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So now let's look at this very important topic. Every time you get on an aeroplane, every time you get on a taxi or you put your body under knife of a surgeon, how many of you have got doubts? Some got no doubts. I wish you were my patient. We all have doubts. I think doubt is part of being human. If you have no doubt, you probably won't have lived very long. It's a part of our human psyche to have some degree of doubt. Now if you look at one of the most famous Christians who gave her life for the service of mankind, Mother Theresa, one Nobel prize. You would a thought, a giant of a Christian Saint like that would have little to no doubt, after all she gave her life from a young age to be a nun, serving the poorest of the poor in society. And this is what she writes,

So many unanswered questions live within me afraid to uncover them--because of the blasphemy--If there be God --please forgive me--When I try to raise my thoughts to Heaven--there is such convicting emptiness that those very thoughts return like sharp knives & hurt my very soul.--I am told God loves me--and yet the reality of darkness & coldness & emptiness is so great that nothing touches my soul. Did I make a mistake in surrendering blindly to the Call of the Sacred Heart?

"What do I labour for? If there be no God--there can be no soul--if there is no Soul then Jesus--You also are not true"

These words were written by a Saint, written by someone who won a Nobel prize, written by someone who has given her entire life to the service of the poor because of her convictions and yet Mother Teresa struggled with doubts. Saint Augustine says,

Christians are those who think in believing and believe in thinking. The world of the Christian faith is not a fairy tale, make believe world, question free and problem proof, but a world where doubt is never far from faith's shoulder

So even Augustine says doubt is common. So, we need to understand doubt because there are two issues that involve in doubt. When we understand doubt we are able to safeguard our faith and also prepare the faith for testing. All right, because if you don't deal with doubt, you will lose your faith. And if you understand doubt, you're able to prepare your faith for testing, those are two areas in your life.

So your faith may rest on trusting God. Trust in Christian friends or the church; however, when you are tested doubts will determine which leg of this two you stand on. This is a testimony from a atheist, why she left the Christian faith in November 2014. It is a true story. Malaysian Chronicle

For a while, I revelled in my newfound faith. The pastors told me that my father's death was in accordance with God's will and that His ways are higher than ours. It didn't make much sense to me, but death never does, even till this day.

At that time, I just pushed aside the illogicality of the church's explanations. The close ties, the sense of belonging, the way everyone seemed so together in their worship gave me a sense of purpose at a time when my world had plunged into chaos. Throughout the years, however, cracks began to appear in my tightly constructed faith.

What do you think her faith was built on?

It is the people. Come to gamma, have food together, fellowship, otherwise I am lonely at home. So your faith is built on that and the doubts that came in start to crack in shows that your faith has no foundation at all. So doubt can do that to you.

There is a misconception that true faith has no doubt or doubt is the same as unbelief. So, we often get guilt when we have doubt, because we think doubt is the same as unbelief. It is not the same. These are the words in the Bible in Greek that are used for doubt.

- Dipsukos.....chronically double minded...heaving sea ruffled by winds -James 1
- Diakrino..to separate
- Meteorizomai..to raise or suspend...up in the air..restless, anxious, tense
- Dialogizomai...inner debate as person reasoning with himself
- Distazo.....hanging back, hesitating or faltering

These are the words that doubt means. OS Guinness says,

Genuine faith is unreserved in its commitment; doubt has reservations. Faith steps forward; doubt hangs back. Doubt holds itself open to all possibilities but is reluctant to close on any.

Isn't that nice. So genuine faith is unreserved in commitment. Doubt has got reservations. It hangs back. It doesn't want to go forward neither does it want to go back. So if I give you a proposition that Jesus is son of God, right? OS Guinness is a very, very famous Christian philosopher. He writes many books and much of today's course is based on his book, all the seven points. He is a very important Christian icon. So, I will quote to him very often.

