

**Message: “Facing Doubt”, Week 1 of “Unshakable Series”
presented by Rev. Kristen Lowe on 08-21-2016
at Crossroads United Methodist Church, Waunakee, WI.**

Our Story in Mark Chapter 9 takes place as Jesus and three of his disciples are coming down from a high mountain where Peter, James and John saw Jesus transfigured right before their eyes! As they were watching, they saw Jesus talking with long departed saints, Moses and Elijah. They couldn't believe what they were seeing. Jesus' clothes were white and shimmering. They were still stunned and trying to wrap their heads around this event when they saw the other disciples arguing with some of the religious leaders.

Mark 9:9-10, 14-28

Coming down the mountain, Jesus swore them to secrecy. “Don't tell a soul what you saw. After the Son of Man rises from the dead, you're free to talk.” They puzzled over that, wondering what on earth “rising from the dead” meant.

When they joined the rest of the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and some teachers of the Law arguing with them. When the people saw Jesus, they were greatly surprised, and ran to him and greeted him. Jesus asked his disciples, “What are you arguing with them about?”

A man in the crowd answered, “Teacher, I brought my son to you, because he has an evil spirit in him and cannot talk. Whenever the spirit attacks him, it throws him to the ground, and he foams at the mouth, grits his teeth, and becomes stiff all over. I asked your disciples to drive the spirit out, but they could not.”

Jesus said to them, “How unbelieving you people are! How long must I stay with you faithless people? How long do I have to put up with you? Bring the boy to me!” They brought him to Jesus.

As soon as the spirit saw Jesus, it threw the boy into a fit, so that he fell on the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth. “How long has he been like this?” Jesus asked the father.

“Ever since he was a child,” he replied. “Many times the evil spirit has tried to kill him by throwing him in the fire and into water. Have pity on us and help us, if you possibly can!”

“What do you mean if I can? Of course I can. Anything is possible if a person believes.”

The father at once cried out, “I do believe, but not enough. Help my unbelief!”

Jesus noticed that the crowd was closing in on them, so he gave a command to the evil spirit. “Speechless and deaf spirit,” he said, “I order you to come out of the boy and never go into him again!”

The spirit screamed, threw the boy into a bad fit, and came out. The boy appeared lifeless, and everyone said, “He is dead!” But Jesus took the boy by the hand and helped him up.

After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, “Why couldn't we drive the spirit out?”

“Only prayer can drive this kind out,” answered Jesus; “nothing else can.”

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Matthew 17:20

For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.”

May the words of our Messiah fall on listening ears. Amen.



GEO.Tech story

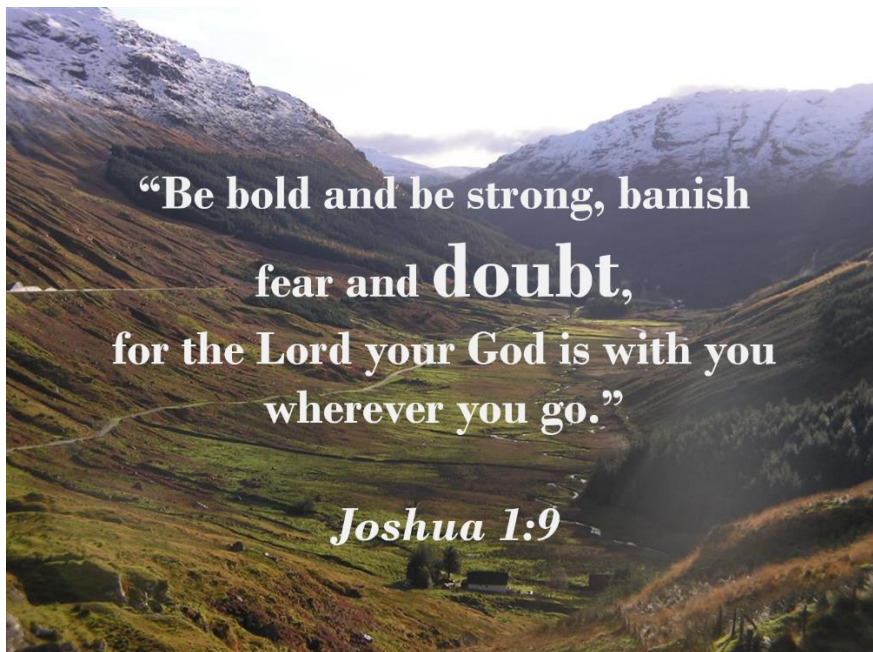
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What kinds of doubts do you wrestle with? Do your doubts keep you from taking steps in your life? In your relationships – causing you to put walls around your heart? Do you have doubts about God that keep you from being able to trust him?

If we allow them, doubts will rob us of living the abundant life God wants for us. But, we can't help ourselves, can we? They creep into our thoughts uninvited.

