

## Sources of Doubt

*Dealing with Doubt*

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**Bible Text:** Jude 1:17-23  
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Would you please take your Bible and let's turn over to the New Testament to the letter of Jude. It's a small letter, very small, only one chapter. It's right before the book of Revelation. If you were using one of the black Bibles provided for you there at the bottom of the chair in front of you, you can turn to page 1,027 to the letter of Jude comprised of what we would call 25 verses. We are going to start reading in verse 17 today and I'm going to read through the end of verse 23. Our particular focus of attention will be primarily on verse 22 but we're going to read from 17 to 23 to get the context. Jude 1:17,

17 But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. 18 They said to you, "In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions." 19 It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. 20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. 22 And have mercy on those who doubt; 23 save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

This is God's word. Let me pray.

*Father, you have revealed yourself as a God of great mercy, a God who is rich in mercy, a God whose mercy is from everlasting unto everlasting to those who fear you. And Lord, you have promised not to extinguish the smoldering wick, you have assured us that you will not toss aside the broken reed, all of which is to say you care about the weakest among us. So Lord, help us to taste your mercy today. Help us to experience your mercy. And help all those who are perhaps in a time and a place of spiritual doubt, and may we be better prepared today to have mercy on those who doubt. And this we pray through Jesus. Amen.*

You will see a picture of a gentleman named Bart Campolo. He is the son of a well known evangelist by the name of Tony Campolo. Some of you may not be as familiar with Tony Campolo simply because he would probably be on the progressive end of

Christianity otherwise known as a liberal end of Christianity. Nevertheless, Tony Campolo has been very well known over the last few decades. His son, the picture you see is a picture of Bart Campolo. He was raised at home in the church. He became a believer at the age of 15 and after professing Christianity for at least 30 years and speaking internationally to youth groups all around the world, a few years ago Bart came out with a de-conversion, that's what people call it today, those who leave the Christian faith, a de-convert. Bart departed from the Christian faith and he walked away into what he called "life after God." You'll see a portion of an interview he gave, it's the paragraph here I give to you. He said,

"The narrative was always hard for me, and over time, lots of experiences, lots of unanswered prayers, lots of questions like, why does God heal so many people of cancer but never an amputee grows his limb back? I came to this place where I was like, over time, I don't think that the core narrative is true."

Bart is saying that he began with some questions, questions like, "Why don't we see amputees with limbs that grow back?" He even went on to say, "Has God got something against amputees?" So he questions and his questions led to doubt and in his case, his doubt led to disbelief. He said, "I don't believe the narrative anymore." He just basically said, "I don't believe the promises of God. I don't believe the word of God. I don't even believe there is a God." But let me say, not all questions, not all doubt has to lead to disbelief.

Today, we're going to begin a series on "Dealing with Doubt." Dealing with doubt. There are a lot of things that we can doubt in life. For example, you might be here today and you might be, maybe over the last few days, maybe you have been doubting the intentions of someone, you've been wondering, "I wonder if maybe are they really sincere?" Or maybe we might doubt that salesperson making an extravagant claim about their product. You know, we've seen it on the television or in person, this lifetime guarantee and all that kind of stuff and you think, "I don't know. I don't know about that." We have our doubts. There are a lot of things that we can doubt but our text today deals specifically with believers who struggle with what we might call religious doubt.

No doubt there are some here today who may be experiencing doubt. Maybe you have been Christian for a short time and there are still many unresolved questions and they have led to doubt. Or maybe you've been a Christian for a number of years and you've had those seasons of doubt. Maybe you're going through one of those seasons right now. Or maybe you're here today and you're uncommitted. You're not a Christian but you have been looking at the Christian faith and you have had questions, and you have doubts, and so I think we're going to touch on some things today that will help you. I'm convinced of that. The following two Sundays, we're going to be looking at two case studies of doubt but today we're going to just simply do this: we're going to look at the general subject of doubt. Let me tell you what we're going to do first, we're going to ask: what is doubt? We're going to also ask: why do we doubt? Then we're going to look at some occasions for doubt, in other words, how does doubt kind of enter into our lives. And then finally

and I think perhaps the most important part maybe, will be compassionate help for those who doubt.