So let's say I give you a proposition. Jesus is the son of God. So you actually have doubt. Is it true? So doubt is basically is Jesus son of God, or Jesus is not son of God. So when you have doubt, you are in two minds. Half your mind say Jesus is son on God, the other man Jesus is just a man. That's what doubt is. So once you've decided about the proposition, Jesus son of God, I reject it completely. I've decided Jesus is not son of God then you have unbelief. If you accept the proposition that Jesus is son of God then you have faith and then basically that's faith genuine or whatever, but that's faith.

Unbelief is a consequence of a settled choice, a deliberate response to truth. It doesn't say anything but the truth. I can show you a box made of gold. It's actually gold. You can believe or not believe. Your response doesn't determine the truth or validity of that statement. So unbelief is having been presented with a proposition and you are deciding that's not true.

So doubt is weighing the whole thing up still. So, doubt, faith, doubt and unbelief is the same thing as courage, fear and cowardice. You can't have fear and still have courage. Courage does not mean the absence of fear. The opposite of courage is what cowardice, running away. That means you act on your fears. Fear is somewhere halfway. It's okay to fear. That's why it's also okay to have doubt, but doubt is something that you need to resolve.

This is a Mark chapter nine, very famous incident when Jesus was dealing with a young boy who was in a demon possessed,

- *(ESV) 22 And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” 23 And Jesus said to him, “If you can’t! All things are possible for one who believes.” 24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I **believe; help my unbelief!**”*

The word here unbelief, maybe the word unbelief actually doesn't mean unbelief. This is doubt. He may call it unbelief, but it's not really unbelief. Unbelief is a settled decision to believe that Jesus cannot hear me. The fact is I believe, help my unbelief means he is doubting. So, so you deal with doubt. If you whack your own faith and suppress the doubt, you will wind up with a very kind of poor kind a faith, which really won't stand up to any testing. If you don't allow yourself to deal with doubt allowed to grow, you are too soft on doubt then doubt becomes a monster at eats you up. So there are about seven factors involved in doubt, probably more, but I just choose seven out of OS Guinness book to deal with today. Why we often have doubt. So they are

1. In gratitude
2. Faulty view of god
3. Weak foundation
4. Lack of commitment
5. Lack of growth
6. Unruly emotions
7. Hidden conflicts

INGRATITUDE:

When you actually take God out of your mind and you become self-sufficient because you are very smart already. For example, Adam and Eve, the richest men and women in the entire world, given the whole garden of Eden, everything you can eat. Only thing cannot eat is one tree in the middle and then all Satan has to say to the woman.

- *Genesis 3: 1b He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?”*

Come on. Hello. He is twisting around. God said you can eat from any tree and yet he just twisted around and say, God said you cannot eat of any tree and she believed him. So that's call ingratitude. We give you everything, some more just because I didn't do this one you turn against me as it were. So, Hosea

- *Hosea 13:6 but when they had grazed, they became full, they were filled, and their heart was lifted up; therefore they forgot me*

Very, very common. Whenever Israel is doing well, money flowing in, plenty of children, peace that is when they turn away from God. Whenever they're in trouble, they're very close to God. That is perhaps a parallel of our own spiritual experience. So the cure for that is that we need to remember and when we remember we start to give thanks. That's how we fight ingratitude because ingratitude will cause us to doubt. The key to remember overcoming trials,

- *Deut 8: 2 And you shall **remember** the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not.*

So always we need to remember. That's why, if you look in the Bible, Old Testament is repeat with examples of memorials, Passover. Why do they celebrate the Passover? To celebrate the fact that God took them to cross the red sea as slaves across to Sinai desert. They celebrate that every year. When they cross over from the River Jordan into the promised land, they put 12 memorial stones. So that every time they go back, they remember the 12 stones and it brings back faith. Whenever they celebrate festival of Tabernacles, they build all these tents to represent the fact that they were going through Sinai Desert and they had to make the tents. So each one of these memorials are designed for human beings to remember so that they will combat ingratitude.

