

## Honest Doubt

1/17/21

Acts 3:1 - 16 and John 20:24 - 29

Author Mark Twain suggested that whatever we look at in life and how we see it, can influence our next steps. It can even influence our destiny! As Twain said – ‘You cannot depend on your eyes when your imagination is out of focus!’

In Acts, Peter too spoke of vision when he replied to a lame beggar, a man whom he and John encountered at the busy temple gate called ‘Beautiful’. The Beautiful Gate is not mentioned in any historical sources. It is believed to have been the Corinthian Gate. The Corinthian Gate was the gate to enter the Temple from the road to Corinth. It was certainly a beautiful gate but it was torn down during the great Exile by the Babylonian Empire.

This lame man outside of the Beautiful Gate was there every day begging for money. Peter and John looked directly at the man and said – ‘Look at us!’

Why did Peter say that? As Christ’s ambassador, Peter likely wanted the lame beggar to stop looking at his own limitations. Peter wanted the lame beggar to stop looking at his need for money. So the lame beggar looked at Peter. In this gaze, the lame beggar would see the reality of having faith in God. In this gaze, the lame beggar would see his salvation!

As Peter told him – ‘Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give to you in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth – get up and walk and give praise to Jesus Christ!’

What happened? The lame man had faith in God and Jesus Christ and he got up and walked. The lame beggar keep his eyes simply on God, and he walked!

Are you in some way lame and sitting outside of some Beautiful Gate? Have you been like this for some time? Christ is calling you to look at him!

As Christ's ambassador, I would like you to stop looking at your own limitations. I would like you to stop looking at your need for money. To gaze at the cross and see the reality of having faith in God. To gaze to the heavens and see your salvation!

Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give to you in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth – get up and give praise to Jesus Christ!

What will happen if you do this? If we have faith in God and Jesus Christ, we will get up and walked in faith. Just keep your eyes simply on God, and you will walk in faith!

What are you focused on instead of God? By refocusing our faith, think of what we could see in Him for our lives.

Many people never commit themselves to Jesus Christ because of honest doubts they have lingering in their minds. They are awaiting the time when those doubts will have been resolved and then they will profess their faith and become Christians.

We all have doubts, at times! There is no sin in doubting. Let me repeat that – There is no sin in doubting! Usually it is through the process of doubting that we come to recognize the truth. I am less concerned about people who admit their doubts openly than about those who pretend they have no doubts and try to get by on a dishonest faith.

The honest person deals with his or her doubts honestly. The result is that he or she can believe his or her beliefs both intelligently and honestly. Never fear your doubts as long as you have the disposition to believe!

It does not take much exposure to the Gospel message to know that the faith of the great ones was hammered out on the anvil of doubt!

Think of those who were doubters. In our second scripture reading from Luke's Gospel, we have a doubter! We have Thomas who is immortally remembered as 'Doubting Thomas'. Thomas doubted so that he might not doubt. Jesus said concerning doubters – *Happy are those who believe without seeing me.*

John Calvin was noted for his strong and courageous faith. What most people do not know about John Calvin is the frequency with which he called into doubt every promise of God.

Martin Luther also struggled with all kinds of doubts. Martin Luther wrote – 'I was looking out my window and beholding the stars, and the whole majestic vault of God. It was held up without be able to see the pillars on which the Master had caused them to rest'. In that moment, Martin Luther's doubts left him and he believed God would support his cause if it was right.

No honest doubting person can end up a skeptic when we view God's glory. Where there is doubt, truth is its shadow!

The wise person deals with honest doubts. Wise parents do not fear their sons and daughters questioning, doubting, or scrutinizing the Christian Faith. Wise parents know it can survive all criticisms, doubting, and examinations.

Honest doubting is the course to finding one's own beliefs. The man was right who said – 'Who never doubted, never half believed!'

We all know that this Thursday we will have the inauguration of our 46<sup>th</sup> President, Joe Biden. We all may have our doubts that things will change for the better in DC and in our country, but let us have honest doubts and let us as a nation seek unity within our country.

May God Bless America!

Let us pray:

Heavenly Father, when our eyes wander from you, focus our gaze on your unlimited power. May we be honest doubters seeking a deep faith in you. And bless our new President and our country. AMEN.