



St Barnabas Cray

Is It All for Nothing? Finding Faith in Doubt

Weekly Devotional Journey

Monday - When Doubts Arise

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God. (John 6:68-69 NIV)

Devotional Thought

There's something profoundly honest about Peter's response to Jesus' challenging question. When many followers had turned away, when the demands of discipleship seemed too great, Jesus asked his closest disciples if they too wanted to leave. Peter's reply wasn't a triumphant declaration of unwavering faith—it was the response of someone who had wrestled with doubt but found something irreplaceable in Christ. The beauty of Peter's words lies not in their certainty, but in their recognition that despite questions and struggles, Jesus remains the only source of eternal truth. We often imagine that mature faith means never having doubts, but Scripture reveals something different. Even Jesus' closest followers faced moments of uncertainty. What distinguished them

wasn't the absence of questions, but their willingness to bring those questions to Jesus rather than walking away. Doubt isn't the opposite of faith—it's often faith under pressure, faith being refined. When life becomes difficult, when God seems distant, when the promises of Christianity feel too good to be true, we find ourselves echoing that ancient question: 'What if all this is for nothing?' But Peter's response offers us a way forward. He doesn't claim to have all the answers, but he recognises that Jesus alone has 'the words of eternal life.' Sometimes faith isn't about having perfect certainty; it's about knowing where to turn when certainty feels elusive.

Reflection Question

What doubts about your faith have been most persistent, and how might you bring these honestly before Jesus rather than allowing them to drive you away?

From Sunday's Sermon

"I don't suppose that there is one of us here in this church this morning who has not at some time had questions about their Christian faith. It doesn't usually happen, does it, when things are going well."

Today's Application

Today, instead of hiding from your doubts or feeling ashamed of them, practice bringing them into the light. Create space for honest prayer, perhaps writing down the questions that trouble you most. Remember that doubt doesn't disqualify you from faith—it can actually deepen it when handled well. In your relationships, resist the temptation to present a facade of perfect faith. When appropriate, share your struggles with trusted Christian friends who can pray with you and remind you of God's faithfulness. Consider how your own seasons of doubt might actually equip you to encourage others who are struggling. At work or in daily conversations, you don't need to pretend you have all the answers about faith. Your honesty about wrestling with questions, combined with your continued commitment to follow Christ, can be a powerful testimony. Like Peter, you can acknowledge uncertainty whilst still affirming that Jesus has 'the words of eternal life.' This authentic approach to faith often resonates more deeply with others than false certainty ever could.

Morning Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you that you welcome our questions and don't turn away from our doubts. Like your first disciples, we sometimes struggle to understand, sometimes feel overwhelmed by the demands of following you. Help us to bring our uncertainties to you rather than allowing them to drive us away. When faith feels difficult, remind us that you alone have the words of eternal life. Give us courage to be honest about our struggles whilst remaining committed to walking with you. Amen

Evening Devotion

Resting in His Words

Evening Reflection

As this day draws to a close, reflect on Peter's profound words: 'You have the words of eternal life.' What makes words 'eternal'? They are words that transcend time, circumstances, and even our fluctuating emotions. Throughout today, you may have encountered words that discouraged, words that built up, words that confused or clarified. But Jesus' words carry a different weight entirely—they speak life into death, hope into despair, purpose into meaninglessness. When we're tempted to wonder if our faith is worth it, we can return to his words like a weary traveller returning home. His promises don't depend on our ability to fully understand them or our capacity to feel their truth in every moment. They remain steady when we waver, true when we doubt, life-giving even in our seasons of spiritual dryness.

Evening Reflection

Which words of Jesus have been most life-giving to you, and how can you rest in them tonight despite any lingering questions?

Evening Prayer

Jesus, as I end this day, I'm grateful that your words remain true even when my faith feels weak. Help me to rest tonight in the certainty of your love, not in the strength of my own understanding. Thank you that your words of eternal life are stronger than my temporary doubts. Amen.

Tuesday - The Authority of His Teaching

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

The crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

(Matthew 7:28-29 NIV)

Devotional Thought

What makes someone's words carry weight? In our world, we often look to credentials, experience, or popularity. But there was something different about Jesus' teaching that went beyond human qualifications. Even those who came to arrest him returned empty-handed, saying, 'No one ever spoke the way this man does.' His authority didn't come from quoting other teachers or appealing to human wisdom—it came from speaking truth that resonated in the deepest parts of human hearts. The Sermon on the Mount remains universally recognised as unsurpassed moral teaching, yet it came from a carpenter's son with no formal rabbinical training. This paradox points us toward something profound about who Jesus is. His teaching carries the ring of eternal truth because it flows from his divine nature. When we struggle with doubt, we can return to his words and ask ourselves: where else do we find teaching that so perfectly diagnoses the human condition and offers such hope? Where else do we encounter words that have transformed countless lives across cultures and centuries? The authority in Jesus' teaching isn't just historical—it's personal. His words continue to speak into our situations today with the same power they had two thousand years ago. When he speaks of forgiveness, love, purpose, and eternal life, he's not offering mere philosophy but revealing the very heart of God.