The Jews wear tassels. So these tassels are for you to remember all the commandments of the Lord and to follow them. So time and time again, the Bible gets us to remember. Do you know, out of 13 Paul line letters, 10 of them have Thanksgiving. Why is Thanksgiving so important? Because Thanksgiving combats ingratitude. If you say thank you God for, try in your prayer life. Every day, you get together and start to think about five things you thank God for. The moment you start thanking God for five things, all the five things you want to grumble about disappear. So that's a very powerful combat against pride.

What about the woman who was a prostitute. She has done a lot of sins and she was so repentant of her sins. She came to Jesus and she had one eight months' pay worth of perfume and she poured it on Jesus' feet and use a hair to wipe his feet. Well, she did it out of gratitude and love because she remembered who Jesus was. So I think remembering brings gratitude, brings love and the key thing which we do nowadays to remember is the Lord's Supper. We remember. So that's very important.

FAULTY VIEW OF GOD:

Why people have doubt? because of a faulty view of God. I want to ask the ladies first, who would you date A or B. Put your hands up for A. Who would date B? So if you were to date A, he would cheat you. If you date B, you would cheat yourself. Let's say you won't date B, all of you girls who you won't date B means you cheat yourself. You know why, if you date A, his name is Ted Bundy. You probably wind up dead. He is one of the America's favorite largest serial killer. He looks good. You thought a guy who smiles like that surely good man, but you wind up dead. You look at this fellow, his name is William Hung. The only problem with him, is he cannot sing. But he got a very nice wife and he got married happily ever after. You can look at somebody and form opinions and the same thing is with God, isn't it. The faulty assumptions. When you look at something, we need to be careful of the settings of our camera. We need to let God be God. The problem is that we have presuppositions. And our presuppositions are wrong. Just like the camera got wrong settings, always wrong setting, always blur one, always too black and white. So that problem is a faulty view of God.

This is a website about our conversations about faith and a testimony of people who have left the faith. 50 testimonies of people have left the faith 2011, 22 out of 50 left because God had failed to do what they thought he should do for them. Faulty presupposition. What is God's role? To look after you, everything like genie to answer, right? If God don't answer means lousy God. This is called presuppositions. For example, the other one,

The first time I questioned the faith was when my grandmother shriveled up in front of me for 6

month's due to cancer. I was 13 & my mother & father [were] getting a divorce. My father told me I should have been aborted. I prayed to God but nothing fails like prayers."

So she was in a tough spot and she believed God must cure her grandmother, bring her father and mother together, otherwise God is useless again. A faulty presupposition. That's why she left the faith.

So crisis reveals the misalignment between our beliefs and our practice. Our living faith is better tested in crisis than in creeds, in failure rather than success.

What are the causes of doubt?

Two things, residual secular presuppositions, and current cultural presuppositions. For example, the one atheist who left in Malaysian Chronicle, you know why she left?

I don't have to try to fit in the divine when science can explain the way the world works.Most of all, I don't have to bother reconciling my idea of women's rights and the sexist notions in Christianity and other major religions. If other women are happy being submissive to their husbands because the bible tells them to do so, that's up to them. But at least now, I can choose not to and I'm free to seek a more egalitarian relationship outside the misogynistic boundaries of religion. I found freedom in atheism, the freedom to think. -Malay Mail

Misogynistic means male chauvinistic pigs. That means sexism, male looking out female. So this woman believes very much carry over from secular ideas of women's liberation for example, and all the little norms which you can and they want to be free and probably she will support homosexual relationships as well. And she brings that in. This is the secular presupposition. And so therefore you bring religion and you compare with your previous secular presupposition, and then you don't agree. So that's where doubt comes in. So there are two types of doubts, inaccurate view of God and inadequate view of God.