So first, let's look at the question: what is doubt? The word, the original word from which we get the English word "doubt," is a word that means "to be of two minds." To be of two minds. Some have described it this way, it's to have a foot in two boats. You've got one foot in this boat, one foot in this boat, and it's to give us the picture of a person being torn in two directions at once. You know, we're kind of leaning toward this direction but then we lean toward this direction too and so we are wavering in between the two. For example, to believe something, to believe is to be of one mind and accepting something as true. To disbelieve is to be of one mind and rejecting it. So if you believe, you have embraced it, you're settled, but then if you disbelieve, you are settled there, okay? Therefore, doubt is to waver somewhere between the two. You've got one foot in this boat and one foot in this boat.

Now, this distinction is really important because sometimes when, let's say a young believer, when they experience doubt, they might immediately feel, "Uh-oh, I'm not a Christian anymore. I've got some serious questions and unresolved things in my mind. I feel like I've got one foot over here and one foot over here. So I must not be a Christian anymore. Or I must not be in the faith anymore. I must not truly be a believer." Listen, listen very carefully: doubt is not the same thing as disbelief. They are not the same thing. You might be persuaded in your mind, you might feel that they are but they are not. You see, just because a believer experiences questions or doubt does not mean that they have abandoned the faith and that is important to remember because you might feel that way but it doesn't mean that. Doubt is a halfway stage between a confident faith or it can lead to disbelief, as it did in the case of Bart Campolo. So doubt, what is doubt, it's that halfway place. You know, we've got one foot over here and one foot over here. Now I'm going to say this numerous times today, don't misunderstand me, don't think I'm encouraging doubt or suggesting doubt. Right now we're just identifying what is doubt and it's that in between spot between belief and disbelief.

The second question: why do we doubt? Why do we doubt in the first place? Well, I look around the room and I realize that I'm speaking to fellow human beings, okay? We are all humans, okay, and that means that we operate under certain limits. None of us in this room are omniscient. None of us know everything. None of us know the future. None of us know even the next few hours what's going to take place. We have limits because we are human. We are creatures, we are not the Creator. God is omniscient, he knows all things, but we don't. We are human. We operate with certain limits.

So what that means is with the absence of absolute certainty, there will always be room for doubt. With the absence of absolute certainty and believe me, we do not have absolute certainty, with the absence of absolute certainty, there will always be room for doubt, and because we can't fully grasp things, sometimes we think that that can't be true then, you see. We think, "I just don't understand this. I just don't get it," and so therefore we immediately put it in the category of it's not true and part of that is because we don't want to look foolish. We don't want to embrace something and go for it and look foolish in

having done it. Think about it this way, let's say you're in a building on the tenth floor and a fire breaks out and the fire is pretty intense, it melts the elevators and the stair collapses and you're left there on the tenth floor and really the only option you have is to jump. And you look down and there is a group of volunteer firefighters holding a blanket and so you look at that and you start looking at it pretty closely and you explore a little bit and you think, "Hm"; you look at the blanket and it looks thin and tattered and it looks like it's been used a number of times. Then you look at the firefighters and they look like they are hung over from the night before and you start thinking, "Hm," and you decide because the blanket is thin, because the firefighters look like they are hung over, "I'm not doing that. I'm going to stay right here. I'll stay right here and die rather than look like a fool and jump."

The point is this, friends, we are all in a burning building. It's called our body. Every one of us in this room are in the burning building, so to speak. We are headed toward death and there is only one road that leads to absolute certainty and the door, when you get there the door is marked "death." That's when you get absolute certainty. You'll know, you'll know then is there a God or is there not a God? Is God good? We'll know all those things but we don't know them now, you see. So what you and I have to do, we have to decide which worldview will best prepare us for the door marked "death."

So we doubt because we are human. We doubt because we have limited certainty. We are limited and so therefore we doubt. The third thing, though, is occasions for doubt. We know what doubt is, now we know why we doubt because we are humans, but what brings about the occasion for doubt? What moves in kind of like a dark cloud? What are the occasions for doubt? Well, I'll not mention them all, we might cover some today and in the next couple of weeks but let me mention a couple, a few today.

