

IT'S OK TO DOUBT



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When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted, Matthew 28:17.

Over the years we have viewed doubt as something unspiritual, a sign of spiritual weakness, possibly even sin especially if you are part of the faith movement, but doubt in general is something to be avoided at all costs, something we should repress or deny.

Doubt is part of our makeup, it's part of what makes us human. Doubt can lead us to the truth, it can lead us to answers and even into experience. Many people have questioned, and tested God, and in doing so have had divine encounters.

Don't just go along with everything in parrot fashion, learn to question things. Sometimes these kinds of people drop away so easily or live ordinary lives or never do anything with their faith because their walk in God is just never quite real or they're not fully convinced.

When I see someone arguing, doubting, and questioning the things of God, I see someone like myself, someone who deep down wants God but hasn't realized it yet. I used to fight with my brother about his faith. One time I ripped up his Bible. I remember being at a beach mission in Port Macquarie disputing with the workers about Jesus of which I now am one of His big promoters.

I remember the coordinator of AA when he approached me to see if he could use a room in our building for his daily AA meetings. After I said, that would be great, he went on to sternly tell me he didn't believe in God, but the higher power. My reply was simply, "that's cool, I know the higher power, you believe in Him, we're a team." It was only 4 weeks until he started coming along to the morning service and it was only 4 weeks before he told me that he had worked it out. He realized that the higher power is Jesus and that he needed to get to know Him. Today Ted is part of the ministry team at Life.

You tell a small child not to touch the heater because it's hot, you say, "its hot" but the understanding of 'hot' is not in them, they have doubts, which is, "I can believe, but I'm not sure." So curiosity gets the better of them as they touch the heater. Their doubt and uncertainty convert to experience and a real knowing.

What's interesting is that in Matthew 28:17-20, Jesus empowered them both, the worshipers and the doubters. He told them both to go into the world and make disciples. Imagine the worshipers

cheering with confidence and the doubters would have said: "I'm not sure about that".

DOUBTING THOMAS

Think about it, Thomas was around at that time and was most probably among the doubters. We're always giving Thomas a bad rap. We call him and anyone who struggles to believe 'doubting Thomas' but when you read his story of how he came to believe and his achievements after, you can forgive a converted doubter any day.

John 20:24-29, *"Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord!' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.' 26 A week later His disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' 27 Then He said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; see My hands. Reach out your hand and put it into My side. Stop doubting and believe.' 28 Thomas said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!' 29 Then Jesus told him, 'Because you have seen Me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'"*

Thomas experienced Jesus. He felt and touched that the Lord was real. Psalms say taste and see that the Lord is good.

Charles Finney said "theology must be experienced." Thomas has a lot to teach us. Firstly the way he questioned: "unless I see, unless I feel." That question brought him into an encounter, an experience, a personal visitation that would live with him forever. When questioned on the resurrection, he wouldn't say, "I believe" he would declare, "I know Jesus has risen." God isn't upset with your questions. He doesn't get insecure or back down when challenged. He steps up to the plate and says "bring it on." Malachi 3:10, "Test Me in this," says the Lord Almighty.

I'll never forget Stan from the second church I planted. His wife June was heading off to church and taking \$50 out of her purse to put in the offering, Stan commented with this; "When is that church going to give me \$50?"

While at church that night June went to the front for prayer and as the visiting speaker approached her, without any knowledge of what had happened, he took out a \$50 note and gave it to her saying: "Give that to your husband." It was like God saying "don't mess with Me Stan." Stan was in church getting saved a week later.

Thomas' questioning caused his faith to be strong. His story tells us that he went on to Babylon (Iraq), to preach the Gospel and then onto Persia (Iran). Then in 52AD he travelled to lowest India where he saw many converts and church plants established. When the Portuguese landed in India in 1600, they discovered the original church Thomas planted was still going, certainly the work of a person that had a solid faith.

Thomas went on from there to Madras, East India where he was martyred by being thrown into a pit and speared to death. It doesn't sound like the doubt that Thomas had earlier in his walk with the Lord hindered him later on in life in stepping out.

WE ALL HAVE SOME DOUBTS

Thomas doubted the resurrection, which was quite a serious doubt. Some people doubt the virgin birth. Joseph probably did for a time. Some doubt creation, Noah's flood, the trinity, the miracles of Jesus, who made God, where did He come from. Some people doubt the local church, others doubt the miraculous is for today.