You either have the wrong view of God or too small a view of a God. For example, the wrong view of God. When the people of Israel went into the promised land, there were a lot of regional gods and the regional gods were idols who were called Baals call baal owls. And so they worship God, they also do it for baal and after a while they wound up worshipping Baal. So they're bringing in the wrong view of God. You have a foot in both worlds, halfhearted, because you're double-minded, you want the best of both worlds but you get neither of each. So you have residual attitudes was raise money, naturalism, corporate culture, sexuality. All those ideas that you have, you brought from the world, and you don't submit those ideas under the scrutiny of by Bible. You still hold them very dear. That's why I think a lot of young people when you talk today about this idea of homosexuality and same sex relationships, they bring secular ideas. They say I can't accept Bible because Bible is so a one sided. Discriminate against gays. Why? These are all secular values brought in.

When we become Christians, we start to change and have our ideas and minds molded by the facts of the Bible rather than the other way round. So that's why their doubts. So we need to approach people like this with their wrong suppositions, bring it out to the logical conclusions and work out consequences them. Now faith is squeezed by narrow views of God. So faith has no room to grow and doubt is the expression of this discomfort. So therefore, if you've got too small a view of God, you also start to get doubt. For example, Sarah, remember she was told that she will get baby. Right. And how old was she? Way past menopause. 80-90 years old. Right? And then when was given the

promise, Sarah laughed.

- *(Genesis 17:) 12 So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?" 13 The Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' 14 Is anything too hard for the Lord?*

So again, she doubted because her view of God is too small. Look at the two instances.

- *A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean." Mark 1:40-42*

Power but no love. He thinks Jesus is very powerful, but Jesus very stingy. So you go to Jesus, I know you got power but if you are willing, if you are happy, if you are willing, please heal me. He has no doubt on Jesus's power, but he had doubts on Jesus's love. The other one is the boy who was thrown down into the fire; love but no power.

- *"It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. **But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.**"*

Here he doubt's Jesus power but he doesn't doubt Jesus love. So we can have different too small ideas of God. So some of us are confronted with a holiness of God and we get very upset, very anxious, very guilty, because you doubt the love of God. It's a protective reflex against unhealthy response that make such a God, because maybe they didn't know, or maybe they brought up in a family where there is past hurt, where the father was like a Chinese Mandarin, everything's going to punish you, punish you. You think God is like the Chinese Mandarin . And so therefore that's how you respond.

So these are all inadequate views of God.

DOUBT FROM WEAK FOUNDATION:

The Christian faith is not true because it works. It works because it's true. So truth is very important. Leo Tolstoy a very famous Russian author said,

Those who loved Christianity more than truth

In many Western countries they love Christianity more than they love the truth and that is not the right faith because true faith is based on truth. Alright, now Martin Luther says,

*"Unless I am convinced by Scripture and **plain reason**, my conscience is captive to the Word of God*

So mystery and rationality. We have in Christianity a set of facts, and then we have got inferences from the facts. And these form our rational beliefs. Christianity is not a fairy tale. I ask you to believe anything, you feel very lovey dovey in your heart, and then you give yourself to the tooth fairy. Is it? No, Christianity is based on a set of hard facts and then you got inferences for a fact that becomes rational and then above that there may be things you don't know as either mystery or absurdity. So I'm going to explain what that means.

So you've got a set of facts. For example, Jesus rose from the dead. I base my faith entirely on only

one important fact in life that Jesus rose from dead because if he doesn't rise from bed, I'm screwed and you are all worse than screwed because you learn under me. Yeah. It's fact I'm the biggest con man in the world because you're all screwed. If he's still dead, we are all worse than dead. Now, why do I believe him? Why? Because the tomb is empty, 75% of new Testament scholars will tell you after extensive research that the tomb, there's no tomb that was full of Jesus, a grave. The lives of disciples have been changed. And the extra biblical attestation from historian Eusebius, Josephus people who hated Jesus who are non-Christians, they write and attested to Jesus. Then there's prophecy, which is being fulfilled. These are facts. There are 5,000 New Testament Greek documents that talk about the existence of Jesus Christ and the gospels. All right, there are only 10 documents that talk to us about Julius Caesar and we all believe in Julius Caesar.

