

SN Trusting God with Our Doubts

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Preacher: Tedd Tripp

[0 : 00] And I'm going to read this psalm, and we will look at it together. Psalm 73. Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart.

But for me, my feet had almost slipped, for I had nearly lost a foothold. For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

They have no struggles. Their bodies are healthy and strong. They are free from the burdens common to man. They are not plagued by human ills. Therefore pride is their necklace.

They clothe themselves with violence. From their calloused hearts comes iniquity. The evil conceits of their minds know no limits. They scoff and speak with malice.

In their arrogance they threaten oppression. Their mouths lay claim to heaven, and their tongues take possession of the earth. Therefore their people turn to them and drink up waters in abundance.

[1 : 04] And they say, how can God know? Does the Most High have knowledge? This is what the wicked are like. Always carefree. They increase in wealth.

Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure. In vain I have washed my hands in innocence. All day long I have been plagued. I have been punished every morning.

If I had said I will speak thus, I would have betrayed your children. When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me. Till I entered the sanctuary of God.

Then I understood their final destiny. Surely you placed them on slippery ground. You cast them down to ruin. How suddenly they are destroyed.

Completely swept away by terrors. As a dream when someone wakes. So when you arise, O Lord, you will despise them as fantasies. When my heart was grieved and my spirit embittered, I was senseless and ignorant.

[2 : 08] I was a brute beast before you. Yet I am always with you. You hold me by my right hand. You guide me with your counsel. And afterward you will take me into glory.

Whom have I in heaven but you? And the earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail. But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Those who are far from you will perish. You will destroy all who are unfaithful to you. But as for me, it is good to be near God.

I have made the sovereign Lord my refuge. I will tell of all your deeds. Let's pray together. We come to you, Lord, in prayer asking that you would give us illumination and understanding that we might grasp the message of your word in this passage and that we might be changed by hearing it and considering it and that it might work its way into our lives, not just in our knowledge and understanding but even in our prayers, that we would bring our prayers to you and we would pray the truths that we find in this and in so many psalms.

We pray that you would help us in these things. We ask this for Christ's glory. Amen. For the next months, as I have occasion to speak to you, I want to take the opportunity to think about our feelings and ask the question, what do you and I as Christians do with the feelings that overwhelm us?

[3 : 45] We find ourselves sometimes cast about by doubt or filled with fear or sometimes in despair or sometimes full of guilt or restlessness.

What do you do with those feelings? Where do you go with those things? And our culture doesn't give us much hope. On the one hand, you have the stoic response that some of us reflect and some of us have heard and grown up with.

You stuff your feelings. Don't be driven by your feelings. Deny them. Ignore them. Keep them under control. You may talk to people who try that.

They deny their feelings. They deny, for example, their anger. I'm not angry. I'm frustrated. I'm frustrated. But I'm not angry. It makes me so angry when you say that I'm angry. I'm not angry. Just quit saying that I'm angry. So there are, and many Christians even will tell you to stuff your feelings and to deny them. With some Christians, that denial is kind of a works righteousness sort of denial.

[4 : 59] I can't feel that way. God won't like it. He won't be happy with me. I'm fine. Really, I'm fine. I'm just giving it to God. And sometimes that may be the voice not just of faith, but sometimes that's even the voice of denial.

I'm just not going to regard these things. On the other hand, we have those voices that tell us denial is a sure way to have a stroke. If you don't stuff your feelings, vent your feelings, let it all hang out, it's better to blow up than it is to clam out, clam up.

At least people know what you're feeling. You get it out. You get it out of your system. Even if it ain't pretty, at least it's honest. You know if that's the way you feel, that's the way you feel.

It doesn't make you a bad person. So we have those conflicting voices that we hear. And did you ever notice sometimes people will speak as though, you know, my feelings are the real me.

I mean, it's really how I feel. And, of course, there's, I mean, what can I do about that? That's just the way I feel. My belief system, my belief system, my practices have nothing to do with this.