1. Cultural influences. We live in the world, okay? You say, "What's so wrong with that?" Well, remember the Scriptures tell us this, "Do not love the world nor the things of this world." Now, what does that mean? Does that mean that when you go on vacation, let's say you go out West and you're going to get to go to Hoover Dam and you go to the Grand Canyon and all the other places, does that mean that you can't like that? Does that mean, "Oh, I'm not going there. I'm not going there because I'm not supposed to love the world." It doesn't mean that. Not at all. You can go and enjoy God's great creation. You see, to love the world, we are forbidden to love the world and by that God means this: the world is that evil system that is controlled by Satan that is opposed to God and leads us away from worship of God. Think about it this way. You got up this morning, maybe watched some news, maybe read the paper, let me ask you, how many of you heard the newscaster say, "I want to begin today by declaring to you the greatness, the magnificence of God. God is awesome. He has kept us overnight. He has been faithful. He is glorious and worthy of all our praise." Probably nobody heard that on the news today, right? Now, you might say, "Well, that's stupid. They're not going to do that." Now, what's so stupid about that when the fact is God is the most important being in the universe? What's so stupid about it? Because we've gotten used to the air we breathe. It's a world that's opposed to God. It's a world that is anti-God.

That's where we live, you see, so one of the reasons for the doubts that will come about, will come through the world. Let me give you a couple of examples. I'm not against the History Channel. I like the History Channel but I'm not going to look to the History Channel to teach me the Bible, okay? So please, let's make a pact today that we are not going to learn anything about the Bible from the History Channel. What we will learn from the History Channel about the Bible is there are a lot of people that don't believe the Bible. Let's make a pact, let's don't look to the National Geographic Channel to teach us about the Bible, okay? Let's just don't do that. Do you know why I'm saying this? I have people all the time come and say, "I watched a Bible program. It's about the Bible, have you seen that?" Nope. Nope, I haven't and I'm not going to. Why? Because they are going to trot in, they are going to trot in all of the liberal scholars around the world, they are going to trot them in and they are going to say to us, "Well, you know, it probably didn't happen that way." You see, that's the world and you listen to that stuff and you buy into it and it's going to create all kinds of doubts to the truth of God's word.

So one of the reasons for occasions for doubt is we live in a world that is opposed to God. Another occasion for doubt is our peers. Our peers. Bart Campolo, his wife, his wife had serious doubts about Christianity before they got married. Now, I'm just going to be bold enough to say this: Bart should have never married her. Really. I mean, for his spiritual benefit and well-being, he should have never married her knowing that she had far more serious doubts about Christianity than he did. It was only after, again, his questions and the peer pressure of his wife that led to serious doubting and then led to disbelief.

Think about it this way for us. You might be here today and you are acquainted with someone who is a disbeliever, maybe even they have gone as far as to be an atheist. They are just unbelievers of God, but yet they have many good qualities. Maybe you work with them and maybe you find, "This guy is more honest than some of the people I know. Or he treats his family great or she treats her kids wonderful or she is very generous," in spite of the fact that they are unbelievers. And what will happen is you come up against that, you see, and you'll start beginning, that's where the doubt can begin to seep in. Or you might know someone who is pursuing an alternative lifestyle. You might be going to school with someone who has chosen an alternative lifestyle that is very very different from the lifestyle that you live, or that the lifestyle that the Scriptures commend. And you look at them and you'll say, "They seem like the nicest people in the world. They're sweet. They're kind to me."

Or it may happen this way: difficult teachings in the Bible that can be very countercultural. Again, take the Bible's teaching regarding sexual immorality and that goes against the grain of the world that we live in right now. The sexual revolution with the wind, the strong headwinds, and we say, "Look, here's what the Bible has to say about it." And there will be a great deal of pressure, great deal of pressure upon us and that can lead, again, to doubt beginning to seep in.

All of these can arouse questions and doubts, but then also there is another occasion and that is deep suffering. Deep suffering which can be an occasion for emotional doubt. It's a little different than intellectual doubt. Intellectual doubt might be more of, "Can you

believe the Bible? I don't know if I believe the Bible is true." Emotional doubt is more where it hits to the core of, "God, I thought you loved me?" I mean, take the young lady, take the young ladies who have gone through serious, painful, sexual abuse. I have read so many accounts of young ladies who have gone through this and as they got into their teenage years, they began to talk about, they would express, "God, where were you? Why did you let this happen to me?"

You see, that can create a great deal of doubt. "God, why did you allow this to happen to me?" Or maybe for teenagers it might be more like this, it might be where you are raised in the church and you kind of get the impression that if we just pray, if we just pray everything is going to work out okay, and then one of your best friends at school dies in a car wreck, or a member of your family that you absolutely loved and were so dependent upon and they die. That can be an immediate occasion for a great deal of doubt of, "God, why did you let this happen? I thought you loved me. Don't you love me? Aren't you there?"

