

UNDERSTANDING FAITH SERIES

DOUBTS AND UNBELIEF

Mark 6: 1 He went out from there and came to His own country and His disciples followed Him. And when the Sabbath had come He began to teach in the synagogue and many hearing Him were astonished saying, " Where did this man get these things? And what wisdom is this that is given to Him that such mighty works are performed by His hands? Is this not the carpenter the son of Mary and brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" And they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country among his own relatives and in his own house." Now He could do no mighty works there except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief.

Then He went about the villages in a circuit teaching. This morning we want to consider unbelief and doubt and how to deal with them. The bible tells us very plainly that unbelief is a sin. Yet unbelief consists of two causes and not just one. In understanding faith we realize that the most important battle we fight is with doubts. Its what goes on within us that determines our success and not so much what goes on without. There are many circumstances that people faced that caused them to fail. Yet another different person facing the same set of circumstances can come out a success. The problem is no so much as what is without. You can face any kind of circumstances, obstacles, mountains from the outside, the problem is more on the inside.

And that is where faith comes in. Faith transforms the inside of our being first before it transforms the outside of our circumstances. Don't ever expect God to answer your prayers or your exercise of faith unless the word of faith transforms your thinking life, your believing life, your visualizing life and your whole being inside you. What is transformed outside is proportional to what is transformed on your inside. In proportion as to how much the Word has changed our inside, in that same degree and proportion the Word is able to change our outside.

Unbelief is not so much just disbelief or no belief. There are two causes for unbelief. One is ignorance and the other is a free choice. The most dangerous kind of unbelief is free choice. The bible says in Romans 10: 16-18 *How shall they have faith unless they hear? How shall they believe unless they hear? And faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.* It tells us there is no possibility of believing something unless you have faith for it and unless you have the opportunity to have faith produced inside you. So unbelief can be caused by ignorance. By a lack of knowledge people have perished. And by a lack of knowledge people suffer circumstances that they should never have suffered. They should never have gone through that if not for a lack of knowledge of the Word. The Word brings forth tremendous knowledge that will help us to have faith in areas that we have not had before.

When Paul in Acts 19: 1-2 met a group of John's disciples in Ephesus, these Ephesians have already met Jesus as Lord and Savior. They have been baptized in John's baptism. He asked them a question that they could not say yes. Paul asked, "Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believe?" The answer was, "We have not heard about the Holy Spirit." Obviously you can't receive what you have not heard. They could not have faith to receive the baptism in the Spirit because they have not heard any teaching in that area. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Therefore the first cause of unbelief is ignorance. Ignorance of the Word of God, ignorance of what the Word says.

The second cause of unbelief is by free choice. It comes because of a decision people make. And like the incident in Mark 6 it is this kind of unbelief that angers Jesus Christ. The hometown and home folks of Jesus had the opportunity to hear Jesus teach the Word. They even said, "What wisdom is this? Where did He get these words?" These wonderful words were from God. They wondered where He got that kind of wisdom. And they made a decision not to believe. Suppose you were one of the disciples of Jesus. He has just been crucified and raised from the dead. Somebody met Him and came and said, "I saw Jesus and He was resurrected." Once I give a person that information he has a choice. The information brings him to a position where he could say, "I believe," or "I do not believe." Supposing he had one person come to tell him that, and he can say, "I don't believe. It is a figment of your imagination." Another person comes and says, "I saw Jesus," there are two now. You can see the pressure increasing. And he says, "Couldn't be." The third person comes along and said, "I saw Jesus." Now there are three. You can see the amount of information he is beginning to receive will help him to make a choice. That is why teaching is important to get rid of unbelief. The more information is

given from God's Word its easier to believe than to disbelieve. However the choice still remains.

What happened in Mark chapter six is that they chose not to believe. It was unbelief based on free choice and not based on ignorance on the Word. Believing God therefore is not automatic. Therefore you can conclude if unbelief comes because of free choice, then hearing the Word alone may not guarantee faith. Hearing the Word may give us the opportunity to have faith. But hearing the Word alone does not guarantee faith. Faith still comes from our attitudes to the Word that we hear and how we receive the Word.

