

Can Godly People Doubt?

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[0 : 0 0] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you'll be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. All right, take your Bibles if you would and turn with me to Matthew chapter 11.

And here's a wild story taking place for you and your Bible. John the Baptist is in prison. Jesus is teaching and preaching and going about teaching and preaching.

And John, being locked up in prison, gets a little apprehensive, a little doubtful, and he wonders, is Jesus the Messiah?

Is he the one we were waiting for? Or do we need to look for somebody else? So he's having this period of doubt in his life. It's like, I'm weak, I'm tired, I'm in jail.

I was free for 18 months preaching. I've been in jail nearly a year, locked away. I don't know what's going on. He's not getting a Twitter feed. He's not getting to watch YouTube.

[0 : 5 6] He doesn't know how things are going. And he's just discouraged and in doubt. And so God is going to teach you today, through this passage of Scripture, how we deal with doubt.

How many in this room have ever had, you're a born-again believer, you've gone to church, but if you're honest, alone, in private, when you're scared, in the hospital, when something happens in your family, when something goes wrong, doubts have crossed your mind.

You don't need to answer, because I would doubt you if you said you didn't doubt. And so the truth is, we all deal with doubt. And so I would like to talk to you this morning about the fact that can a believer deal, can a believer doubt?

Can godly people doubt? So we're going to go through our Bible. Well, first thing I want to do is just show you a little bit about what doubt means. And if you've got your Bible open, Matthew chapter 14 and verse 31, I just want to show you what doubting means.

Doubting is like losing your confidence. You know, that's what happened when Peter was walking on the waves and the storm. In Matthew 14, 31, he doubts, and he cries out to Jesus, and Jesus stretches forth his hand and said, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

[2 : 1 0] He had been walking on the waves and walking on the water, looks up and sees all that going on around him. I don't know what happened, but he doubted and he sunk. He lost confidence.

In Matthew chapter 8 and verse 26, the apostles are in the boat and the waves are coming and it's a scary time. And in chapter 8 and verse 26, they woke up Jesus saying, Lord, save us.

We perish. And he said unto them, why are you fearful? O ye of little faith. And so it is a time of being afraid. When you doubt, you deal with fear.

And it's also when you start to think that something might just be unlikely. In John chapter 20 and verse 25, we have the story of a guy that we call Doubting Thomas.

The Bible doesn't really call him that, but we call him that. People have all of my life Doubting Thomas. They came to him and they said, Thomas, you're not going to believe this, but Jesus who died and was buried is risen again.

[3 : 07] And he showed up at our meeting. And he walked in and Thomas says in John chapter 10 and verse 20 and verse 25, he says, unless I stick my finger in there, unless I put my finger to the print of the nails and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

It is the idea of an uncertainty of belief. It kind of hinders our decision making. In Acts chapter 10 and verse 19, the apostle Peter has some racist tendencies.

He's up on the rooftop. And so God lets down this great big sheet that's got all kinds of animals in it. And he says, rise, kill and eat. And Peter says, you know, I don't eat that kind of stuff.

I don't do that. And it happens three times. And on the third time, Cornelius sends a servant who rings the doorbell. And they say, hey, Peter, there's a Roman centurion has sent a messenger to see you.

And Peter's like, OK, I understand. That's what God wanted. And the angel basically tells him, why don't you go without doubting? Why don't you go doubting nothing? It says in Acts chapter 10 and verse 20, doubt causes you to hesitate.

[4 : 13] But let him ask, James 1, 6, let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like the wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. So people that get caught up in doubt, man, one week they seem to be really in love with Jesus.

They're giving, they're praying, they're going, they're witnessing. And the next week, doubt seems to slam the other way. And they lose all of that doubt. It makes people hesitate. In Ephesians 4, 14, he said, don't be like mere children, tossed to and fro, carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie and wait to deceive.

So you should gather as you read the passages I just read, and as we go through Matthew 11, that doubt is quite common among God's people. Not good.

I didn't say it was good. I didn't say it was right. I didn't say we should. I said it's quite common. But we don't want to live there. We want victory over it. We want to help others who have this problem.

So that's what we're going to do as we go through this passage. Look with me, if you would, at Matthew chapter 11 and verse 1. Jesus is continuing his ministry.