Reflection Question

When you read Jesus' teaching, what is it about his words that still carries authority in your life today?

From Sunday's Sermon

"They said, didn't they, that he spoke with authority. It's a way they hadn't heard before. They believed that his words had the ring of truth to them."

Today's Application

Make Jesus' teaching a priority in your daily life. This isn't about dutiful Bible reading but about genuinely engaging with his words as living truth that can transform your day. Choose one of Jesus' teachings—perhaps from the Sermon on the Mount—and spend time this week really pondering its implications for your life. Notice how his words address not just behaviour but the attitudes of the heart. In your workplace, let Jesus' teaching about integrity, love for enemies, and concern for others shape your interactions. When conflicts arise, remember his words about forgiveness and reconciliation. In your family relationships, apply his teachings about humility, service, and sacrificial love. When you're making decisions, great or small, ask yourself how Jesus' teaching might inform your choices. Share with someone this week about a particular teaching of Jesus that has impacted your life. Don't preach at them, but simply bear witness to the authority his words have carried in your own experience. Let your life become a living demonstration of the truth and power found in his teaching.

Morning Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you for words that carry divine authority, words that can transform hearts and lives. Help me to receive your teaching not just intellectually but with a heart ready to be changed. May your words have authority in my life today, shaping my thoughts, attitudes, and actions. Give me wisdom to apply your truth in practical ways and courage to live differently because of what you've taught. Amen.

Evening Devotion

Truth That Endures

Evening Reflection

Tonight, consider how Jesus' words have proven themselves throughout your day. Perhaps you found strength in his promise that he will never leave you. Maybe his teaching about not worrying helped calm your anxious heart. Or possibly his words about loving others challenged you to respond differently in a difficult relationship. The authority of Jesus' teaching isn't just something we read about—it's something we experience as his words prove themselves true in the laboratory of daily life. Even when we struggle to live up to his standards, we recognise the truth and beauty in what he taught. His words don't lose their power because of our failures; instead, they continue to call us toward the life he designed us to live. As you reflect on today, notice where his teaching intersected with your real-life experiences.

Evening Reflection

How did Jesus' teaching prove its authority in your life today, either through comfort received or conviction experienced?

Evening Prayer

Thank you, Jesus, that your words are not just ancient wisdom but living truth that speaks into my daily experience. As I rest tonight, I'm grateful for the authority your teaching carries in my life. Continue to shape me through your words. Amen.

Wednesday - The Integrity of His Life

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.

When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. (1 Peter 2:22-23 NIV)

Devotional Thought

One of the most disheartening experiences in life is discovering that someone we admired has feet of clay—that their private life contradicts their public words. We live in an age where such revelations are commonplace, where the gap between what people say and how they live often seems vast. But with Jesus, we encounter something unprecedented: perfect alignment between word and deed, between teaching and living. When Jesus taught about humility, he demonstrated it by washing his disciples' feet. When he spoke about love, he showed it by serving the very man who would betray him. When he commanded forgiveness of enemies, he practised it from the cross, praying for those who crucified him. This wasn't performance or pretence—it was the natural overflow of who he was. Even his enemies couldn't find fault with him. Pilate declared him innocent, his betrayer confessed he had betrayed innocent blood, and the centurion at the cross recognised his goodness. More remarkably, his closest friends—who knew him best and would have been most aware of any inconsistencies—testified to his sinlessness. This perfect integrity isn't just historically interesting; it's foundational to our faith. If Jesus had been flawed like every other teacher, his claims about divinity would be empty. But his perfect life validates his extraordinary claims and gives us confidence that when he promises eternal life, forgiveness, and God's love, these aren't hollow words but promises we can trust completely.

Reflection Question

How does Jesus' perfect integrity between his words and actions strengthen your confidence in his promises to you?

From Sunday's Sermon

"Jesus talked about being humble, wonderful. Taught about humility. But he also washed his disciples feet when no one else did. Jesus talked about loving people... And he served a man at supper who he knew was about to betray him."