So these are facts. From the facts we have inference. If the tomb is empty, what is the inference? Jesus Rose from the dead. And if you Rose to the day, he must be the son of God. Now, what are the things that you don't know, which are mysteries? Well incarnation. How can Jesus man and God, 50-50%, how does it work? Which atoms is God, which atoms is not God? Do you know, nobody knows it's a mystery. It is a mystery, but it is not beyond human reason. It is beyond human reason, but not against human reason. It's not stupid, but it's not unreasonable either. It's an inference. So I'm willing to be able to suspend judgment on that for the time being.

Now, this is written by CS Lewis and I've used this when I shared with many of you who were in Alpha before. You come to a situation in your life.

Then I realized that was a gap behind me as well. If I had to believe in Christ there would have been a leap of faith as there is no certainty. But to even go back is also a leap of faith It would take enormous faith to reject Jesus. Once I saw the gap behind me I flung myself forward in a leap of faith toward Jesus

When you go to Alpha after 13 weeks learning about Jesus, you will learn certain facts and you're going to be in this situation, you know, what you have in your old life is unknown and then there's God, but it's very difficult to jump forward, right? You talk to everybody in Alpha, they will tell you, I know about this. I know about this, about God but I am not completely sure about Jesus. There's a gap. I mean, I've never seen Jesus with my own eyes, so there is a gap of inference, but then CS Lewis says, if you look at the back after 13 weeks in Alpha, there's also a gap behind. Because from here, can you go back to becoming just 13 weeks earlier that you didn't hear about Jesus, you don't believe in Jesus at all. There is a gap and all that. If you can't go back, you can't go forward, what do you do? A leap of faith, isn't it? So that's what our faith is about.

Mysteries for example, how can light be both wavelength as well a particle simultaneously not at different conditions. So these are mysteries that we don't understand. Things which are absurd, this is the lost gospel of Peter. I'll read to you the lost gospel of Peter, why we don't believe in this? All right. Resurrection,

And as they declared what things they had seen, again they saw three men come forth from the tomb, and two of them supporting one, and a cross following them. And the heads of the two reached to heaven, but the head of him who was led by them overpassed the heavens. And they heard a voice from the heavens, saying, You have preached to them that sleep. And a response was heard from the cross, Yes.

So you have the resurrection scene where three men come out, their heads reach up to the heavens

and one giant cross that speaks. It is not rational. We are talking about rationality and absurdity? So our faith, if you really have faith you can believe in this, but it actually absurd. Our faith is a rational faith.

The questions that we must ask ourselves, why do you believe. These are the questions you need to answer?

- Why do we believe God is there?
- Why do we believe God is good?
- How do we know Jesus ever lived?
- How do we know Jesus rose from the dead?
- Why do we trust the authority of the Bible?
- How do we understand that the Christian faith is true?
- How would we answer others who asks,

These are fundamental questions. If you don't answer and know how to answer this right, then your doubt will kill you. So this is your basic assumptions. All right. For example, Abraham was asked to take his son on Mount Moriah and sacrifice him. So, this is irrational or blind faith. It's a mystery. Why would God want to sacrifice him? Right. But it is actually known at that time, people sacrifice or actually consecrate their first-born son, but God had already promised him that he would have many nations. If he will kill the only son, finish, how to get that. It didn't seem rational. But why did he do it? Well, because he knew God as he did and his faith was a trust in the face of mystery, but not in the face of absurdity because he had been walking with God for 22 chapters. He had seen God answer prayer after prayer. After all, he was 80 years old, the wife is 90 years old and they still got a son. This saw a miracle and they saw God is good, isn't it? So when you don't understand something in your life, you turn back and remember, is God great and is God good? And if you can answer that question in the face of mystery that you don't understand, you can still trust God, isn't it. So, faith against sight but not against reason.

