



Growing Together In Christ

Growing Our Faith in the Face of Doubt (Part 2) 30 Nov 2021

Take Up the Shield of Faith

- Eph 6:16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;

Faith doesn't preclude doubts.
Rather true faith will extinguish their flames.



Doubts That Assail Us

Spiritually

- Am I a sham Christian?
- Does His Spirit really dwell within me?



Rom 8:1-29 (Review of notes in part 1)

1. We have a relationship with the Triune God rooted in Christ
2. We have a changed life bearing the fruit of the Spirit, who testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.
3. We have ultimate hope from God that sustains us in suffering

Emotionally & Physically

- Does God care when I'm suffering or in pain?
- Is God really in control of the world I see around me?



Mentally & Intellectually

- Is it wrong to ask for more evidence and more assurances?
- Is the Christian faith based on reason, evidence or spiritual experience?

Faith That Overcomes Doubts In Sufferings

Expectation Reversed

“Somewhere in the first few years, a wife will wake up one day with the following three thoughts:

- 1. You’re not the man I thought you were.
- 2. You’re not meeting my needs.
- 3. Marriage is difficult.”

DOUBT → Have I married the right person?

- Ben Young, [*Room for Doubt: How Uncertainty Can Deepen Your Faith*](#) (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2017).

“Darkness is my only friend” . . . Ps 88:18

“. . . I walk through the valley of the shadow of death . . .” Ps 23.4

“She weeps bitterly in the night, with tears on her cheeks; among all her lovers she has none to comfort her; . . .” Lam 1:2

“Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm . . .” 2Tim 4:14

Insights of Eternity → Wisdom, Strength, Devotion

Psa 73:3 For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

Psa 73:11 And they say, "How can God know? Is there knowledge in the Most High?"

Psa 73:13 All in vain have I kept my heart clean .

Psa 73:21 When my soul was embittered, . . .

Psa 73:22 I was brutish and ignorant; I was like a beast toward you.

Psa 73:17 until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I discerned their end.

Psa 73:23 Nevertheless, I am continually with you; **you hold** my right hand.

Psa 73:24 **You guide** me with your counsel,

and **afterward you will receive me to glory.**

Psa 73:25 **Whom have I in heaven but you?** And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.

Psa 73:26 My flesh and my heart may fail, **but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.**

Why God Allows His People to Suffer

- 1Pe 1:5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.
- 1Pe 1:6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,
- 1Pe 1:7 **so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**
- Rom 5:3 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,
- Rom 5:4 and **endurance produces character**, and **character produces hope**,
- Rom 5:5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

In Suffering, Persevere with Kingdom Perspective

... that with full courage now as always **Christ will be honored in my body,** whether **by life or by death.** For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. (Php 1:20-21)

... the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race ... there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, ... will award to me ... not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing. (2 Tim 4:6-8)

2Ti 4:16 At my first defense ... all deserted me. ... **The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom.** To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen. (2Ti 4:16, 18)



Faith Amid Mental Doubts

4 Reasons Why Christianity is True

by Frank Turek

The reason why Christianity is true is because the answer to these 4 questions is, “Yes.”

1. Does Truth Exist?
2. Does God exist?
3. Are Miracles Possible?
4. Is the New Testament Reliable Enough to Show Us That Jesus Rose from the Dead?

Source:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ata3XrCiGtY>

Mental/Intellectual doubts

“My reason can only take me so far. My reason, your reason, Stephen Hawking’s reason are simply limited. We always bump into paradoxes, antinomies, and contradictions when we push our reason to the limit. We find paradoxes in astronomy, biology, physics, and mathematics. These realities perplex us and boggle our minds. They are inexplicable even to the experts . . .

the idea that reason can achieve certainty is an overreach for believers and nonbelievers. Our reason, both fallen and redeemed, is simply limited. We see in a mirror dimly, and we know only in part.”

