When You Struggle With Doubt
John 6:60-69

ETS: Jesus gave a difficult teaching that tested His followers, many left, but some remained.
ESS: We must stay anchored to Jesus in the midst of our doubts
OSS: I want believers to resolve to stay anchored to Jesus
PQ: Are you Anchored to Jesus?
UW: Anchors

WE

Series on DOUBT

- Reality: Doubt is Natural
    - Everyone struggles with doubt.

Examples:

- "I doubt if God cares about me"
- "I doubt if God really loves me"
- "I doubt if God hears my prayers"
- "After all I have done, I doubt if God can really use me"
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Series

- **Week #1**: Why Do we Doubt
    - Fear Fuels Doubt
    - Faulty Focus Fuels Doubt
        - **Challenge**: Trust God in the Midst of your Doubt
- **Week #2:** How Jesus Responds to Doubt
    - Doubt is Natural
    - Doubt Doesn't Diminish You in God's Sight
        - **Challenge**: Doubt, but Don't Give up
- **Week #3:** The Benefit of Doubt
    - Possible Reason for Doubt**:** No Personal Encounter with Christ
        - **Challenge:** Use Doubt to Drive Devotion to God

This week, **When You struggle with Doubt**

- What do you do when doubt floods your mind?
- Where do you turn when you are feeling fear?

GOD

Background:

John 6 starts off with the only miracle that is recorded in all four gospels.

- It is one of Jesus' most famous miracles: the Feeding of the 5,000.
    - This miracle happened at a very crucial time in Jesus' ministry.
- It marks the highest point in Jesus' popularity.
    - We know at least 5,000 men were present and some estimate the crowd from 10-20,000 people when you included the women and children.
    - It occurs one year before His crucifixion
    - It occurs during the Passover—which was the high point of the Feasts which were observed.

The next miracle: Jesus walking on the water

- Jesus asked Peter "Why did you doubt?"
    - Answer: Peter got his eyes off Jesus!
- When Jesus and Peter get back into the boat, the boat is suddenly at the shore!

The next day, the crowds go looking for Jesus

- They get in boats and go across the lake

John 6:25-26 "When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" 26 Jesus answered, "Truly I tell you, you are

looking for me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate the loaves and were filled.

The problem was that the crowd wanted to follow a prophet who will provide free food and political deliverance—another Moses.

- According to John 6:2, Jesus knew that the people originally followed Him because of His miracles, BUT NOW their motive was to get FED!
    - Even if they were attracted only by the **miracles**, at least there was still a possibility they might be saved. After all, that is where **Nicodemus** started (John 3:1–2).
        - BUT NOW, their interest had **degenerated** to the level of **food**.
        - They wanted Jesus to deliver them from their problems and take care of their needs.

John 6:27-29 "Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal." Therefore they said to Him, "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

- Jesus tells them that they need to "believe" on Him.

- You would think that they would already been believing on Jesus—after all, they are following Him all over the place.
  - But apparently, many of them still haven't put their faith and trust in Him!

Think about it:

- They were **with** Jesus,
- they were **listening** to Jesus' teachings,
- they were **seeing** Jesus' miracles,
  - but they still **did not believe him** to the point of **accepting Him** as the **Son of God.**

Despite all the miracles, despite the healings, the feeding of the multitudes, when it came to the subject to of **believing on Jesus** they wanted **another sign**!

- In **John 6:30** they state: "So they said to Him, "What then do You do for a sign, so that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform?"
  - They wanted Jesus to impress them!

<u>Hadn't they witnessed enough already?</u>

- **John 6:24** tells us that this incident happened in **Capernaum**. Think about the miracles that Jesus performed in Capernaum:
  - **Healed** the **paralytic** man in Capernaum

- **Cast out a demon** in the **synagogue** on the Sabbath in Capernaum
- Healed the man with a **withered hand** in Capernaum
- Healed the **Centurian's slave** who was about to die in Capernaum
- Healed a **royal official's son** who was sick at Capernaum
- **Walked on the water** as the disciples went **toward Capernaum**

Despite all **of these miracles at Capernaum** and towns all in the area, the people still wanted **another sign**.

- Did they really want another sign so they would believe? I don't think so.
  - They wanted another sign so they could be **impressed** and **entertained**.
- **Problem:** Jesus wasn't born in to this world just to do **miracles** or to feed hungry people!

Jesus came into the world to **save people** from the **eternal consequences** of their rebellion against God!

AFTER the people asked Jesus "What sign are you going to perform" they state in **John 6:31** "Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, just as it is written: He gave them bread from heaven to eat."

- ARGUMENT: Just like Moses, YOU Have an obligation to give us food!
  - Jesus, we want you to keep our belly's full!

The other day, I went grocery shopping and the bill was $140.00—and that was just for the **eggs**!

