

Why Me God?

I Doubt It – Week 3

by Bill Aumack

You know, one day, John Wesley was walking with a friend who was experiencing some troubles, some difficulties in his life. And as this man told John Wesley about his problems, he said, "I don't know what I'm going to do with this wall of trouble and doubt that I have." Just then John Wesley saw a cow, looking over a stone wall. And John says, "Do you know why that cow looks over the wall?" The man looks at the cow looks at John. "No." "Well, because she can't look through the wall." And that's what we need to do. With our doubt, and our troubles. Sometimes we try and see through them, instead of looking over them at the God who is above all.

We're in our third message in our series on doubt. Today is why me? Right? I was good. I always followed the rules. I did what I was supposed to do, Lord, why me? We've probably all been there, right? And, you know, I mean, if we're really honest with ourselves, we've all dealt with doubt. We've all had a time when we doubted. Maybe it was big, it was a huge thing that really shook our core and our foundation, maybe it was a smaller thing. But at some point, another, we've all dealt with doubt. And in fact, in our small groups, least in my small group, we've talked about a lot of times we weren't allowed to talk about doubt. Right? We're Christians, you can't have doubt. That makes you the lowest of the low, right? If you were to rank all the sins, from you know, little white lies to stealing to whatever the you know, axe murderers and rapists under that is doubters, right? Just the worst. And I don't know that is necessarily true. And we're going to talk more about that. But we've all had doubt. And usually it's a big thing. Right? Somebody we know and love got sick, we prayed for him and they died anyway. Right? Or the young child dies, or the mother gets hit by a drunk driver and dies. And we say God, why? That's a valid question. Right? We all want to know why. And you know, I mean, it's happened to me. You guys. Remember, Randy, we prayed for Randy. You remember Ray, we prayed for Ray. My mom prayed for her. Linda's dad, prayed for him. And many of us have been through the same thing. That doesn't make me unique. That makes me just like everybody else. Because we've all been through that. We've all experienced that. Right?

And you know, the Bible is full of people who doubted Abraham doubts, and he's in the hall of fame of faith. Right. And how do you get from doubt to the Hall of Fame? Right? I don't know how that works. But he doubts. David doubts all the time. Jonah doubts that God can protect him from the citizens of Nineveh. Right. Thomas doubts. The entire Israel nation doubts many times, most notably right when they're ready to go into the Promised Land. And so we have all

these doubts, but it's not just those big stories. Sometimes, it's much more subtle. Eve, standing in the garden, listening to the serpent tell her his story. God doesn't want you to know. And she begins to doubt. Maybe God doesn't want me to know. Her son Cain doubt that God was serious about how you should do a proper way to do a sacrifice. And so he does his own thing that ends badly. And we could go on and on and on and on.

But I want to be really clear about one thing here, doubt is not sin. Okay? Let's let's be clear about that doubt is not sin. That's like temptation. Right? To be tempted is not a sin. Jesus was tempted, we're all tempted. It's what happens afterwards, that may or may not be the sin, right? Same thing with the doubt, the doubt is not a sin. It's what happens afterwards, that we need to be careful about, okay.

So, you know, the real question is what is doubt? Because many times we think doubt is the opposite of faith. I have faith or I have doubt. And that's not right. See, the opposite of faith is no faith. And doubt is somewhere here in the middle. Okay. The opposite of belief is not a question. It's unbelief. And doubt is in the middle. That is when we make up our mind of whether I'm going to go this way, or I'm gonna go that way. Okay, so doubt itself is not a sin. And we need to understand that it's okay to doubt and if you have doubted, that doesn't make you some poor sorry, excuse of a Christian, that makes you just like everybody else. Amen. Okay, so now we got the stigma of doubt out of the way, right.

We know the story of doubting Thomas, why don't you turn with me in your Bibles to John chapter 20. I think Doubting Thomas gets a little bit of a bad rap here. Some of it he deserved, but some of it maybe we're a little bit hard on him. Okay. John, chapter 20. And we're, this happens, you know, this is whatever you want to call it, Resurrection Sunday, the first Easter morning, whatever. This is the Sunday that Jesus comes back to life out of the tomb, right? Let's pick up the story. Right in verse two, right? The women have gone out to try and put the spices and whatever on the body so you don't doesn't smell too bad. And they find that the body's not there. So what happens verse two, she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved and said, they have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him. So Peter and the other disciples started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter haha, slowpoke and reach the tomb. first. He bent over and looked in at the strips lying of of linen lying there, but did not go in. Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb, no stopping and Peter, He saw the strips of lying there as well as the cloth had been wrapped around Jesus's head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. Finally, the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went inside, what's it say next? He saw and believed, When did he start to believe when he

saw! When the women came back and said the body wasn't there, did they believe her? No. I'm going to check that out for myself. Right? Didn't didn't believe until he saw it with his own eyes.

