

Doubt

Do you doubt if God exists.

My aim in this in many ways is to dispel many of the cultural Christian faux pas. About confessing perhaps the darkest most unconfessed sin in Christian culture. Doubt. Principally speaking its clear why this is the most “inappropriate” sin to confess. If one were to confess the sin of lust and all of its different forms and fallings to a brother or sister in Christ– the shame that comes from such a confession flows from the foundation that Christianity is implicitly true. The same is true if one confesses the sin of wrath or anger and all of its different forms and fallings – the shame that comes from such a confession flows from the foundation that Christianity is, once again, implicitly true. Still so, it is this way with any public or private confession of sin struggle to a brother or sister of selfishness, envy, faithlessness, lack of spiritual discipline, etc... Fill in the blank; all such confessions are built on the foundation that what we believe collectively about Jesus Christ is right and true. This is what makes doubt distinct. How can one confess a sin that questions the very necessity of confessing a sin in the first place? How can one even feel lead to confess to a brother or sister, when the very structure that fills us all with the good and righteous fear of God is unstable at best?

My name is Caleb, and I have struggled on and off with doubt my whole life. I realize these letters are intended to be anonymous, but for this particular topic, my intent is that it would be public who I am. As I said before my primary aim is not to necessarily solve all your doubt (Though I will provide my own personal defense of Jesus Christ in this letter), but to make you feel comfortable enough to confess it. Yes even though your name is bound to such a confession. I have at one time or another asked myself all of the following questions:

Is Jesus really God?

Does God exist?

Did God really create us?

Is the bible true? Isn't it possible or even likely that there are books that should be in the bible that aren't?

If men wrote the bible, how can it be God's word? I understand that people say these men were “inspired by the holy spirit” but how can we be sure?

Are we really born sinful? Or are we basically okay and the idea of sin is contrived simply to drive people to this fake Jesus?

Is faith really enough to save me from the punishment I deserve?

Friends I have wrestled with these questions and so many more. I can truly say to you that the reason I am writing to you now is not that I have solved all my problems of doubt and no longer struggle with it anymore, but that God has shown me that through this doubt and sin he is still God. He has shown me in the end, in the midst of the rocking of my feeble faith, it is not I that clings to Him but it is He that holds onto me. He has shown me in the middle of my failure to trust in him, that he has deeply loved me in my darkest hour. He has shown me in the pit of night when I am nearly sure He is not real and I lack the desire to follow Him,

prone to wander as I am, my God and my Savior has not let me go and He never will. In order to battle my doubt and fight these questions with foundational truth, I have taken to the task of articulating my thoughts on paper to remind myself of the faith to which I claim. This is not an 'end-all be-all solution' but it has proven to be a tremendous comfort to me in times of doubt and pain. I pray that it is an aid to you as well.

I first believed in Christ and in the Bible because honestly he changed me. And I don't think it was just an outward moral conformity to the doctrine of the Bible or some set of principles; it was a drastic change at the deepest level of my person, my thinking and my soul. I previously had an understanding of what the Gospel was, but one time I heard it differently and it changed me and produced a hatred of my sin and a love for God that I used to not have. It was the Holy Spirit that changed my heart. I consciously decided that the Bible was right at this point because it had the power to change me. And that's what you see in the Gospels and in the Book of Acts: Jesus and his apostles teaching, and then performing miracles, so as to say: "See? Our authority is not from men, but from God." The power of the Gospel has continued for 2000 years to this day. The change in my heart is a proof of its power. Everyone has faith in something. Right now, I'd say your faith is in human reason as the highest authority instead of you seeing God through His Word as the highest authority, and, even though it's outside of me, it does not contradict reason. Ponder the person of Jesus: if Jesus truly rose from the grave, it validates the Bible as the actual Word of God. If He truly rose, then that means He was/is who He said He was/is; He predicted His resurrection. Jesus taught and affirmed the Law and the Prophets (Old Testament), and He gave authority to his apostles (New Testament). Also, as far as journalism goes, the evidences for the truth of the resurrection are heavily supporting his resurrection. The 4 Gospels are separately written, contemporary accounts of the life of Jesus, and they in no place contradict one another. They all bear witness to the resurrection. Paul records in 1 Corinthians 15:6, "Then Jesus appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep." That's 500 eyewitnesses to the risen Lord Jesus, many of whom were alive at the time Paul wrote this! It's as if he's saying, "If you don't believe me, go and ask them!" It couldn't have been a lie. More than this, consider the witness of the apostles. The 13 apostles (minus Judas, plus Mathias and Paul) all personally knew and encountered Jesus, the Twelve being His closest followers during His ministry. They all devoted their lives and went to gruesome deaths because they believed in the risen Lord. They carried the news about Jesus to the ends of the earth. Thomas went to India and was skinned alive. Peter was crucified upside down. John was boiled alive, and because it didn't kill him he spent his days in exile. etc. etc. All this for a lie? I think not. Not to mention the countless martyrs throughout church history who through their deaths bore witness to the power of the Gospel.