[5 : 20] Look at Matthew 11, 1. And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his 12 disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.

There are a couple things you ought to notice. Jesus didn't just tell others what to do, but he did it himself. He's given instruction to the apostles. He's told them what to do. And as soon as he gets through telling them what to do, he takes off doing what he's told them to do.

It can appear that having a real job or doing something else might be more important than teaching and preaching. Sometimes when you're a preacher, you get the idea, man.

People are like, well, he's just a preacher. He gets paid to work. Jesus, he gets paid to work three hours a week and so on. And look at what it said. Jesus is teaching and preaching.

And so teaching and preaching. Mark going to China tomorrow. Teaching and preaching is important. But Jesus had a message he wanted taught and preached in other places.

[6 : 19] Look at verse 1. Last part. To teach and preach in their cities. He was busy about sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. He was busy about sharing how you could be free.

Now, he's free to move about. You know, Jesus in chapter 11 and verse 1, he's going from here to preach and he's going over here to preach. And John the Baptist, though he loved Jesus and he actually preached when he started in his ministry.

In John chapter 3 and verse 30, he said, I must decrease and he must increase. But you've got to kind of put yourself in John's situation. It's kind of easy to say, well, John the Baptist, he should never doubt.

If anybody's going to doubt, he's a cousin to Jesus. He was filled with the Holy Spirit in his mother's womb. He's a great preacher. He's a great man of God. If anybody is never going to doubt, it ought to be old John the Baptist that he would never doubt.

But he's in prison. He's in prison. He has announced the coming of Jesus. He has baptized Jesus. He's told everyone that Jesus is the one that will take away the sins of the world.

[7 : 24] In John 1.29, the Bible says, the next day John sees Jesus coming and he points out and says, Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. So John doubts what's going on.

John is in a little bit of a depressed state, a discouraged state, a doubting state. Maybe seeing the success of others when things are going so well for them and they're not going so well for us might discourage us and cause us to doubt.

So here's your story. Get your story. John the Baptist. We're talking about one of the greatest men. In fact, Jesus calls him the greatest man born of woman and he's got problems.

He's doubting. So if you have doubt issues occasionally, you're in good company. If you have doubt issues, you're in good company. You see, what happens is circumstances and life can be discouraging.

We go through discouraging times. Look at verse 2. Matthew 11.2. Now when John had heard in prison. We ought to underline that. In prison.

[8 : 31] Now when John had heard in prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples. John's in prison. He has faithfully served God and the Lord Jesus.

He has preached repentance for about 18 months. He has prepared the crowd. He has now been in jail or prison for about a year. 18 months he preaches.

Now a year he's been in jail. He's in jail because he preached repentance. He's in jail because old Herod had married his brother's wife. He divorced his own wife. Married another woman.

Luke chapter 3 and verse 18. 19 and so on. You'll see that story. He's in jail because he took a stand for what was right and now he's in jail. The only reason he's not dead is Herod is afraid to take his life because so many people love him.

He has a tremendous following. In Matthew 14.5 when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude because everybody counted John a prophet. But I want you to remember, see here's what happens.

[9 : 29] We get discouraged and I just want you to see yourself in John. Here's what ends up happening. John hadn't done anything wrong. John hadn't done anything wrong. He is a true man of God.

He has done exactly what God wanted him to do. I mean he's been filled with the Holy Spirit since his mother's womb. That's a wild thing. Just imagine in your mother's womb you're already filled with the Holy Spirit.

That's not happened with any of us. He's lived as a Nazarite. That was the strictest, harshest vow they could take. They wouldn't touch anything dead, not even their own family. If they died, they wouldn't eat or drink anything alcoholic.

They wouldn't even eat raisins and wouldn't touch grapes. I mean they didn't cut their hair because it was a sign to everybody of shame and embarrassment that, hey, I am not just a normal guy.

I am totally wildly committed to following Jesus Christ. That's who he was, to following God. And now he's in prison. He's in prison alone. And he's suffering.

[10 : 27] You can probably imagine what he's thinking. Where's God when I need him? Why doesn't God help me and bless me after all I've done?