Ben Young, [*Room for Doubt: How Uncertainty Can Deepen Your Faith* \(Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2017\).](#)

The Transforming Journey of Dismantling and Reconstructing One's Belief

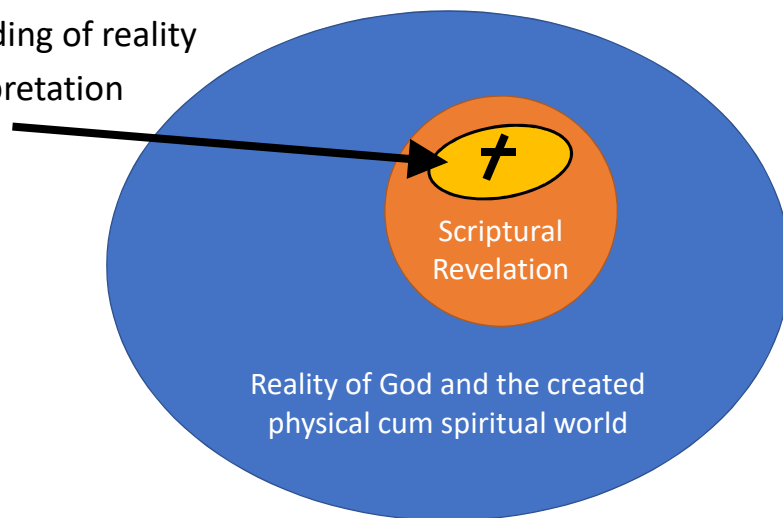
"In John 3, Nicodemus packs in a laundry list of religious questions for Jesus. . . Just as Nicodemus offers a question, Jesus raises a whole new path of discussion about the spiritual life. The ultimate questions are not *from Nicodemus, they are for Nicodemus*. . .

Nicodemus's story does not end there. . . . The man who first came to bury Christ with tricky and evasive questions now comes to bury Christ at his death in passionate love."

- A. J. Swoboda and John Comer, [*After Doubt: How to Question Your Faith without Losing It* \(Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2021\), 21–22.](#)

The Gap between our knowledge and Reality

Our understanding of reality
thru' our interpretation
of Scripture



Paul's word to a spiritual unstable and fragmented church

For I decided to know **nothing** among you **except Jesus Christ and him crucified**. (1 Cor 2:2)

For I delivered to you **as of first importance** what I also received: that **Christ died** for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he **was buried**, that he **was raised** on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. . . (1 Cor 15:3-4)

Certainty & Assurance amid Doubts

The good news: The cross and its accomplished work are realities that lie outside us and are independent from us.



A Reality Grounded in History

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, . . . to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, . . . (Lk2:1-4)

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, (Mt 2:1)

Christianity is a Historical Faith

“A God who is only an idea, and who never intervenes in the world of fact, can never actually save a soul that is real from sin that is real. For the actual salvation of an actual sin-stricken soul we require an actual Redeemer who has actually intervened in the actual course of history.... Christianity is a historical religion, all of whose doctrines are facts.”

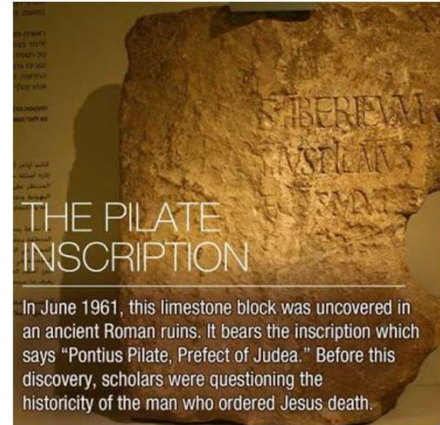
- Benjamin Warfield of Princeton Theological Seminary, cited by Kenneth Boa and Robert M Bowman in *Faith Has Its Reasons*.

A Faith Attested by History

The [Roman historian](#) and [senator Tacitus](#) referred to [Jesus](#), [his execution](#) by [Pontius Pilate](#), and the existence of [early Christians in Rome](#) in his final work, [Annals](#) (written ca. AD 116), [book 15, chapter 44](#)



Alexamenos graffito



In June 1961, this limestone block was uncovered in an ancient Roman ruins. It bears the inscription which says "Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judea." Before this discovery, scholars were questioning the historicity of the man who ordered Jesus death.

