

Theme: What to do when faced with doubt. Doubt comes against even the best of Christians. So what do we do when faced with doubt or in helping others overcome the place of doubt. How does Jesus respond to doubt?

Introduction:

- 1602 Galileo began studying at the University of Pisa. It was there he began to study the pendulum. He was watching a lamp swinging back and forth at the cathedral of Pisa. "The Law of the Pendulum." was born!
- **The law of the pendulum is: A pendulum can never return to a point higher than the point from which it was released.** Because of friction and gravity, when the pendulum returns, it will fall short of its original release point. Each time it swings it makes less and less of an arc, until finally it is at rest. This point of rest is called the state of equilibrium, where all forces acting on the pendulum are equal.
- I attached a 3-foot string to a child's pair of scissors and secured it to the top of the white board with a mic stand. I pulled the scissors to one side and made a mark on the blackboard where I let it go. Each time it swings back I make a new mark. It took less than a minute for the scissors to complete its swinging and come to rest. When I finish the demonstration, the markings on the blackboard proved my thesis. Law of the Pendulum. How many believe the law of the pendulum is true?
- I want to talk about another law, the law of faith. The I want to look at how Jesus respond to our doubt using three men found in the NT who doubted Jesus.

I. The Law of Faith

- A. In Romans 3:27, it is Paul who 'coins' the phrase 'law of faith.' *"Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith."* (Romans 3:27, NKJV)
1. The Greek word use there is νομου (nomou) "law"-it is a principle by which something operates.
 2. Paul in Romans 3 declare we are made right with God by the law of faith, the principal of faith. The way the kingdom operates is by faith.
 3. *"When we look at natural or scientific laws, like the law of gravity, or the law of aerodynamics, or Newton's laws of motion, the law of the pendulum they are laws that work consistently every time without fail (assuming nothing supernatural intervenes). Faith also is a law which when operated properly works every time without fail. By using the law of faith we can obtain any of the promises of God, including healing, deliverance from sin, forgiveness of sins, justification, and salvation."*
- B. The law of faith is what gives us entrance to the realm of the Kingdom of God. That realm must become more real to us than what we see in the natural or experience with our five senses. Note: The law of faith over rules the law of sin and death!
1. Our faith is what brings that which is available in that spiritual realm into this realm. Heb 11:1 *"Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen."* You cant see it here here but it is so real you have evidence of it.
 2. I use faith to access grace for salvation, healing, favor, deliverance etc.

3. Smith Wigglesworth quotes:
 - a) "No man looks at circumstances if he believes." p. 16 Healing, Smith Wigglesworth.
 - b) "If God says a thing, you have to believe it." p. 17 *ibid*.
- C. Jesus explained this law in Mark after Peter discovers the fig tree that, Jesus cursed the day before, is dead. *"Then Jesus said to the disciples, "Have faith in God. I tell you the truth, you can say to this mountain, 'May you be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' and it will happen. But you must really believe it will happen and have no doubt in your heart. I tell you, you can pray for anything, and if you believe that you've received it, it will be yours."* (Mark 11:22-24, NLT)
 1. When can you say to the mountain? When you have faith.
 2. When will the mountain move? When you have faith, when you have spoken, when you have believed that you received what you prayed for. Law of faith.
- D. How many in here live by the law of faith? How many believe that just as the law of the Pendulum works so does the law of faith? Do you really believe?

II. Testing the Law of Faith

- A. Our faith is tested every time we encounter something that appears to be bigger than the God we believe in. Our faith is tested every time we encounter something that we can not settle or figure out on our own.
 1. *"Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors."* (James 1:2-3, The Message) Challenges come from all sides. Everywhere: financial, physical, mental, spiritual etc. They come to nullify our faith. That is what hell is after. Hell fears a faith filled Christian. Hell does not want you to believe! Heaven does! Hell wants us to doubt, heaven wants us to believe. That puts us between two opinions.
 2. Doubt, *διστασιμια*, doubt. means to waver between two thoughts. In consistency. The Latin word, *dubitare* comes from a word meaning two. That is why you are in two minds when you doubt. Doubt is a final lack of faith that God can do what we have requested of Him.
 3. The testing, *doke* (*δοκη*) of our faith makes us stronger. But it does not make us free from doubts. *Δοκη* - means to watch, to be under the watchful eye. God's eye and our eye. Watching lets us know what kind of faith we have. Tests reveal how much we have learned. Lets test the law of faith, using the law of the pendulum.
- B. *le.* Another pendulum illustration. How many people in the room BELIEVE the law of the pendulum is true?
- C. Our doubts are revealed when our faith is tested or...our faith is revealed when it is tested! Let me make five comments about doubt:
 1. Doubt is an enemy of our walk with God. Because it keeps us in the natural realm not accessing what heaven provides.
 2. Doubt is something we all encounter and we must all successfully work through
 3. It is possible for people of faith to experience doubt. In fact, doubt is possible for the strongest of believers. Doubts can attack us but they do not have to master us.
 4. Doubt causes us to focus on what we can't do rather than focusing upon what God can do. At that point we are more focused on our limitations than upon God's truth to us.