Today's Application

Let Jesus' integrity challenge and inspire your own pursuit of authenticity. Examine the gap between your words and actions—where do they align, and where do they diverge? This isn't about perfection but about sincerity and growth. In your relationships, strive to be someone whose words can be trusted, whose promises are kept, whose character is consistent whether in public or private. When you speak about Christian values, ask yourself whether your life demonstrates these values. At work, let your integrity shine through honest dealings, reliable work, and consistent character. If you've made mistakes or failed to live up to your words, don't hide behind excuses—acknowledge your failures and seek to do better. Remember that while you'll never achieve Jesus' perfect integrity, the Holy Spirit is working to conform you to his image. Practice small acts of integrity: keeping commitments, speaking truthfully even when it's costly, treating others with consistency regardless of their status. When you're tempted to compromise, remember that your integrity—like Jesus'—validates your witness to others about the reality of your faith.

Morning Prayer

Lord Jesus, I'm amazed by the perfect integrity of your life, how your actions always matched your words. Forgive me for the times when my life hasn't reflected my beliefs. Help me to grow in authenticity and consistency, that others might see in me a reflection, however imperfect, of your character. Make me trustworthy in small things and large, that my life might validate the hope I profess. Amen.

Evening Devotion

Reflecting His Character

Evening Reflection

As you review this day, think about the moments when you had opportunities to reflect Jesus' integrity. Perhaps you chose honesty when a small lie would have been easier. Maybe you kept a promise even when it was inconvenient. Or possibly you recognised areas where your actions didn't match your stated values. Don't be discouraged by your imperfections—even recognising the gap between Jesus' perfect integrity and your own inconsistencies is a sign of spiritual growth. The goal isn't to earn God's love through perfect behaviour but to become more like Christ because of the love you've already received. His perfect life doesn't condemn you; it transforms you. Tomorrow brings new opportunities to grow in integrity, to align your actions more closely with your beliefs, to become more authentic in your faith journey.

Evening Reflection

Where did you see glimpses of Christ-like integrity in your life today, and where do you sense God calling you to greater authenticity?

Evening Prayer

Jesus, thank you for the perfect example of your life. Help me not to be discouraged by my failures but motivated by your grace to grow in integrity. As I rest tonight, continue your transforming work in me. Amen.

Thursday - The Power of His Works

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the evidence of the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father. (John 10:38 NIV)

Devotional Thought

Jesus didn't ask people to believe in him based on words alone. He pointed to his works—the miracles, the transformed lives, the demonstration of divine power—as evidence of who he was. The feeding of five thousand, walking on water, healing the sick, raising the dead: these weren't mere displays of power but signs pointing to his divine identity. Yet the greatest work of all was his resurrection from the dead. As Paul wrote, if Christ has not been raised, our faith is useless—it would all be for nothing. But Christ was raised, and this changes everything. Consider the transformation this brought about: disciples who had been hiding in fear became fearless proclaimers of the Gospel. A movement that should have died on Good Friday instead spread throughout the Roman Empire within centuries. The only adequate explanation for the birth and growth of the Christian church is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This isn't just ancient history—it's the foundation of our hope today. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is available to us. We serve not a dead teacher whose good ideas we try to follow, but a living Saviour who continues to work in and through his people. When we wonder if our faith is worth it, we can look at the evidence: lives transformed, prayers answered, comfort in sorrow, strength in weakness, hope in despair. These aren't coincidences but continuing demonstrations of resurrection power.

Reflection Question

What evidence of God's power at work have you witnessed in your own life or in the lives of others around you?

From Sunday's Sermon

"The resurrection is crucial to Christian faith. And the evidence for the resurrection, however unlikely it might seem, is overwhelming, isn't it?"

Today's Application

Take time to recognise and document God's work in your life. Keep a record of answered prayers, moments of unexpected provision, times when you experienced peace beyond understanding, or occasions when you saw God's hand in circumstances. This isn't about manufacturing miracles but about noticing God's activity that you might otherwise take for granted. Share these experiences with others—not to boast but to bear witness to the reality of God's continuing work. In your daily routine, pray expectantly, believing that the God who raised Jesus from the dead is able to work in your situation. This doesn't mean expecting constant miraculous interventions, but rather trusting that God is active and engaged in your life. When you face challenges, remember that resurrection power is available to you—power to overcome sin, to love difficult people, to find hope in dark circumstances, to persevere when you want to give up. Look for opportunities to be part of God's work in others' lives through acts of kindness, words of encouragement, practical help, or simply by being present in someone's time of need.

Morning Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you that your resurrection proves your power over death, sin, and every force that would separate us from God. Help me to recognise your continuing work in my life and in the world around me. Give me faith to trust in your power, not just historically but personally and presently. Use me as an instrument of your resurrection life in the lives of others. Amen.