I remember in 1988 coming out of an AOG conference session in Adelaide after Frank Houston had shared, he mentioned numerous unusual miracles that had taken place over the years of ministry. I must admit I had my doubts about them and why God would do these things in the first place.

It would be like one of the disciples telling me about how Jesus walked on the water, besides doubting I would have asked: "What's the purpose of that miracle? He could have taken a boat out like the others." Anyway as I'm walking out with Paul Lomeau, I told him how I struggled to believe some of his stories. I went on tell him how Frank one time shared about two Seventh Day Adventists that came into his office and got prayer. One guy fell and began rolling from one side of the room to other, the other guy fell and his legs lifted every time the other guy rolled towards him.

This supposedly happened over 2 hours. I said to Paul who I was just getting to know: "Can you believe that?" He looked at me and said: "Yeah I have to, I was the one rolling." I asked him why God did that and he said: "I'm not fully sure, but I was really proud, didn't really know God and it was like God shook me." While in that place he went on to tell me how he yielded to God. Needless to say I believe in modern day miracles and have gone on to see many unusual encounters with God. Doubt is good, embrace it, ask questions, question your doubts and doubt your questions. It will lead you to truth. The bible is full of doubters.

- ◆ Gideon doubted himself;
- ◆ Habakkuk doubted and questioned God's purpose;
- ◆ Saul doubted God's timing;
- ◆ Jeremiah doubted his age and speaking ability;
- ◆ Zechariah doubted God's ability to give him a son;
- ◆ Israel doubted God's ability to protect them in the promised land;

- ◆ Even the father of faith, Abraham doubted God's promise to give him a son through his wife Sarah and slept with Sarah's slave woman who gave birth to Ishmael which has caused a few dramas since.

But in all of these examples, they were led into a reality and truth. Doubt just says I'm not sure, but disbelief says I refuse to believe.

This guy came to Jesus asking for his son's healing, the guy said I believe, but help me overcome my unbelief, it's great to see Jesus didn't deny him but blessed him by healing his son.

The key is not blind faith, nor defiant unbelief, but genuine doubt that seeks, that asks questions, that desires truth that seeks reality.

Jesus while teaching on prayer and even though it's not answered straight away He said in Luke 11 "Ask and it will be given you, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you." So whatever your doubts are, ask Him, and your doubts will be met.

I remember as a 16 year old, I believed in God, I

always had, but I just didn't believe He had the best life for me to live. So one day at Port Macquarie as a 16 year old looking over the Hastings river I prayed: "Lord I know your real, but show me if your the best way to live?" Over the next nine months, He revealed His plan to me and I excepted.

Even as a minister for over 25 years, I've never doubted God's existence or even His ability to do things. But I have often doubted God's ability to use me and have questioned and wrestled with Him numerous times and He keeps meeting and ministering His belief into me. He'll do it to you too. Give Him your doubts, questions and concerns as He can handle them.

**Love
Kevin**



KEVIN'S TRAVEL

Tuggerah (Men's Night)	May 4th	Canberra AM	May 22nd
Tamworth	May 13th	Thirroul (CCC) PM	May 22nd
Gosford (Ministers Connect 6:30pm)	May 18th	Thirroul CCC (Young Adult)	June 1st
Campbelltown (Men's Night)	May 20th	Mittagong AM	June 5th



Real Life Stories From Life Church

I Was A Criminal

I was a criminal who for the past 35 years plus, has suffered being a homeless alcoholic and drug addict and for approximately 20 of those years I lived in Mt. Druitt in Sydney. While attending W.H.O.S (We Help Our Selves), a rehabilitation centre in Cessnock on a court order in July 2008, I experienced a spiritual awakening and realising that I couldn't go back to Sydney, stayed on in Newcastle. It was hard at first not knowing anyone except a few members on A.A and N.A but this is actually how I came to meet Life Church.

Besides housing A.A meetings I found that they also helped with the needy with free meals and feeling the need to give back to God for my sobriety I volunteered my services to Soul Café finding that there was more to Life Church than just feeding the hungry. They support two life houses for the homeless and have doctor's lawyers, Centre link and Compass Housing, to mention a few, come on board offering services free of charge. I am blown away by the generosity and love Life Church has for those who are lacking.

