

Sermon Title: When Faith Wavers - Matthew 11:2–19

I think every one of us knows what it feels like to have our hopes colliding with reality.

- You prayed for a healing, and it didn't come. You asked God to save your marriage, and it fell apart. You trusted Him with your finances, and the bills kept piling up. You expected Him to show up one way, and He showed up completely differently—or so it seemed.
- That gap between what you *hoped* for and what you *got*—that's a painful place to live.

John the Baptist knew that place well.

- He had spent his entire life preparing for the Messiah. He had seen the Spirit descend on Jesus. He had heard the voice of the Father. And yet, months later, he was sitting alone in a cold prison cell, wondering, "*Did I get it wrong? Is Jesus really the One?*"
- John's problem wasn't that Jesus had failed. Not because He was weak. His problem was that his *expectations* of Jesus were too small.
- If John the Baptist—the man Jesus called "the greatest born of women" (v. 11)— could struggle with unmet expectations, maybe we can be honest about ours too.

The question isn't whether you'll ever struggle with doubt. The question is: *What will you do with it?*

Title of the Message: When Faith Wavers - Matthew 11:2–19

So Here's the Story –

John the Baptist was in a dark, dirty prison.

- King Herod had put him there because John had told the truth about Herod's sin. And now, alone in the cold, John started to wonder.
- Just a few months earlier, he had stood at the Jordan River and watched Jesus walk toward him. He had shouted, "Look! The Lamb of God!" He was sure Jesus was the One. He is the one who baptized Jesus. He had seen the sky open up. He had heard God's own voice.

But now, in prison, nothing looked the way John expected.

- He thought Jesus would bring fire and judgment. He thought Jesus would knock down the Roman Empire and set up God's kingdom. But Jesus wasn't doing any of that. He was healing sick people and eating dinner with tax collectors. Rome was still in charge. Herod was still on his throne. And John was still in chains.

So John sent two of his friends to go find Jesus and ask him a question:

- "Are You really the One? Or should we look for someone else?"
- His friends found Jesus in the middle of a crowd, healing people. Blind people could see. Lame people were walking. Deaf people were hearing. Jesus told John's friends, "Go back and tell John what you've seen. And tell him this: 'Blessed is the one who does not lose faith because of Me.'"

The Probing Question – Mt. 11:2–3

Jesus has chosen His disciples – He sent them out on their First Short Term Mission Trip

- Jesus instructs them... verse 1 ... Notice what he does – Doesn't sit down and take break...
- He went on from there...

Matthew 11:1-10 - When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, ***he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities.*** ² Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?"

John asks a Probing Question...Blank Live - The Probing Question – Mt. 11:2–3

Remember who John was the one who...

- Said, "Behold the Lamb of God / "He must increase; I must decrease"
- Baptized Jesus and said, "I should be baptized by you"
- It was John who heard the voice of God – "This is My Beloved Son ... well pleased!

That may strike us as being odd – If anybody should know it would have been John.

- We have the advantage of hindsight – Hindsight is always 50/50 right?
- We have the complete Word of God – John did not
- Paul said in Ephesians 3, that I preach "the unsearchable riches of Christ. **Ephesians 3:9** - ⁹ and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; (mystery: divine truth hidden)
- **Ephesians 3:10** - to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,
- John did not have the full knowledge we have today – Peter said we have a more sure word of prophesy – **2 Peter 1:19**

So John asks a Probing Question – Jesus give him ...

An Honest Answer – Matthew 11:4-6

Before we read how Jesus answers, notice what Jesus does not do

- He does not critique or chastise or criticize John for his doubt.
- He does not react like ... Cuz, you know me! What's up with you?

Here is what Jesus does...He identifies who He is through the Word and His Works

- What does God want us to know about Himself? His Character?
- God does not reject us in our pain and suffering. He does not discard us in our doubt.
- **Psalms 34:18** - The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit.
- **Psalms 94:18** - In the multitude of my anxieties within me, Your comforts delight my soul.
- **Do you remember the father desperate for healing – He said, Mark 9:24, "Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief – Jesus responds with grace and mercy**
- **Remember Doubting Thomas – unless I see his hands/feet – Jesus said to Thomas,** Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." (**John 20:27**)

Jesus identified Himself with The Word – We may miss this

Matthew 11:4 - ⁴ And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ 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. ⁶ And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

