

# MESSAGE OUTLINE

## SUNDAY, March 19, 2023



CHURCH

הקהילה מתקדמת

10:30am Sunday 13095 Publishers Drive, Fishers

Today's Message: **DOUBT**

Pastor Gary L. Stump  
*Luke 7:18-35*

If we're completely honest, don't we all doubt at times? Is all doubt sin?

*Romans 14:23b (NKJV) for whatever is not from faith is sin.* (Note: be careful to see the context here)

When you doubt do you feel guilty...and yet can't help doubting at times?

What role does doubt play in our faith?

**Doubt** = a feeling of uncertainty; to question the truth of; to lack confidence in. --Merriam Webster Dictionary

**Doubt** = (a feeling of) not being certain about something, especially about how good or true it is.

–Cambridge Dictionary

**Rene' Descartes** (1596-1650), "If you would be a real seeker after truth, it is necessary that at least once in your life you doubt, as far as possible, all things."

**Soren Kierkegaard** (1813-1855), "Doubt didn't come into being until there was faith."

**A Secular Age by Charles Taylor**—Default conditions of believeability:

- 1500 AD Almost impossible to NOT believe in God
- 2000 AD Almost impossible to believe in God

**What changed?** Secularization of society.

- Secular is not unbelief but a condition of the contestability of belief
- No one's belief is taken to be axiomatic (absolutely true)
- All beliefs are to be contested and contestable
- Emergence of a vision of life that could be fulfilling without the transcendent or eternal

**How is this experienced?**

- It makes doubt an ever-present reality
- Doubt is not an enemy of faith, but a kind of companion of faith
- Our posture should be for us to leave an opening for people to doubt
- People don't see the need for God except in their crisis or in their "hauntings"

"I don't believe in God, but I miss Him." –Julian Barnes British novelist; poster child of secularization

**What can doubt teach us about faith?** What can we learn from one of the great doubters: John the Baptist?

**Let's see how Jesus dealt with John's doubt**

*Luke 7:18–35 (NLT) The disciples of John the Baptist told John about everything Jesus was doing. So John called for two of his disciples,<sup>19</sup> and he sent them to the Lord to ask him, "Are you the Messiah we've been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?"<sup>20</sup> John's two disciples found Jesus and said to him, "John the Baptist*

sent us to ask, 'Are you the Messiah we've been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?' " 21 At that very time, Jesus cured many people of their diseases, illnesses, and evil spirits, and he restored sight to many who were blind. 22 Then he told John's disciples, "Go back to John and tell him what you have seen and heard—the blind see, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor." 23 And he added, "God blesses those who do not turn away because of me." 24 After John's disciples left, Jesus began talking about him to the crowds. "What kind of man did you go into the wilderness to see? Was he a weak reed, swayed by every breath of wind? 25 Or were you expecting to see a man dressed in expensive clothes? No, people who wear beautiful clothes and live in luxury are found in palaces. 26 Were you looking for a prophet? Yes, and he is more than a prophet. 27 John is the man to whom the Scriptures refer when they say, 'Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, and he will prepare your way before you.' 28 I tell you, of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John. Yet even the least person in the Kingdom of God is greater than he is!" 29 When they heard this, all the people—even the tax collectors—agreed that God's way was right, for they had been baptized by John. 30 But the Pharisees and experts in religious law rejected God's plan for them, for they had refused John's baptism. 31 "To what can I compare the people of this generation?" Jesus asked. "How can I describe them? 32 They are like children playing a game in the public square. They complain to their friends, 'We played wedding songs, and you didn't dance, so we played funeral songs, and you didn't weep.' 33 For John the Baptist didn't spend his time eating bread or drinking wine, and you say, 'He's possessed by a demon.' 34 The Son of Man, on the other hand, feasts and drinks, and you say, 'He's a glutton and a drunkard, and a friend of tax collectors and other sinners!' 35 **But wisdom is shown to be right by the lives of those who follow it."**

Jesus was speaking to John in "Isaiah code" (Isa. 29:18–19; 35:5–6; 61:1). John is languishing in prison. Jesus hasn't called out the Roman authorities. He hasn't done anything to gather political power. Is He the one or was I mistaken?