Why doesn't God protect me when I'm doing his will and I am his man? Why doesn't he protect me? God, why have you let this happen to me?

You ever thought that? Has it ever crossed your mind? Why in the world? I can remember so distinctly one day in Atikipa. Our oldest son, Chris, was probably 14 years old.

And he kept getting weaker and weaker and we couldn't figure it out. He couldn't see. He told us he couldn't see. He said, I can't even see the blackboard. So I thought, just to be honest, I said, you just don't want to study.

You're just making that up. So I had the teacher put him on the very front row and he couldn't see the blackboard. And we had a preacher down visiting with us. And the preacher said, but when I go to the bathroom, there are ants all over that bathroom.

[11 : 32] He said, I believe your boy or somebody in this family has sugar. That's the old people's way of talking about diabetes. A neighbor told Betty, what's wrong with Chris? He's losing weight.

His legs hurt all the time. And so we go to the doctor and we don't know anything about diabetes. We go to the doctor and the doctor said, well, I'm not sure. We don't know much about diabetes. I think he may have diabetes.

And then we found out that he was going to end up having to take shots all the rest of his life. He was going to have all these issues. And I can remember sitting outside the doctor's office while we're waiting to know what's going on.

Thank God. Do you know? I left America. I don't live with my family. I don't live with the comforts I had in America. It was a time in Peru when things were really hard.

And I was like, God, what are you doing? Where are you? Why don't you help me? Why don't you get me out of this mess? Why did you let this happen to my family? You ever been there?

[12 : 28] I think you probably have. I think many of us in this room have thought, why? Why is God doing that? I believe that's probably where John was. Remember, John is all alone doing the ministry for 18 years.

He didn't run around with Jesus. He didn't watch Jesus do ministry. While Jesus was over here preaching, John was over here preaching. Now it's been about a year. He hears what Jesus has done, but he hasn't been there to see it.

Even before prison, they weren't in contact. He's alone doing his ministry. He didn't hear Jesus preach. He didn't see the miracles. He didn't get to worship with Jesus.

That's exactly what can happen to you when you're isolated. That's why you need a church. Hebrews chapter 10, verses 24 and 25, you ought to write down in the margin of the Bible. The Bible said that we need each other to exhort each other, to encourage each other, to prompt each other, to consider each other, to help each other grow in the Lord.

The same thing happens when you're not immersed in the Word of God. We need God's Word to strengthen and keep us. If you get away from teaching and preaching and reading and studying, you will very likely deal with doubt.

[13 : 40] That's where John is. John's now alone. That's a hard place to be. Alone. He's in jail. Alone. He's all night long.

This is a guy who probably lived outside most of his life. And he's now in a dungeon. Maybe he can see a light through the top of the hole. He's alone. And no one is with him.

So he sends a message to Jesus. Look at Matthew chapter 11 and verse 3. And he said, Are you him? Or should we look for another?

11.3 And he said unto him, Art thou he that should come? Or do we look for another? Now wait a minute. This is the John who baptized him.

This is the John who heard the voice from heaven and saw the Holy Spirit like a dove descend from heaven. This is the John who was cousins to Jesus. This is the John who said, Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world.

[14 : 39] This is the John that says, He must increase and I must decrease. And all of a sudden, He sends word and says, Jesus, I need to know something. Are you him? Or do I need to be looking for another?

Because I'm just kind of wondering. Just like to know. Can I get some reassurance? Could you confirm to me what I knew yesterday? Could you help me with that? John knew where to go when he had doubts.

That's one of the first things you need to remember. He knew where to go when he had doubts. He didn't run from, but he rather ran to the one that could make a difference in his life. He's wondering if Jesus is the Christ.

And when it appears that Jesus is not going to do something great, John gets weak in the faith. You've got to think about this a second. He said, Repent! For the kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent! He's thinking most likely that Jesus is going to come. And solve all the problems. I read yesterday, yesterday even, when somebody talked about Jesus being the Messiah, about a Jewish guy who walked outside, looked around, picked up a newspaper, turned back to the guy and said, The Messiah is not here because things ain't fixed yet.

[15 : 48] And so John's wondering, Are you him? Or do we look for another? He's kind of weak in the faith. He sends his disciples to find out.