[6 : 06] It's just what's real about me is my feelings. And so people see, sometimes people see any expression of feelings or emotion as a good thing almost within itself.

What I want to suggest is a third way for us is to look at some psalms with you in the coming months for us to deal with our feelings. Because psalms provide us with this third way.

We don't have to stuff our feelings. And we don't have to vent our feelings. But we can pray our feelings. We can bring our struggles to God. We can bring those deep emotions to God.

And if you read the psalms regularly, you find yourself amazed, I'm sure, as I do, that every sort of emotional response that we can imagine is there.

It's there in the psalms. Doubt, fear, guilt, despair, envy, white heart, white hot anger, profound questioning.

[7 : 11] It's all there. And if your knowledge of the psalms is more thorough than just what you get from snippets off of greeting cards or from verses that we might have drawn to our attention as called to worship verses, if you read the psalms deeply and understand them thoroughly, you find the depth of emotion and the depth of feelings in the psalms is really shocking.

Every emotional experience is there. And the answer of the psalmist is not to deny or to vent. But really, the psalmist, again and again, we find the psalms full of prayers.

The psalmist is praying his feelings. He's praying his emotions. He's bringing those feelings with honesty and candor to God. And so what I want to do with you is I have occasion is to look at these feelings through the lens of prayer, pouring them out to God using the psalms.

And the feeling we want to look at or the emotional response we want to look at tonight is this emotional response of doubt. And there are three things I want us to see about doubt. First, we'll look at the condition of doubt.

We'll look at the cause of it, at least in this psalm. And we'll look at the cure. But verse 2 describes the condition of doubt. The psalmist says, My feet had almost slipped.

[8 : 34] I nearly lost my foothold. Now, notice he doesn't say my feet had slipped. If you look at verse 18, when he describes the feet having slipped, it means being plunged into destruction.

But he said, My feet had almost slipped. I tottered for the moment. For the moment, I lost my bearings. I was looking at one place and stepping somewhere else, and I experienced a moment of unsteadiness.

It was an experience almost of dizziness or like a spiritual vertigo. He says, I almost lost my faith. I almost fell to destruction.

I almost lost my hope in God and hope in God's grace. And, of course, it's a very interesting picture of doubt, kind of losing your bearings momentarily.

Because dizziness is what happens when the signal is going to your brain. And your brain can't process for a moment. And so it produces a distortion that leaves you disoriented and not quite sure of what your bearings are.

[9 : 39] It's like the experience. Maybe some of you remember, like me, you have progressive lenses. The first time you start wearing progressive lenses, you notice these things have these kind

of bubble shape to them.

And it takes a while for your eyes to adjust to the fact that you're wearing a variable lens. And it can be very disorienting. I remember a couple times almost falling down the stairs because the stair I thought I was stepping on in my vision wasn't there under my foot.

And many Christians believe that people should never doubt. But the reality is that doubt is a sure pathway to solid faith than just blind, mindless belief.

We have to face our doubts head on. It's not wrong for us as Christians to face our doubts. And the answers we find in this psalm and many psalms don't deny the doubts.

The answer is not just don't doubt, just believe. One of the things we learn in this psalm is that doubt is a pretty common problem. We all have doubts.

[10:46] We have struggles sometimes. We have questions of faith. You might look around you and say, I'm looking at these people. They never seem, the people around me, they never seem to have any doubts.

None of the Christians at Grace Fellowship have any doubts. They're always so certain and so sure. And yet I have to struggle so much with believing. It's not true. We all struggle with doubts. And this psalm is a psalm of Asaph. Asaph was a godly man, perhaps a better Christian than any of us in this room. He was one that God used to compose music that was sung in the worship of God. He wrote this psalm under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And yet he had doubts. And this psalm is an expression of his doubts. He was overwhelmed with those feelings of doubt and fear, ready to throw it all over.

At the end of this psalm of doubt, we have one of the most thrilling statements and affirmations of faith that we can imagine. At the end of this psalm, he says, Whom am I in heaven but you?

