

Doubt or Assurance?

Psalm 4 Romans 8:31-39 John 10:27-33

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Have you ever been surrounded by the darkness of doubt?

Doubt is the kind of darkness that you can feel; it's close, and thick, and it seems like there's no way out. The word doubt comes from the Latin and means *hesitant*. In the Christian faith it means that you are *hesitant* to trust in God and to believe His Word. For some people, doubt is a re-occurring temptation; an unwelcome visitor that just will not leave.

Doubt can come in many forms, and it attacks the truth of Scripture at many points. For example:

- ⇒ Does God exist?
- ⇒ Does God love me?
- ⇒ Is the Bible true?
- ⇒ Did Jesus do enough for my salvation?
- ⇒ Does God really know me and care about me?
- ⇒ Why do bad things happen to me?
- ⇒ Why is there so much evil in the world?

Doubt attacks the promises of God; and questions the truth of God's Holy Word. It leaves you *mistrusting* God, being *hesitant* to trust His Word, and *uncertain* of your salvation. Doubt is a serious thing! Doubt erodes your faith, separates you from Christ, and threatens your eternal salvation! Doubt *is no child's play; it is a real danger!*

If doubt is a *terrible darkness*,
then Christ and His Word are a **brilliantly bright light!**

Christ is the Truth and His Word is True!

The way to combat doubt is to look outside of yourself and to Christ and His Word. Do not look inside yourself for answers; don't trust your feelings, don't look to the world for answers. **Look to Christ and His Word alone!** That is the only way to combat doubt ... there is no other way. Christ and His Word will give you *assurance, conviction, and true faith*. *Assurance, conviction, and true faith* bring *peace to your mind, rest to your spirit, and confidence to your heart*.

Christ is the Truth and His Word is True!

Look to Christ and His Word. *In the Bible, you learn that:*

God is faithful! He keeps His Word and promises to you. There are countless stories in Scripture of men and women who trusted in God's Word and promises. God is your Father in Heaven who loves you, cares about you, provides for you, and watches over every detail of your life. Even in your own life you can look back and see God's faithfulness to you. Stop doubting and believe!¹ God's faithfulness gives you *assurance, conviction, and true faith*. **God's faithfulness brings *peace to your mind, rest to your spirit, and confidence to your heart***.

SCRIPTURES TEACH US

Christ is faithful! He came into the world to do what you could not do: rescue you from the terrible power of sin and guilt and death. He shed His precious, divine blood on a cross for your forgiveness. He has done everything needed for you to be forgiven, loved, and accepted by God. The work of salvation is *finished* in Christ! All of God's promises now apply to you. In Christ you are brought near to God, and you are a part of His family. It is all by grace; it is all a gift that God freely gives to you! Stop doubting and believe! The

¹ This is called a "Gospel Imperative." The promises of God give you the ability to do what is asked. Even though you might think and feel that you cannot stop doubting, the reality and truth is that you can because of the Promises of God. God's Word is powerful, and enables you to "*stop doubting and believe!*"

Lord Jesus Christ, and His finished work of salvation, gives you *assurance, conviction, and true faith*. **Christ's faithfulness brings peace to your mind, rest to your spirit, and confidence to your heart.**

SCRIPTURES TEACH US

The Holy Spirit is faithful!

He works through the Means of Grace, the Word and the Sacraments, to create and strengthen your faith in God, His Son, and His Word. The Word and the Sacraments are powerful: they bring the promises of God to you and give you the faith to believe them. The Word of God is described as “**dynamite**” in your life; it crushes sin, pride, and self-righteousness and leads you to repentance and faith in Jesus and His work of salvation! The Word of God crushes your doubt and gives you faith to believe! The water of Holy Baptism is **Living Water** that actually gives you New Birth in the Holy Spirit! The bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper actually brings you into a **Holy Communion** with Christ’s Body and Blood, given and shed on a cross for the forgiveness of your sins. The Holy Spirit at work in the Word and the Sacraments to drive doubt away from you! The Holy Spirit gives you life, peace, and certain hope.

If you struggle with doubt, then look outside yourself, and cling to the **Means of Grace: God's Word and Sacraments!** These are places that God has prepared for you to strengthen your faith and deepen your conviction. The Holy Spirit works through the Holy Scriptures, through Holy Baptism, and through Holy Communion to give you *assurance, conviction, and true faith*. **The Holy Spirit brings peace to your mind, rest to your spirit, and confidence to your heart.**

SCRIPTURES TEACH US

The Triune God has chosen you!

Before the creation of the world, God chose you, by name, by grace, in Christ, to be His very own! Before the Creation of the world God knew you and loved you! He made the events happen during your life so that you were Baptized, and given faith in Christ. He has been at work throughout your life; as He is even now. If you struggle with doubt, then look outside yourself, and remember how much God loves you! He chose you! You belong to him! The Doctrine of Election brings *assurance, conviction, and true faith*. **God's mighty**

and loving work in your life brings *peace to your mind, rest to your spirit, and confidence to your heart.*

If you struggle with doubt, then consider it like a fire in your house. You immediately put it out; you do not kindle the fire, nor let it burn, because it will grow into a blazing inferno and all would be lost. Doubt is like that, it is like a little fire that burns slowly and quietly, but can quickly explode into a major and destructive blaze. Just as you would immediately put a fire out in your house, quash any doubt that you may have. Don't indulge in it otherwise it will grow. Treat your doubt as a temptation; consider it sin; realize it comes from the evil one and his depraved demons. Repent of it, confess it to God, and hear words of forgiveness for you. Look outside yourself and turn to Christ and His Word.

Christ is the Truth and His Word is True!

Turning to Christ and His Word means that you fill your mind with Scripture; specifically the area in which you are being tempted to doubt. Bring the Scriptures to bear on your doubt; let the power of God's Holy Word work in your heart and mind; let the Holy Spirit strengthen you! The Holy Spirit works through the Holy Scriptures to give you *assurance, conviction, and true faith.* God's Holy Word is living, active, and powerful: it brings *peace to your mind, rest to your spirit, and confidence to your heart.*

If you need help finding the right scriptures, call, text, email, or talk to me or any of the Church staff – we can help you find the right scriptures to combat your doubt.

Christ is the Truth and His Word is True!

That is the solid ground on which you stand!

That is the compass by which you live your life!

That is the power of God at work in and through you!

Christ and His Word will drive your doubt away and give you confident *assurance, conviction, peace, and true faith.* Amen!