He surely thought that Jesus would have corrected everything. Punish those that had not repented. Set up his kingdom. Overthrown Rome. He probably felt like he was the last warning before the judgment.

The Jews are waiting on a coming king. Not much about a suffering servant. So watch how Jesus handles his doubt. Look at Matthew chapter 11 and verse 4 if you would.

Matthew chapter 11 and verse 4. Jesus answered and said unto them, Well, go show John. Go show John again those things that you do here and see. The blind receive their sight.

The lame walk. The lepers are cleansed. The deaf hear. The dead are raised up. And the poor have the gospel preached to them. John's disciples are supposed to go right back to John and say, Let me tell you what we saw.

[16 : 44] That should have reminded them of who Jesus was. It should have reminded them that what he said when he first started his ministry. In Luke chapter 4 and verse 17, when Jesus got ready to start his ministry, he comes up, goes to the place, and he opens to the book of Isaiah, and he reads a passage, and Luke records what he said.

And there was delivered unto him the book of Isaiah, Luke 4, 17. There was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.

He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

So he says, I'm going to show the disciples what I'm doing, and I'm doing exactly what I said I was going to do. But John was probably a pretty good Bible student. And the very next phrase in that passage of Scripture, back in Isaiah chapter 61 and verse 2 said, And the day of vengeance of our God.

And Jesus wasn't even talking about that. Jesus was fulfilling the Old Testament prophecy, but he stopped just short of the day of vengeance. So I just want to say to you, now listen to me, you've been doubting.

[18 : 04] Just be honest, you have. Not to be embarrassed about it. John the Baptist doubted. God wrote it in the Bible and told us how he handled it. And throughout the Bible, there's other things that help you.

So you have had hard times, and things in life haven't worked out like you thought they would. And this medical condition came, and you were like, what's going on with this? And this financial thing turned upside down, and your family got all messed up.

And you're like, well, where's God? And what's God doing? And so I'd just like to go walk through with you just a little bit about how we can overcome doubt. It's not so much that you shouldn't doubt, although you shouldn't.

And I will show you that in a second. We ought not doubt. But if we do doubt, there's a way to handle it. And by the way, Jesus didn't rebuff the disciples. You know, when the disciples said, Jesus, John wants to know if you're him, or do we look for another?

Jesus didn't go, I can't believe that, John. He didn't do that. He kindly said, let me show you what you need to know so John can be encouraged.

[19 : 06] By the way, before I leave the story of John the Baptist, you know things are not going to get better. They're only going to get worse. John the Baptist is in prison. The disciples are going to come back and say, well, this is what Jesus said.

He said, go tell him what you're seeing here. Here's what we're seeing here. The blind, the deaf, all these great things are happening. And the next thing we know about John, they're going to cut his head off. So you could be in a bad time and need some encouragement.

Here's what Paul said while he was in prison. In Philippians chapter 4 and verse 4. Philippians 4 and verse 4. Rejoice in the Lord always. And again I say rejoice.

Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Now if you've got your Bible open, if you take a few notes, let me just remind you what it says in chapter 4 and verse 4. You are to rejoice in the Lord.

I don't rejoice in my good health. I don't rejoice in the fact that my family is good. Sometimes we say my brother got sick, but God was able to heal him. And so God is good.

[20 : 07] But God's good if he heals him or if he doesn't heal him. God is good if John gets his head cut off or he doesn't get his head cut off. That's not the question. So your rejoicing is in the, can you say it with me?

Rejoice in what? The Lord. Man, I know God. I know the God of the Bible. I know he's real. I know he's there. And then in chapter 4 and verse 5 he said, hey, let your moderation, your gentleness, you're not getting overly excited on one side or overly excited on the other side, let that be known.

And remember this, the Lord's close. The Lord's close. He's right here. He is right here. Right now you are in the middle of a mess, and I can tell you the Lord is at hand.

The Lord is right here with you. In verse 6 he told him, Paul writes from prison, don't worry about anything. Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.

So you're in trouble and you're hurting today. Here's what the God of the Bible wants you to do. What John did. When John was all discouraged and John was all upset, he sent disciples to Jesus and said, Jesus, we just need to know.