[11:54] And being with you, I desire nothing on earth. My heart and my flesh may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. That profound statement of faith at the end of this psalm was forged in the crucible of doubt, in the crucible of looking at the wicked and losing his bearings and wondering about what he saw.

Thomas, you remember, the disciple of Jesus was a famous doubter. We call him sometimes Doubting Thomas. He's a great example to us because no one was more of a skeptic than Thomas. When the others said that they had seen Jesus, Thomas doubted. He was a hard sell. He said, Unless I stick my fingers in his wounds, I won't believe.

I've got to see it for myself. The Christian scientist Francis Bacon was quoted, he's often thought of as the father of modern science, but he said, If a man begins with certainties, he will end in doubt. But if he's content to begin with doubts, he shall end in certainty. And what he's saying is a person who simply believes and never questions anything will end up struggling with doubt.

[13:08] Because the doubts often identify true problems. And problems we have to wrestle with and problems we have to come to an understanding of if we're going to be strong as Christians and understand the faith better and come to a stronger, more unassailable faith.

A person who faces his doubts and brings those doubts to God will come to certainty. Jesus doesn't rebuke Thomas' doubts.

He says, Thomas, put your fingers here. Put your fingers in these holes in my hands. Put your hand here at my side, Thomas. Don't doubt, only believe. And Thomas makes, in that context, one of the most thorough affirmations of faith in Jesus Christ.

He says, My Lord and my God. It's a statement hammered out on the anvil of Thomas' doubt. Well, we have those struggles.

We look around us and we see the wicked prosper. We see difficulty that comes into our lives and we can't understand the hand of God and why God is doing what he's doing. And the temptation for each of us, the temptation each of us has faced and has struggled with at some point is that temptation to doubt.

[14:29] What's the cause of it? What is the cause of Thomas' doubts? What's the cause of the psalmist's doubts in this passage? And we know there are broad theological answers to this question.

And we could talk about even the problem of human depravity and the problem of man's sin and pride and how we want to be the source of answers for ourselves and not rest in God and God's revelation.

We could talk about all of those things and that would be right and true. But that's not where this passage takes us. He tells us in verse 3 that his problem was, I saw the prosperity of the wicked. The doubts came. They developed as he saw things that did not make sense to him. It doesn't make sense to me in light of what the scriptures teach to be true.

And in this case, his problem was, I see the wicked prosper. And if God's true and if God's ways are true and right, the wicked should not be prospering. And the holy should not be, the righteous should not be suffering.

[15 : 35] How can that be? It doesn't make sense. And that really was the cause of his stumbling. But Psalm 73 is not telling us that this is the only reason for any of our doubts, but it certainly is the reason for Asaph's doubts in this psalm.

I remember years ago a man who was headed down the road of doubt, one of the members of his family, a sister of his, took her own life.

And he could not reconcile this senseless loss of life, the senseless death of his sister who had not come to know God. And he couldn't reconcile it with the goodness and mercy of God.

And he began to doubt and he began to question in angry ways the providence of God and the purposes of God and what God had brought into his life. And he didn't respond in the ways this psalm teaches us to respond to doubt.

But he continued down the path of doubt and became more and more skeptical and more and more negative toward God and toward Christian faith and eventually threw off Christian faith altogether and made a shipwreck of the faith.

[16 : 50] A young person might go to college or we might go into a work situation and meet people who seem so nice and so happy and so well-adjusted. And we can't reconcile what we see in their lives with what we read in the Bible because this person is not a Christian, yet they're nice, they're considerate, they're enjoyable to be with.

How can they be so nice if they're not a Christian but a Muslim or a Buddhist or an atheist? And doubts begin to rise in the heart. How can Christianity be true? How can God be the only way to life that is good and whole when I see people that seem to live such good lives who do not know God? Now the Bible answers these questions, and I can't pursue those answers with you tonight and still finish my sermon. But my point is the envy of the wicked can take many forms.

