

NSD Notes

For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. (1 Cor. 9:19)
Volume 4, No. 10 December 6, 2009

Services

- Bible Study 10 a.m.
- Morning Service.....11 a.m.
- Evening Service.....6 p.m.
- Wednesday Meeting.....7 p.m.

News @ NSD

Prayer List

- **Martha and Ken Holloway** – recovering from eye surgery and stroke.
- **Dema Franklin** – fractured spine needs care and rest.
- **Jessica Fredrickson**—recurring headaches.
- **Cassandra Fredrickson** - away at college.
- Darlene Huxtable’s mom had heart surgery recently and was diagnosed with cancer.
- Marie Adams – recovering from hip and knee surgeries.
- Jeanne Lynne – had recent reconstructive surgery and is facing more surgeries.

The Monthly Task List for next year - 2010 - is posted on the bulletin board. We encourage all members to sign up for Communion preparation and building cleaning.

Sunday Class
Studies in James

Wednesday Class
Bible Character Studies: Samson

THE VALUE OF DOUBT

Larry Rouse

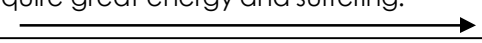
Late in his ministry John the Baptist sent two disciples to Jesus with this startling question: "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" (**Luke 7:19-20**) To the careful Bible student this question makes no sense when you first consider it. John appears to have doubt about a matter that he had earlier expressed great confidence in. Jesus described John as being the greatest of the prophets (**Luke 7:28**). How can this happen with such a man of faith?

Consider the earlier experiences and statements of John the Baptist. He had witnessed the Holy Spirit come down upon Jesus as a dove and had heard the voice of God from heaven proclaim: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased". (**Mt 3:17**) Shortly after these events, John boldly proclaimed this eyewitness account to his own disciples. It is from these very men that Jesus would later choose his 12 disciples. Listen to the bold, confident proclamation from John as to the identity of Jesus Christ. "And John bore witness, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God." ³⁵Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" (**John 1:32-36**)

The bulk of John's ministry consisted of his strong preaching to the multitudes in the wilderness. He was an outdoors man described as being clothed in camel hair, and eating wild locusts and honey (Mt 3:4). He was arrested and imprisoned for boldly and accurately teaching the will of God. His stand of faith was exactly the stand God wanted him to make. But now he is isolated and soon would be killed. This sudden change of lifestyle would cause any man great pain. It is at this time that a man of faith would step forward and review the very foundations of his faith.

Another possible cause of doubt would be John's lack of knowledge of the details and timetable of the execution of God's plan. He preached boldly of the power of the Messiah and how He would purge Israel of the chaff of unbelievers (**Mt 3:7-12**). John was like every other prophet that came before him in that he was given a specific, accurate message to deliver, but he was not given all the details. We are told of how both the prophets that spoke of Christ and even the angels from heaven desired to know "the rest of the story" but were not allowed (**1 Peter 1:10-12**). Did John have a mistaken view of the kingdom as Jesus' own disciples did? Was he expecting a physical, earthly kingdom? From the outlook of the fleshly eye, the ministry of Christ would appear to be going nowhere.

Whatever the cause of John's doubt, we see in his request to Jesus the exact response that a man of faith would have in a moment of doubt — he brought his doubt to the Lord! Doubt, by itself, is not a threat, but instead, it is an opportunity! The man of faith has learned that when doubt comes, a man is to seek out answers. These answers are not often easily found and will require great energy and suffering.



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All are welcome to our worship
and study meetings!

... singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs
with thankfulness in your hearts to God. **Col 3:16**

I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,
And in His word I do hope.

My soul waits for the Lord
More than those
Who watch for the morning
Yes, more than those
Who watch for the morning.

O Israel, hope in the LORD;
For with the LORD *there is* mercy,
And with Him
Is abundant redemption.

And He shall redeem Israel
From all his iniquities.

Psalm 130:5-8

We shall stand before the throne
Stand with all but stand alone
Face at last the Aged One
God is holy, bow before Him

But the faithful on His right
Wearing crowns and garments white
Sing forever in His sight
Holy, holy, thou art holy

R.J. Stevens

[The Value of Doubt]

When one runs from his doubts and tries to bury his doubts he is in reality running from a stronger faith. Jesus taught in such a way to make men think, struggle and doubt in order that they might reach the truth of God. When Jesus challenged a man to believe in His ability to free his child from demon possession, the man honestly and tearfully said: "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" (**Mark 9:23-24**)

Jesus gave John the very evidence he needed to erase his doubt. "And that very hour He cured many of infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many blind He gave sight. Jesus answered and said to them, 'Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed...the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.'" (**Luke 7:21-23**)

Can you imagine John hearing the eyewitness testimony of his disciples about the miracles and teaching of Jesus? John knew the prophecies of Christ, given both to the Old Testament prophets and also to him. Can you see him as he reviews again this evidence and, as a result, saying, "Yes Jesus is the Coming one!"?

Did Jesus rebuke and show disappointment in John because of his doubt? No, rather in this very setting Jesus gives John the highest of praise. "When the messengers of John had departed, He began to speak to the multitudes concerning John...This is he of whom it is written: Behold I send My messenger before your face who will prepare your way before you. For I say to you, among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." (**Luke 7:24-28**)

What questions about God's will do you have? Do you have a reasonable foundation to know that Jesus is the son of God and the Bible is His complete revelation? (**1 Peter 3:15**) Are you running from doubts about the application of God's will in the local church where you are a member? Sadly, many churches have taught their members to run from their doubts and to run from an honest examination of the evidence found in the word of God on a multitude of possible questions one may have. This approach will not lead to a stronger faith.

I will never forget the reactions that I received as I studied my way out of denominationalism and later out of a local church that had made some serious compromises. Men threatened me, others ridiculed me, and others gave me "easy answers" thinking that I would swallow them and end my struggle. None of these men helped me to find what I found after a lengthy, painful struggle – a faith upon which I could stand and defend to myself and to others.

From my experience, I have found some who have the weakest faith are the very ones who try to project the greatest confidence. From the Pharisee who scoffed at how anyone could disagree with him, to the one who loudly proclaims God's grace but lives in sin, these all have one thing in common – they will not open their hearts and test the doubts that actually exist in their hearts with an open Bible. They will, however, try to silence those whom they may disagree with by using their tongues to attack or by other forms of intimidation. My prayer for you is that you begin this struggle for a stronger faith and that you will not abandon the struggle. Do not let men enslave you in fear and doubt. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." (**Hebrews 11:6**)

Charlottesville Beacon, April 16, 2006

ELDERS: Dan Austin, Robyn E. Hamilton

DEACON: Matt Wells

MINISTER: Dan Austin