

Welcome to New Life !

We are very pleased you are here. It is an honor to you as our guest today! This information is provided to help you feel welcome and "at home."

Worship in Singing & Giving

- We leave how to worship up to you as an individual. During **singing** worship some people remain seated, some stand, others kneel, many clap, and some lift their hands. The outward expression is not the issue - it is what is in your heart that counts. Just relax and enjoy the presence of God.
- If you would like to receive personal **prayer** during worship with singing, you may go to one of the Prayer Teams located at the back of the sanctuary.
- Invitation is given for **tithes and offerings**. If you are our guest, please do not feel obligated to contribute when God's tithes and offerings are received.

Worship in Sharing God's Love

Expressions of greeting and God's love are extended to all, especially to our guests.

Worship in Meditating on God's Word

Teaching from the Bible for about 35 minutes.

We encourage you to use our **staffed Nursery** [which has a private nursing room] and **Children's Churches** during the service. Please ask an usher for assistance in locating the various rooms.

{turn page over}

Pastor Bob Wine

August 17, 2008

DOES YOUR HEART WANT TO BELIEVE?

"Jesus doesn't condemn our honest doubts."

Matthew 11:2-19; Luke 7:18-35

FOCUS FOR THE DAY ... facing our doubts honestly

James 1:6b-8 "Whoever **doubts** is like a wave in the sea that is driven and blown about by the wind. People like that ... must not think that they will receive anything from the Lord." GNT

- If you wrestle with doubts and want to be encouraged, **open** your mind and heart.

Matthew 26:41 "Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the **spirit** is willing, but the **flesh** is weak." NASB

- There is a distinct difference between the commitment of our "**spirit**" and "**flesh**".
- Jesus understood this difference and didn't condemn or judge a man named John when he was in that very condition.

"How to Deal with Doubt"

1. JOHN'S **PASSIONATE** HEART FOR GOD

- Isaiah prophesied about John in the Old Testament ...

Isaiah 40:3 "Prepare the way for the Lord [Messiah], make straight paths for him." [John 1:23]

- The Holy Spirit revealed to John who Jesus was ...

John 1:29 "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

- And after baptizing Jesus, John saw the heavens open and heard a voice from heaven ...

Matthew 3:17 "This is my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased."

- John the Baptist was thrown in prison because of His intense passion for righteousness.[Matthew 14:1-12]

- Doubts came to John ...

Matthew 11:3 "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?"

- Please catch this! Jesus says this about John ...

Matthew 11:11 “of all who have ever lived, **none is greater** than John the Baptist.”

- John had audibly heard God’s voice, and still his mind was doubting! Only as you face your doubts **honestly** can you begin to resolve them.

2. GOD’S RESPONSE TO OUR SOUL DOUBTS

- Jesus didn’t rebuke John for his doubts -- they were mental doubts, not spirit doubts.
- Jesus responded to the faith already in John’s **spirit** that wanted to believe, not to John’s doubting intellect or emotion!
- Healings and miracles are about encouraging our spirit to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, that He is God!

John 20:31 “these have been written in order that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through your faith in him you may have life.”

3. NOT EVERY SPIRIT WANTS TO BELIEVE

- John’s humble spirit wanted to believe.
- Jesus then contrasts that attitude with that of the Jewish religious leaders.
Luke 7:30b “**rejected** God’s plan for them, for they had **refused** John’s baptism.”
- John came expecting to submit to God’s ways. Note the blatant contrast in the expectations of these religious leaders.
Luke 7:32 “They are like children playing a game in the public square. They complain to their friends, ‘**We played** wedding songs, and **you didn’t dance**, so we played funeral songs, and **you didn’t weep**.’” NLT
- They were being independent, as many are today, and Jesus was showing how wrong that attitude was -- and still is.
- The fruit of Christianity is not about passively jumping through hoops; it is all about whether or not you have a **spirit faith** within you that truly wants to believe.
- Soul doubts will come, but they will not stop God from lovingly responding to the cry of your heart [your inner man, your spirit].

NOW WHAT? Humble yourself and admit your doubts and humanity. Seek Him more passionately to find out those things that will bring answers to those doubts.

“DIGGING DEEPER”

For personal or small group study

Week of August 17, 2008

QUICK REVIEW: Which point or scripture passage most challenged, confused, or caught your attention in this week’s sermon? Why?

TODAY’S FOCUS

1. Why is it just because we want to believe that we sometimes still doubt God? What are some things that we sometimes doubt about God?
2. Jesus shares about a time when John doubted Him [Matthew 11:2-19 and Luke 7:18-35.] **Why and what** did John doubt? Was he justified in doing so? If so, how? [Matthew 14:1-12; John 20:31]
3. What key truths can we discover about John as a person and how Jesus viewed him? How does this make you feel about your own relationship with Jesus?

GETTING THE POINT

1. Why did Jesus not judge or condemn John at this time? What did He see in John that caused Him to respond as He did? How are you personally encouraged by Jesus’ response and how you can deal with doubts in your own life? [Matthew 26:41]
2. How important is it, as we deal with our own doubts, to keep our hearts and minds open to the truth that Jesus is good, He is who He says He is and that He understands us? What happens to us when circumstances cause us to doubt this? [Matthew 6:32-34]
3. *“Those who believe they believe in God but without passion in the heart, without anguish of mind, without uncertainty, without doubt and even at times without despair, believe only in the idea of God, and not in God Himself.”* ~ Author Madeleine L’Engle. What do you hear this quote saying? Do you agree or disagree? How can it be applied to our everyday Christian walk?

A LOOK INSIDE

1. What part does our wanting to believe play in what kind of faith [or doubt] that we may have? How do we get away from the “I quit “ attitude? [James 4:6-10; 1 John 1:9; 1 Peter 1:13-15]