And it's not the only possible cause of doubt. And a better way of thinking about this is that doubt occurs when there is a discrepancy between what we see and what we know God's Word says to be true.

And in verses 3 through 11 in this passage, you have this very vivid description of people who are living wickedly. And if you look at those verses, and just let your eye fall over them as I draw some things to your attention, these people are proud and they're calloused.

[18 : 19] They're full of envy. They scoff at God. They mock God. They speak in malicious and arrogant ways. They even mock the idea of God knowing what they're doing and of God ever bringing them to justice.

And yet look at them. They have no struggles. They're free from common troubles. They're strong and healthy. They never seem to get sick. This is what the psalmist saw, and it was troubling to him. How can God's Word be true when people live like this and they prosper? Doesn't Psalm 1 say that the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish?

I don't get it. How can I trust God when His Word doesn't seem to work out? And he saw something that almost made him stumble. He lost his footing for the moment.

He got spiritual vertigo. And these doubts often don't come through the pathway of thinking. They often come through the doorway of experience.

[19 : 28] Doubts come by way of experience. Oh, I know there's suffering in the world, but God is wiser than we are. He's at work in the tapestry of life, and God is working out His good purposes in all things.

But it wasn't just the prosperity of the wicked that he saw. There was something else that troubled him. Because you know the prosperity of the wicked doesn't usually trouble us too much unless it's in contrast to our experience.

You see, what he saw was not only the prosperity of the wicked, but he's very honest in verses 13 and 14. He says, I've been doing the right thing. In contrast to the wicked who are behaving wickedly and prospering, I'm doing the right thing, and yet I'm plagued every day.

Everything goes wrong for me. I'm punished every morning. And the prosperity of the wicked is particularly onerous to us when we are striving to do what is right and everything seems to be going wrong.

And that was the difficulty that the psalmist Asaph was struggling with in this psalm. To see that good things happen to bad people when bad things are happening to you, even though you're striving to be good, and to do what is right, that's a bitter pill to swallow.

[20 : 56] So it was that discrepancy between what God says is true and what he experienced, what he sees, that caused the problem for him.

And there are many areas in which this can happen. We can have the struggle with financial reversals. When we sought to be prudent and careful and honor God with our finances and bring our tithes and offerings cheerfully to God and yet nothing seems to turn out well.

Or sickness when the ungodly around us seem to be so healthy. Or our children going bad when other people never seem to care for their children and they have loyal children who enjoy being with them.

Or some guy at work who's dishonest and a backstabber and an unscrupulous sort of person and he gets promoted at work and now you're reporting to him.

And doubt often presents as an intellectual problem. But the issue really is an issue of faith. It's not a matter of intellect. It's a matter of faith rather than sight.

[22 : 03] And faith versus feeling or experience. Paul says we, in 2 Corinthians 5, 7, we live by faith, not by sight. And faith is hanging on to what you know to be true in spite of the way things appear.

It's hanging on to what you know God's word has said in spite of the fact that things don't seem to be working out in the ways that you had hoped or desire. And the problem we have is that in deep trials of faith, the claims of faith that we're trying to hang on to are in audio and the trials we're having are in video, widescreen, HD.

And so they're very powerfully being displayed before us. And faith is holding on to God regardless of the evidence, regardless of appearances.

And doubt comes when what you know to be true becomes unreal in light of what you think you see around you.

And you follow what you see around you rather than what you know to be true. You may remember the accident of JFK Jr.

[23 : 21] he flew his airplane into the ocean. Because of my interest in aviation, I've read a number of articles about this crash. And he was a newly minted instrument pilot.

And the primary training that an instrument-rated pilot receives is training to watch your instruments and follow what the instruments say rather than follow what your body tells you.

Because your body is going to lie to you. And you can't, when you're enveloped in clouds or enveloped in thick fog and you lose the horizon, you can't see anything that gives you any sense of orientation, your body begins to lie to you.