**Note:** Pharisees were the real doubters (unbelievers) in the context of this story

### **A doubting father prays for help**

Mark 9:24 (NLT) *The father instantly cried out, "I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!"*

### **Some worshipped and some doubted**

Matthew 28:16–17 (NLT) *Then the eleven disciples left for Galilee, going to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him—but some of them doubted!*

**Famous Doubters in Scripture:** Abraham, Sarah, Moses, David, Elijah

### **Thomas moves from doubt to faith**

John 20:26–29 (NLT) *Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them. "Peace be with you," he said. 27 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!" 28 "My Lord and my God!" Thomas exclaimed. 29 Then Jesus told him, "You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me."*

### **Thomas died as he was run through with spears in India**

Hebrews 11:1 (ESV) *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*

What do we do about doubters? Do we avoid them because they confront us with our own doubts? Do we shame them?

### **Doubting God's Existence**

Hebrews 11:6 (NLT) *And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.*

## Doubting God's Goodness

*Psalm 34:8 (NIV84) Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.*

## Doubting God's Love

*Romans 5:8 (NIV84) But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

## Doubting God's Word

*Proverbs 30:5 (NLT) Every word of God proves true. He is a shield to all who come to him for protection.*

Thoughts on Doubt:

- Pretending you never doubt is false piety.
- There is a difference between doubt and hopelessness or despair.
- Opposite of Faith is not Doubt. Opposite of Faith is Unbelief!
- Honest Doubt gives God opportunity to reveal Himself

**SO WHAT?** What will you do with your doubt?

*Jude 20–22 (NLT) But you, dear friends, must build each other up in your most holy faith, pray in the power of the Holy Spirit,<sup>21</sup> and await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will bring you eternal life. In this way, you will keep yourselves safe in God's love.<sup>22</sup> And you must show mercy to those whose faith is wavering.*

**We need each to help each other with our doubt!**



## ONWARD CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR SUNDAY, March 19, 2023

**1. LADIES BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAY @ 9:30am**—at Kathy Stump's house (12928 Whitehaven Lane, Fishers). Studying **Psalms** using David Helm's One-to-One method.

**2. EASTER SCHEDULE:** Easter is getting close, so we want you to be aware of our schedule.

- April 7 Good Friday / Passover Service at 7:00PM
- April 9 Resurrection Sunday Service at 10:30AM

**3. FAMILY CAMP—SAVE THE DATE—SEPTEMBER 8-10**—at Blue Gate Inn, Shipshewana.

**4. 2023 ONWARD TO JERUSALEM BIBLE STUDY TOUR OCTOBER 20-31, 2023**—Walk where Jesus walked and see the Bible comes alive as Pastor Gary and our good friend Dr. Moshe Loewenthal lead us on this incredible tour. Estimated cost: \$3,950 per person (double occupancy).

**5. MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP TONIGHT 6-8pm:** Dinner provided.

**6. HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP EVERY OTHER WEDNESDAY**—2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays 6-8pm at Cynthia Brown's house (14079 Clifton Ct., Fishers).

**7. SUMMER YOUTH CAMPS**—**High School** (Grades 9-12) June 12-16. **Middle School** (Grades 6-8) June 21-25. See Pastor Jerry for more info.

**8. PAL ("PARENTS OF ADDICTED LOVED ONES") MEETING**—This is for families of adult children dealing with substance addiction. Every Tuesday night, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. Free weekly meetings. Dr. Nancy Smith, facilitator. For more information, contact [nancy1108smith@gmail.com](mailto:nancy1108smith@gmail.com) or 317-508-8149.

**9. ONWARD PRAYER RESPONSE CARD ONLINE**—To make it easier for some, you can scan this QR code in order to complete your Prayer Response Card.