- **Groceries** are **EXPENSIVE**!
  - <u>Do you know how much **extra money** we'd have if we just didn't eat food?</u>

Jesus would attract followers from all over if He'd just keep supplying them with physical food!

According to **John 6:59**, this scene is occurring in the **synagogue in Capernaum**, and these religious Jews decide to **remind** Jesus of **Psalms 78:24** which says that God gave the Israelites "Bread from heaven."

- The Jews in the synagogue are saying "if you are the Son of God then you need to feed us with food, just like God did when the Israelites were in the wilderness."

Since they brought up **Ps. 78** and this talk about God sending "Bread for Heaven" Jesus decides to **DROP THE BOMB**

This week, as we are watching Bible prophecy continue to take shape in our lifetime, we've heard talk about the United States' BUNKER Buster bomb

- A bunker buster bomb **burrows** through layers of earth, **concrete**, or **reinforced materials** before detonating.
    - THe U.S. GBU-57 Massive Ordnance Penetrator (MOP), can penetrate up to 60 meters (200 feet) of earth or multiple layers of hardened concrete.

Jesus drops the **bunker buster bomb** and it starts to **burrow** into their hearts: **John 6:35** "**I am** the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst."

- Jesus says "I am is the bread!"
    - The Manna that came down from heaven in the Old Testament was **picture** of CHRIST!

Jesus makes some WILD CLAIMS:

- he who comes to Me **will not hunger**,
- and he who believes in Me **will never thirst**.

<u>HOW DOES this work?</u>

- In **vss. 36-40**, Jesus says "you have to believe in me" but the problem is "you've seen me, and yet you do not believe." (**John 6:36**)

- They **don't' really believe** that he is the **Son of God**
- They **don't really believe** that Jesus "came down from heaven"

The **bunker buster bomb** Jesus drops is starting to tear up the ground heading to its target: **John 6:41-42** "Therefore the Jews started grumbling about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." 42 They were saying, "Isn't this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?"

- The Jews: "We know His parents! How can He 'come down from heaven'"?

The bunker buster bomb keeps burrowing deeper: **Joh 6:43** "Jesus answered them, "Stop grumbling among yourselves."

- Jesus rebukes them!
  - In **vss. 44-45** that the Reason they don't believe is because they haven't been "drawn by the Father" and the reason they haven't been drawn by God the Father is because they haven't "Listened to and learned from the Father."
    - Jesus accessed them of **NOT seeking after God**!

Jesus is in a Jewish synagogue telling the congregation: You are not seeking after God!

- WHAT? They are sitting in a synagogue!
  - The only people who go to synagogue are the ones seeking after God!
    - This is a SLAM

The Bunker Buster Bomb burrows deeper in **vs. 46** when Jesus claims that He "has seen God the Father."

- That statement would have caused more grumbling!

IN **vs 47-50** Jesus doubles down on His claim that He is the "Bread of life!"

Then Jesus' **bunker buster bomb** plows up a **big chuck on concrete** when He states **John 6:51** I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he will live forever. The bread that I will give for the life of the world *is my flesh*."

- The **concrete chunk** is the that the bread Jesus "will give for life of the world" is HIS FLESH!

Remember, the people in the **synagogue** have already been **grumbling**, shooting each "the eyes," making snide comments, but NOW it intensifies!

- Jesus' talk UPSETS the Jews: **John 6:52** At that, the Jews argued among themselves, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

We have moved from "grumbling" to "arguing"!

- The question: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"
  - Is Jesus preaching CANABALISM?
    - Has Jesus lost His Mind?

Then Jesus' **bunker buster bomb** started burrowing into the Steel: **John 6:53** So Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man AND drink his blood, you do not have life in yourselves."

- Jesus' **bunker buster bomb** has hit the target: You have to "eat the flesh of the Son of Man AND drink his blood" ***IF*** you want eternal life!

Jesus keeps gets GRAPHIC with His bunker buster bomb! **John 6:54-58** "The one who **eats my flesh and drinks my blood** has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day, 55 (WHY?) because **my flesh** is true food and **my blood** is true drink. 56 The one who **eats my flesh and drinks my blood** remains in me, and I in him. 57 Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who **feeds on me** will live because of me. 58

This is the bread that came down from heaven; it is not like the manna your ancestors ate—and they died. The one who **eats this bread will live forever."**

- Jesus is talking about people "eating" his flesh and "drinking" His blood
- Jesus is talking about people "feeding on me"
- Jesus is claiming that those who do this "will live forever"

Have you heard the **phrase**: "A bridge too far"?

- For the **Jews**, this statement was a 'Bridge too far'!

You can imagine that the synagogue is in an uproar!

- People are arguing that Jesus has gone insane, but others are insisting He isn't.