For the huge part you have played in my recovery and the continued support you offer me at all times—Pastor Kevin, I am in your debt. I have three of my children back in my life and a place of my own and can't tell you what a comfort it is to know that you are just a phone call away. I had no life and it's been given back to me and you are a big part of that.

In four months time I will have three years total abstinence from all my bad habits including cigarette smoking and am grateful to God and to all at Life where I feel quite at home because you are my family here in Newcastle now.

**Thank you
Denis Charles Lundall**

So what do 2 chefs, a neighbourhood pub and an art show all have in common?

They are all a part of the ministry of Life Church in Newcastle, Australia. While this Life Church may have far less people, they make up for it with a tremendous missional drive and desire. During our first trip to Australia Kevin Wilcock, the pastor of the church was our host. How do I describe Kevin? The only thing Kevin loves more than a good drink and a party is probably family, his church and Jesus! Kevin is a wild character; but he has a creative passion for helping people find their way back to God. In the few days that I spent with Kevin his Church did the following:

- ◆ They have hired two chefs on their staff so they can use their church facility to feed the homeless and hungry. Every week they serve more than 800 free hot meals.
- ◆ They opened up their church as an art gallery on Friday night with both Christian and non-Christian artists displaying their art for the community. One young man sold his very first painting. Kind of cool that an artist gets to launch his professional career in a church building.
- ◆ Kevin had a party in his neighbourhood on Saturday night he called, "Jazz in the Vines". He hired a local jazz band and invited 150 of his neighbours over for the evening. They all came with their food and their drink and a great time was had by everyone.

They announced they were starting a new service at the local pub called "The Kent" that would meet on Sunday nights. All this took place during the few days I was there... while holding a leadership conference! They were doing a lot more than that too! They have AA groups, SA groups, NA groups and more. They host jazz concerts with local professional jazz musicians at their church. I left his church inspired to be more missional, more engaged in the community and more intentional about using all our resources to reach out to the least, lost and lonely and help them find their way back to God!

Dave Ferguson is a Lead Pastor and Spiritual Entrepreneur with Community Christian Church Chicago Lincoln Square and the New-Thing Network.

For New CD pack orders send to:
Life Church * P.O Box 2158 * Dangar NSW 2309
Or Email your order with your credit card
details to: info@lifechurch.org.au



EPHESIANS Kevin Wilcock - \$35.00

A powerful 8 CD series. This is God's blue print for the church. Paul wrote this amazing letter in prison. It has been a great source of inspiration in building my personal life and the local church. May the revelations of the unsearchable riches of Christ and His church grab you.

LOVEDALE LONG LUNCH



SATURDAY 14TH MAY

COST: \$75.00

TIME: BUS LEAVES FROM NEWCASTLE @ 9.30AM

Kevin & Tracey would like to give you a special invitation to The Lovedale Long Lunch. Come and enjoy the sights and the flavours of the Hunter.

Stay overnight & attend Life Church & Pub Church

PUB CHURCH UPSTAIRS IN THE LIVING ROOM

@

THE KENT
BEAUMONT ST
HAMILTON

2 BEER
SERVICE
SUNDAY



6:00PM TO 7:15PM

15TH MAY

Artist: COCONUT TRIO

Booking is essential. Phone our office on: 4961 0211
or email us on: info@lifechurch.org.au

The Rev will be sharing briefly
after each service



OzReach

P.O. Box 2021, Dangar NSW 2309

www.ozreach.org

OzReach Conference— 19th, 22nd October

“INCARNATE.”

Building Local Missional Churches

with Billy Kennedy (UK), Kevin Wilcock, John Robinson, (Thailand) and Nikki Correia

FRIENDS IN MINISTRY

We are simply a kingdom of God based ministry that wants to provide fellowship, connection and influence for ministers, leaders of ministries and business owners and managers. Anyone wanting to know more about connecting to Ozreach as a group of churches, contact:
Kevin Wilcock on 0407 467 798

Wednesday 8th June 2011

with Syd & Sue Miller:

They will share on identifying signs of falling into adultery and the journey of coming through at The Briar Pub at 653 Moss Vale Road, Bowral on Wednesday 8th June from 6:30pm to 7:30pm. There is a limit of 30 people and cost is \$10.00 per person plus the cost of your meal.