- We as Western, American Christian may think – O, yeah, all the miracles
- What would John have thought? Isaiah 35:4-5 & Isaiah 61:1-2
- **Isaiah 35:4-5** - Say to those who are fearful-hearted, "Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, With the recompense of God; He will come and save you." ⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.
- **Isaiah 61:1-2** - "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty

to the captives, And the opening of the prison to *those who are bound*; ² To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn,

- John would have memorized these passages – He would have known the OT Scriptures
- The best place to go when you doubt is to the Word – Logos – to Jesus
 - What do we want to do? Facebook, Tic Tock?
 - Justin – John had some Matt Carriers – Guys that could not get him to Jesus physically, but guys who carried Him to Jesus spiritually – Who are your matt carriers
 - Mr. Lewis Curry, Job's friends were the exact opposite – they were anti-matt carriers

Jesus identified Himself with The Word

Jesus identified Himself with His Works

Luke gives us some insight that Matthew does not...

Luke 7:18 - Then the disciples of John reported to him concerning all these things. (What things?)

- Luke 7:11-15 Luke records Jesus raised the dead son of the Women of Nain
- Look at verse 16

Luke 7:16 - Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen up among us"; and, "God has visited His people." ¹⁷ And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region.

Luke 7:18 - Then the disciples of John reported to him concerning **all** these things.

Luke 7:19-20 - ¹⁹ And John, calling two of his disciples to *him*, sent *them* to Jesus, saying, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" ²⁰ When the men had come to Him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, 'Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?'"

Notice what happens in verse 21

Luke 7:21 - And that very hour He cured **many** of infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many blind He gave sight.

- That word *many* is an interesting word – It means a bunch – He cured **many**
- You want to know if I am the messiah, the coming one, the branch, promised one, here you go
- We don't know how he did it, but Luke says He did!
- **Luke 7:22** - Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that *the* blind see, *the* lame walk, *the* lepers are cleansed, *the* deaf hear, *the* dead are raised, *the* poor have the gospel preached to them." ²³ And blessed is *he* who is not offended because of Me."
 - Hey, fellas, go give John a first hand account of what you've seen and heard
 - The blind see; the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed – all a result of the fall
- Jesus is pushing back on the affects of the Fall – Romans 5:19 – as by one man, sin entered the world and death by sin
 - When John preached his message, He said, Repent for the Kingdom of heaven is near
 - Jesus comes on the scene – Mark 1:15 – The kingdom of heaven is here!

With His Words and Works He identifies himself to John

This is Proof beyond any doubt –

John MacArthur observed,

- When the New Testament talks about doubt, whether you're talking about the gospels or the epistles, it primarily focuses on **believers**. That's very important. It's as if you have to believe

something before you can doubt it; you have to be committed to it before you begin to question it. So doubt is held up as the unique problem of the believer. (MacArthur Sermon, "Solving the Problem of Doubt" – [Link](#)) (Platt, "Exalting Jesus: Mt. KL 2723)

Unless you might think unless you might think that John the Baptist was a weak believer

- ...verse 11 Jesus said, that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist now if the greatest man who ever lived up until his time had doubts then we can be a little comforted can we not when we doubt so doubt is big basically a problem encountered by Believers
- Over and over for example in Matthew Jesus said to his disciples, "Oh ye of what little faith and on some occasions how long will you doubt?"
- He said they had committed themselves to him. They had believed but their belief from time to time hit some snags that made them doubt.
- Even after his death, burial and resurrection, Jesus said to them in **Matthew 28:17** - And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted.
- **Luke 12:29** - "And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind.

What causes doubt – What do we do about it

This is what John Faced – This is not uncommon - Four Reasons to Doubt – John MacArthur – [Web Link](#) – [Doc Link](#)

Disheartened by Difficult Circumstances

Difficult Circumstances made John Doubt

- Remember John was the last of the Prophets – I am man full of the Holy Spirit that preached with power and look where it got him.
- In the middle of a pit – dark and bleak.
- He had done exactly what the Lord had wanted him to do – Announce the Kingdom of Heaven is near – It's coming – Repent! **And look where it got him.**
- Sometimes serving the Lord is costly – If you know the rest of the story, John eventually is beheaded...
- John had been bold and faithful, yet he sat in a cold, dark prison (Matthew 4:12; 14:3).
 - His circumstances wore him down.
 - Even the strongest servants can feel the weight of prolonged suffering.