Mystery is beyond humanly discernible reasons, but not in any sense against reason at all. So sometimes you look through life through a keyhole. And you basically have to suspend judgment. It's like somebody during World War Two, the French resistance. So you meet somebody who is supposed to be part of the resistance, the Nazis have taken over Germany and you meet him, he talked to you, he tells you, okay, he's also part of the resistance and you see, he goes out, he helps you when you're captured. He saves you, he tends to your wounds and then he sees you help your friends, but then one day you see the fellow wear German uniform and put another friend in jail. Then you start thinking, this one haan, is he for me or against me, is he a traitor or is he a very good spy? And usually we would decide based on his character and what he has done for us before. We suspend judgment. And that's what God is like. A lot of people who left their faith didn't have a good foundation of faith, faulty assumptions about God and basically don't understand this issue of mystery.

If you know that God is good and God loves you, you're able to deal with some of the mysteries in life that you don't understand. All right.

There are two kinds of doubts that you have simple and compound doubt. Simple doubt is that some of you have got questions about the faith about Christianity, where you get the Bible and they're basically questions of knowledge. All we have to do give you the answer. You feel happy. Okay. But some of you, I give you the answer, not enough, you still don't believe. You know why, because there's an emotional issue. You were betrayed by somebody in your life. Compound doubts are

doubts not due to the lack of information. It's due to some emotional trauma that has happened to you in the past. The doubter can understand the answer, but he is reluctant to accept it.

DOUBT FROM A LACK OF COMMITMENT:

Faith equals obedience equals the discipleship, but the faith comes from the conviction of the truth. You must be convicted in order to have the truth. If your conviction or truth is no basis, is just a leap of faith, you think God is a fairytale, just believe that. Then you got problem with conviction or you've got a very weak basis. You believe in Christianity because of any number of reasons. Because your mother is Christian, you are Christian too, you born in Christian country and that is why you are a Christian. Your friends tell you become Christian, you become Christian.

If you have that problem, then you're going to have difficulties with doubt. Some people have this leap of faith, belief without any conviction or truth, because of my friends, environment, convenience or family. That is why you have doubt because your faith actually is a big jump. It's totally illogical. You don't believe it because your friends believe it so you believe it. So that's part of the reason why you doubt. There is an old Masai definition of faith. You see the Masai actually was talking to some Western Hunter. See you Western hunters, your definition of faith is like a man with a gun, with a telescopic sight shooting the cow. What do you use your faith for your eyes and one finger, right? The Masai definition of faith is a lion. He stocks the prey, smells the prey, runs, jumps, totally enwraps himself around the prey, bites, gets blooded. That is a proper definition of faith.

That means it is not intellectual you know, just see far, far away, one mile away, press the button and shoot you. That is not true faith. True faith is when you're all in, you are totally convicted and commitment. Commitment based on the conviction of truth. Factors they promote problems in this area are relativism, Man was meant to be doubtful about himself but undoubting about the truth. Relativism reverses this.

Group thinking, let me give you an example. CNN, just the other day January 31 Church of England apologizes for saying only married heterosexual should have sex. So therefore implies that this is Archbishop of Canterbury took responsibility of last week's announcements, he is compromised. Gays also can have sex. All right. Why? Because of the current climate. So that's a problem.

So if you've got a weak basis, because you've got no serious engagement with truth, you have got a sense of unreality that you get shame and you get guilt. So if you've got a weak basis of your faith, then you will actually have unreality and doubt. And the more you doubt, the more it affects your conviction of the truth.

Lisa Gungor, these are very famous Christian couple who are doing singing a gospel singing, and they write,

"God was the center of everything," she says. "The center of our marriage. God is the reason we got married. We sang worship songs to each other in a little practice room, and that's how we fell for each other—songs about God. It was all Christian romance

Doubt was the opposition of faith. And so [if you doubt], you're seen as a bad person. So, I felt like I was a bad person for questioning. That made this perspective shift really difficult and painful. We ended up getting kicked out of the 'Church' for some of the beliefs that we had."

You can see their faith is based on the fact that they were in a church, singing Christian songs together, marrying Christian husband and really no conviction of truth. And also the church was also a little bit stupid. They never allow people to discuss doubt and why they have doubts. You bring out the doubt and you are crucified as if you're non-Christian. So we should actually answer people's doubts rather than to prosecute them for them.