In the book of Thessalonians Paul mentioned something positive about the Thessalonians that we want to take a look. First Thessalonians 1: 5 *For our gospel did not come to you in Word only but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance as you know what kind of man we were among you for your sake.* Wonderful statement that says the gospel came to the Thessalonians in great power. How did it happen? I Thessalonians 2: 13 *For this reason we also thank God without ceasing because when you received the Word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of man.* Now that is where the attitudes come in. Hearing was not enough. It was how they hear. *But as it is in truth the word of God which also effectively works in you who believe.* Without that belief and their attitude the gospel would not have come to them in power. It was not only hearing the Word, it was how they hear.

The book Hebrews 4: 1-2 *Therefore since the promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seems to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them. But the Word, which they heard, did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.* In the bible when it talks about unbelief it primarily focus on unbelief that is caused by a decision. Not unbelief that is caused by ignorance. And that is the prime cause of unbelief. It is a decision. Unbelief is not non-belief. It is believing in the opposite from what God has spoken. Unbelief is not the absence of believing. It is a decision made against what God has said even though God has said something. Unbelief believes some things. But the things they believe are contrary to the Word of God.

In the book of Hebrews the reference is made to the Israelites who were in the wilderness. They have just come out from the land of Egypt. And they were supposed to cross over to the Promised Land. It tells us that they sent twelve spies.

Twelve spies came back and ten said we saw giants. The other two also said we saw giants. But ten of them said the giants were so big that they were like tiny little grasshoppers before the giants. But two of them Caleb and Joshua said there is no problem and that they can overcome them because God has given them that land. And all the multitudes chose to believe the ten spies who gave a bad report. It was a free choice made. And God will always give you that opportunity to exercise that freedom. Faith is not automatic. Living by faith is a decision we made.

Lets examine that passage very carefully in the book of Numbers 13: 30, *Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession for we are well able."* He says we can do it. We are able to do it. But the rest said no we are not able. The book of Hebrews 4 tells us that they heard the Word. What Word did they hear? The Word that God said I have given you the land. The whole group had an opportunity and they chose not to believe Joshua and Caleb but to believe in the ten spies who came back and said we cannot do it.

Unbelief is a choice we make and it is the opposite of what God said. Doubts form the process of the decision. Doubts are choices given to you. By the time you reached unbelief, you take a position that is contrary to God's Word. Doubts are opportunities, you haven't chosen yet. When a doubt arises you are in an opportunity to choose which direction to take. A doubt is the devil's words or man's words coming to your mind. And you see God's Word and man's words and you have an opportunity to choose between the two.

Doubting is the process of beginning to choose the wrong choices. So doubts are bad too. We must reach a point where we completely become single minded. We have to define doubt and unbelief in order to protect ourselves against them. We have to know what our enemy is doing. Since there must be a change coming on in the inside before a change can take place outside, we must therefore learn how to protect the change that comes inside. We must understand how to fight against unbelief, how to fight against doubt that comes.

Both doubts and unbelief are based on natural laws. All unbelief and doubts are the work of Satan trying to make you look at things from the natural point of view. Doubting is also having two minds about a subject. To doubt is to say this statement is true and the opposite statement is also true although they are contradictory to each other. So doubt is being double minded. The book of James 1: 6 *but let him ask*

in faith with no doubting. For he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. But let not that man supposed that he would receive anything from the Lord. He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. God declares through His words that doubt is having two minds about a subject. Not just having two minds but you begin to question God's Word and what God says about that matter. James said you cannot receive it at all. You cannot receive anything from the Lord if you have doubt.

Mark 11: 23-24 tells us have the faith of God and it says whatsoever you pray for believe that you received. Verse twenty-three tells you do not doubt in your heart. It is the doubts in the heart and not the devil that rob us. The devil is powerless against you if you do not doubt. The devil has no authority over your life whatsoever as long as you don't doubt and permit doubt to come into your life. The most important place of your whole being to protect against doubt and unbelief is your mind. What goes on in your mind will determine the success of your whole life in your endeavor for the Lord. If the doubt is permitted to dwell in your mind and not driven off it will take root and cause you to be in a position where God cannot bless you. God cannot work in your life. God cannot work on your behalf.