Difficult Circumstances tend to make us doubt -

- Every been there – Trying to be faithful – trust in the Lord with all your heart
- You lose your job. You get a diagnosis. There is a tragedy. Heartache / Heartbreak
- We start to doubt the Lord – We start to doubt His goodness
- This is exactly what is happening with John

Circumstances breed doubt. John was in prison, isolated, and suffering. His expectations of what the Messiah would do didn't match his reality.

- **Doubt is not the same as unbelief.** John didn't walk away from Jesus; he brought his question to Jesus.
- **Application:** When suffering comes, are you willing to bring your honest questions to Christ rather than turn away from Him?

Philippians 4:4 - Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

Philippians 4:6-7 - ⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷ and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Verse 8 – Meditate on good, wholesome things...

Verse 9 – Follow my example, Paul says,

Verse 10 – Paul rejoices for the care the church expressed to him. – Now look at verse 11

Philippians 4:11 - ¹¹ Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: ¹² I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. ¹³ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Doubt gives us the opportunity to exercise our faith – When we exercise our faith, it gets stronger.

Disheartened by Difficult Circumstances

Disillusioned by Worldly Influences

The Jews expected the Messiah to come as a victorious warrior who would overthrow Rome, restore Israel's kingdom, and judge God's enemies. But Jesus came very differently.

- They expected political freedom; Jesus brought freedom from sin.
- They expected a restored earthly throne; Jesus announced a kingdom not of this world (John 18:36).
- They expected fire and judgment; Jesus spent His time healing the sick, forgiving sinners, and eating with tax collectors.

Even John the Baptist struggled with this. John had boldly announced:

"The ax is laid to the root of the trees... Verse 11 – Coming one is greater. He will gather His wheat into the barn, but burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3:10–12).

John expected immediate judgment.

- Instead, from prison he heard reports of Jesus healing the blind, cleansing lepers, and showing mercy. So he sent his disciples to ask, "Are You the One who is to come, or should we expect someone else?" (Matthew 11:3).
- John's problem wasn't a lack of faith as much as a mismatch between expectation and reality. He expected the Messiah to change the political landscape, yet Rome still ruled. Evil still existed. Injustice remained. It seemed nothing had changed.
- The disciples wrestled with the same misunderstanding.
- Even after years with Jesus, they kept asking when He would establish His earthly kingdom (Acts 1:6). Peter even rebuked Jesus for saying He would suffer and die because that didn't fit his idea of the Messiah (Matthew 16:21–23).
- Many Jews believed a series of prophetic figures—Elijah, Jeremiah, and others—would come before the Messiah. So when Jesus didn't match their expectations, some wondered if He was simply another prophet rather than the Messiah Himself (Matthew 16:13–16).

The lesson is clear:

- Our expectations can keep us from recognizing what God is actually doing. When we expect God to work according to our plans instead of His promises, disappointment and doubt can follow. But Jesus wasn't failing to fulfill God's plan—He was fulfilling it in a way no one expected.

Disheartened by Difficult Circumstances

Disillusioned by Worldly Influences

Disoriented by Limited Revelation

Think about how disorienting this would have been for John.

- Everything he had preached and proclaimed seemed to be unfolding differently than he anticipated.
- When your whole theological framework is shaken, disorientation is natural.

Remember John had been in prison for several months (1 year / 1 ½ year)

- He had heard – He did not know exactly what was going on? How could he?
- He did not have the opportunity for a first hand look
- His understanding was limited.
- He did not have the opportunity to ... like Peter to be eyewitness of this glory ... like John to (I John 1:3) that which we have seen and heard, we declare to you
- He did not have the "...more sure word of Scripture..."
- He was getting a lot second handed

Scripture does not record John ever seeing a miracle **first hand!**

Here's what we know:

1. John was present at Jesus' baptism (Matthew 3:13–17; John 1:29–34). He saw the Spirit descend like a dove and heard the Father's voice from heaven. He testified, "I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God" (John 1:34).

2. John was imprisoned early. After Jesus' baptism and temptation, Jesus began His public ministry. But John was arrested by Herod not long after (Matthew 4:12). The bulk of Jesus' miracles—the healings, the deliverance, the raising of the dead—happened while John was locked away.