Evening Devotion

Living in Resurrection Power

Evening Reflection

Tonight, reflect on how resurrection power has been evident in your life today. Perhaps you found strength you didn't know you had, or experienced peace in a stressful situation, or felt love for someone who had hurt you. These may seem like small things, but they're actually evidences of the same power that raised Jesus from the dead working in your daily experience. The resurrection isn't just about Jesus conquering death two thousand years ago—it's about life conquering death in you today. Every time you choose hope over despair, love over hatred, forgiveness over bitterness, truth over deception, you're experiencing resurrection power. This power doesn't make life easy, but it makes life meaningful and gives us confidence that our faith is not in vain.

Evening Reflection

How have you experienced God's resurrection power working in your life today, perhaps in ways you hadn't previously recognised?

Evening Prayer

Thank you, Lord, that because you rose from the dead, I can live with hope and confidence. Help me to recognise your power at work in the ordinary moments of my life. As I sleep tonight, I rest in the assurance that you are alive and active. Amen.

Friday - Wholehearted Commitment

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers. (Psalm 1:1-3 NIV)

Devotional Thought

After examining Jesus' teaching, integrity, and power this week, we arrive at the crucial question: what will we do with what we know? It's tempting to hedge our bets, to maintain a kind of spiritual insurance policy whilst keeping our options open. But this half-hearted approach robs us of the abundant life Jesus offers. The psalmist presents us with a beautiful image: a person whose delight is in the Lord, who is like a tree planted by streams of water. This tree doesn't struggle for nourishment—it has a constant source of life. It bears fruit naturally and its leaves don't wither even in difficult seasons. This is what wholehearted commitment to Christ looks like—not anxious striving but deep-rooted flourishing. When we cling to our doubts, we become like waves tossed by the wind, unstable and uncertain. But when we choose to trust completely in Christ, we discover the stability and fruitfulness God intends for us. This doesn't mean blind faith—we've spent this week examining the solid foundations for our trust in Jesus. It means choosing to act on what we know to be true rather than being paralysed by what we cannot fully understand. Billy Graham faced a moment like this as a young man, when he determined to believe God's Word and base his life upon it. That decision shaped everything that followed. We each face similar moments of decision throughout our Christian journey.

Reflection Question

What would it look like for you to move from partial commitment to wholehearted trust in Christ?

From Sunday's Sermon

"It's so tempting, isn't it, as Christians, to kind of hang on to our doubts? It's so easy to, well, we believe, but kind of hold back a bit... And the sad thing about that is that what we're doing, really, I believe, is that we're missing out on all that God wants for us."

Today's Application

Identify specific areas where you've been holding back in your faith. Perhaps you've been reluctant to fully trust God with your finances, your relationships, your career, or your future. Choose one area where you sense God calling you to deeper trust and take a concrete step forward. This might involve increased generosity, more intentional prayer, greater involvement in Christian community, or simply spending more time in God's Word. Stop treating doubt as a comfortable companion and start treating it as an obstacle to the abundant life Christ offers. This doesn't mean suppressing questions, but rather choosing to act on what you know to be true about Jesus whilst working through your uncertainties. In your relationships, stop hedging your bets about your faith. Let people know where you stand, not in an aggressive way but with gentle confidence. Share how God has been working in your life. Be willing to pray for others and to speak about the hope you have in Christ. Examine your daily routines and priorities—do they reflect someone who is fully committed to following Jesus, or someone who is keeping their options open? Make adjustments that demonstrate your wholehearted commitment to Christ.

Morning Prayer

Lord Jesus, I don't want to be someone who holds back, who hedges their bets, who misses out on all you want to give. Help me to trust you wholeheartedly, to commit fully to following you, to stop allowing doubt to rob me of the abundant life you offer. I want to be like a tree planted by streams of water, deeply rooted in you and bearing fruit for your kingdom. Give me courage to step forward in faith. Amen.

Evening Devotion

Why Would We Not Want This?

Evening Reflection

As this week of reflection draws to a close, consider the question that echoes through the sermon: 'Why would you not want this?' Why would we not want the words of eternal life, the perfect integrity of Christ, the power of the resurrection, and the abundant life that comes from wholehearted commitment to him? Sometimes we resist God's best for us out of fear, pride, or simple inertia. But when we honestly examine what Christ offers—forgiveness, purpose, eternal hope, divine love, spiritual power, and meaningful community—the real question becomes not whether we can afford to trust him, but whether we can afford not to. This week you've been reminded of the solid foundations for faith in Christ. You've examined his unparalleled teaching, his perfect life, and his resurrection power. The invitation now is to stop questioning what you've already experienced of God's goodness and instead to step forward into deeper trust, fuller commitment, and richer experience of all he offers.

Evening Reflection

As you reflect on this week's journey, what is God inviting you to embrace more fully in your relationship with him?

Evening Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for this week of reflection on who you are and what you offer. Help me not to question what I've already experienced of your goodness, but to step forward in faith. I don't want to miss out on anything you have for me. Help me to trust you completely and follow you wholeheartedly. Amen.