***Big Questions: Looking to God’s Word for Answers
“…always being ready to make a defense…” I Peter 3:15***

**If I have doubts, will God still accept me?**

**I. God’s acceptance of me is based on His work in Jesus Christ and not my works**

* Genesis 15:1-6, Psalm 32, Psalm 51, John 1:12-13, John 3, John 4, John 5:19-24, John 6:28-29, John 20:30-31, Acts 4:8-12, Romans 3:21-26, Romans 10:9-15, Galatians 2:19-21, Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 3:5-7, I John 5:11-12, and many others

**II. Doubt comes in a variety of shapes and sizes**

* We doubt God’s existence
* We doubt the resurrection of Jesus Christ
* We doubt our salvation
* We doubt God’s provisions for our life
* We doubt our gifting in fulfilling God’s calling in our life
* We doubt our calling for a particular task
* We doubt God’s love for us when we face difficulties

**III. Doubt is a struggle for some really big named people from the Bible**

* Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Naomi, David, Elijah, Hosea, Jeremiah, Esther, Simon Peter, Thomas, The Disciples

**IV. Doubt has many causes**

* Our sin
* Our past mistakes
* Distractions by this world
* Bad company
* Personal convenience
* Trials, troubles, tribulations, sufferings, disappointments, hurts, brokenness
* The adversary – the Devil

**V. Tools for the struggle**

* Think and read
	+ Great books by great thinkers and great biographies about faithful followers of Christ
* Argue with yourself
	+ Biblical and philosophical arguments
* Confess you struggles to someone you trust
* Pray for God to help you
	+ God will answer a humble and contrite heart in due time
* Go to battle with your doubts

***Big Questions: Looking to God’s Word for Answers
“…always being ready to make a defense…” I Peter 3:15***

**If I have doubts, will God still accept me?**

* The issue of doubt is a silent struggle of almost all believers
* The doubt may take on different forms – in other words – what we doubt and what causes to doubt may be different
* However, I am convinced that all believers in Christ will struggle with doubt on a fairly regular bases
* I remember one time mentioning in a small group bible study that I battle with doubts from time to time and someone came to me afterward and said “You, you occasionally struggle with doubts”
* Yes, even the preacher
* And, in fact, I think some of that struggle can be helpful for it prevents us from being mindless, thoughtless robots
* That said, excessive doubts can be paralyzing and unhealthy
* I will also at this point distinguish between struggles with doubt and cynicism
* We are talking about our struggle with confidence in God or in our faith or in our calling
* We are not talking about the skeptic or hardened cynic
* There are times for hardened cynicism, like when a guy with a radio show misleads many into believe he is the first one in the church’s history to figure out the greatest mystery in the church’s history, the timing of the return of Christ
* So great is this mystery that Jesus during His earthly ministry said the Father had yet to reveal such knowledge to Him
* I think we know why Jesus said that, because here we are 2000 years later still in need of His cautious words
* And of course, I have already seen the cynicism come from my atheistic and agnostic friends on Facebook, laughing at the return of Jesus, scoffing at Him
* I have chosen not to respond to any of these, but my heart breaks over another individual in the name of Jesus causing so much harm to the cause of Jesus
* So it turns out there are some things to be doubtful about, such as our ability to discern God’s specific plans and timing for the world
* That said, we must deal with a more personal aspect of this, how do I deal with doubt in m walk with God
* For graduation Sunday, I could not think of a better issue to discuss
* Let’s talk through these issues

**I. God’s acceptance of me is based on His work in Jesus Christ and not my works**

* The question for the day, “If I have doubts, will God still accept me?”
* The most fundamental issue of Christianity and all the world is on what basis will God accept me
* Am I good enough to be received by God on the basis of my works?
* Am I good enough to be received by God on the basis of avoiding bad?
* Will my struggle with doubts keep me from being accepted by God?
* God does not accept us on the basis of being good enough or confident enough in ourselves
* But instead, we are accepted by God, received by God, in right relationship with God on the basis of God and not on us
* Genesis 15:1-6, Psalm 32, Psalm 51, John 1:12-13, John 3, John 4, John 5:19-24, John 6:28-29, John 20:30-31, Acts 4:8-12, Romans 3:21-26, Romans 10:9-15, Galatians 2:19-21, Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 3:5-7, I John 5:11-12, and many others
* **Read Ephesians 2:8-9 (Slide 2)**

**II. Doubt comes in a variety of shapes and sizes**

* We doubt God’s existence
* We doubt the resurrection of Jesus Christ
* How does Jesus deal with the issue of doubt and the resurrection?
* With great patience
* **Read Luke 24:36-39 (Slides 3-4)**
* **Read John 20:24-29 (Slides 5-7)**
* We doubt our salvation
* We doubt God’s provisions for our life
* We doubt our gifting in fulfilling God’s calling in our life
* **Read Matthew 28:16-20 (Slides 8-9)**
* We doubt our calling for a particular task
* We doubt God’s love for us when we face difficulties

**III. Doubt is a struggle for some really big named people from the Bible**

* Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Naomi, David, Elijah, Hosea, Jeremiah, Esther, Simon Peter, Thomas, The Disciples

**IV. Doubt has many causes**

* Our sin
* Our past mistakes
* Distractions by this world
* **II Timothy 6:9-10 (Slide 10)**
* Bad company
* Personal convenience
* Trials, troubles, tribulations, sufferings, disappointments, hurts, brokenness
* **Read I Peter 1:6-9 (Slides 11-12)**
* The adversary – the Devil

**V. Tools for the struggle**

* Think and read
	+ Great books by great thinkers and great biographies about faithful followers of Christ
	+ Great books by great thinkers like Tim Keller, C. S. Lewis, John Piper, R.C. Sproul, Lee Strobel, Ravi Zacharias
	+ Great biographies about faithful followers of Christ like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Jonathan Edwards, Adoniram Judson, Joann Shetler, Kimberly Smith
* Argue with yourself
	+ Biblical and philosophical arguments
* Confess you struggles to someone you trust
* Pray for God to help you
	+ God will answer a humble and contrite heart in due time
* Go to battle with your doubts
* **Read James 1:6-8 (Slide 13)**