

April 23, 2017

TIME OF REFLECTION

“Doubts are the ants in the pants of faith. They keep it awake and moving.”

~Frederick Buechner (1926-present), American writer, minister and theologian

“If a man fights his way through his doubts to the conviction that Jesus Christ is Lord, he has attained to a certainty that the man who unthinkingly accepts things can never reach.”

~William Barclay (1907-1978), Scottish minister, professor and author

“Christ never failed to distinguish between doubt and unbelief. Doubt is *can't believe*. Unbelief is *won't believe*. Doubt is honesty. Unbelief is obstinacy. Doubt is looking for light. Unbelief is content with darkness.”

~Henry Drummond (1851-1897), Scottish evangelist, biologist, writer and lecturer

“Some of us who have preached the Word for years, and have been the means of working faith in others and of establishing them in the knowledge of the fundamental doctrines of the Bible, have nevertheless been the subjects of the most fearful and violent doubts as to the truth of the very gospel we have preached.”

~Charles Spurgeon (1834 – 1892), British author and minister

“Even doubting thoughts and feelings that border on sin are better laid out before the gracious eyes of the Lord than nursed in our hearts. God will not be shocked! He knows our inmost thoughts anyway!”

~Iain Duguid, contemporary pastor, professor and author

“You must learn to call on the Lord. Don't sit all alone or lie on the couch, shaking your head and letting your thoughts torture you. Don't worry about how to get out of your situation or brood about your terrible life, how miserable you feel, and what a bad person you are. Instead, say, ‘Get a grip on yourself, you lazy bum! Fall on your knees, and raise your hands and eyes toward heaven...and tearfully tell God what you need.’”

~Martin Luther (1483-1546), German professor, theologian, composer, and author

Worship through the Word

SERMON – “The Surprise of the Empty Tomb” – *Pastor Doug Cooper*

SERMON PASSAGE – *Selections from all four gospels (NIV)*

John 1:29, 34

²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

³⁴ I have seen and I testify that this is God’s Chosen One.”

Luke 7:20-23, 28

²⁰ When the men came to Jesus, they said, “John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?’”

²¹ At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. ²² So he replied to the messengers, “Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. ²³ Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.”

²⁸ “I [Jesus] tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.”

Mark 9:14-27

¹⁴ When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. ¹⁵ As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him.

¹⁶ “What are you arguing with them about?” he asked.

¹⁷ A man in the crowd answered, “Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. ¹⁸ Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not.”

¹⁹ “You unbelieving generation,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.”

²⁰ So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.

²¹ Jesus asked the boy’s father, “How long has he been like this?”

“From childhood,” he answered. ²² “It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.”

²³ “‘If you can?’” said Jesus. “Everything is possible for one who believes.”

²⁴ Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!”

²⁵ When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit. “You deaf and mute spirit,” he said, “I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.”

²⁶ The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, “He’s dead.” ²⁷ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up.

John 20:24-31

²⁴ Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

²⁶ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

²⁸ Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

³⁰ Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Matthew 28:16-20

¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