So these are just a few occasions for doubt, okay, and we'll touch on some more later, but here's what I want to get to this morning before we run out of time and that is: help for those who doubt. Help for those who doubt. We have described what doubt is and why we doubt, some of the occasions for doubt, but now I want to get down to help for those who doubt. Now, you might be one here today who needs help. You might be in the place right now that you've got some serious doubt going on. You've been coming to church and, you know, you've still got some doubts. Some things have happened, some occasions have happened and you're doubting. Or you might be on the end of providing help. You might know someone right now who is really struggling with doubt and so you think, "How can I help them?" Well, let's take the next few minutes and just talk about help for those who doubt.

Notice in our text, look at verse 22, "And have mercy on those who doubt." Now, this one here is going to be more helpful for those providing the help, okay? It says have mercy. Another way of putting that is show compassion. Show compassion. Now, what would that look like? First, doubt can be devastating. I mean, doubt can be like this dark gray cloud that just comes and camps out right over you and you try to work your way through it and you're reluctant to talk about it, you're reluctant to say anything about it.

So what do we do for that person? Well, it says: show compassion, have mercy. What does that mean? It means, first, the simplest thing, it means to be there for them. Be there. You see, it comes right back to being in community. Be there. Be there to build them up. The Scripture calls it edify. We are to edify one another, you see. And I say this because a church can be a very unkind place for doubters. I know this. I've been in the church for 37 years, I can remember as a teenager, a young adult, having what I felt were sincere questions only to be looked at like, "What are you up to? What are you up to? What are you trying to subvert? What are you up to?" The church can often be a very unkind place for doubters and so a lot of times doubters just keep it to themselves. It just eats them up, you see. What the Scriptures are saying, we should have mercy on them and what that means is the doubter is going to have to talk about it. The doubter is going to have to talk

about it to someone and I would encourage you to do that, but the response must not be that somehow this is a subverter of the faith. It should be showing compassion. Showing compassion. Have mercy on those who doubt. So let's be a church, can we do this, can we be a church that's not going to attack the doubter? Not going to beat the doubter down? But we're going to help them, come alongside of them and help them?

The second matter of help: make the main things the main things. If you were to go home today and I hope you will, it wouldn't take you just a few minutes to read this letter. Read the letter of Jude. Here's what you'll find out: there with those in the church who were perverting the grace of God. In other words, let me put it this way: have you ever had a situation, maybe Facebook, you looked and you saw this person and, man, I mean, they're all churchy and angels and all kinds of stuff. They've got all kinds of religious stuff going on, but when you see them in real life, they are the exact opposite. I mean, they've got filthy language. The stuff that they're doing, the stuff that they're involved in is off the hook. It's questionable. And the first thing they want to say is, "Well, I'm free. I'm free. I'm saved by grace. I'm free." And you look at them and you think and you begin to wonder, "Hm." You've got questions.

You see, that's what Jude is talking about here in some way. There were those in the church who were perverting the grace of God. They were in the church. Look at verses 18 and 19. We read them, it says, "'In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.' It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit." You see, these are folks that were in the church. How do we know that? They cause divisions, you see. They were there. They were ungodly, devoid of the Spirit but they were in the church.

You see, that can be very confusing to people who are sincere and devoted to God. They look around and they see this and they see this and it can be very confusing. It can also be confusing when we say, "Well, good grief, this church over here believes this and this church over here says, no, you can't do that. And this church teaches this and another church teaches this." It can get very confusing, can't it? I mean, this church, they have communion every Sunday and this church, they have it once a month. It can get very confusing and what you can do is you can lose focus of the main things.

Make the main things the main things. What do we mean by that? Well, Paul put it this way in 1 Corinthians, "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried and he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures." First importance. Main thing. Paul said, he talked about a lot of different things in his letter to the Corinthian church but he said, "Here's the main thing. Here's the main thing."

Make the main things the main things. You say, "I've just been struggling. Brother Van, I've just been struggling. I just can't hardly believe that Jonah could be swallowed by a whale." And I say this to you: if Jesus did not rise from the dead, it just doesn't matter. It just doesn't matter, right? Really, I mean, it doesn't. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, then it doesn't matter, but if he did, it changes everything. So what I mean by that, hang

onto the main things until the nonessential things begin to be worked out. And I say that from my own experience of years in the church. There were a lot of things I didn't understand, a lot of things I had to work out just over time. God was patient. God will be patient with us as we work out these but hold onto the main things. Hold onto the Gospel and continue to rub that into your life.

