

Sunday Service ~ March 16, 2025

Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church

Welcome & Prayer

As we begin our service of worship this morning lets remind ourselves of the great God we are coming before & so begin with a reading from Psalm 46. *"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth gives way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her; she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Come and see what the Lord has done, the desolations he has brought on the earth. He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire. He says, 'Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.' The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress."* (NIV)

Let us pray... "God our Refuge, when human resources fail, you alone remain our sure hope and defence. In the knowledge of your love, grant us courage. We place ourselves in your hands, confident that nothing can separate us from your love. We praise you for Jesus, the Living One, the First and the Last, who was dead, but now is forever alive. Help us, who have not seen, to believe; send us, as you have sent Jesus, to greet the world with your words of hope, life and peace and to share with all the Spirit's new life of forgiveness. We ask through the Lord Jesus, our Passover and our Peace, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

Song – The Chorus of the Saved <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ilpVNCSoH8k>

1. See the radiance of God Risen Son
 All the angels rejoice at his name
 All creation sustained by the power of his
 word
 And his throne will endure for now and ever

3. Through his blood our forgiveness is sure
 By his Spirit within we'll endure
 Holding on to this hope
 as an anchor for the soul
 And our eyes fixed on Jesus
 the one who saves us

2. Perfect Son sacrificed once for all
 Power of sin, fear of death now destroyed
 Raised to life, raised on high,
 Jesus name above all names
 His acclaim will resound beyond the ages

Chorus

Chorus
 Come join the song
 in earth and heaven voices raised
 In the chorus of the saved
 Come shout his name,
 come lift a sacrifice of praise
 With the chorus of the saved

Bridge

Now let us draw near the holiest place
 Our hearts full of faith,
 our lips full of praise
 So let us draw near
 the holiest place
 Now pure through his blood,
 our sins washed away

Chorus

Bible Reading – Matthew 11:1-15 (NIV)

"After Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in the towns of Galilee. 2 When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples 3 to ask him, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?" 4 Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: 5 The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. 6 Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me." 7 As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? 8 If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces. 9 Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 10 This is the one about whom it is written: "'I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' 11 Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. 12 From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence, and violent people have been raiding it. 13 For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. 14 And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come. 15 Whoever has ears, let them hear."

Announcements

Focus for Month: Love for one another. It is not too difficult to love our friends but it is much harder to love our enemies. For if someone has hurt us it is hard to show love back to them – much easier to give them what they deserve! But it was while we were Christ's enemies that He died for us and so Jesus shows us that all people must be treated with love, grace and patience. If you are struggling to love someone, ask Jesus for the help to do so this week.

Turn the tide: How we can live as Christians in a world that is becoming more and more pornified. Lean more about the effects of porn and ways to combat it. Come because you have a problem, your friend has a problem, your family member has a problem or you want to do something that will help others in the Church. Saturday 29th March 2-4:30pm. Newcastle City Church. Run by Outgrow ministries on behalf the local Presbyterian Churches

Charlestown Redevelopment. There will be a congregational meeting straight after each of our morning services TODAY to discuss the budget and borrowings needed to finance the Charlestown Redevelopment. Please read the documents prepared by the Session. The motions that we will be discussing are...

Charlestown. 1. That we increase the Construction Budget from \$1.4m to \$1.52 million
2. That we increase our potential borrowings from \$500,000 to \$520,000

Swansea 3. That the Swansea Congregation lend the Charlestown Presbyterian Church the sum of UP TO \$270,000 over 15 years at the TIF (Trustee Investment Fund) rate, which is currently 3.5%. That the Committee of Management ensure that the Swansea Church is not financially disadvantaged by this decision.

Annual Congregational meeting. Please note the annual meeting for our Church will be on Sunday 30th March from 11:20am at the Charlestown Church. The agenda and reports will be sent to you by email (or available to pick up) by next Sunday.

Offerings. Every month we let our congregation know how the monthly offerings are going as this is the most critical financial figure in achieving our overall budget.

Budget Offerings for February	\$37,583
Actual Offerings for January	\$31,332
Deficit for February	\$6,251
Deficit for the year	\$14,099

Please continue to pray for the financial resources we need to continue to serve God faithfully in this place.

Working Bee. We will have a working bee to clear the Church the week before the redevelopment begins. At the moment this will be sometime in April.

