

2. Read Matthew 14:22-33

- What caused Peter to want to get out of the boat?
- What caused him to sink?
- What is the significance of the words of Jesus to Peter, “Why did you ever doubt?”
- Why do you think He said those words?
- How do those words speak to your life today?

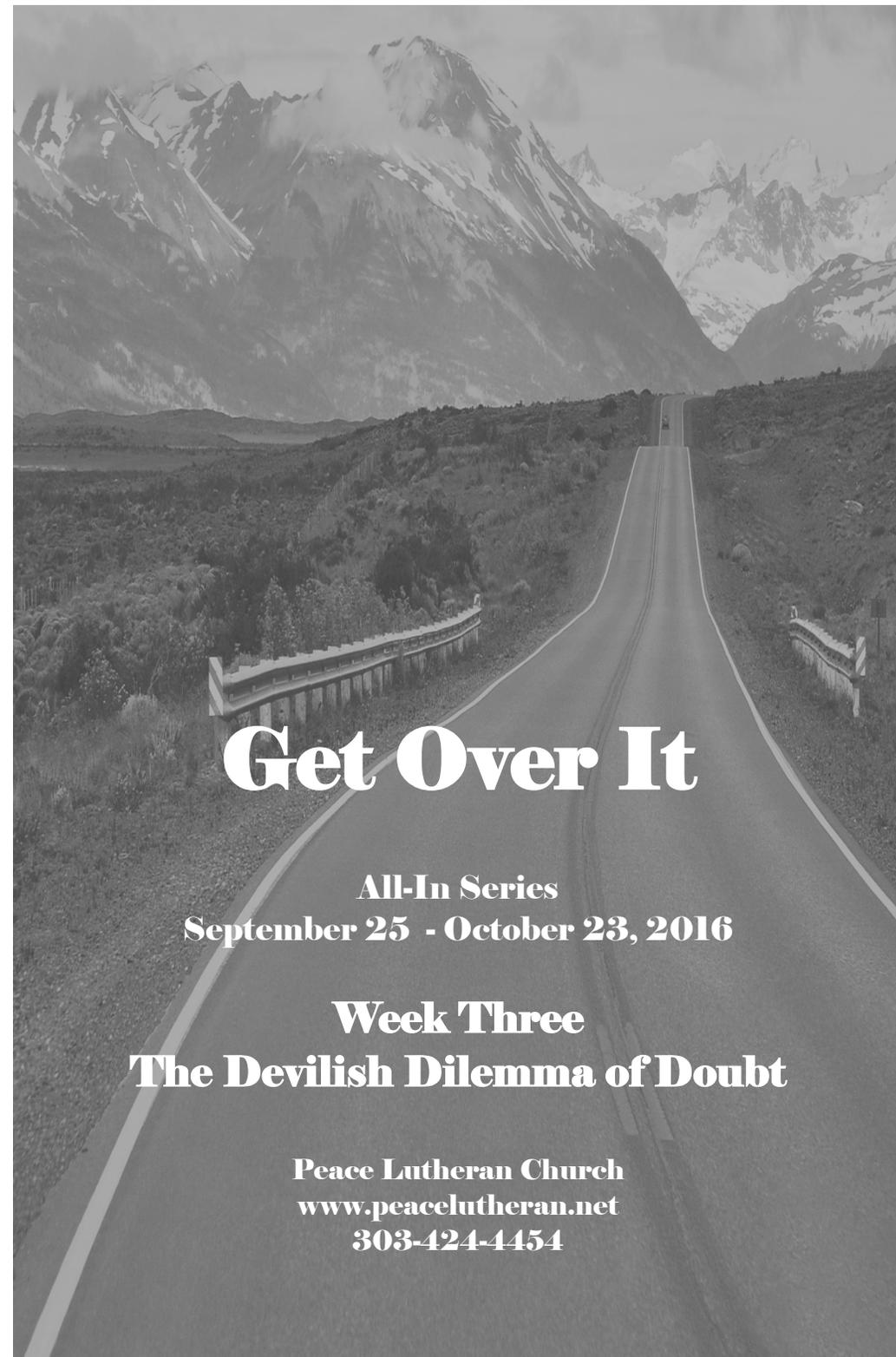
REFLECT

- Genuine doubt comes from a desire for truth and a reflective Christian is a healthy Christian. Know in whom you are trusting, He will keep you safe.
- What have you learned in this study that can help you face your doubts?

Action Item:

- What ways can you be a source of encouragement to fellow believers who struggle with their doubts?
- What words could you have for them that might be helpful?
- What words will probably not be helpful?

Thinking through your possible response may prove helpful when you encounter someone who is struggling with doubting their faith and may also be a resource for you when doubt creeps into your life.



Get Over It

All-In Series
September 25 - October 23, 2016

Week Three
The Devilish Dilemma of Doubt

Peace Lutheran Church
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OPEN

All of us have doubts about the faith at one time or another.

- What has contributed to the times when doubts have entered your heart
- and mind?
- What did you do about it?
- What practice or what person helped you?
- How did it/they help?

DIG

Discuss the following statements.

- Is it okay for Christians to have doubts? (Yes)
- George Verwer: Faith is not found in the absence of doubts, but in the midst of them.
- Chuck Swindoll: Doubt is the raw side of honesty as opposed to rank unbelief.

Read and discuss the following thoughts from Ann Marie Thomas *Thinking Out Loud*.

These are two kind of doubt: Intellectual and Emotional.

1. Intellectual

Doubt can come from people who question your mental capacity or think you are swallowing fairy tales if you are a Christian. Have you ever been asked the question, *Isn't Christianity put together by clever people over many years to deceive people?*

Karl Marx said that religion is the opiate of the masses.

We can also ask, *Is God still God even if I don't believe in him? Did Jesus still die if I don't accept salvation?*

The truth doesn't change because I don't believe.

There are two responses which will help counteract intellectual doubt:

Response 1: Look at the lives of other Christians past and present. Would they have suffered so much, even died, for a lie? Remember and share what God has done in your life.

Response 2: Look at other people's discoveries, (e.g. Stuart Burgess at Bristol University, or Alister McGrath at Oxford University) I don't have time or brain power to research everything, but I can read others who have done the work. They assure me of the robustness of the Christian viewpoint.

When people question you, don't be afraid to say, 'Right now I don't know but I can go and find out.'

2. Emotional

This is much more subjective and internalized.

Does God really love me? Why doesn't He answer my prayers?

Other people's answers are not enough, we have to work it out for ourselves.

Blondin pushed a wheelbarrow across a tightrope over Niagra falls.

One day he asked the watching crowd, *'Who believes I can put a person in the wheelbarrow and cross?'* Everyone cheered and said 'yes!'

Then he asked for a volunteer. No-one answered. They didn't believe so much that they would act on it.

I'm not sure what will happen, but I know who is pushing my wheelbarrow. I know who holds my life.

A young girl was afraid to jump into the swimming pool until Daddy said he would catch her. Our doubts and fears disappear when we rely on God.

How does God respond to doubt?

1. In Luke 7:18-23, John the Baptist (JOHN THE BAPTIST!), had doubts.

- How do you see this doubt in this passage?

- What answer does Jesus give John the Baptist?

- How does it comfort you to know that even John the Baptist struggled?