[21 : 16] And if you're discouraged and you're hurting today, you need to go to Jesus and say to him, here are my petitions. Here are my heartaches. Here's what's breaking me down today. Here's what's got me scared, and here's what's got me doubting.

And Lord, I thank you because you are a great God. I come begging you, but I thank you because I know that you hear me. And then it says in verse 7, the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts because I'm trusting God.

And then it tells me to control my thoughts. The next verse, verse 8, ends with think on these things. In Isaiah chapter 26 and verse 3, your Bible says, Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusts in thee.

I need to ask you to listen to this real quickly and clearly. You and I have to work on controlling our thoughts. Could I just be honest and tell you, I am a, I have a great tendency to discouragement, depression, and doubt.

I mean, I'm always kind of insecure. And here's the battle. The battle we all face is think on these things.

[22 : 27] You see, if I get up and I start thinking, well, maybe people don't love me. Maybe things aren't going right. Maybe God could have done more with me. Maybe my children shouldn't be sick. Maybe my daughter shouldn't have gotten raped. Maybe all these bad things that happened shouldn't have happened.

And I think like that because a lot of bad chunks happened in our lives. And I can think like that and get discouraged. But he said, no, you need to learn to think. You need to learn to bring me your problems.

You need to rejoice in who I am. And you need to control your mind to think the right thoughts. There are people in this room that have debilitating diseases that are never going to get better, only worse.

There are people in this room that are in financial crisis. And I hate to say this, but you're probably not going to win the lottery tomorrow. So you're going to have to learn to think on the right things, to focus on the Lord Jesus.

Not only that, you've got to learn to be happy where you are. Philippians chapter 4 and verse 11 says, Not that I speak in respect of won't, for I have learned in whatsoever state I am therein to be content.

[23 : 30] That's what Paul wrote from prison. He's in prison. And he says, guys, I can do all things with Christ that strengthens me. I can live in prison or I can live out of prison.

I can live when I've got money. I can live when I haven't got money. I've just learned one thing. I'm going to think on Jesus. I'm going to thank Jesus. And I'm going to be happy wherever he puts me. I'm going to be happy in him.

You are in a spiritual battle. We're all in a spiritual battle. And sometimes that battle rages hot and heavy and harder than ever.

Like when you're in a prison cell and there's no light and there's no freedom and you don't get to preach anymore. You never hear the amens anymore and you're not involved in everything. Like old John must have been going through.

But you need to know you're in a spiritual battle. The Bible says in 1 Peter chapter 5 and verse 8 that you're to be sober and be vigilant because you're vigilant. Because your adversary the devil goes about seeking whom he can devour.

[24 : 29] Satan would love to get you to doubt God. Satan would love to get you to doubt the Bible. Satan would love to get you to walk away from God. So you need to know that. You need to realize I'm in a spiritual battle.

In Ephesians we know that we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers. I know that Satan would do anything he could to get me to take my love from Jesus and my trusting in Jesus.

And so I don't want to do that. So in Ephesians 6.16 it says this. Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith you shall be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked.

There was a video made a long time ago of Pilgrim's Progress. It's a corny video. You know, when Christians try to make a video, a movie, that's never done with good Hollywood actors.

Never done with really good effects, you know. So they had this guy and he's got this shield. And it's the shield of faith. And it shows the devil throwing these fiery darts at him. Doesn't look like fiery darts.

[25 : 27] Doesn't look like it. You know how it is. But I love that video. Because it was a picture of Jesus, of the devil, throwing these fiery darts at him. And there was this devil. He was just a regular guy dressed in a cloak.

You know, he's probably a Baptist pastor being the devil. And he's throwing these darts and the pilgrim's holding his shield up. And they're bouncing off. That's what you've got to do. You are under attack.

It is easy for the devil to try to say to you, Jesus doesn't really love you. God doesn't care about you. Things are going wrong in your life. If God were real, he'd be here. And he'd be doing more.

It's easy for that to happen. So you learn to believe God and to lift your shield and say, I will not listen to things that are false. I will not listen to things that are anti-God.

I will not listen. I will not think about those things. I won't let those thoughts in my head. You need to understand. Doubts can hit your mind, but you don't have to let them in. You need to realize that your mind is very much like your living room.