3. John only heard about the miracles secondhand. In Matthew 11:2, the text says John "heard about the deeds of the Christ" while in prison. He sent his disciples to ask Jesus directly. That means everything John knew about Jesus' miracles came from reports—he didn't see them with his own eyes.

This makes John's doubt even more understandable. He had proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah based on the baptism event. But then he sat in a dark cell for months, hearing rumors of healings but never seeing any of them himself. He had a powerful spiritual experience, but no *ongoing* visible evidence to sustain him. And his expectations of what the Messiah would do didn't match what he was hearing.

That's why Jesus' response is so gentle. He didn't say, "John, you should have seen all those miracles!" Instead, He sent back evidence and a blessing: "*Blessed is the one who is not offended by Me*" (Matthew 11:6). He was essentially saying, "Trust Me even when you can't see."

What about Us – today?

- People doubt not only because of negative circumstances and worldly influences but a lot of people doubt **because they just don't understand God's revelation.** You got to know the facts. He says go tell John the blind receive, their sight the lame walk, the lepers are cleanse, the deaf hear, the dead or raise the poor of the Gospel preach.
- In other words give him the Revelation give him the manifestation. Tell them what I've done.

- **John MacArthur said, "I would promise to you that your doubt is erased as you daily expose yourself to the revelation of God. Let God speak through his word that spells the end of doubt."**
- Do you remember the two disciples on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24.
- They were walking along and they're in the midst of doubt and confusion and perplexity and the Lord comes along, and what did He do? He open unto them what the **scripture** and began to speak out of the scripture the things concerning himself and their eyes were opened and they saw him and they said did not our heart burn within us as he spoke with us along the way and open to us the scripture.
- You see what dispelled their doubt was the revelation of himself in the Scriptures
- We all need that daily exposure to the Word
- Romans 10:17 – So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
- **God Time – Picture – Slide 54 (Full Screen Live) Slide 55 (blank live)**

Disheartened by Difficult Circumstances

Disillusioned by Worldly Influences

Disoriented by Limited Revelation

Despondent by Unmet Expectations

John Expected Judgment. Jesus Came with Mercy.

John had preached:

Matthew 3:12 - **"His winnowing fork is in His hand... He will gather His wheat into the barn, but burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."**

John's message was simple: **Repent! The Messiah is coming to judge.**

- He expected the Messiah to arrive with power, bringing swift justice, destroying evil, and judging the wicked.
- But Jesus came differently. Instead of calling down fire from heaven, He called fishermen.
- Instead of overthrowing Rome, He walked through Galilee healing the sick, welcoming sinners, and showing compassion to the broken.

John's message emphasized **judgment**. Jesus' ministry displayed **mercy**.

- From prison, John couldn't understand. *"If You are the Messiah, why hasn't judgment come? Why are evil people still prospering?"*

It's the same question believers have asked throughout history.

- David asked it in the Psalms.
- The martyrs ask it in Revelation 6:10: **"How long, O Lord?"**
- We ask it today when injustice seems to win and evil goes unpunished.

Unfulfilled expectations can lead to doubt.

- We expect God to act immediately, but He often works according to His timetable, not ours.
- So how did Jesus answer John? He pointed him to the evidence:
- "The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." (Matthew 11:5)

These miracles were signs that **God's kingdom had already begun to break into the world.**

- The King had come, even if the final judgment had not yet arrived.
- Jesus was reminding John, **"Look at what I am doing, not just what I haven't done yet."**
- Judgment would come—but first came mercy, so that sinners could repent and be saved.

The lesson for us is this: Don't let delayed expectations produce doubt. Keep your eyes on what Jesus is doing today, trusting that He will complete everything He has promised in His perfect time.

Conclusion

Matthew 11:6 - And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me." The Greek Word: *Skandalizō*

- The word Jesus uses here translated as "offended" is the Greek verb *skandalizō* (σκανδαλίζω). It means to cause someone to stumble, to fall into a trap, or to be repelled by something. It's where we get the English word "scandalize."
- When Jesus says, "Blessed is the one who is not offended by Me," He's saying: "Blessed is the one who doesn't trip over Me—who doesn't find Me to be a stumbling block."