New City Catechism – Question 11. What does God require in the sixth, seventh, and eighth commandments? Sixth, that we do not hurt, or hate, or be hostile to our neighbour, but be patient and peaceful, pursuing even our enemies with love. Seventh, that we abstain from sexual immorality and live purely and faithfully, whether in marriage or in single life, avoiding all impure actions, looks, words, thoughts, or desires, and whatever might lead to them. Eighth, that we do not take without permission that which belongs to someone else, nor withhold any good from someone we might benefit. Scripture: *For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.”* (Romans 13:9)

Pastoral Prayer

Pray for India (Population 1.4 billion, Christians, 73 million). For God to help the new coalition government protect all rights, including those of Christians. For a spirit of peace and reconciliation as Christians in Manipur State recover and rebuild. For the protection of church leaders falsely accused under anti-conversion laws.

Pray for Josh Montzka (Power to Change, Melbourne): Praise God He is healing my shoulder and keeping me healthy. Praise God for the provision of finances and resources to help live and do ministry. Please pray for my time in Japan focusing on 'reaching the uninterested'. Please be praying for a quick and peaceful resolution with my ex-housemate. Please pray I trust God to provide, especially with either a new housemate or alternative accommodation.

Pray for the elders (Ross, David, Rob, Mal, Steve) and the Deacons (Jo, Karen, Matt and Robynne) as they take the lead for the spiritual (elders) and practical and pastoral (deacons) aspects of the church. Pray for the energy, wisdom and gracefulness as help us to keep our eyes on Jesus.

Pray for south east Queensland and northern NSW as they deal with the aftermath of Cyclone Kevin. Pray for the clean-up, for ongoing help, for fast insurance claims, as well as for resilience going forward. Pray that Christians might be salt and light as they care about their neighbours in affected suburbs.

Bible Reading – Matthew 11:16-24 (NIV)

16 “To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others: 17 “‘We played the pipe for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.’ 18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ 19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’ But wisdom is proved right by her deeds.” 20 Then Jesus began to denounce the towns in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent. 21 “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. 23 And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted to the heavens? No, you will go down to Hades. For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. 24 But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you.”

Song – Just a closer walk with Thee <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6Ks49apfIE>

I am weak but Thou art strong;
Jesus, keep me from all wrong;
I'll be satisfied as long
As I walk, let me walk close to Thee.

(Refrain)
Just a closer walk with Thee,
Grant it, Jesus, is my plea,
Daily walking close to Thee,
Let it be, dear Lord, let it be.

Thro' this world of toil and snares,
If I falter, Lord, who cares?
Who with me my burden shares?
None but Thee, dear Lord, none but Thee.
(Refrain)

When my feeble life is o'er,
Time for me will be no more;
Guide me gently, safely o'er
To Thy kingdom shore, to Thy shore.

(Refrain)

Sermon – Don't listen to this sermon (Stephen T)

Sermon link: <https://youtu.be/dJ6dNRBOhhQ>

I am someone who has had his doubts in the last few weeks. As you know we have a group of people that are working hard to make the Charlestown redevelopment a reality. And so, after 3 and a bit year we get to the point where the plans are completed and the tenders come in and they are over our budget. Cripes! What do we do now? Can we afford any of these quotes? Do we walk away from the project? I have found myself doubting the best way forward. Fortunately having a good team around you can help deal with those doubts.

But we all have doubts at times, don't we? Can we afford that massive mortgage? Should I really have changed careers? Is this girl or guy really the one that I want to spend the rest of my life with? Did I say the right thing? Could I have done anymore to change the situation?

And sometimes those doubts are related to our faith in Jesus? Is there really a God? Am I really a Christian? Why isn't he answering my prayer? Why do I still feel so lonely? Am I really on the right track? You see friends, faith and doubt are not opposite extremes. It doesn't mean if you have doubts, you have lost your faith. For some doubts will lead to more faith. But other doubts can reveal a lack of faith. It all depends upon what you do with your doubts and where you go when you have your doubts.

Slide 2

Which is why Matthew 11 is such a helpful part of the Bible for us all. For we saw last week that Jesus was training the 12 disciples to go out and preach the gospel to the lost sheep of Israel and we would expect to hear some snippets of how that is going but we don't. Instead, Matthew keeps the focus on Jesus and not his disciples.

Verse 1. *"After Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in the towns of Galilee."* And while Jesus is doing that, we see that the original preacher of the gospel, John the Baptist, is having doubts, so firstly let's see

Slide 3

1. John's wariness (verses 1-3)

"When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples to ask him, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"

It's not surprising that John would have his doubts. He's in a gloomy prison fortress about five miles east of the Dead Sea and at this stage he has probably been there for about 12 months. He's locked up in a small cell, away from friends and family, away from Jesus. He would be experiencing hunger, shame, beatings and loneliness.