The third thing that will help: be like Mary. Be like Mary, Mary the mother of Jesus. If there was anybody that had an occasion for doubt, an angel comes, you've conceived a child from the Holy Spirit. "What? What?" If anybody had an opportunity for doubt, it would be Mary. So what did she do? Well, I'll tell you what she did. 1. She didn't do this: she didn't say, "Really? I've got it. I'm on board. No problem. I understand it all." She didn't do that nor did she say, "What? That's the craziest thing I've ever heard. I have no part of that." She didn't do either one. What did she do? Luke 2, look at what she did, "But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart." You see, like Mary, we encounter things that we can't always resolve and so what do we do? She held them inside her soul, the Scriptures say, pondering them rather than trying to eliminate them. What does it mean to ponder? It means to hold them in tension.

I know I mentioned this numerous times, but when I was 15 and I was in the church and I was in an environment where a lot of emphasis upon healing and my mother had died with cancer and I had a hard time. You see, I didn't hold that in tension anymore. I was like, "I'm done. I'm done. I'm done." But later on in life when I truly became a Christian, I've had to hold things in tension. I've had to hold in tension like we were saying this morning, "For he is good. Yes, he is good." I've had to hold that in tension when things didn't seem that way. So Mary pondered, she held things in tension. She didn't drop this to go with this and she didn't drop this to go with this. She held them in tension, you see, and so we need to be more like Mary. We need to be more like Mary.

Next, repent of known sin in your life. We're talking about help for those who doubt. If you're here today and you say, "Brother Van, I'm having some serious doubts. I'm just barely hanging on. I'm just about..." Well, can I ask you to do this: pray, ask the Holy Spirit to shine the floodlight of omniscience into your heart and if there is any known sin in your life, turn from it.

I'll never forget the story, probably one of the most impactful stories that I have heard. As a teenager, he grew up in church, he was faithful to the Lord, he loved the Lord with all of his heart, went away to college and came home for the summer and his former Sunday school teacher asked him, "Let's have lunch together. I want to catch up a little bit." So they had lunch and the Sunday school teacher asked him, "Tell me, what's going on? What's going on in your life? How are things going?" And the young fellow said, "I don't think I believe the Bible anymore." There was a pause for a few moments and the Sunday school teacher looked up at him and said, "Okay, tell me who you're sleeping with." And the young man seemed startled and said, "How did you know?" He said, "I didn't know. I didn't know." But you see, what the Sunday school teacher did know was that willful immorality will undermine and take a significant toll on your faith. You see, it wasn't intellectual belief that caused this young man to say, "I don't believe the Bible anymore,"



it was because he was outside the will of God. He was sinning and it began to cloud up and mess up and undermine his faith. Friends, one of the ways that we can deal with our doubt, one of the ways is to repent of any known sin.

Next, another help: ask the Lord to help you. Remember the man that brought his son to Jesus for healing and let's look at this verse, Mark 9. Here's the exchange, "And Jesus said to him, 'If you can! All things are possible for one who believes.' Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, 'I believe; help my unbelief!'" Now you know the rest of the story, right? Jesus said, "How dare you doubt! Get away from me until you deal with your doubt and then come back and I'll help you!" That's not what happened, right? He helped him. Imagine that. You've got a man standing here saying, "I believe but I am riddled with doubt. I've got one foot over here and I've got one foot over here." What does Jesus do? Does Jesus just push off the boats and say, "Get away from me"? No, he helps this sincere person and, friends, that's what we need to do, we need to ask for help. You see, when we are taking in the fumes of this world and then we have this Spirit-given desire to read the Bible but then there is this doubt that creeps in like, "I don't even know. I don't know." Here's what we need to do, "God, help me! God, help me! Help me to trust you! O for grace to trust you more! Help me!" And I can say on the authority of the word of God, he will help us. Ask for help in your time of doubt.

Next, I'm hurrying. Doubt can be good, doubt can be bad. Doubt can force us to think things out. You see, I'm worried about, I'm worried about people who, they hear a little flicker of the Gospel and they're like, "Count me in! Count me in! Write me down!" You know, "No questions. I've got it all." No, no, no. You need to think things out.

Stuart McAllister grew up in church, a young Christian man, wanted to make a difference in the world. He went to college, graduated, got involved in a program to smuggle Bibles into a forbidden country. And he had already kind of played it out in his mind, you know, "Here's what's going to happen. We're going to go and make a difference and we're going to get the Bible to people who need it and God is going to take care of us and everything is going to be cool. Everything is going to be fine." And do you know what happened? He got thrown in prison. He got thrown in prison. Now, want an occasion for doubt? Want an occasion to question God's goodness? Yeah, that would do it, wouldn't it?