Jesus is gently telling John:

- *"John, I know you're confused. I know I'm not acting the way you thought I would. But don't let your expectations cause you to miss Me. Don't let your disappointment turn into disbelief. You are blessed if you can look past the confusion and still trust that I am who I said I am."*

This is hugely relevant today.

- Many people walk away from Jesus not because He has failed, but because He didn't meet their expectations. They wanted a life without suffering. They wanted answered prayers on their timeline. They wanted a Jesus who fit their comfort zone. And when the real Jesus didn't match their picture, they stumbled.
- Jesus says: "Blessed—truly happy, truly at peace—is the one who doesn't let that happen."

John Finished Strong – If you know the end of the story, John is beheaded in prison.

- Yet, I believe John's doubt was removed – MacArthur points out that... (Matthew 14:12 [\[57:18 Opens in a new window.\]](#))
- After John's death, his remaining disciples immediately buried him and **went straight to Jesus**
- They went to Jesus because **John had directed them to believe in Him** and had sent them back to Jesus with their questions
- The fact that John's own disciples ran to Jesus for comfort and allegiance after John's death proves that John had received Jesus' answer in Matthew 11, had his doubts fully removed, and died fully convinced that Jesus was the Messiah

If you doubt because of difficult circumstances...**look at his Works**. They prove he cares for people in difficulty.

If you doubt because of world influences, **look at his Works**. He is in control and someday we'll show it fully.

If you doubt because of incomplete Revelation, then **look at his words** and study them and read them and see who he is.

If you doubt because of unmet expectation, **look again for these are all the previews** of what he will do in the kingdom.

And if he could do them then he proves himself to be the one who can do them in the Kingdom

When peace like a river, attendeth my way; When sorrows like sea billows roll

Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say, It is well, it is well, with my soul

It is well With my soul

It is well, it is well with my soul

II. The Patient Answer (vv. 4–6)

- **Jesus points to the evidence.** He tells John's disciples: "*Go and tell John what you hear and see*" (v. 4).
- **The proof is prophetic.** Jesus quotes Isaiah 35:5–6 and 61:1—the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.
- **The blessing of faith.** "*Blessed is the one who is not offended by me*" (v. 6). Faith means trusting Jesus even when He doesn't look like what we expected.
- **Application:** Don't rely on your feelings. Look at what Jesus has actually done—in Scripture and in your life.

III. The Unshakable Witness (vv. 7–15)

- **Jesus affirms John's role.** John was not a reed shaken by the wind—he was a prophet, the very messenger Malachi 3:1 promised would prepare the way.
- **The greatest human privilege.** "*Among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist*" (v. 11). Yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater still—because of what Christ has accomplished.
- **Application:** Your momentary doubt does not erase your faithful service. God sees the whole picture.

The six signs Jesus lists are drawn directly from **Isaiah 35:5–6 and 61:1**—passages understood in Jewish tradition as describing the messianic age:

- "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened" (Isa. 35:5)
- "The lame shall leap like a deer" (Isa. 35:6)
- Isaiah 61:1 contains the entire program Jesus cites

The enumeration—blind, lame, lepers, deaf, dead, and poor receiving gospel—constitutes a sevenfold catalog of redemptive acts. In Jewish numerology and rhetorical practice, such lists convey completeness and divine fullness.

The phrase **"and the poor have the gospel preached to them"** (καὶ πτωχοὶ εὐαγγελίζονται) is crucial. The verb *εὐαγγελίζονται* is passive; the poor are *evangelized to*, not active evangelists. This emphasizes that the gospel reaches those society deems worthless—a reversal of typical honor-shame categories in the ancient world. Matthew's Jewish audience would recognize this as fulfilling Isaiah 61:1: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor."

"Blessed is he who is not offended because of Me" (Μακάριος ὃς ἐὰν μὴ σκανδαλισθῇ ἐν ἐμοί) introduces a crucial theme. The word *σκανδαλίζω* (from *skandalon*, a trap or snare) means to cause someone to stumble, to trap into sin, or to offend. Here it carries the sense of being *disillusioned* or *scandalized* by Jesus. John's disciples—and by extension John himself—are being warned: the Messiah's works, however glorious, may not align with preconceived expectations. Blessing comes through adjusting expectations, not rejecting the Messiah for failing to meet them.