Jump down with me to verse 24, same chapter. Now Thomas, also known Didymus I don't know if I'm saying that right. I looked that up. That means twin. Okay, it was a twin. One of the 12 was not with the disciples when Jesus came, and the other disciple told him we have seen the Lord but he said them unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were put my hand was side. I will not believe I'm not going to believe it until I see it right. A week later, his disciples were in the house again. and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, Peace be with you. Then he said to Thomas, Put your finger here, see my hands, reach out your hand and put it into my side. What's he say? Stop doubting and believe. And Thomas said to him, My Lord and my God, then Jesus told him because you have seen me you have believed, but bless it are those who have not seen and yet believed. There's a blessing for us, if we are willing to believe when we haven't seen, right, Peter and the other disciple, and Thomas didn't believe until they had seen. And let's be honest, it's a pretty amazing story. It's one thing for Jesus to stand there and raise Lazarus from the dead. It's another thing for a dead Jesus to raise Jesus from the dead. Right? That's a whole nother level. Right? It's a hard story to believe. And then the Christian context, we battle with this all the time, Stop doubting and believe. And that doubt, creeps in our feelings take over, and we don't know what to do.

Reminds me of the story in Mark 9, when the disciples were trying to cast out the demon and the little boy, and the demons would throw him into the fire and throw him into the water trying drown him, just do horrible things to him. And the disciples couldn't kick the demon out. And they took him to Jesus. And the father says, And Lord, if you could do something, and Jesus says, if!? If I can do something?! you need to believe and what's the Father say? I believe and help my unbelief. Powerful prayer. One we can remember when we're struggling, and say, Lord, I believe and help my unbelief. Help my unbelief. Okay.

Doubt is a concern that we can have that we must recognize and learn how to deal with it, doubt will stop your spiritual growth. I want to say that again, it seems obvious, but doubt will stop your spiritual growth. You cannot grow spiritually, if you do not believe. it's impossible. Oh, you can gain more knowledge. And I know how many books are in the Bible. I know how many verses and words and I can tell you all kinds of trivia and facts. But that's not always necessarily the same thing as spiritual growth. Amen. Okay, nothing wrong with that. But that's not necessarily spiritual growth.

All right. So I didn't want to just talk about doubt. And be you know, Debbie downer, whoever Debbie is. Sorry, Debbie. We got a Debbie here somewhere. Sorry, Debbie. It's like some people's names. You know, like, if your name is Karen anymore, I feel sorry for you, you know? Just sorry. Alright, so the question is, what do we do when we doubt? How do we overcome that? How do we get to a better place? And the Bible is chuck full of this stuff. When I was working on this this study, I mean, there's so much, and a lot of times you don't even realize that when you read it. When God tells Joshua, Be strong and courageous. He's not just talking about the battlefield. He's saying, Don't doubt me. Right? I will take care of it. Be strong and courageous. And I'll take care of it. But he says, I'll be with you always. Don't doubt. Right. So this stuff is just woven everywhere through the Bible. And I didn't even realize how much it was in there. Until I started looking. So here's a few things and a couple verses we can look at.

Number one, be confident in God. Be confident in God, when doubt shows up, put your confidence in God. Now, this is easy to say, sometimes harder to do, right? Because we're looking at the wall of doubt, instead of looking over the wall of doubt, and it can be tough. It can be hard. Turn with me to Hebrews chapter 13. Hebrews 13 and go the last part of verse five through verse eight. Hebrews 13, Give me an amen when you get there.

Wow, you guys are quick Hebrews 13, last part of verse five to verse eight, says, "...because God has said, Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you. So we say with confidence, The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid, what can mere mortals do to me? Remember your leaders who spoke the word of God to consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith? Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today and forever." There's three times in this short passage, where God is kind of indirectly telling us not to doubt. Never will I leave you never will I forsake you. Do you have to doubt if God is with you? No, right. So we can say the Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid what can mere mortals do to me? Right? My salvation is secure, what can mere mortals do to me, and then in verse eight, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever, three times, we're kind of subtly reminded, you don't have to worry about this. He's saying I got you. Right. I'm taking care of it. You can count on me. Keep your Bibles open there in Hebrews, we're going to come back to that in just a second.

But another verse we can look at is here in Psalms 139, 8 through 10. It says, If I go up to the heavens, you are there. If I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even your hand will guide me, and your right hand will hold me fast. Where can you go to get away from God? Nowhere. So why are you worried? What's the issue? I know what the issue is, the issue is we don't have enough faith in God, right? We're trying to do it ourselves. Alright, God, it's okay, I got this one. That always ends badly. It may seem like a little thing and you're like, I know how to do this one. Bring God

along, you may know how to do it. Maybe you've had to do that 27 times. Because you know, you're a slow learner. And you do know how to do it. Bring God along with you anyways. Right? Because maybe this time, it'll be different, something else will happen. Okay.

Our confidence is in a being who is always with us, who is all knowing who is all powerful, and who's always in control. It should never be an emotion or a feeling. I talk about this a lot, because sometimes we let our feelings control us. And something happens to us, and we feel bad and that's okay. You can feel bad, feelings are real. But don't let your feelings control you. Right. Let what you believe and what you know, control you. You have feelings. But don't let them take over. When doubt shows up. Remind yourself that you serve a God and He is with you always. Amen. All right.