And your body may tell you you're lying on your side when actually you're still upright and you've got to follow the instruments and not what your body's telling you. Because if you start following what your body's telling you, you're 107 seconds from spiraling into the ground or in his case, into the ocean.

And that's exactly what happened in that accident. He flew the plane into a death spiral because he knew with his mind what the instruments said, but what he was feeling became more real to him at that moment than what the instruments said.

[24 : 41] And he followed what he was feeling. And what he was feeling was lying to him. The instruments were telling them the truth. If only he had followed them. But because he didn't, he spiraled the airplane into the ground and to his loss of his life and his wife and his sister-in-law.

So that's the condition. That's the struggle of looking at what we see going around us and saying, this doesn't seem right in light of what God's word says.

Why aren't things working out in the way God's word says? And we've got to hang on to what the word of God says to be true and what God says to be true and not follow our feelings and our emotions.

Well, the cure for this, I want to give you four things. First is to doubt your doubts. It's in verse 3. Verse 3 says, For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

And you might be thinking, Wait, Ted, I have to be intellectually honest with my doubts. And you'll notice the psalmist is very honest about his doubts.

[25 : 59] He said, I envied the wicked. And doubts, you know, I think it's interesting. Doubts are not just intellectual problems. There's always more to doubting than just simply honest questions.

He looks at the injustice of the world and it's a problem. But it's only a problem when he sees the prosperity of the wicked in comparison to that. And he feels like, I'm under a plague.

Notice in verse 14, he says, I'm facing difficulty at every single point. And intellectual honesty will require you to be honest about your doubts.

But recognize, doubts don't come just from the intellect alone. They come through experience. And the psalmist says, it came to him through his experience. I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

I saw that they're, I'm not getting what they're getting. And he was honest enough to identify the self-serving motivations behind his doubts.

[27 : 01] Doubts are never 100% objective truth. There always is some dishonesty in our doubts. And so you have to doubt your doubts. You can't trust your doubts.

There's a great section in C.S. Lewis's Great Divorce. And these people are on a bus to hell and trying to reason with people in hell about why in the end, and they find out in the end that the people in hell don't want heaven anyway.

But there's a section that's relevant for us. And C.S. Lewis imagines the experience of a college student. And he says, let us be frank, our opinions were not honestly come by.

We simply found ourselves in contact with certain currents of ideas and plunged into it because it seemed modern and successful. At college, you know, we just started automatically writing the kinds of essays that got good marks and saying the kinds of things that won applause.

And when in our whole lives did we honestly put up one moment's real resistance to the loss of our faith? You know that you and I were playing with loaded dice.

[28 : 14] We were afraid of crude salvationism, afraid of the breach with the spirit of the age, afraid of ridicule, afraid above all of any real spiritual fears and hopes.

And having allowed oneself to drift, unresisting, unpraying, accepting every half-conscious solicitation from our desires, we reached the point where we no longer believe the faith.

Just in the same way as a jealous man's drifting and unresisting reaches the point at which he believes the lies about his best friend. The drunkard reaches the point at which he actually believes that another glass will do him no harm, beliefs are sincere in the sense that they do occur as psychological events in a man's mind.

If that's what we mean by sincerity, they are sincere and so were ours. But the errors which are sincere in that sense are not innocent. Do you see what C.S. Lewis is saying?

He's saying there's always some element of dishonesty and doubt. Even in the face of suffering, terrible suffering and tragedy, there's an element in that struggle that is dishonest.

[29 : 27] I can't believe that God would let this happen to me. It's really a way of saying I can't see a purpose in it. If I can't see a purpose in it, I'm not going to accept it.

So we have to doubt our doubts. That's what the psalmist does. And what keeps him from nearly losing his way and plunging into destruction is doubting his doubts and recognizing my doubt is really not based in the facts.

It's based in envy. And it's my envy that makes me jealous of the wicked. Really, the point for us to see is that we're never neutral in our interpreting of things.