When Jesus' bunker buster bomb hits its target the results are catastrophic: **John 6:60** Therefore, when many of his disciples heard this, they said, "This teaching is hard. Who can accept it?"

- WHO is struggling with Jesus' teaching?
  - "Many of His disciples"

To be a disciple meant you were a follower of someone

- These were people who claimed to follow Jesus!

- They may have traveled with Him from city to city
  - Or, they always tried to go listen to Him when He was in town

When Jesus wasn't in town, they would talk to their friends about Him and they would identify as a follower of Jesus.

- These people believed Jesus was the Messiah—or at least they thought they did—until now!

John 6:61-69 "Jesus, knowing in himself that *his disciples were grumbling* about this, asked them, "Does this offend you?

- Not only were the **people in the synagogue** "grumbling" about Jesus
  - His **own disciples** were "Grumbling" about Jesus' teaching!

Jesus asked "Does this offend you?

- Short answer: YES!
  - It is offensive to talk about "drinking Jesus' blood!
    - The Jews were taught that the **life was in the blood** and that is why they could not eat rare, medium rare or mediums steaks!

        - They ate their steaks “well done”
- If they could not eat animal blood, the idea of drinking Jesus’ blood was more offensive!

It was offensive to say that they had to “eat Jesus’ flesh”

- God forbade cannibalism—we are created in the image of God!
    - Only PAGANS drink blood and eat people!

Jesus asked another question: **John 6:62** Then what if you were to observe the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?

- What does Jesus mean “ascending to where he was before”?
    - They knew His parents
        - They knew He was born into this world!

Jesus is claiming to have existed BEFORE He was born into this world!

The next statement explains everything: **John 6:63** “The Spirit is the one who gives life. The flesh doesn’t help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.”

- Jesus is NOT talking about LITERALLY drinking His blood or eating His flesh!

- Jesus is using a physical reality, eating and drinking, to teach a spiritual truth.

Just as **Manna** was **literal food** in the desert that people **ate** to **stay alive**,

- **Jesus** is the **spiritual manna** that people must eat if they want to live spiritually!

<u>How do you "eat Jesus' flesh and drink His blood?</u>

- It is a spiritual act!
  - It requires BELIEF!

One must believe that

- Jesus is the Son of God who was sent to earth by God
- Jesus died on the cross, shed His blood, for the forgiveness of your sins

From **vss. 22 to 70** the word "Believe" occurs **11 times**!

- Jesus' point: You must believe in me!

John 6:64 "But there are some among you who don't believe." (For Jesus knew from the beginning those who did not believe and the one who would betray him.)

- It appears that Jesus turns his attention specifically to the 12 disciples at this point!

- There was one among the **12 disciples** that "did not believe."
  - In fact, he would eventually "betray" Jesus!

John 6:65 "He said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted to him by the Father."

- What is Jesus saying?
  - Go back to **vs. 45** "Everyone who has listened to and learned from the Father comes to me."

The people who came to Jesus were first listening and learning from God the Father!

- Those who were pursuing God the Father, God gave them to the Son!

Jesus is saying "If you are having difficulty with my teaching, it is because you were never pursuing God in the first place! You have been following me for the miracles! You liked what your heard as long as it did not challenge you way of thinking."

- Jesus is saying "If you are having difficulty with my teaching, it is because you are not truly my disciples."

John 6:66 "From that moment many of his disciples turned back and no longer accompanied him."

- Jesus was at the **height of His popularity** and He just ran off **many of His followers**!

John 6:67 "So Jesus said to the Twelve, "You don't want to go away too, do you?"

- Jesus' **bunker buster bomb** has reached the nuclear reactor: the CORE!
  - Now, the 12 must decide!
    - Are they going to continue to follow a man **who just told people** they must "eat His flesh" and "Drink His blood" if they want eternal life?
    - Are they going to continue to follow a man who is causing people in the **synagogues** to get upset?
    - Are they going to continue to follow a man who is **running off many** of His **followers**?

We've been in a series about DOUBT!

- Do you think the disciples may be thinking "Is Jesus sane"?
- Do you think the disciples may be thinking "Do we want to keep following this man"?

This is a FLASH Point: the Moment of truth!

- Do you think the **12 disciples understood** what Jesus was saying when He talked about "eating His flesh" and "Drinking His blood"?
    - NO! Jesus' **death and resurrection** had not yet happened.
- Do you think the **12 disciples** were **confused** by Jesus' teaching?
    - YES! This teaching didn't make sense at this point!
- Do you think the **12 disciples** were **AFRAID** of what lay ahead?
    - Yes! What Jesus just taught didn't make sense!
        - PLUS, why would Jesus teaching something that would **scare off a lot of His followers**?