A Faith Attested by History
in *Fulfilment of Prophecy*

Isa 45:21–22.

The Fulfilment of OT Prophecies

- Isa 53:5 But **he was pierced for our transgressions**; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.
- Isa 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and **the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.**

Prophecies in OT Typology Foreshadowing the Cross

The Passover in the Exodus (event)

Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, . . . the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight. "Then they shall take some of **the blood and put it on the two doorposts** and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. (Exo 12:5-7)

The Passover Meal Instituted (liturgy)

It shall be eaten in one house; you shall not take any of the flesh outside the house, and **you shall not break any of its bones.** (Exo 12:46)

Jesus the Lamb of God (event)

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, **the Lamb of God**, who takes away the sin of the world! (Joh 1:29)

For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: "**Not one of his bones will be broken.**" (Joh 19:36)

Testimony of the Church (liturgy)

and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "**This is my body**, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "**This cup is the new covenant in my blood.**" Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." (1 Cor 11:24-25)



What the Cross Testifies: Perfect Humanness & Faith Revealed in Petrifying Pain & Agonising Abandonment

- And he said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.” Mk 14:36
- And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Mk 15:34

What Is Covenantal Faith?

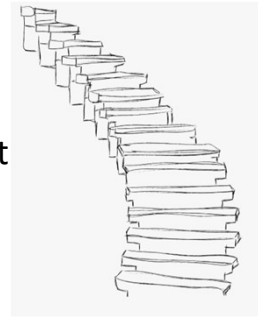
The Nature of True Faith

“biblical faith is not about striving for certainty, but about faithful living in the face of uncertainty.”

- Boyd, Gregory A.. Benefit of the Doubt (p. 77). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

- Someone said, “Faith is taking the first step when you don’t see the whole staircase.”

Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!” (Mar 9:24)



Didn't Scripture Condemn Doubt As Sin?

Jas 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives . . .

Jas 1:6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.

Jas 1:7 For from the Lord; **that person must not suppose that he will receive anything**

Jas 1:8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Jas 4:3 **You ask and do not receive**, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

Jas 4:4 **You adulterous people!** Do you not know that **friendship with the world is enmity with God**? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

True Faith is Committing to a Covenant Relationship

- Covenant versus Contract
- Scripture is to be read in a covenantal context and not a contractual context
- Covenant Faith is entering into a marriage like covenant relationship with Christ
- Example of Marriage
 - A marriage is secured not only on their legally binding pledge made in the past, but in living out their pledge daily in their marital life together.

Wrestle Doubts from within the Covenant

- The covenant does not create perfect knowledge that excludes all kinds of doubts
- Rather it allows doubts and faith to be worked out from inside a committed and secure relationship.
- The covenant creates a secure space for the relationship to grow despite the assaults of doubts from without.

