

Tough Questions Series: Is It Ok To Doubt?

John 20

January 24, 2010

Is it ok to doubt?

- Short answer: no (v31)
- Longer explanation: the Christian faith assumes question asking, being confused at times, not knowing all things and occasions of being in disagreement

Mary, Disciples and Thomas – rationalists, skeptics and unbelievers

- Mary – v1-2, 11-18
- Peter and John – v3-10, 19-23
- Thomas – v24-29

Faith in Christ

- Feeling a lack of trust in Jesus can come from numerous places, like: a) moral choices b) tension between claims of Christ and already developed beliefs c) genuine engagement in the process of following Jesus
- the Bible keeps us on the right path and increasingly brings peace through assurance (vv9, 21-23, 29, 30-31)

Questions for reflection

1. What sorts of doubts do you have about Christianity? Specific claims (that God exists, that Jesus rose from the dead, that the Bible is really God's word, etc.)? Your own place in Christianity (whether or not God really accepts you)? Whether or not the cost of following Christ is worth it?
2. Do you doubt Christianity as an outsider (not committed to the faith)? As a Christian who doesn't whole-heartedly follow Jesus? As a Christian who strives to walk in full faithfulness to Jesus but you are confused, discouraged, or unsure?
3. Read Romans 8:31-39 – What is the nature and source of Paul's [the author of Romans] assurance? What does his assurance look like (what things is he assured of) and what is the basis for his confidence?
4. The Westminster Confession of Faith (17thc) says that true believers in Christ can be assured they are in a state of grace and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God – study and consider these words:

This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith but that a true believer may wait long and conflict with many difficulties before he be partaker of it: yet, being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means, attain thereunto. And therefore it is the duty of everyone to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure; that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper fruits of this assurance: so far is it from inclining men to looseness. (WCF XVIII.3)