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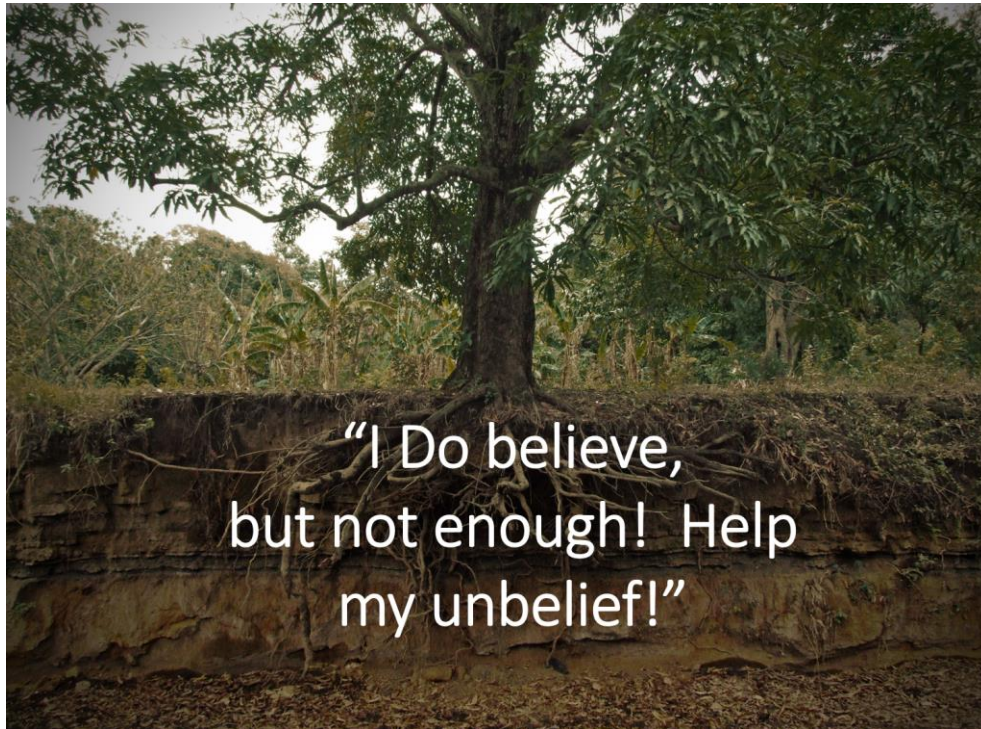
So, what can we do to keep doubts from taking control of our emotions and directing our actions? The answer comes to us in scripture. “Be bold and be strong, banish fear and doubt, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” (Exegete scripture)

- Doubting is part of human condition – everyone has doubts.
- Jesus shows compassion on those who doubt – Thomas, Peter
 - Transfiguration – down the mountain back into everyday life.

Break down scripture:

The father’s simple prayer is one of the most powerful prayers in the Bible. While tinged with doubt, its also full of faith! As Jesus goes on to tell the disciples later in the passage, prayer was the key to the boy’s healing. The only thing that could overcome the creeping doubt and open the way for Jesus to work was the honest prayer of that doubting father.

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It's easy to have faith on the mountaintop, but it's hard not to doubt in the valley. When you're on the mountaintop with Jesus – when you're feeling close to him and things are going well...

Doubt is a sign that there is a broken connection with God.

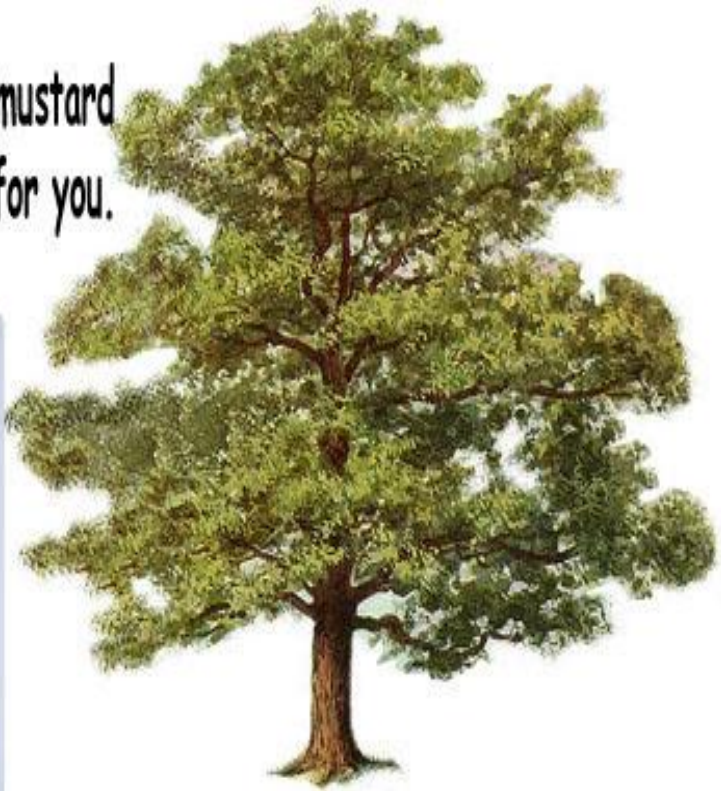
Intense doubt can be a warning sign that something is off in your relationship with God. Let your doubt point you toward what needs to be fixed.

Doubt limits God's power in your life. Consider how Jesus shifted the doubting father's perspective and made him realize that his own doubt was preventing his son's healing.

Jesus only requires a small amount of faith Jesus knows that you and I will struggle with doubt. He knows our faith is imperfect. That's why he only requires a small amount of faith. He goes so far to say: **mustard seed**

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If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, nothing will be impossible for you.



The father's prayer was colored with doubt, but it also contained a mustard seed of faith... that's all Jesus needs to see.

Prayer is essential to overcoming doubt. Even though the father's prayer was imperfect, at least he was willing to pray. His prayer connected him with Jesus and his faith paved the way for his son's healing.

How do we overcome doubt? Prayer.

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Every day countless issues and situations have the potential to create doubt and drive that doubt deep into our own hearts. But, in every case, prayer enables us to stand confidently on God's truth.

There are certain situations that open the door for doubt to creep in and the corresponding power of prayer to keep us firmly grounded.

When difficult circumstances cause doubt, prayer releases God's power into your life.

Whatever you're facing, (list things) Satan's strategy is to start stirring doubt. (Home erosion)

He gets you to question rather than trust God. He wants you to protest, "God, how could this happen? Etc."

Romans 8:28: God has a different plan and can use those circumstances to draw you closer to him.