John 6:68-69 Simon Peter answered, "Lord, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

- Peter's answer: There is no alternative!
    - Only Jesus has the words of eternal life
        - We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God

In other words, "We don't always understand WHAT you are doing, WHY you are doing it, or fully grasp what you

are teaching, but "We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

What do you do when faced with doubt?

Stay Anchored in Jesus

Only Jesus has the words of eternal life
Only Jesus is the Holy One of God.

Doubt sets in when we don't understand WHY God is allowing difficulties in our lives
Doubt sets in when we don't understand HOW God is going to use a tough time for our good
Doubt sets in when we feel alone—when others have seemed to abandon their faith

In the autumn of 1857, the merchant ship Northern Star sailed through the treacherous waters of the North Atlantic, laden with timber and furs bound for Liverpool. A fierce gale swept in, with waves towering over the deck and winds tearing at the sails. The crew, battered and weary, fought to keep the vessel afloat as the storm pushed them toward a jagged reef off the coast of Newfoundland.

Captain Elias Thorne, a grizzled mariner with decades at sea, knew the ship was in peril. The rudder was sluggish, battered by the storm's relentless force, and the crew struggled to maintain course. As the Northern Star drifted closer to the reef, the lookout's cry confirmed their worst fears: rocks loomed dead ahead, their foam-crowned edges barely visible through the driving rain.

Thorne's mind raced. The ship's anchors—two massive iron claws stowed at the bow—were their last hope. He ordered the crew to prepare the starboard anchor, a 2-ton beast of forged iron. The men, soaked and freezing, hauled the anchor's chain, their hands raw from the effort. With a deafening clank, the anchor was released, plunging into the churning sea.
The chain paid out, link by link, as the anchor sank toward the seabed some 30 fathoms below. For agonizing moments, it seemed the Northern Star would still crash against the reef. Then, a jolt ran through the ship—the anchor had caught. Its flukes dug into the rocky bottom, holding fast against the storm's pull. The ship groaned but steadied, swinging into the wind as the anchor line held.

For two days, the gale raged on, but the anchor never faltered. The crew, exhausted but alive, kept watch,

reinforcing the chain with extra lashings. When the storm finally broke, the Northern Star was battered but intact, spared from the reef's deadly embrace. Captain Thorne later credited the anchor's unyielding grip for saving the ship and all 24 souls aboard.

The tale of the Northern Star's anchor became a quiet legend among sailors, a reminder of the simple, brutal strength of iron against nature's fury. It was said Thorne kept a piece of the anchor chain in his cabin thereafter, a talisman of survival.

How do you Stay Anchored to Jesus?

Believe and Know Jesus

John 6:69 "We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

Notice the order:

- #1: You must **believe**!
    - To believe in Jesus is to place your COMPLETE **TRUST** in Him
        - It means you DON'T Trust in good works or anything else for your deliverance!

As Eliza Edmunds Hewitt wrote:

1. My faith has found a resting place,
Not in device nor creed.
I trust the ever-living One;
His wounds for me shall plead.

2. Enough for me that Jesus saves,
This ends my fear and doubt;
A sinful soul I come to Him,
He'll never cast me out.

Refrain:
I need no other argument,
I need no other plea,
It is enough that Jesus died,
And that he died for me.

Notice the order:

- #1: You must **believe**!
- #2: You come to "KNOW" Christ!

The longer you stay anchored to Christ, the more you get to know Christ, the more you get to know Christ, the stronger your faith grows!

- You stay **anchored to Christ** by not running from Him when the storms of life hit

- You stay **anchored to Christ** by communing with Him in prayer
- You stay **anchored to Christ** by obeying His commands
- You stay **anchored to Christ** by not looking at the storm around you but by looking to Him.

It is interesting that Peter makes this statement!

- The night before Peter was walking on water, but when he took his eyes off of Jesus, he began to sink.
    - Peter had come to "KNOW" that Christ was the only One who could save him in the midst of the storm.

Maybe Jesus' question to Peter, "Why did you doubt?", made him resolve that he would not doubt Christ again—no matter what happened!

Stay Anchored in Jesus

YOU

Priscilla J. Owens wrote:

Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,
when the clouds unfold their wings of strife?

When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain,
will your anchor drift, or firm remain?

2 It is safely moored; 'twill the storm withstand,
for 'tis well-secured by the Savior's hand.
Though the tempest rage and the wild winds blow,
not an angry wave shall our boat o'erflow.
[Refrain]

3 When our eyes behold through the gath'ring night
the city of gold, our harbor bright,
we shall anchor fast by the heav'nly shore,
with the storms all past forevermore.

Refrain:
We have an anchor that keeps the soul
steadfast and sure while the billows roll;
fastened to the Rock which cannot move,
grounded firm and deep in the Savior's love.

PQ: You are anchored in Jesus?

- Have you come to "Believe and know" that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the Living God?
- Are you holding on to Jesus in the midst of the storms of life?