Bookings are essential



GlobeReach some of the works we support overseas

PHILIPPINES - Alvin Bautista



We picked up Kev and Ryan at the airport late in the afternoon and drove for two hours up to Bulacan.

I'm so excited to see my long lost father in the Spirit again because it was ages not seeing him, six years not seeing me and thinking that Kev will not visit us again here but when I heard the news that he is coming back here to visit us my heart is very happy.

Kev is one of the people who imparts lots of things in my life to serve the Lord, how you live your life and how you enjoy life. I can say Kev is a champion. I see how he loves the Lord, life, and people which I admire him for the most.

Our 6th Southeast Asian Global Conference went well. There are over 90 people who

attended this conference from different churches. Kev talks about having a dynamic church and it's about having a freedom in the church. It was a great two day conference that brought divine moments of reconciliation, conviction, hope and unity.

Meeting Ryan is one of the best good things to share. I saw how passionate he is to serve the Lord. I know it's a different culture but I saw how he really wants to share the love of God to everyone. He was our speaker in our Youth Valentines Party and his testimony was very powerful and encouraged lots of young people.

There were over 30 young people who accept Jesus as their personal savior. Kev and Ryan were able to take me to Boracay and give me a holiday, thank you guys. I really had a great time with you both. It was great to hang with you and do partying with the world with good benefits. It was an amazing time with you guys. Me, my youth group, family, church mates and local

people had a great time with you guys!

God's Blessings

Alvin Bautista

acbautista_24@yahoo.com

Stop Press

Alvin is coming to Australia for about two and a half weeks with Lolit. They run an amazing ministry in the Philippines; an infant school of over 300 children in an extremely poor area and a church of over 200.

They run an annual conference for Pastors, and an annual youth camp and a kids camp.

Alvin and Lolit do loads of outreach among their community.

If this is something you would like to support contact me and I can arrange for you to connect to one of them from now until approx 20th May:

Kevin: 0407 467 798

Ken: (02) 4951 7445

Kevin

CAMBODIA-BURMA - Donna Byham



HERE & NOW
April 2011

"Joy releases to the extent that the capacity for woe does also."

Saysdaw U Jotika - Burmese Buddhist Monk

The last 3 months in Cambodia have consisted of many 10-hour days, 6 days a week. It has been a busy time and there have been many tears. Tears of tiredness, tears of loss, tears of sadness and solidarity

- ♦ the loss of Sao and Chantha as house parents of Joshua House,
- ♦ the sadness of disappointment of expectations not met,
- ♦ and tears of solidarity with those who are/have been hurt as a result of the many earthquakes and much violence the world is experiencing.

I've meditated on Psalm 23 and prayed that God would guide me in paths of righteousness for His Name sake. I've prayed that God would help me learn what it means to "desire mercy and not sacrifice" (Matthew

12), and to "take courage" and "not be afraid" (Mathew 14). But one thing I've seemed to have missed, one thing that I think I've needed but have lacked, is Joy.

Henri Nouwen said:

"Joy is the experience of knowing that you are unconditionally loved and that nothing - sickness, failure, emotional distress, oppression, war, or even death - can take that love away."

I know I have that love, I have a trust and a deep understanding that God is with me and within me, loves and values me. But over the last 3 months I have chosen sorrow instead of joy. Joy is a choice. I have the full measure of the joy of Christ within me (John 17), my joy can be complete (John 15), I just need to choose it.

As I reflect back on these last 3 months there have been many glimpses of joy that I chose to ignore. I chose to dwell on the sorrow instead. God help me to embrace both but instead of living out of sorrow let me live out of joy.

Praise Points:

- ♦ Eight years of heart felt service of Sao and Chantha with Joshua House,
- ♦ Positive changes for the future of Sure Destiny (Empower Asia) Cambodia,

- ♦ Friends that love and journey with me.

Prayer Points:

- ♦ Final week in Phnom Penh to finish well,
- ♦ Six weeks in Australia,
- ♦ To choose to live in joy.

While I'm in Australia I've a number of speaking engagements if you'd like to hear me share, please see the schedule below. If you'd like some more information just give me an email.

With much love

Donna

Email: donnabyham@gmail.com

Stop Press

Donna is here for about six weeks as of about now. She is really needing extra support for her work in both Cambodia and Burma.

She has an amazing ministry and is an incredible person. Donna can preach a great word. Please contact her on:

Email: donnabyham@gmail.com

Kevin