We're always interpreting, and we interpret out of the abundance of our hearts. The second thing we see the psalmist doing is he enters the sanctuary. It's in verse 17.

He says, when I tried to understand this, it was all, verse 16, it was all oppressive to me till I entered the sanctuary of God. Then I understood their final destiny.

[30 : 36] The psalmist says his intellectual problems were cured through worship. They were cured by entering the sanctuary of God. And you might be thinking, that's crazy.

How can I worship when I'm full of doubts? And here's the point. You don't get into your doubts through thinking. Because the doubts are spiritual struggles, and you don't get out of your doubts by thinking.

You don't think your way out of doubts back to certainty. Doubts come through what we experience, and we shed our doubts through our experience.

And the psalmist's doubts were lifted as he entered the sanctuary, as he worshipped God, as he heard the word of God. You see, if you're worshipping, if you're with the people of God who worship, if you have conversations with people who are trusting God and believing, if you're hearing the word of God, if you're reading the word of God, then you experience things that strengthen your faith and weaken your doubt.

And you might be saying, but I don't even know if I believe it all anymore. Why should I come to church? Why should I pray to God? Why should I sing praise?

[32 : 00] Should I listen to the word? And the answer is, yes, you should. You must. Because it's the only fair thing you can do. See, the world every day is bombarding us with experiences that tell us that God is not real and that the things we believe and hold to cannot be trusted.

And the only corrective is giving yourself to those experiences that show the reality of the fact that he is real.

And you have to do something that engages your senses as well as your mind. And corporate worship of God does that. The corporate worship of God engages our senses and engages our feelings and engages us on a level that is emotional as well as rational and intellectual and conceptual.

And it's that, it's being moved by the worship of God that is one of the ways the psalmist shakes off his doubt and comes out on the other side saying, whom am I in heaven but thee?

It's because he's worshipping. And I think that's one of the reasons why worship should be passionate. It should be, it should be involved. It should be, it should be loud and boisterous and joyful because entering the sanctuary engages the senses.

[33 : 21] Hearing God's praise sung, singing God's praise with other people who are singing God's praise audibly. Excuse me. It engages the senses, it engages the experience as well as the mind.

And it's a reality check against our doubts. So doubt your doubts, into the sanctuary, compare footholds. Notice in verse 18, he says, surely you place them on slippery ground.

You cast them down to ruin. He uses the idea of a foothold as an analogy of faith. And it's a great analogy because you know for rock climbers that foothold is very important.

You want to make sure your foothold is good and sturdy before you reach out for another foothold and the footholds are very important. Each time you place your foot, you're trusting your whole weight on that foothold.

And the foothold of the wicked was very slippery. He had placed his weight on something that was dangerous to trust. And there's a very vivid imagery here of a, excuse me, of a slippery slope.

[34 : 36] You know, there's a point at which you're on a slippery slope and you're stable but then in a split second it gives way and you're sliding and you can't possibly stop the slide once that happens.

And the foothold of the wicked was slippery. He's placed his weight on something that's dangerous to trust. And you know, the choice is never just between faith and unbelief.

You also have to choose between Christian faith and something else because wherever you place your foot it's a, it's a, it's a foothold.

It's an act of faith. So if you, if we abandon believing what God says to be true to be true then we put our foothold somewhere else.

We're never just dangling there without a foothold. We've just put our foothold in something else. In the book *A Severe Mercy* Sheldon Van Alken tells about the problem he faced with doubt and unbelief.

[35 : 41] It's a very interesting book. It's written in the 50s if you ever get a chance to read it. He says, excuse me, there's a gap between the probable and the proved. How was I to cross it?

If I were to stake my whole life on the risen Christ I wanted proof. I wanted certainty. I wanted letters of fire across the sky. I got none of these. As I continued to hang on to the edge of the gap if it was a question of whether I was going to accept him or reject him and then I realized the gap there was a gap behind me as well.

Perhaps the leap to acceptance was a horrifying gamble but what of the leap to rejection? There might be no absolute certainty that Christ was God but there was no certainty that he was not.