And how do doubt and unbelief and mental thought that are contrary to God's Word work? All of them are based on one primary principle based on natural laws. It is the understanding that is based on natural laws. It is the reasoning that is based on natural laws. The bible declares that there are two ways you can reason. You can reason by spiritual laws or you can reason by natural laws.

Doubts and unbelief is as we said is not non-belief. It is believing in the wrong thing. Believing in the wrong thing means you have the wrong information and you have also a wrong concept involved. It is not just non-belief. Non-belief is you have nothing or have never heard anything. Unbelief is when you have heard but you use the natural concepts to form precepts and principles and you base your life on that. Before a human being believes, he or she always rationalizes, justifies and reasons. The only problem is that all these rationalizing, justification and reasoning are based on natural laws.

Before a person can commit a crime, they will have to justify its righteousness to themselves, although it may be a lie. Someone who robs another person will have to justify it because the conscience is at work. They will say since these rich people

have made enough money they can take the loss from the robbery. The most amazing thing is that there are a lot of prisoners right now in prison who think that what they did is still right. How did they think that way? The reasoning. All human beings have reasoning powers. If there are no reasoning powers we are no more human beings. There is a reasoning process taking place all the time. Before people kill another, they have to rationalize it away. They reason that since this person is so evil they have to get rid of him. All human beings literally reason themselves into a wrong act. Believing in the wrong thing causes unbelief and doubt. And before you believe in the wrong thing you reason your way into that. And all the reasoning of doubt and unbelief is based on natural laws. Satan gets you to look at the natural laws.

Think about the Israelites who spied out the Promised Land and came back with their reports. They said that the inhabitants of that land were bigger than them, and that is why they couldn't possess the land. Is that a fact? It is a fact. They are taller than us. Is that a fact? It is a fact. Everybody knows in the natural if one guy is bigger than you, that guy will win in fight. Is that reasonable? It is. My friends, doubts and unbelief are reasonable but it is reasonable in the natural. That is the problem that we have to understand in order for us to protect ourselves against doubt and unbelief. If I see a guy who is two hundred pounds and bulging with full of muscles and if I want to do the arm wrestling by all natural laws he will win. The Israelites said they are bigger. And they said we couldn't over come them. Even God agree with them and say your can't win them in the natural. God told them in the book of Deuteronomy He said you are the least. Doubt and unbelief are based on reasoning.

Satan will reason his way with you. Look at how Satan dealt with Eve. He reasoned with her. He said look this will make you wise. And he reasoned people into sin. He reasoned people into all kind of situations. And before they know it they were in unbelief. And you said how did I get here. You got into the bus that is listed on the road to unbelief. You jumped into it and were admiring all the scenery. And the scenery represents all the reasoning of Satan, all the reasoning of man. You say yes by the time you got out of the bus parked right out there in unbelief street, something changes inside your life and you become a failure. Success and failure depends on what goes on inside you. Some human beings somewhere else have faced every circumstance that is impossible to you right now and they have over come it. There is no temptation that has overtaken you that is not common onto all man. Somebody else has succeeded against the same circumstances.

Lets see the reasoning that they have about Jesus in Mark six. They said, "Isn't this the carpenter?" Is that true? It is. "Are not His brothers with us, Joseph, James, Judas and Simon?" They probably never heard about the virgin birth. But they said, "Are not His brothers with us. And who does He think He is?" Are they reasoning? Yes they are reasoning. They are saying, "He is a carpenter; we know Him. Where did He get all these things?" And they reasoned their way into unbelief. And by their reasoning they stopped the power of God from working. All the reasoning of unbelief and doubt are based on natural laws. It looks very appealing and very reasonable to the natural man. And that is where we must be more watchful. For everything and some of the things God has said are so opposite from the way the natural world goes.

In Matthew fourteen Jesus said to Peter to come and he started walking on the water. He saw the waves coming. By all natural laws he should be sinking. I don't know why he didn't do the reasoning before he got out of the boat. You must have a reason for your faith. If somebody asks you to believe something without a spiritual reason, you are not obligated to believe. God will present His argument on His side. When Moses doubted God and said, "How can You supply food for all these Israelites?" God said, "Is the arm of the Lord too short?"