Slide 4

God had made him a preacher but now he could no longer preach. God had placed upon his heart a message of judgement, of fire and brimstone, that God himself would send his messiah who bring in the Kingdom of God and judge all of God's enemies and here is Jesus, the one he thought was the Messiah, not bringing in judgement but showing mercy. Not attacking the Romans and the Pharisees but instead eating with sinners and tax collectors.

So, for John the Baptist the doubt seems to come from two quarters. Firstly, he is going through a difficult circumstance. And that is wearing him down. Discouraging him. Putting questions into his mind. And secondly his expectations are not being met. Things are not turning out as he imagined they would. And so, the doubts are there to help him take stock of the situation. Was he wrong about Jesus? Or should he be looking somewhere else?

Which raises for us the issue of faith and doubt. And so, if you have ever wrestled with doubts about God and his word, we should take heart, because you and I are not alone. Theologian Alistair McGrath puts it this way *"Doubt is natural within faith. It comes because of our human weakness and frailty."*

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He continues, *"Unbelief, is the decision to live your life as if there is no god. It is a deliberate decision to reject Jesus Christ and all that he stands for. But doubt is something quite different. Doubt arises within the context of faith. It is a wistful longing to be sure of the things in which we trust."* (Platt, 144 quotes McGrath "When doubt become unbelief" p8-10)

Many Christians have been troubled with doubts, including many of you who have sought me out to talk through your faith and your doubts. The famous preacher Charles Spurgeon once said Slide 6
"Some of us who have preached the Word for years and have been the means of working faith in others and establishing them in the knowledge of the fundamental doctrines of the Bible, have nevertheless been the subjects of the most fearful and violent doubts as to the truth of the very gospel we have preached."

Friends, faith can be hard. The burdens that we bear in this life can be incredibly heavy. So, what do you and I do when we attacked by doubt? Well, let's do what John the Baptist did, & take it to Jesus. Let's honestly ask him the questions that are going through our mind. Let's not run away from our doubts or worse still hide them from ourselves and others, instead let's use them as a springboard to wrestle through the issues with Jesus' help.

Slide 7

As Jesus will say later on in Matthew 11, *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you & learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden light."*

John the Baptist comes to Jesus and he asks the right question of Jesus. *"Are you the Messiah, or are we to look for someone else?"* That's the key issue, is Jesus who he claims to be? If he is then he can move from doubt to faith. If he isn't, then John needs to find out where to go next. So, friends if you are weary or wary or doubting or questioning, come to Jesus. He won't close the door on you. He won't condemn you for your doubts. Instead, he will send you his Spirit to help you learn the truth and also trust in that truth.

Slide 8

2. John's wariness and then Jesus' works (verses 4-6)

4 *"Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: 5 The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. 6 Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me."*

Jesus answer to John's doubt is to say have a good look at who I am. And what I am doing. For all around you are the signs of God's kingdom is breaking in. Diseases, death and the devil are being defeated. Those made captive are being set free. And at the very centre of all that is happening is the preaching and teaching of the good news. Good news for the blind, both spiritually and physically. Good news for the lame. Good news for the dead and the diseased. Look at Jesus and what he is doing and reflect on that in the light of Scripture.

Slide 9

Because didn't Isaiah 35 say that the eyes of the blind would be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped and the lame will leap like the deer. It is not just that the works of Jesus are powerful but the Word of God is being fulfilled. And look again at Isaiah 61:1, "The Spirit of God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor."

The answer to doubt is to look carefully at Jesus. And to go back to the Bible to see if he really is the one sent to us from God. The Scriptures, are our first stop when we struggle with doubt. For though, our circumstances may be the occasion of our doubt, it is the lack of grasp of the truth of Scripture which enables our doubt to get a foothold on us. And Jesus deals with John's doubt tenderly and pastorally by helping him to understand a message that he was missing from the scriptures. And allowing the Bible to reset his expectations.

Friends, Jesus will not rebuke us if we take our doubts to him. He will deal with you, like he dealt with John with a gentle hand and will place on you an easy yoke. Remember what he did to Doubting Thomas. Come here, put your fingers in my hand and thrust your hand in my side. Stop doubting and believe. Doubts can lead to increased faith if you take them to Jesus.