So the remedy is that we have to examine our basis of faith, own or shared or cultural or inherited. Relearn to choose and commit to the consequence of their choices

DOUBT FROM LACK OF GROWTH:

Here's how we look at life events. Events happen to us. We've a worldview. Then we translate that what does it mean for us. That's how everybody looks at the world. So for example, if you will live, this is article from BBC the other day, talking about a lady who lived in Wuhan and everything Wuhan stops and she writes here.

I don't have many regrets, because my job is meaningful. But I don't want my life to end.

She looks at the current crisis through the lens of her worldview. Her worldview is what, my life is about working. As long as my work life is meaningful it is okay. If I die, I don't get to work. So therefore I'm very upset, I'm sitting at home and I won't go out. That's your worldview. All right. So, faith is not a thing which one loses. We merely cease to shape our lives by it. If your worldview, isn't one crafted by the Bible and the word of God, then the way you see things will be different and the way you live will be completely different. You see, you don't lose your faith overnight OS Guinness says, you basically merely cease to be shaped by your faith. That means you do things not because you believe, you know, but because of whole bunch of other things, that's why we have a lack of commitment in church. People come to church. That is all they'll give you on Sunday because they're not convicted of anything aside from giving God Sunday and that's it. It doesn't affect the rest of their life.

When your life is not shaped by your faith, then you really don't have a true faith. So you don't actually lose it, we merely cease to be shaped our lives by our faith. So are our lives shaped by faith? Charles Darwin, he's a non Christian now.

"I gradually came to disbelieve in Christianity as a divine revelation. . . . Disbelief crept over me at a very slow rate, but was at last complete. The rate was so slow that I felt no distress, and have never since doubted even for a single second that my conclusion was correct."

Charles Darwin was a Christian even when he wrote about evolution but he slowly lost his faith. CS Lewis says,

"If you examined a hundred people who had lost their faith in Christianity, I wonder how many of them would turn out to have been reasoned out of it by honest argument? Do not most people simply drift away?"

Why do you drift away? Because you don't grow in your faith. As you don't grow in your faith, your faith become more unreal. And as it becomes more unreal, you start to doubt. So doubt comes from the lack of growth.

DOUBT FROM UNRULY EMOTIONS:

You've got doubt. Okay, no matter what people tell you about the statistics human bias. So you heard, like my wife and I went to Rome and we had this horrible spaghetti and had diarrhea for five days. So you can tell me, give me statistics about all the restaurant in Rome, how wonderful it is, till this day we are not going to go back and eat spaghetti. Why because you got emotions. Every time you think of it, oh my backside painful. So emotions can control us. So, the conundrum of emotions is that it can contradict what we believe, cause conflict, most vulnerable to outside influences and highly influential. Emotions are not weak, emotions are very, very strong. We doubt because we do not control our emotions. CS Lewis writes.

Now that I am a Christian I do have moods in which the whole thing looks very improbable; but when I was an atheist I had moods in which Christianity looked terribly probable.

So doubt is part of everybody's landscape as it were. Elijah, you know, the famous prophet who challenged all the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel to a match. So when he called upon the Lord, the Lord sent fire and burnt up the sacrifice. Great victory. Right after that he was threatened by the woman, Jezebel

- *1 Kings 19: 1 Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. 2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow." 3*

She threatened to kill him and then he was afraid, he rose and ran away. This guy who beat a hundred prophets, one woman come and threaten him he runaway already. You know what I mean. So, lamentations feelings,

- *Lamentations 3:16 He has made my teeth grind on gravel, and made me cower in ashes; 17 my soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is; 18 so I say, "**My endurance has perished :so has my hope from the Lord.**"*

Our prophet Jeremiah, no more hope in God. Emotions, he is very down, he is crying. So, emotions are very-very important. So emotions is what was a shadow becomes real and what is real becomes a shadow. That's what emotion is and all triggered by things like comments by others, pressure about being different, financial setback, family strife, failures in evangelism. So if somebody says something nasty to you, then you went back so upset and that upsetness causes you to doubt. So emotions are something that are very difficult to control. So what did God do for Elijah? God brings him aside, lets him rest, feeds him twice and then sends him off.