And that is what Paul was doing in the synagogue when he went to preach. He always reason with them from the scriptures to get them to believe in God. His reasoning is based on spiritual laws. Paul says in First Corinthians chapter two that he speaks with wisdom of God and not with the wisdom of man. The reasoning of God and the reasoning of man are contradictory to each other. When God reasons He takes into account His power. He takes into account a lot of other sources that this natural reason does not take into account. If the Israelites realized that the angels are fighting with them it would have been easy. The angels of God are much more powerful than their enemies. And they are going to fight on the Israelites' behalf. There are spiritual ways and reasons that you can establish your faith on.

As Peter stepped out into the waters, along the way I guess Satan was reasoning with him. He saw the waves. And as the waves were stirred up something went on in his mind. This is not reasonable. Who would think of a man standing on the water? And the bible says he was afraid, he doubted. And doubts are based on natural laws. He doubted, he was afraid and he started sinking. So unbelief and doubts are based on the wrong reasoning. You could reason yourselves out of the blessings of God. There are many people who are reasoning themselves out of

God's healing. They will memorize the scriptures about Paul's thorn in the flesh and Timothy's stomach where apparently these apostles too are sick. They know these scriptures and they reason themselves out of healing. There are people who reason themselves out of salvation. You preach the gospel to them. They will tell you a lot of other things and their good works. "Don't tell me that after doing all these good work God is going to send me to hell." "No we are not telling you that. Jesus is telling you that." So they reason themselves out of salvation. And there are people who reason themselves out of the baptism in the Spirit. They could quote you scriptures to prove that they don't have to speak in tongues. It's the negative application of the scripture. Scripture is used to prove why they don't have to be healed. Scripture is used to prove why they don't have to speak in tongues. It's a negative application. And people reason themselves out of the blessings of God. And there are people who let the devil reason them out into poverty. Don't be to rich. Haven't you heard of dirty money? And they reason themselves into poverty.

If we understand that the process of doubt and unbelief is the work of Satan to turn your eyes to natural reasoning and self-knowledge then we have to protect ourselves against it. The next time somebody present an argument, present some aspect of truth and then you say there is no way you are accepting his reasoning since there are higher reasons that you are basing your faith on.

When the Lord Jesus told Peter to throw his net on the right side, Peter said, "Lord we have done it the whole night and it did not work." He was a fisherman. He should know more than Jesus in the natural. But Jesus knew more than him in the spiritual. And the spiritual always win. Thank God that Peter continued, "But at your word I will do it. I have a reason to believe because You gave the word." And he put the net down and lo and behold there was so much fish that they had to call James and John to help. Their boats were literally sinking out of that catch. Jesus has His reasoning. Peter has his reasoning. But Jesus' reasoning releases the power of God. Man's reasoning based on sense knowledge will cripple you.

Learn to protect yourself from sense knowledge and from natural reasoning. We have to protect ourselves from that and move into the realm of the Spirit and be sensitive to what God says. His spiritual reasoning covers more aspects and laws that man cannot see. It would have been just like the three blind men and the elephant. One blind man came and held the elephant by the tail. And he says, "An elephant is like a rope." Is he right? Yes, from his perspective he is right. The second blind man felt the body of the elephant. He says, "You are wrong my friend.

An elephant is like a wall." Was he right? He was. And that is the problem with doubt and unbelief. It seems so right. It seems so right only because of the small little frame of reference. If you isolate certain things in its small little frame of reference it would look very reasonable.

And that is not what we are supposed to do. We are supposed to take God's frame of reference. Faith is having God's frame of reference and not man's. When God tells you to do something, your frame of reference is only so much. And you say God I don't comprehend beyond that. I don't understand beyond that. But based on my frame of reference Lord it is not reasonable. Later on when you obey, you found that it was that frame of reference is that huge and big, and you realize that God was right all along. We have to protect ourselves from limiting God on a small frame of reference. When God tells you go enter into some promised area and do certain things, you say, "Lord I don't understand. My natural reasoning says it cannot be done. It should not be done. It is not permissible for human beings to do so." Break down those frames of reference.