[26 : 26] They may knock on your door and ask to come in, but you don't have to open the door. Often when somebody comes, you know, a doubt comes to my mind. The doubt comes and says, you know, you're not that good a preacher. And you just don't do that much for God.

You just don't really count that much. When they knock on the door and say that to me, I go, you're probably right. Come on in. Let's sit down and talk a while. So they come in and they sit down and they go, you know, you stink. And I say, yeah, I've been smelling myself.

I'm kind of like that conch shell that John brought back. Where's the aqua velvet? Let me see if I can't cover up the stench. And so then that thought talks to me and I'm like, yeah, you're right. And then when you stink, I'm like, yeah, I do stink.

And yeah, you stink worse than you think you do. Yeah, I do. And the next thing you know, but what you're to do is not open the door, but lift a shield of faith and say, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. I don't think that thought. I know what the Bible says.

Has God left you? The Bible said he'll never leave you and he'll never forsake you. Is what God says true or is what you're hearing in your head true?

[27 : 23] Let me tell you what we're to do. First Peter chapter five and verse seven. Cast all your doubt, all your cares upon him for he cares for you. You know what God wants you to do?

He wants you to come. He wants to say, God, I'm worried about this. You know, my daddy used to say, it's sin to worry. I never worry. I'm just concerned. Concerned. So bring your concerns, bring your worries, bring your cares and come to Jesus and say, man, I'm dealing with some junk.

I'm dealing with some stuff and things are going on in my life and give them to Jesus so he can do a work in your life. Learn to be thankful. First Thessalonians chapter five and verse 18.

In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. I was just sitting there before we got up and there was like six of people saying, I think five here and Kristen was singing with them.

There were like six people singing and Betty leaned over and said, man, we're part of a great church, aren't we? And so you could easily say, you could easily think, you know, I'm a preacher. So I can easily say, well, we only had 139 and Sunday's go.

[28 : 28] So he ain't that great. That's me. Me and the devil, we like to talk like that. Devil always likes to say to me, if you was any good, there'd be more people here today. If you know how to preach this place, we'd already be in a regular building.

I've got all that junk going on. Instead of saying, man, God's been good. Man, God's been good. Hadn't God been good? Think about how many people we've seen saved. Think about how your life has been changed.

Think about how God has met your needs. Think about no matter how bad today is, God's been good to you. In everything, give thanks. A thankful attitude will run away all that nasty junk.

Amen. I often fall into that trap myself. I often fall into that trap of not being thankful. And sometimes you're not thankful until it's a funeral. I so well remember a Peruvian funeral.

Her name was Rosa Cabero de Lopez, and she died. She was the first death in our ministry in Arequipa. And Rosa was just the sweetest, most wonderful, sweet lady of God you'd ever meet.

[29 : 30] And she had children that did not love God. And she so desperately wanted them to. And her husband didn't love her very much like he should.

And it was not the best home and not the best circumstances. And Rosa died. And when Rosa died, we went and got her body, and we brought it to the church.

And my wife and the other ladies of the church actually took her body up on the platform and closed the curtains. And they washed her body and prepared it because you don't do things here or there like you do here. And they prepared the body.

And I bought a casket, and we put her in the casket. And in came her children. Amazing. They were so thankful for their mother. But they hadn't been thankful for the last year.

They hadn't been thankful the last five years. And they were screaming out in pain and yelling. And they wanted to open the casket and almost pull her out of it kind of deal. That's where I fall sometimes. I don't trust God, and I don't give thanks until it's too late.

[30 : 27] Learn to be thankful. But I'd like to give you my favorite passage of Scripture about this. This is what helps me. And I'm being honest with you that I do deal with this problem.

So let me show you what helps me. And these are what I call the steps to victory. James chapter 4, verses 6 through 8. You might write that in the margin of your Bible. Matthew 11, 1 through 6.

You might mark that down and study that later. Here's what it says. He gives more grace. That means God helps me more. God gives more grace because he resists the proud, but he gives grace to the humble.

When you realize that you aren't all you ought to be, when you realize that you do have weaknesses, all the time you're faking it that you never have problems, that you're always an overcomer, it's pretty easy to have a public persona and a private persona.

