

The Light of Christ



Psalm 4 Romans 8:31-39 John 8:12-20

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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 a Latin word that 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. *Its like being surrounded by a cloud of darkness.*

Doubt can come in many forms and various intensities. **Doubt** 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 Light of the World;
He is 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. The Light of 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.* The Light of Christ is found in His Holy Word: the Bible! **Look to Christ and His Word.** In the Bible, you learn that:

God the Father 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.**

God the Son 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

¹ These are Jesus' words to Thomas (John 20:27). A command like 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!*"

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 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.**

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**²” in your life; it “blows up” sin, pride, and self-righteousness and has the power to lead you to repentance and faith in Jesus and His work of salvation! *The Word of God explodes 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 conviction³. 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.*

² Romans 1:16: For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the **power** of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.” The word “power” in this verse is the Greek word δύναμις (dynamis), where we get the English word “dynamite”. The Gospel is God’s dynamite/power to bring salvation to people.

³ This paragraph is so important in the battle with doubt! Faith, peace, and assurance are objective – outside of your own thoughts and proclaimed to you through Scripture and the sacraments. Don’t get spun around with your own ideas; listen, learn, and believe the truths of Scripture – such as the ones highlighted in this sermon!

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 Light of the World;

He is 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*.

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 is the Light of the world and His Word is true: in Him you find *assurance, conviction, peace, and true faith*.

Amen!

God the Holy Trinity, send the Holy Spirit to us so that we may have assurance, conviction, peace, and true faith. Help us to fully trust in Christ your Son, and to believe His Holy Word. Allow us to glorify you in all we do, think, and believe. Cleanse us from doubt; guard us from temptation, and ban the evil one from our lives. We look to you as the One, True, and Only God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Amen!

Psalm 4

1 Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have given me relief when I was in distress. Be gracious to me and hear my prayer! 2 O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame? How long will you love vain words and seek after lies? Selah 3 But know that the LORD has set apart the godly for himself; the LORD hears when I call to him. 4 Be angry, and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. Selah 5 Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the LORD. 6 There are many who say, "Who will show us some good? Lift up the light of your face upon us, O LORD!" 7 You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound. 8 In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.

Romans 8:31-39

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? 33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died--more than that, who was raised--who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36 As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

John 8:12-20

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” 13 The Pharisees challenged him, “Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid.” 14 Jesus answered, “Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. 15 You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. 16 But if I do judge, my decisions are true, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. 17 In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true. 18 I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me.” 19 Then they asked him, “Where is your father?” “You do not know me or my Father,” Jesus replied. “If you knew me, you would know my Father also.” 20 He spoke these words while teaching in the temple courts near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his hour had not yet come.