Here's what Stuart wrote years later,

"From the perspective of time," in other words being able to look back now, "I can now answer these questions meaningfully, but I needed the experience of doubt and hardship to show me how much I did not know or was not rooted in the biblical answers to these core questions."

You see, doubt was a good thing for him. You see, that occasion was good. It helped him to build upon a more confident faith rather than some flimsy thing that could come and go with the circumstances of life. Doubt can be a good thing. It can force us to think things out and bring to a stronger confident faith. But I'm not commending that, I'm not recommending doubt because doubt can be a bad thing as it was in the case of Bart

Campolo. Doubt is not something we should rest in. When Jesus came to Thomas who was doubting, the original language says this, "Stop doubting right now and believe." He didn't say, "Take a doubting vacation or take your time." He said, "Here I am. Stop doubting now and believe." So doubting can be good but, friend, don't underestimate the danger of doubt.

One final important help is this: pursue commitment as opposed to absolute certainty. Marriage, child rearing, all of these require a 100 percent commitment, right? You're going to get married, you are married, you're 100 percent committed, however, there is no 100 percent certainty, is there? There is no 100 percent certainty that everything is going to turn out all right but what do we do? We still pursue it anyway, right? We still pursue 100 percent commitment even though we don't have 100 percent certainty. And I say that to say this: biblical faith is not a product of absolute certainty. God doesn't come and say, "I'm going to answer everything, every possible question, give you absolute certainty, and then you can believe." No. No, biblical faith is being willing to live through trust in the existence and the promises of God knowing that one day his existence and those promises will be totally vindicated. That's biblical faith and in the meantime, we walk by what? Faith, not by sight.

I began this morning with introducing you to Bart Campolo, let me introduce you quickly as I close to another individual, George Matheson. George Matheson was a household name in Scotland in the late 1800s and the early 1900s. He preached to hundreds of people per week. He was a beloved man of God. However at the age of 20, he was engaged to be married but he began to go blind. When he told his fiancée about it, she decided she did not want to marry him. She had no interest in being bound in marriage to a blind man. It was devastating for George. I read where he even sent a letter to his church and said, "You need to take me off the rolls. I don't know where I stand with God." He was so riddled with doubt. Then his sister said, "I will come and I will live with you and I will take care of you." And she did, however she fell in love with another man and began to prepare for marriage herself. The evening before the wedding, George's family had to get ready for the next day's celebration so they left and he was alone and he was facing the prospect of living the rest of his life without the one person who had come through for him and in that terrible time of discouragement and doubt, he wrote the well-known hymn, "O love that will not let me go." Listen to some of the words.

"O Love that will not let me go,  
I rest my weary soul in thee;  
I give thee back the life I owe,  
That in thine ocean depths its flow  
May richer, fuller be.

"O Light that foll'west all my way,  
I yield my flick'ring torch to thee;  
My heart restores its borrowed ray,  
That in thy sunshine's blaze its day  
May brighter, fairer be."

As I close today, some like Bart Campolo doubt toward disbelief, others though, doubt toward faith. So my Christian friends, let me say something to you quickly and briefly: if you are struggling with doubt right now, speak to someone. Speak to someone because it's serious. It can lead to a stronger more confident faith but holding onto it and closing down and not talking to anyone, it can lead, it can lead to disbelief. It can lead to apostasy.

Speak to someone and remember this: faith comes by hearing, hearing the word of God. If we want to grow in faith and trust in our Lord, we need to hear what he says. We need to put ourselves in the place of our faith being able to be built up through hearing the word of God.

If you are here today and you are uncommitted, if you are here today and you've been looking at Christianity and you've been wondering, "Can I really trust? Can I really trust?" I would say to you: read the Gospel of John. Start there. Now, why would we say that? Because in John 20, look at these words and I'll close, "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." These things were written not that you might doubt, not that you might poke holes in it, not that you might distance yourself from it, that you might believe.

So let me ask you: what do you want to believe? Maybe you need to ask yourself that. If you are here and you're uncommitted, if you're outside the Christian faith, maybe you just need to ask yourself seriously: what do I want to believe? Because how you answer that question will determine whether you doubt toward disbelief or whether you doubt toward faith.

Let's bow our heads.