This was not to be born. I could not reject Jesus. There was only one thing to do once I had seen the gap behind me. I turned away from it and flung myself over the gap toward Jesus.

Do you see what he's saying? He's saying looking at the foothold of unbelief, unbelief, of unbelief. It's even worse than saying there is no God because if there is no God then we have nothing to believe and nothing to hope in and no certainty.

[37 : 06] If there's no God to vouch for the designations of good and evil, if there's nothing that is right and nothing that is wrong, then you have no basis to even speak of right or wrong or good or evil.

No God is a slippery foothold. It's a plunge to ruin both in time and in eternity. It's a plunge to ruin both emotionally and personally and ultimately ultimate ruin.

And later in the psalm when the psalmist says, Whom have I in heaven but you? And being with you, God, I have your beauty that's unfading beauty.

What else do I want? You see, everything else is devaluing. Your money is devaluing. Your success will erode over time. Without God, you have nothing. Without God, you have a slippery foothold.

Ultimately, we either trust him or we're trusting ourselves and our own judgments, someone else's judgments, and we're in a slippery place.

[38 : 11] The fourth thing I want you to see that the psalmist does in the psalm is he takes God's hand is in verse 23. He says, Yet I'm always with you.

You hold me by my right hand. Afterward, you will guide me with your counsel. I'm always with you. In spite of my doubts, in spite of my unbelief, in spite of the fact I acted like an animal and I didn't respond to you like a son, even in my deepest time of doubt and mistrust, you were always there, you were holding me by the hand, you took hold of my hand.

How did he know that God would hold his hand even through his doubts and his unbelief and his brutish ways? He entered the temple. He entered the place where sacrifice was made for him and for his sins and we see that even more clearly in light of the cross.

We sing the hymn, when darkness veils his lovely face, I rest on his unchanging grace. And that song is a song about doubt. His face is hid, but I rest in something that doesn't change.

I rest on his grace. And how do we know? How do we know that he will hold our hands through our doubts? We know that because there's one who faced more doubt than you and I will ever face.

[39 : 43] On the cross, he faced the ultimate disorientation and overwhelming doubt. He experienced spiritual vertigo. He faced doubt and he cried out to the Father and the Father turned away from him.

And the Father let go of his hand and let him experience what every doubter deserves so that there would be grace for you and me and so that in our doubts he would never let go of our hands.

And the psalmist is making a powerful affirmation of faith at the end of the psalm where he says that you always hold me by my hand. What assurances do you have that when darkness fails his lovely face you can rest in his unchanging grace?

Your assurance is that Jesus Christ bore the punishment for doubters so that in your doubts you would know him and know that he's holding your hand.

Do you have doubts? Of course you do. We all have doubts. We have times when in the privacy of our own mind and lost in our fears we doubt everything that we have been told is true and that we believe to be true.

[41 : 08] We have to doubt our doubts. We have to enter the sanctuary and worship God. We've got to compare our foothold and recognize if we don't have God we have no foothold at all.

And we've got to take hold of his hand. God is with us in our doubts. And in the context of doubt we have this strong affirmation of faith that Asaph expresses whom have I in heaven but you.

Being with you I desire nothing on earth. My heart and my flesh may fail but God is to strengthen my heart and my portion forever. May he be our portion. Let's pray together. We come to you Lord recognizing our frailty and weakness recognizing that we have times when we are assailed by doubts and when we question the reality of things that we have to turn from those questionings immediately and cry out to you for hope and for truth and for reality.

And we pray that we would know you in the midst of our doubts. We would doubt our doubts, that we would enter the sanctuary and worship God, that we would gain a strong foothold in our faith in him and that we would embrace this one who holds our hand and affirm with the psalmist that whom have I in heaven but you and being with you I desire nothing on earth.

My heart and my flesh may fail but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. Help us with these things we pray Lord for Christ's glory. Amen. Amen. Amen.