Be humble and just admit, I need God. Be humble and admit, I need more grace. But look, if you would, at James chapter 4 and verse 7. And here's the first step. Submit yourself, therefore, to God.

[31 : 27] So if you've got your Bible open, circle the word submit. And here's the first step. I submit. I say, I know what God says is right, and I'm going to apply it to my life. I know what God says, and so I will obey God.

I don't feel like obeying God. You ever been there? Have you ever been there where you're like, I don't really feel like obeying God? Have you ever been there where you're like, I'm at a point where I just don't know if I can?

Well, just submit. Submit. Just obey God. James chapter 4 and verse 7. After you do that, second word I want you to put a circle around. James chapter 4 and verse 7.

Resist the devil. Put a circle around the word resist. So I submit to God, and I say, God, I'm going to do what you say do. I'll be in the place I'm supposed to be, and I'll be doing what I ought to be doing, because I'm going to obey you.

And then when the devil comes, I'm going to resist him. I'm simply going to say to him, I'm not listening to you. Here's my shield of faith. You can throw all the darts you want to throw, but I'm not listening to you. I'm going to resist you.

[32 : 28] I'm not going to believe you. I'm going to say no to you. And here's the promise that he put in the verse in James 4, 7. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. I love that word flee.

I wish you'd put a circle around the word flee, and I wish you'd think about this. We never use the word flee. The word flee is a word for cowardice. You never have a race.

In the Olympics, they never get them down and say, one, two, three, flee. You don't say that. Fleeing is what you do when the cops are coming, and you're a thief. Fleeing is what the cockroaches do when you turn the lights on.

Fleeing. That's what they do. They get out of here. Fleeing. That's what flees do when you put the flea collar on the dog. They flee. Flee. Amen? So he said, hey, you submit to God, and you resist the devil, and the devil will take off running.

The devil's a coward. The devil can't take us down. He can't take us down. His doubts that he throws your way cannot take you out if you'll do two things so far.

[33 : 24] Submit and resist. And then I'd like you to go to verse 8 and get the next one. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

So here it is. Boy, I'm in the middle of a battle. Are you there? Are you there? You wake up in the morning, and your thoughts are, I don't know how I got myself in this mess. I don't know if I'm ever getting out of it.

I don't know if this is going to work. I don't know why God abandoned me. I don't know why things aren't working out for me. I don't know why things seem to be better for him and not for me, and I'm just upset with God. You ever been there? No, don't answer.

But here's the solution. Submit to God. Resist the devil. Resist the devil. And draw nigh to God. As soon as you get through resisting the devil, just run over to God and say, God, I ain't got nothing left but you.

And I'm going to trust you. And I'm going to believe you. That's a hard thing going on in John's life. You need to understand. Great man of God. Done great things.

[34 : 22] Not ever really done anything wrong. Not one thing listed that the old guy did wrong. But he's in jail. He's in jail for telling the truth. He's in jail for being the leather-lunged preacher that he was.

He's in jail. Things aren't going well. Jesus is free. Nothing seems to be going his way. He's been there about a year. He's beginning to wonder. Well, did I waste my life telling him Jesus is coming?

Guys, go find out from Jesus if he's the one or if we should look for another. Y'all go find out. Jesus said, you go back and tell John, I'm doing exactly what I'm supposed to do.

I'm healing. Deaf or hearing. Blind or seeing. You just go tell John. I don't know what happens and the Bible doesn't record it. But I can imagine when they got back and said, John, we don't have Facebook.

We don't have Twitter. We don't know what's going on otherwise. But we just saw. And my goodness. He's here. It's him. It's great. And I believe that John died with peace knowing that he was doing what's right.

[35 : 33] The last thing he says to John before the guys leave is found in verse 6. Look at verse 6. Matthew chapter 11 and verse 6 if you would. And basically, I'll tell you what, before we go there, just let me say this.

He understands your doubts, but they are dangerous and they're harmful. So real quick, I think I'll throw this in before I get there. It's time to quit, but I'm going to go ahead and throw it in anyway. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear, because fear hath torment.