Number two, be confident in your faith. Not in what you see. Don't be like Peter and the other disciple and Thomas. Be confident in your faith. Understand that Seeing is believing is only half a truth. We believe in all kinds of things we haven't seen. I believe China is real. I've never been there. Never seen it. But I believe it's real. I never met Napoleon but I believe at one point he was a real person here on the earth. We can go on and on and on. I bet you there's nobody here that can describe to me how an automatic transmission in your car works. But they do. Because I'd be honest with you, automatic transmissions are a little bit of rope and smoke and mirrors and magic. But they still work, we can still believe in them, even if we don't fully understand it. See where I'm going? Okay. Open your Bibles with me we're in Hebrews go to Hebrews 11 verse one, Hebrews 11 verse one.

Now faith is what? confidence in what we hope for, and what assurance about what we do not see. This is what faith is. Okay. Faith is not always having all the answers. Faith is not always understanding everything to the minutest detail of what's going on in the world. Faith is about confidence and assurance that God will be with us that God is in control. Not that I will understand everything. I wish I understood everything. It aggravates me that I don't understand everything. I'm an engineer. I'm supposed to understand everything. I don't, automatic transmissions are still a mystery. Okay.

We just read this, this passage about Thomas and John 20:29. Then Jesus said, because you have seen me you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe. There's a blessing for us.

Matthew 21:21 to 22 says Jesus replied, Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but you can say to the mountain, go throw yourself into the sea, and it will be done. If you believe you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer. Do you believe that? So that was weak. That was real. But that was weak. Because we all say, You know what, I prayed to God, I wanted so and so to get better. And I pray and I believed and they didn't. Let's be honest. Right? It's happened. So the next time somebody gets sick, how do you believe? you said, Well, you know, God, I believe you could heal them if you wanted to. But you know, whatever your will is if you don't want to, it's okay with me. Is that belief? That's the weakest belief ever, right? We got to believe we got to believe. Okay. God tells us not to doubt. Say no to doubt.

For those of you who are old like me, you remember a former president's wife that started to just say no, right? Just say no, say no to doubt. 1 John 4:4 tells us the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. Amen.

Last one, number 3... be confident in approaching God he will not let you down. You can be confident in approaching God turn with me to 1 John chapter 5. Way towards the back of the Bible. You got Revelation, Jude and you got first second third John way there in the back... 1 John 5:14.

This is the confidence we have in approaching God that if we ask for what anything according to His will, He hears us and if we know that He hears us whatever we ask, we know that we have what we asked of him if you ask for things according to His will. Okay. Let that mean when you're praying for your favorite team to win the the playoff spot [shrugs]. No when you're praying according to God's will. Okay, getting on on on the same page with God, and praying according to His will. Don't look at the circumstances. Because doubt, that's where doubt creeps in. Look up to God, the hills from where your help comes right. Psalms 46:1 reminds us that God is our refuge and strength and ever present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear have doubt.

Turn with me to James, James chapter 1. I've got it here on the screen too, James 1:2-8. "Consider it pure joy my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces what? Perseverance and let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask you must believe and what not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double minded and unstable and all that they

do." I don't want that last part of that description to be about me. I don't want to be unstable and tossed about. I want to be firm and not doubt, amen. See, our faith should be based on our facts, not our feelings. And you have to get those facts in and straight. Before you come up and deal with this doubt. You have to know about it beforehand, so that you can deal with it. Amen. You have to make these decisions ahead of time. You can't make them on the fly. Oh, today I'm going to choose to be faithful. No, you have to make that decision way back and remake it every day. But it's a conscious decision. And there's going to be days when you don't feel like it. That's okay. There's going to be days when you say I wonder if this is really true. That's okay. God doesn't mind if you ask a question. He's okay with that. Remember Gideon hiding in the forest? And the angel shows up? Does mighty warrior and getting goes like, Oh, you're talking to me? I'm hiding... Sure. And he questions whether God is really going to send them into the whole test with the fleece and the wet and the dry. God doesn't mind a question. We have to be ready to move forward when that question gets answered.

Reflection: Am I confident in God? Am I confident in my faith? Or do I believe the old adage that Seeing is believing? Am I confident enough to approach God for all things?

Challenge: The big things and the little things that are challenge when doubt comes to you or someone you know, look up and over the wall of doubt, to God who is overall. Amen.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, thank you so much, Lord, that you can be here and you can help us with our doubt. Lord, thank You that You are faithful all the time in the past, in the present and in the future. We ask that you be with us, Lord, give us courage and strength when we face these things that make us doubt. Help us understand that it's okay to feel bad. It's okay to have a question. But help us to be strong in our faith. Help us to not be afraid to talk about it. And to reach out to somebody and say hey man, I'm struggling because we've all been there or we ask that you be with us this week. Give us courage give us strength. In Jesus name. Amen.