Humility That Creates Room for Doubts, Correction, Growth, and Change

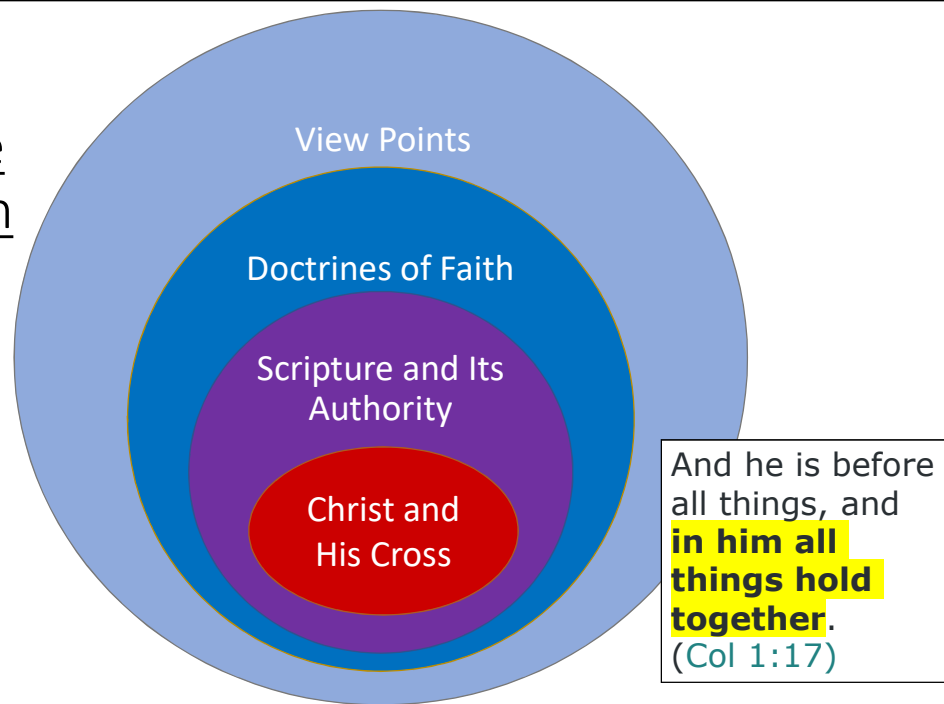
“People who share a deep, healthy relationship with another, whether it be with their spouses or close friends, discover that there is always more to learn about the one they love, and they discover there is a profound joy in engaging in this unending process. . . . If this is true of our relationships with other people, how much more true must it be of our relationship with our Creator?”

- Boyd, Gregory A.. Benefit of the Doubt (p. 150). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

The Anchor and Fruit of Faith

- 1Jn 4:9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.
- 1Jn 4:10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.
- 1Jn 4:16 So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.
- 1Jn 4:17 By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world.

Levels of
Importance
to Our Faith



For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

1 CORINTHIANS 3:11

The Cross is God's Revelation and Pledge to us

- In who He is
- In His love for us
- In Our Future with Him

"I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that **the love with which you have loved me may be in them,** and I in them." (Jn 17:26)

Covenantal Faith is:

Trusting God for

1. Who He is
2. What He has done for us through Christ's Cross
3. What He has promised regarding our future with Christ at His return

With Whole Hearted Commitment to Him

1. Love Him who first loves us,
2. Faith in His atoning sacrifice,
3. Hope in His coming

Assurance And Its Blessings

What Produces Assurance?

Rom 8:1-29 (Review of notes in part 1)

- We have a relationship with the Triune God rooted in Christ
- We have a changed life bearing the fruit of the Spirit, who testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.
- We have ultimate hope from God that sustains us in suffering

The Result of Assurance

- Rom 8:37 No, in all these things **we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.**
- Rom 8:38 **For I am sure** that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,
- Rom 8:39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Centre & Source of Assurance

“. . . nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from **the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**” (Rom 8:39)

“I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me.”

(2 Timothy 1:12)

How to Grow in Assurance

- Study, Reflect, and Deepen our doctrinal understanding of Christ Cross and our salvation with the Holy Spirit's help. Rom 8:30
- Diligent use of the means of grace for growth. 2 Pet 1:10.
- Love God by keeping His commandments (1 John 2:3)
- Lay our treasures in heaven
- Cherish God's gift of assurance by guarding our hearts against sin

So **put away** all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.

Like newborn infants, **long for** the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may **grow up** into salvation—
if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. (1 Pet 2:1-3)

- Cultivate a heart of thanksgiving, filled with God's love from the cross.

The Blessedness of Assurance—Heaven Came Down

But you have come to Mount Zion

and to **the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,**

and to innumerable angels in festal gathering,

and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven,

and to God, the judge of all,

and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,

and **to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, . . .** (Heb 12:22-24)

Blessed Assurance

1

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

2

Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight:
Angels descending bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

3

Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Savior am happy and blest:
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

Chorus

This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long;
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.

Author:	Fanny J. Crosby
Composer:	Phoebe Palmer Knapp
Tune:	Assurance (Knapp)

