David M. Choi

Help My Unbelief!

**Scripture Reading:**

I believe [dear Lord]; help my unbelief! (Mark 9:24)

1. Introduction
2. Goal: To understand what faith is, and its relation to doubt
3. Questions: (1) What is faith? (2) And how do I deal with doubt?
4. Theme: To believe that God is who He says He is, *and* to live out of the truthfulness of that reality[[1]](#footnote-1)
5. What Faith is NOT
   1. Faith is not blind trust
   2. Faith is not parental faith
   3. Faith is not easy
6. What Faith is
   1. *dear Lord*.Faith is trust
      1. Trusting in the God who demonstrates His love for sinners in and through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ
   2. *I believe*.Faith is a conscious decision
      1. Your faith is something you need to take personal ownership of
      2. “Faith *is* a decision. We cannot avoid that. ‘You cannot serve two masters’ [Matt. 6:24], from now on either you serve God alone or you do not serve God at all… Your Yes to God demands your No to all injustice, to all evil, to all lies, to all oppression and violation of the weak and the poor, to all godlessness and mocking of the Holy. Your Yes to God demands a brave No to everything that will ever hinder you from serving God alone… Faith means decision.”[[2]](#footnote-2)
   3. *help my unbelief*. Faith is humility
      1. Humbling yourself before a transcendent, infinite, and holy God, who destroys your pride and arrogance (Søren Kierkegaard)
7. Dealing with Doubt
   1. Doubt is a condition of sin, and a sign of our broken relationship with God
   2. Yet difference between doubting God and doubting *to* God[[3]](#footnote-3)
      1. Psalm 10:1: “Why, Lord, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?”
      2. David is not doubting God, rather he is doubting to God
   3. God uses doubt to drive you to Himself *through* faith
      1. Faith is the daily bread, not once and for all (Exodus 16)
      2. Received through prayer
      3. Even though I believe, I know I am prone to unbelief, so I need God to renew my faith daily
   4. God uses doubt to test and strengthen your faith in Him
      1. Your faith is weak and it needs to get stronger
      2. Weak faith is easily defeated in battle, but strong faith stands and fights the battle of temptation and sin
      3. A sign that God’s grace is at work within you, and that Christ is holding onto you[[4]](#footnote-4)
8. Conclusion
   1. In short, faith is trusting in Jesus Christ and in the work of His salvation. It is received through a *personal decision* as we *humble* ourselves before God on a *daily* basis. Because we are sinful, we doubt God, but in faith God calls us to doubt *to* Him, for the sake of greater faith and trust.

Discussion Questions:

1. Have you made a personal and conscious decision to trust in Christ? Why or why not?
2. What is the nature of your doubt? Do you find yourself more often doubting God or doubting to God?
3. What are some causes of doubt in your life? Are such doubts making your faith weaker or stronger?

1. James 2:19-20: “You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe – and shudder! Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless?”

   In other words, it’s not enough to believe that God exists if we aren’t transformed by that belief. Here James is saying that there is a difference between belief and faith. Faith as belief is merely an acknowledgement, while belief as faith is a belief that produces a life of grace-filled works and transformation. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, “The Gift of Faith,” from *The Collected Sermons of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, ed. Isabel Best(Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 203. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. During a dinner conversation on faith and doubt, Justin Hawkins drew my attention to this powerful distinction. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Bonhoeffer, “The Gift of Faith,” 206. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)