He that feareth is not made perfect in love. You're not mature in love yet. Understand this. When you allow doubt, it will cause fear in you. That fear doesn't come from God.

As much as when the big storms come and the thunders and the lightning are taking place and your children run and jump in your bed, and you hold them and you say it's all going to be okay, your God doesn't want you living in a state of fear.

Your God wants you living in a state of faith. Can you say amen? There's a big difference. The Bible says in Matthew 13, 58, that he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief. Sometimes our doubting God causes God not to do in and through us all that he could do in and through us.

[36 : 48] Sound in Mark chapter 6 and verse 5. Jesus marveled in verse 6 because of their unbelief. He couldn't believe it. How can you guys not trust me more? By the way, doubt never pleases God.

In Hebrews chapter 11 and verse 6 it says, Without faith it's impossible to please God. For they that come to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

So get into the word of God. Be faithful to church. Get involved in Foundations, which is our discipleship program. Talk to us about it. We'll help you. Spend time in the Bible every day. Have spiritual conversations and discussions.

Get your thoughts under control and stop thinking what you shouldn't be thinking and begin thinking what you should be thinking. But the last verse, 11-6. Matthew 11-6.

Basically he sends word back to John and verse 6 says, Don't doubt, John. John, don't doubt. John, quit doubting.

[37 : 47] John, don't doubt. Look at the verse. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. John loved Jesus. And he didn't think any less of him as it is obvious from the following verses.

By the way, starting in verse 7 he's going to say, What did you all expect when you saw John? Did you think some weakling was out there? This is the greatest guy in the kingdom. So God's not upset. Jesus isn't upset. He's in love with John.

And you're doubting. And you're afraid. And you're scared. And the devil's got you on your back. And you're about to tap out. And you're about whipped. God still loves you. Because even though you're unfaithful, he is faithful still.

Doubt does rob us of our joy and peace. This not being offended in the verse refers to not being trapped or snared. You might write that in the margin. It's about not being trapped or snared.

There's plenty you do not understand. But focus on what you do. Why did God allow those things to happen in our lives? I don't know. Why does my wife have this disease?

[38 : 47] Why does my husband have this disease? Why do my children have this? Why are we going through this? I don't know. But I know what I can focus on. I can focus on what the Word of God says and what is true. It's really not about us understanding and knowing.

But it's about us trusting and obeying. There are many questions that will be unanswered all of your life. You're going to spend the rest of your life and you're going to be like, I don't have the answer for that.

I've been preaching the Bible all over the place for many years and there's so many things. You'd say, also, what's going on? I'd say, I'm not sure. All I know is what he said and I'll just trust what he said.

I'll just trust what he said. We trust and we obey. You have to trust God. Get in the Bible. Learn all that you can about our great God and then trust him with the rest of it.

Now, here's what I want to ask you. I don't know if you came hurting today. Nobody knows about your hurt. But God does. In Matthew chapter 11, it just happened to come up today when you're here and you need this.

[39 : 49] John the Baptist doubted. John the Baptist wasn't sure. Are you the one we should expect or do we look for somebody else? Go find out, guys. So John the Baptist is as great a man as he had his doubts and his concerns.

He didn't understand. He was confused. He was afraid, maybe. He was alone. But our God loved him and met his need. And this morning, I want you to know that God loves you and he cares about you and is at work in your life.

And you can trust him and you can believe him. And I want to challenge you to come to him and say, God, I'm just going to trust you. Come up here and cast all your care on him. Find a place to pray and say, God, this is what's got me worried.

I don't worry, but I'm concerned. These are my concerns. These are the things that got me confused. And put them on the altar and say, God, I'm going to trust you with it. Pick up your shield of faith.

And as you walk out here, know, I can submit to God. I can do whatever God wants me to do. I can resist the devil. I can draw not to God and he will draw not to me. You have victory in Jesus.

[40 : 55] Claim it. Act like it. Live like it. I need that message as much as you do. Father in heaven, I love you. And I thank you so much for the opportunity to share your word with your people. And I pray, God, that you draw us closer to you.

I pray your name would be glorified and honored. And I pray that you would work today. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfredo, Georgia. For more information, log on to www.visionbaptist.com, where you can find our service times, location, contact information, and more audio and video recordings.