Slide 10

As popular writer, Philip Yancey once said, "*Doubt is the skeleton in the closet of faith and I know no better way to treat a skeleton than to bring it into the open and expose it for what it is: not something to hide or fear, but a hard structure on which living tissue may grow.*" And if you are still not sure about whether faith is compatible with doubts look at what Jesus now says about

Slide 11

3. John's worth (Verses 7-15)

7 "As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? 8 If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces. 9 Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes,"

This man who had his doubts was a prophet. He was not someone fickle who is swayed by the wind. He wasn't someone trendy who had the finest and latest gear from the palace. He was a committed, courageous, preacher of the good news. And as an aside, isn't that amazing that just as John had been a witness to Jesus, Jesus will also be a witness to John as well as to others who seek to follow Jesus and preach the good news about Jesus.

I think it is a picture of what Christ will say about all believers on the last day. He will stand up in the heavenly court of judgement as our defence lawyer and Satan will say, "she was fickle" and Jesus will say, even when she was faithless, I was faithful. Satan will say he is full of sin and struggles and Jesus will say, "No I died for those sins. Those sins and struggles are no longer held against him." You see, like he did with John the Baptist, those who confess Jesus before others, Jesus will confess his backing of us on the last day.

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For John was a prophet; in fact, he was a unique prophet because he was building the road that the Messiah would later travel down. "Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' John is the last prophet of the old era for God Himself will come next. God will come to earth. So, John has this very special task of bringing in a whole new era.

Like Moses who took the children of Israel to the edge of the promised land but who never entered into that land. So, John the Baptist would announce the coming King of God's eternal Kingdom but never see his coronation on the cross.

You see despite his doubts, 11 “Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist;” Wow. That’s a big rap, isn’t it? John the Baptist stands at the top of the mountain. He is the pinnacle of faith. Not because he was better than everyone else but because of his proximity to Jesus. For no one else had seen the Messiah before John’s time. No-one else knew as much about the kingdom as John did.

Sure, he might have had some doubts but he is still the greatest person to have ever lived up to this point in history & “yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he” Wow what an amazing thing to say. Even the Christian with the smallest faith is greater than John the Baptist because they don’t just see Jesus from afar, they have Jesus inside of them. They get to see things about Jesus that John never saw. Like his death on the cross. And then Jesus rising to life on the third day. And then the sending of His Spirit into all believers.

Slide 13

You see greatness in God’s kingdom is not about giftedness, it is not even about holiness, it is about the great and incredible privilege we have of being a child of God and having been born again. Listen to what commentator Don Carson says “So often Christians want to establish their ‘greatness’ with reference to their work, their giving, their intelligence, their preaching, their gifts, their courage, their discernment. But Jesus unhesitatingly affirmed that even the least believer is greater than Moses or John the Baptist, simply because of his or her ability, living on this side of the coming of Jesus the Messiah, to point him out with greater clarity and understanding than all his forerunners ever could. If we really believe this truth, it will dissipate all vying for position in this world and force us to recognise that our true significance lies simply in our witness to the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Slide 14

And yet as the witness to Jesus becomes clearer and clearer, “From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence, and violent people have been raiding it. 14 And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come. 15 Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

John is like Elijah. He is bringing in the watershed moment prophesied by Malachi that the Messiah is about to come in judgement. But don’t forget that Elijah too had his doubts, didn’t he? He defeated the prophets of Baal and then ran away feeling empty and lonely and all at sea. Doubts don’t disqualify us from greatness because it’s about coming close to Jesus

You see we fight doubt in this world and fight fear of this world with faith in Jesus. If our doubts drive us to Jesus, if our fears make us come to Jesus, if our burdens mean that on our own we are too weak to keep serving Jesus, then as we look again to Jesus and trust in God’s word, our faith will grow. Doubt is not the opposite to faith. Unbelief is.

Slide 15

4. Crowd’s Wisdom (verses 16-19)

But before we get to unbelief lets think about the difference between childlike faith and being childish. Childlike faith is putting your trust in Jesus even if you don’t have all the answers, even if the circumstances are difficult, even if your expectations are not being met. But being childish is demanding that everything be done your own way.

16 “To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others: 17 “We played the pipe for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.””

