

wrestling with **doubt,** finding **faith**

SERMON NOTES

Week 1 January 7, 2023

"Doubt and the Existence of God"

Genesis 15:6; Mark 9:22-24; Psalm 8:1, 19:1, 139:14



I. The Importance of Doubt

- A. Doubt can be a _____ to a deeper faith.
- B. We should have an _____ faith.
- C. In Methodism there has always been a four-fold way of deciding _____ we should believe and why?
 - 1. Scripture
 - 2. Tradition
 - 3. Reason
 - 4. Experience

II. Doubt of Faith

- A. Doubt can _____ us.
- B. When we look in the Bible, we see all the great men and women of faith struggled with _____.
- C. Many of the founders of the _____ revolution had a deep faith.

III. Reasons for the Existence of God

- A. The beauty and rational order of _____.
- B. The _____ of God in my life.
- C. The impact of _____ on people.

Things I Would Like to Remember About This Message



ASBURY DAILY STUDY GUIDE *January 8-13, 2023*

INTRODUCTION

For many people, seeing is believing. But if that's your criteria for believing, it may be a stumbling block to belief in God. Faith does not mean never having doubts. Doubt is normal and it can be a pathway to a deeper faith by leading us to examine what we believe and why. But at some point you will need to take a leap of faith to believe in the existence of God, because no one can prove God's existence. So what reasons are there to believe in God?

Monday: Hebrews 11:1, 8, 39

Oxford scholar Alister McGrath wrote, "Coming to faith doesn't mean merely having a new idea. It means recognizing in our minds who God is and what he is like and responding to him in our hearts."^{*} What experiences or people have helped you to move beyond thinking of God as just a big idea to knowing God as a loving, personal being you trust, obey and are committed to?

Tuesday: 1 Corinthians 1:18-24

Paul knew his message was "foolishness" to the Greeks and "scandal" to the Jews. Just telling the story seemed to invite people to mock. The message sounded "weak," yet it carried God's power. Verse 18 stated Paul's conclusion: God's weakness is greater than human strength; God's foolishness is greater than human wisdom. In what part(s) of your life today do you need to trust that God's saving wisdom is wiser than any other kind of wisdom you might rely on?

Wednesday: Mark 9:14-27

Scholar David E. Garland noted, "Jesus... reveals that prayer is not a magical incantation but a total openness to God's action in and through us... Disciples do not need to learn better techniques but must make themselves more receptive to the action of God... effective prayer is a continuous posture, not simply an emergency procedure."^{**} What helps you to make prayer a "continuous posture" in your life, not just a "magical" or "emergency" way to control God?

Thursday: Jude 1:20-22

Jude's and Jesus' better-known brother James wrote about the need for belief to go beyond intellectual assent and become life-shaping faith (cf. James 2:18-20). That's why facing doubts honestly is so vital. If we hide them, they can get us stuck in our head without ever involving our heart and hands. What helps you move from the intellectual aspect of most doubts to a level of trust that shapes your whole life while you keep wrestling with the mysteries of God?

Friday: Romans 8:22-25

What was the favorite gift you received this Christmas? Would you tell anyone you're still hoping for that gift you received? Of course not - you already have it. In a much bigger way, that was what Paul meant when he asked, "Who hopes for what they already see?" But there is still brokenness and pain in our world. What helps you, like Paul, to anchor your spiritual hope in God, and live with patience and trust for God's full restoration of our broken world to its intended wholeness?

MOVING FORWARD

There are many reasons to believe in the existence of God, Pastor Eric shared three of those during this week's message. 1) The beauty and rational order of creation. 2) the experience of God in my life. 3) The impact of faith on people.

Answers to the sermon notes: IA) pathway, B) examined, C) what. IIA) paralyze, B) doubt, IIC) scientific. IIIA) creation, B) experience, C) faith.

^{*} Alister McGrath, "I Believe": Exploring the Apostles' Creed. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 1997, p. 22

^{**} David E. Garland, Reflection comment on Mark 9:14-29 in Matthew, Mark, Luke: Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary, Volume 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002).