual Doubt: “look”

It seems crazy to us to think that the same man who pointed to Jesus and said, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world” would suddenly doubt who Jesus was! Yet, John's imprisonment was likely a huge shock to his system. A man used to roaming around the desert and saying what God prompted him to say has now been caged, and will soon have his head cut off by a wicked leader. John may also have been expecting Jesus to go faster, say more, or do more things more quickly. John is disillusioned by his experience and it is causing him to doubt everything he ever believed. Share with your group about a time when you doubted God's goodness, existence or control.

2. The Effects of Doubt: An Invisible Prison

1. Unstable: *"..for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind"* (James 1:6)
2. Unfruitful: *"For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*
(2 Peter 1:8)

When we doubt God, it turns off our supernatural power flow. How can Christ live in and through us, when we don't trust His goodness and leadership over our lives? How can we be filled with the Spirit and led by God when we refuse to believe He has our best in mind? Read 2 Peter 1:1-7. What things should be growing in us instead of doubt?

3. The Encouragement in Doubt: Confront it!

1. Define your Doubt: "Unmet Expectations?"
 1. Circumstantial?
 2. Experiential?
 3. Intellectual?
2. Describe your Doubt: "Belief Drives the Bus"
 1. Thoughts
 2. Feelings
 3. Behaviors
3. Deal with your Doubt: *"Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe"* (John 20:25)

A Christian communicator once used the illustration of a train with an engine, a passenger car, and a caboose. The engine is 'belief'. The passenger car is 'experience'. The caboose is 'emotions/feelings'. What do you think he was trying to communicate with this illustration?

What happens to us when we rearrange the order, when we let feelings dictate beliefs or experience? Or when we let experience dictate beliefs or feelings?

4. **The Enlightenment in Doubt:** Matthew 11:4-6

1. He gives Confirmation: *“Go and tell John what you hear and see”* (Vs. 4)
2. He gives Clarification: *“the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.”* (Vs. 5) (Isaiah 61:1)
3. He gives Commendation: *“And blessed is the one who is not offended by me”* (Vs. 6)

John didn't have the whole story! John didn't realize that Jesus was just getting started on a ministry that would last for 3 years! Supernatural things are happening and Old Testament prophecies are being fulfilled, but John doesn't have the full picture. Then, recognizing John's imprisonment and upcoming death, Jesus blesses him as one who is not offended or ashamed to be aligned with Jesus. Oh, if we could just step back and see what God sees! When we are in pain, and living in disappointment, doubts creep in. But they are not based on heavenly reality, that our God is sovereign over everything and He has a plan, and things are happening all around us that we just can't see. Share with your group about a time when God surprised you with a wonderful thing when you thought all was hopeless.

Take Away: If you don't have doubts then you don't have faith, for you can't doubt a faith you don't have.

Prayer:

Pray for one another that you will be strong in faith when the doubts come.