IV. The Stubborn Generation (vv. 16–19)

- **"We played the flute for you, and you did not dance"** (v. 17). This generation rejected John's asceticism and Jesus' celebration—they simply refused to believe.
- **Wisdom is justified by her deeds.** Jesus' life and works prove who He is, regardless of public opinion.
- **Application:** The world will always find a reason to reject the truth. Don't let the criticism of others shake your confidence in Christ.

Conclusion

John the Baptist doubted—but he didn't stay there. He brought his question to Jesus, and Jesus answered with the evidence of His grace.

Where are you doubting today? Bring it to Jesus. Look at what He has done. He is the One who was promised. He is enough.

"Blessed is the one who is not offended by me." — Matthew 11:6

Key Takeaway: Doubt is not the enemy of faith—it is the doorway to deeper faith when we bring our questions to the One who has the answers.

Research

In his sermon on [Matthew 11:1–6](#), John MacArthur examines the concept of doubt in the life of a believer, using John the Baptist's questioning of Jesus as the primary example [\[08:26 Opens in a new window\]](#).

Below are the main points and structure of his sermon:

1. Context & Categories of Response

- **Matthew's Courtroom Strategy (Chapters 1–10):** Matthew lays out a series of testimonies proving Jesus is the Messiah—such as history, virgin birth, fulfilled prophecy, the Father's voice, miracles, and the testimony of the disciples [\[01:41 Opens in a new window\]](#).
 - **Responses to Christ (Chapters 11–12):** Starting in chapter 11, Matthew outlines how people react to Jesus, ranging from negative responses (doubt, criticism, indifference, rejection, blasphemy) to positive responses of faith [\[04:24 Opens in a new window\]](#).
 - **Doubt Belongs to Believers:** MacArthur emphasizes that biblical doubt is a problem unique to believers [\[07:21 Opens in a new window\]](#). You must believe something before you can question or doubt it [\[07:34 Opens in a new window\]](#).
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2. Four Reasons Why Believers Doubt

MacArthur draws four underlying causes of doubt from John the Baptist's circumstance in prison:

- **Difficult Circumstances** [\[28:53 Opens in a new window\]](#): John went from wide-open wilderness preaching to being confined in a dark dungeon at Machaerus [\[30:55 Opens in a new window\]](#). Negative trials and suffering make us question if God truly cares or is listening [\[33:38 Opens in a new window\]](#).
 - **Worldly Influences** [\[38:28 Opens in a new window\]](#): John was influenced by the cultural messianic expectations of his day—expecting a Messiah who would overthrow political oppressors and instantly fix societal wrongs [\[38:45 Opens in a new window\]](#).
 - **Incomplete Revelation** [\[47:19 Opens in a new window\]](#): John lacked firsthand visibility into all that Jesus was doing [\[47:39 Opens in a new window\]](#). MacArthur notes that doubt often stems from not fully understanding or constantly exposing oneself to God's complete Word [\[48:46 Opens in a new window\]](#).
 - **Unfulfilled Expectation** [\[50:23 Opens in a new window\]](#): John expected the Messiah to bring fiery judgment immediately [\[51:14 Opens in a new window\]](#). When Jesus came in gentleness and mercy instead, impatience caused John to wonder if they should look for someone else [\[51:57 Opens in a new window\]](#).
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3. The Cure for Doubt

- **Go Directly to the Source:** When John experienced doubt, he did not spread it; he sent his disciples straight to Jesus [[22:26 Opens in a new window](#)].
 - **Look at the Works and Evidence:** Jesus pointed John's disciples to His miracles—healing the blind, lame, deaf, and raising the dead [[25:00 Opens in a new window](#)]. These served as credentials of Messiahship and previews of the coming Kingdom [[26:30 Opens in a new window](#)].
 - **Avoid the Trap of Doubt:** Jesus offered a gentle warning in [Matthew 11:6](#) ("*Blessed is he who is not offended by me*"), urging believers not to be lured into the trap of doubting Him [[26:47 Opens in a new window](#)].
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4. Final Reassurance

- **God Remains Faithful:** Citing [2 Timothy 2:13](#), MacArthur concludes that even when our faith falters or we have weak moments, God remains faithful because He cannot deny Himself [[58:25 Opens in a new window](#)].
- **John's Faith Was Restored:** John's disciples later went directly to Jesus after John was executed, proving John's doubts were fully resolved by Christ's response [[57:37 Opens in a new window](#)].