

One truth shared: Everyone struggles with doubt, but we can find comfort in our Savior Jesus who handles our doubt with love and compassion.

When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples to ask him, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?” Jesus replied, “Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.” As John’s disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings’ palaces. Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written: “‘I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’ Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

Matthew 11:2-11

Dealing with Doubt

Doubt. The devil loves to create it in the heart and mind of every person—doubt about God and his promises. It’s what he used in the garden of Eden. He questioned Adam and Eve and caused them to doubt God’s words as well as his goodness and love for them.

Doubt is the devil’s greatest power. He uses whatever he can—fine sounding arguments, challenges in life, etc.—to raise questions in our mind. He works through anybody he can—teachers, professors, bosses, coworkers, friends, and even family—to make us doubt the words of God that he gives us in the Bible.

And the devil shows no partiality. He attacks everyone, unbelievers and believers, people of weak faith or those of strong faith.

John the Baptist was one of those guys who was strong in faith. He was the forerunner for the Messiah. He confronted religious leaders and kings and called them to repentance. He pointed people to their Savior, the Messiah. But the devil attacked him too. He preyed on John when John was thrown into prison. He created doubts in John’s mind causing him to ask, “Jesus, are you the one sent to save us—or not?”

How did Jesus respond to John’s doubts? How does Jesus respond to your doubts? Look at today’s Bible verses from the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus doesn’t scold us and tell us that we should know better. He doesn’t humiliate us either.

Instead, he points back to the evidence of his works and his Word. He assures us that he is indeed the Messiah that was long promised in the Bible. He encourages us and reminds us that as children of God we are among the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. He sweeps away our doubts and strengthens our faith.

When you struggle with doubt, take heart! Your Savior Jesus loves you. He came to die for you and his blood covers your doubts. He comes to you with compassion and understanding when you doubt. His words give you assurance that he is indeed the long-promised Messiah and you are his dear child.

Prayer: Merciful Savior, we praise you for looking on us with compassion when we doubt. Forgive us when we doubt your Word, and assure us of your grace and unfailing love. Amen.

Foundation Teen Facilitators Guide

Year A – Advent 3

Come, Lord Jesus

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Dealing with Doubt

Starting the Discussion: *This first section is intended to be light and easy, to engage and get the conversation going. Have a little fun with these questions.*

Evaluate this statement: “Doubt is the beginning not the end of wisdom.”

Connecting: *This section serves as a bridge between the opening conversation and the body of the study/discussion. It should get the group thinking about the topic/text even before they’ve looked at it.*

- Everyone has doubts. Consider a time in your life when you struggled with doubts about God or the Bible. When was it? What were the circumstances?
- How do you tend to deal with your doubts? Talk to someone? Read the Bible? Just try to move on? Other?

Digging In: *Here we want to dig into some texts or the text for the day and see what Scripture says. The questions are meant to be open ended to give a beginning of a scriptural conversation. These are a guide for a spiritual and scriptural conversation.*

- How does knowing that John the Baptist had doubts help you when you have doubts?
- When Jesus heard that John had doubts, he pointed to Scripture to assure John that he was the Messiah. What can we learn from this about handling our own doubts?
- Jesus says that even those who are “least in the kingdom of heaven are greater than” John? Who is Jesus referring to here and what do you think he means?
- Read James 5:7-11. What further encouragement do you get from these verses about dealing with suffering and struggles, including doubt?

Conclusion: *Here we want to wrap up the discussion, perhaps circling back to the “connecting question” above.*

- How have today’s Bible verses given you new encouragement or insights for the next time you deal with doubt?
- Think of a few Bible verses that you could memorize in the near future that would help you the next time you doubt. If you’re struggling to choose some, ask a pastor for some help.