The Gospel's veracity doesn't lack evidence; mine is not a blind faith. What I've said is also completely orthodox; the church has maintained the same thing for centuries. I've become fully convinced that Jesus is the Son of God, but, at the end of the day, no amount of rational discussion can make you believe. The truth is, the world doesn't want to believe in Jesus; as a matter of fact, it hates Him. Men crucified Him though He was blameless, and I've come to realize that I was in that crowd because it was my sin that held Him there. As you consider Him, don't forget that He lived, died, and rose for you to satisfy God's righteous requirements, if you will only look to him for it.

Doubting friend, do not hide. Confess your doubt to someone who is a counselor or leader. Consider the person of Jesus and run to Him with your concerns. Cry out to a God who you do not even know exists and beg Him to give you a peace and comfort and knowledge of Him that surpasses your own understanding. Seek Him out. Pray without ceasing. Wait on the Lord. Do these things and I know that you too will come to realize that even when your heart is apathetic, doubting, cold, and distant from God, His heart burns just as hotly with a passionate love to save you and make you His own as the day you first believed? He will never let you go and His love never fails.

He Will Hold Me Fast

When I fear my faith will fail, Christ will hold me fast;
When the tempter would prevail, He will hold me fast.
I could never keep my hold through life's fearful path;
For my love is often cold; He must hold me fast.

Those He saves are His delight, Christ will hold me fast;
Precious in his holy sight, He will hold me fast.
He'll not let my soul be lost; His promises shall last;
Bought by Him at such a cost, He will hold me fast.

For my life He bled and died, Christ will hold me fast;
Justice has been satisfied; He will hold me fast.
Raised with Him to endless life, He will hold me fast
'Till our faith is turned to sight, When He comes at last!

He will hold me fast, He will hold me fast;
For my Saviour loves me so, He will hold me fast.

Pensive, doubting, fearful heart

Pensive, doubting, fearful heart,
Hear what Christ the Savior says.
Every word should joy impart,
Change thy mourning into praise.
Yes, he speaks, and speaks to thee,
May he help thee to believe!
Then thou presently wilt see,
Thou hast little cause to grieve.

"Fear thou not, nor be ashamed,
All thy sorrows soon shall end.
I who heaven and earth have framed,
Am thy husband and thy friend.

I the High and Holy One,
Israel's GOD by all adored,
As thy Savior will be known,
Thy Redeemer and thy Lord."

"For a moment I withdrew,
And thy heart was filled with pain,
But my mercies I'll renew,
Thou shalt soon rejoice again.
Though I scorn to hide my face,
Very soon my wrath shall cease.
'Tis but for a moment's space,
Ending in eternal peace."

"When my peaceful bow appears,
Painted on the watery cloud,
'Tis to dissipate thy fears,
Lest the earth should be overflowed.
'Tis an emblem too of grace,
Of my covenant love a sign.
Though the mountains leave their place,
Thou shalt be forever mine.

Though afflicted, tempest-tossed,
Comfortless awhile thou art,
Do not think thou canst be lost,
Thou art graven on my heart.
All thy walls I will repair,
Thou shalt be rebuilt anew,
And in thee it shall appear,
What a God of love can do.

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