So I think sometimes when you've got doubt due to your emotions, you need to minister to them practical ways like get some sleep, take a holiday, take a rest, go out with some friends. Don't ask people to pray all the time, because sometimes when you're depressed, you don't feel like praying. So better to go dancing then praying sometimes because maybe that will help you because we are human beings. We are physical human beings. God ministers to us physically. Now you look at Elijah. He was a great prophet. He had defeated a 100 or 80 Baal prophets and yet he got so frightened by one woman who threatened him. He ran away. What did God say to him? God could have said to him, you've got no faith. Hello, I showed you so much miracle, some more you like that, why don't you pray a bit more. God didn't do that. What did God do that? Let him sleep, let him eat

and minister to him. And that's what we need to do for each other.

Recognize emotional pressures. If you are a loneliness in doubt, what do you do? Get your friends, go to life group, go to gamma, sit down with somebody who smiles at you. All right, because we need all those sort of things. Martin Lloyd Jones, who wrote about spiritual depression,

“Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself? We must talk to ourselves instead of allowing ‘ourselves’ to talk to us!”

So you must use your mental faculty of faith. Take the Bible and start telling yourself, lecturing to yourself as it were. It is like controlling horses, mastering emotions is like breaking in horses, taming emotions.

DOUBTS FROM HIDDEN CONFLICTS:

You know, if you were to grab a piece of metal and squeeze it, if you have a wound there can you grab very hard? You can't. And sometimes you have doubts, you know, because of the old, psychological wounds that are too sensitive to bear. When this happens, doubt is a process and excuse for drawing back from this risk.

Here is an example, they were talking about Jesus coming after the resurrection.

- *Luke 24: 36 As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!” 37 But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. 38 And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” 40 And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. 41 And while they **still disbelieved for joy** and were marveling, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate before them.*

Here he appears to them after the resurrection and they couldn't believe it. And here it says they disbelieved for joy. The disbelief for joy is basically too good to be true. You doubt the fact. It's a guy with a lottery ticket. He doubts the fact that he has one because it's safer as he has been disappointed many times in the past. He settled for the fun to trying rather than the fun of winning. He's been burned so many times, so he dare not believe isn't it. So here with Jesus comes and is totally resurrected to believe and fail is too painful therefore the better not believe.

It's the same thing as a young woman, who was this offered marriage by a very handsome men. Does he really love me? He just proposed, I don't want him, you know why, I heard before about other men, I can't get over it. The chat was too nice, too good to be true. I cannot take a risk to believe him. Doubt this protective. I don't to be hurt again.

Sometimes it's not that you don't want to believe, because in believing you might be hurt and you got all psychological wounds that is why people don't believe and you see many of these people, they have joined the church before and maybe somebody criticize them in the church and they were treated badly and they left. And then you say, you know, just believe. Actually it is not so simple, just believe you know. This is a compound doubt, that means a doubt with feelings behind and you

need to dig deep and find out why the person doesn't believe. Is it because of a lack of facts, misalignment of facts or is it because there is an old psychological wound that have resulted in this particular doubt.

What leads to doubt is not so much the pain of a wound in itself, as the memory of a wound that is clung to. It is not the unhealed wound but the wound that is never allowed to heal, the conflict that is not acknowledged.

I would like to end by encouraging you to go to Psalm 73. Psalm 73 is the doubtless prayer. We did this in our last study in Psalms. It describes David struggling through doubt in his life and it gives you some guidelines, how you handle doubt in your lives and it is important to join one of the groups, and honestly talk about some of your doubts. All of us have doubts. If you tell me you don't have doubt, then you're probably a computer program. You're not human. All right. An important thing about doubt, don't underestimate it, don't overestimate it, deal with it and pray with each other to help overcome your doubts.