



# THE THREAD

*weaving Sunday's message through the week*

**Date:** July 21, 2019

**Passage:** selections from the Gospel of John

**Theme:** Confronting Doubt

**Summary:** Doubt is an unwelcome, and oftentimes unsettling, reality for Christians. Our faith, at some point and to some degree, will be tested if we are truly following Jesus. The problem is that doubt tends to cast its sinister shadow over everything we think we know.

How is the genuine Christian supposed to think about and deal with their doubt? How is the skeptic, who is unsure about matters of faith and salvation, supposed to deal with their doubt? Does the presence of doubt indicate that we don't have enough faith, or that we are not truly saved? This week we will look at the Gospel of John to see how we can think biblically and respond faithfully when doubts assail us.

**Outline:**

/// When Jesus seems unconcerned (Luke 8:22-25)

Q: "Where is your faith?"

/// The danger of unbelief (John 3:16-21, 36)

/// Two kinds of doubt:

- Doubt that is condemned (John 5)
- Doubt that is rebuked (John 20:24-29)

/// Encouragement for doubters (John 6:35-59)

/// Two responses to doubt: John 6:66-69

- Turn away from Christ (v. 66)
- Turn to Christ (vv. 68-69)

/// Factors that nurture doubt:

- Satan - the Deceiver and Accuser always seeks to call God's goodness and faithfulness into question
- Ignorance of God's word - "Ignorance is the soil in which doubt flourishes."
- Isolation - not being connected to the body of Christ
- Sin - cherishing some sin(s) robs you of assurance

/// Practical helps to fight doubt:

- Worship - Gather with the church to worship
- Teaching - Let your mind and heart be shaped by sound teaching
- Fellowship - Share your life with other Christians so you can bear each other's burdens
- Spiritual growth - Read the Bible, Pray, Confess sin, Meditate on the promises of God, Obey what he has said

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What causes you to question God's faithfulness and goodness?
2. Where is your faith? Where are you placing it, now?
3. Why is it so important to battle unbelief? What does it lead to ultimately?
4. Where do you need to confess unbelief and take hold of God's promise(s) to you? (Philippians 3:12-14)
5. How do you respond to others who struggle with doubt? Are you merciful, or merciless? (1 Thessalonians 5:14; Jude 22)

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