5. Doubt can cause us to forfeit the blessing of God.
6. Let me mention three people today in God's word that faced doubt and how they overcame. We have a doubting Dad, Doubting Thomas, Doubting Baptist.

III. How Jesus Responds to Our Doubt

A. Most Christians are embarrassed by their lack of faith. When we get under the lack of faith we most often get under condemnation, we get depressed, we lose hope. That is exactly what the devil wants us to do. When we do that we become defeated Christians. Jesus is the exact opposite. Our doubts do not scare Him. In fact, He loves responding to our doubts. Let's look at three men in the Bible who doubted and see how Jesus helped them.

B. A Doubting Dad

1. Mark 9:21-24. *“Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!””* (Mark 9:24, NKJV)
 - a) I believe every believer has prayed that prayer at some time. Lord, I believe help my unbelief. Your whole life has been around the church and you cant believe when the pressure is on. God is watching while you test.
 - b) The Message Bible says, *“I believe, help me with my doubts.”*
 - c) *“NLT says, “I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!””* (Mark 9:24, NLT)
 - d) Doubt, διακριθη, Doubt means to waver between two thoughts; inconsistency. The Latin word, dubitare comes from a word meaning two. That is why you are in two minds when you doubt. IE. This man has two minds and it is obvious... *“I believe”... “help my unbelief!”* Doubt is a final lack of faith that God can do what we have requested of Him.
2. The man's response is quite honest. Be honest with your unbelief. Help my unbelief! Jesus will not be mad at you. He already knows where you are. The man admits his unbelief.
3. Jesus' action. Notice the heart of Jesus.
 - a) He talks to the man. Jesus is soooo personable. He begins to steer the man to faith.
 - b) He gives him the word, *“Anything is possible if a person believes.”*
 - c) He acted based on this mans faith. And his faith seems quite small.

C. A Doubting Thomas

1. *“Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don't be faithless any longer. Believe!””* (John 20:27, NLT)
2. Thomas's doubt was more than hesitation it was unbelief, απιστος - no faith.
 - a) He had no faith in Jesus' promise. His dream was crushed! Thomas at one point was ready to die with Jesus. He loved being close to Jesus but Jesus was dead. Thomas would not believe any of the Word Jesus had given him/them.
 - b) Jn 20:25, Thomas says, *“I will not believe....unless I get to see what you saw when He was here with you. Admit your doubt. When we doubt God knows.”*
3. Jesus action:
 - a) John 20:26,27 He came close to Thomas. He stood among them and He spoke to Thomas. When in the place of doubt expect Jesus to speak to you.
 - b) Jesus knew what it would take to get him to believe.

- c) Note: Jesus gave John no sympathy. He did not give him an 'emotional hug.' He did not give any of our characters today an "emotional hug."
- d) Touch my hands feel my side.
- e) He welcomed them he did not scold them.
- f) Love this promise to us: *"Then Jesus told him, "You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me.""* (John 20:29, NLT)

IV. A Doubting Baptist Mt 11:2-ff; Luke 7:18-ff***

- A. *"John the Baptist, who was in prison, heard about all the things the Messiah was doing. So he sent his disciples to ask Jesus, "Are you the Messiah we've been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?""* (Matthew 11:2-3, NLT)
- B. Thomas
 - 1. John the Baptist had revelation from God the Jesus was the Messiah (Jn 1:33-34)
 - 2. John the Baptist took his doubts to Jesus.
 - 3. "It wasn't supposed to end this way! I was supposed to prepare the way for Messiah. My mission is not over.
 - 4. John was in a 'major' down time...in prison, in a dark place, used to the open spaces, etc. We need to guard ourselves when in a low spot in life. All of characters today were in low spot of life when doubt arose in them.
- C. Jesus action:
 - 1. Jesus gave John the Word! Tell him! ...Is 29:18; 35:4-6; 61:1; Ps 22:26; Is 8:14,15
 - 2. Jesus did not give John the Baptist and 'emotional hug.' He gave him what he needed in his hour of desperation / the dark hour of his soul / the dungeon of doubt he was in.
- D. Jesus gives these men what they need to believe:
 - 1. He gave them himself! He did not reject them, shame them, despise or get angry at them. He came to them to help them in their unbelief. He is no respecter of persons he will do the same for you!
 - 2. The Word!
 - a) *"So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ."* (Romans 10:17, NLT)
 - b) *"But Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'"* (Luke 4:4, NKJV)
 - c) *"The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone."* (John 1:4, NLT)
 - d) *"He sent out his word and healed them, snatching them from the door of death."* (Psalm 107:20, NLT)
 - e) Jn 6:63 My words are Spirit and they are life.

Conclusion:

- *"You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you do not see him now, you trust him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy. The reward for trusting him will be the salvation of your souls."* (1 Peter 1:8-9, NLT)
- Invitation to receive Christ