The wonderful thing about our God is that if you ask Him He will explain. If you ask Him, "Lord could you please give me more light on this area? Could you please give me more information on this area? First Corinthians 2: 7 *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. For it is written eyes had not seen nor ear heard nor has entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.* That is talking about man from man's frame of reference. That is the way man can understand the things of God's mystery. But God said in verse ten, *But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit teaches all things yes the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him. For no one know the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit which is from God that we might know the things that has been freely given to us by God.*

Do you know what Paul say the Spirit of God is to do? Read very carefully it says in verse twelve. The Spirit is given to us that we might know, that we might understand, that we might comprehend, that we may understand the spiritual reasoning for our belief. There is a natural reasoning but there is a higher spiritual reasoning which is called the wisdom of the Spirit of God. And the reason the Holy Spirit came is to give us understanding and reasoning from God's frame of

reference. And notice that unless you know you will never receive. Unless you know a thing from the way God has spoken from His frame of reference, you cannot receive. For it says here in verse twelve, *That we may know the things that had been freely given to us by God.* That is why the Holy Spirit is given. He has been given to give us revelations. He is to lead and to guide us into all truth.

Verse thirteen *these things we also speak not in words which man wisdom teaches.* In other words he is not using human reasoning. It is not based on natural knowledge. All human knowledge and reasoning is based on the five senses. It is reasonable as far as the five senses are concerned. But Paul says *it is not based on man's wisdom but the words which the Spirit teaches for it compares spiritual things with spiritual.* But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness to him. Foolishness means unreasonable and incomprehensible. *But nor can he know them because they are spiritually discerned or spiritually understood. But he who spiritually judges all things yet he himself is judged by no one. For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him but we have the mind of Christ.* We have the frame of reference of God. We have the understanding as Christ sees it. To have the mind of Christ is to see things the way Jesus sees.

About thirty to forty years ago when Albert Einstein came forth and said that Newton's law was wrong, everybody thought that he was a mad scientist. But what Newton said was correct based on the earthly realm. See it was correct within a certain realm. Newton's law declares that all these state of motion there is always a cause and effect. But Albert Einstein put a new dimension and he says there is a dimension where time will affect the speed of motion. The three laws of Newton are correct. They are still correct today until you move out into outer space and then Einstein's law reign. See each law has its perspective. It is correct up to a certain time.

Sometimes it is quite interesting in the fact that like for example when you see an object as a certain color. It is more because all the other colors are blocked out and not just that the colors are coming back. If all the colors that we see shine into our eyes, we see it as white. But if I block out all the other colors except red, you see red merely because all the other colors are blocked out. Not because its just only red signals. Green is a primary color in nature. But if you use the color mixture you will realize that red and blue together makes purple. And you think that green is a compound color. If you mix blue and yellow you get green. To us green is a compound color. A compound color means it is a mixture of other colors. But in

science and in natural law green is a natural color. It is with green and two other colors that they make all the T.V. signals and the T.V. pictures.

As we move from one level of education to another we realize that some of the things that we think are a law we realize there is another law running from a different frame of reference. And all the T.V. colors are based on the combination of just three. If I tell you that this light is going on and off all the time, your natural eyes says you are lying. Why because you don't have the scientific apparatus and your natural apparatus cannot measure it.

And sometimes when God says something from His Word. Our natural apparatus cannot measure it. We say, "Lord it cannot be. Your Word must be wrong. By His stripes I am healed. But Lord I still feel the pain of the sickness. So I am right and You are wrong." But your natural apparatus cannot measure the healing that is already taking place until it is seen in the natural. Jesus told the fig tree, "From this day no one shall eat fruit from you." It looks like nothing happened. But immediately the roots were drying up. You can't see it yet until the next day the tree had died. See our measurement cannot cover certain spiritual realms. And that is why God's reasoning and frame of reference is from the spirit area.

And the Spirit will give wisdom. The Spirit will give his reasoning if we ask. That's the purpose why the Spirit is given to us so that we would have faith in God. And we have an understanding of the things of God and launch out into the things that God has called us to. And in the last days more and more of His people are going to understand the difference between unbelief and doubt and the faith of God. And realize that to live by faith is choosing not to live by man's reasoning. To live by faith free from doubt is to live by God's higher frame of reference. And when you do that you began to realize that doubt and unbelief start going away further and further from your life until you reach a point where you are never in doubt. Where you will never move into unbelief any more. And that's the day great things are going to happen mightily in your life.