Its all a game, if I play the pipe, you start dancing and if I sing a dirge, you start mourning. Depending upon what I do determines what you should do. And so, when John the Baptist came and he didn’t look like a

real prophet because he lived in the desert and denounced Israel, we told John to change his tune and he refused to do so. And then when Jesus came and he mixed with the wrong crowd, he didn't fit our mould either, so we disbelieved him as well. *"But wisdom is proved right by her deeds."*

In others words the crowd's wisdom was they wanted John and Jesus to dance to their tune, to match their expectations, to march to the beat of their drum. That way they could remain in control. They could still be the boss of their lives. But that was like the children demanding that their parents do what they want them to do. They are choreographing the dancing, they are conducting the music and everyone, including the Messiah must fall in line.

Really the crowd can get it all wrong, can't they? The religious leaders of any day can make the very same mistake. Telling God how to dance the jig. Demanding that God meet our expectation. Insisting that we know best. That's not faith, its arrogance. That's not doubt, its ignorance. And that sort of an attitude will lead to

Slide 16

5. Chorazin's Woe (verses 20-24)

20 "Then Jesus began to denounce the towns in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent. 21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you."

Notice it is not that those who have doubts who are doomed but those who are indifferent to the message of Jesus. You see just a few kilometres from where he is speaking these words are cities where the blind now see, the deaf can hear, the lepers are clean, even the dead have come back to life. And yet they were clearly indifferent to Jesus' message. There was no faith and no repentance.

And that seems to be the big issue here. Because did you notice their hideous crime? It was not homosexual rape or not caring for the poor as Sodom and Gomorrah. It was not the genocide, ethnic cleansing of Tyre or Sidon. It was simply disbelief. Ignoring Jesus. Hearing the message of the good news of Kingdom and then saying "Mum what's for dinner?"

Slide 17

You see everyone in the world has a ranking of sins with some being more heinous than others. So, they look through the list – murder, adultery, stealing, lying, parking in a handicap spot, speeding. But Jesus says at the top of the list, at the top of everyone's list, should be disbelief. A lack of faith. A who cares attitude toward Jesus.

Slide 18

23 "And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted to the heavens? No, you will go down to Hades. For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. 24 But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you."

Capernaum, the town where more of Jesus' miracles were performed than any other Israelite town will be receive a punishment worse than Sodom, which was destroyed by fire and brimstone. Because they heard the good news of Jesus and did nothing about it, whereas Sodom weren't given that privilege. Capernaum simply refused to repent.

And there is a simple application to that lesson for you and I. We have the very gospel of salvation entrusted into our hands. Most of us have grown up hearing the gospel preached. We know the gospel of grace. We have been well taught about the stories of Jesus. We have access to a library of books, sermons, podcasts, blogs that help us know who Jesus. And if we don't repent of our sins, if we don't respond to the

good news, if we aren't men and women of faith, we will be in an even worse state than Capernaum, even worse than Sodom.

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Friends even today, sitting under the preaching of the Word, is an incredible privilege and an immense responsibility. Listen to how Matthew Henry once put it, "*The stronger inducements we have to repent, the more heinous is our not repenting, and the severer will the reckoning be.*" That's the lesson from this passage.

Yes, we can have our doubts, that's fine, but use them to drive yourself to Jesus. Just don't disbelieve, don't be indifferent, don't be proud and fail to repent. All those who are weary and worn down please come to Jesus and let him give you rest and a burden that you can carry because he will enable you to carry it.

Slide 20

In Thomas Brook's book, "Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices", he encourages the reader in the introduction to his book, to not read his book! I don't think I have ever read about anyone else ever doing that. Don't read the book that I have spent hours writing and is now in your hand. Why?

Let's hear Thomas Brooks own words. "*One last thing, don't read this book. Know that it is not the knowing nor the talking nor the reading but the doing man that will at last be found the happy man. Reader, if it be not strong upon your heart to practice what you read, don't read this book. For to read it would be to increase your condemnation.*" And what is true of Brooks book is also true of this passage. Don't listen to it unless you intend to respond in repentance and faith.

Song – Consider Christ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TH1YIfxqbuQ>

<p>1. Consider Christ, the source of our salvation That he should take the penalty for me Though he was pure, a lamb without a blemish; He took my sins and nailed them to the tree</p>	<p>2. Consider Christ that he could trust His Father In the garden of Gethsemane Though full of dread and fearful of the anguish He drank the cup that was reserved for me.</p>
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Chorus

My Lord and God
You are so rich in mercy
Mere words alone are not sufficient thanks.
So take my life, transform, renew & change me
That I might be a living sacrifice

Chorus

3. Consider Christ, for death he has defeated
And he arose, appeared for all to see
And now he sits at God's right hand in heaven
Where he prepares a resting place for me.

Benediction

11 "Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." (Matthew 11: 11)