

One of the markers of cults is that there is no room for doubt.
Those who begin to ask questions, who wonder if this really is the truth.
Or if the leader really can be trusted are shammed, silenced, and eventually shunned.

This is not the way it is supposed to be in Christian churches.
In fact, our faith actually expects us to experience periods of doubt.
Many of our heroes in stories of the Bible constantly doubt.
And yet, when we find ourselves in moments of doubt it can be overwhelming.

I remember lying on the floor playing with Calvin when he was a baby.
I had just lost my job at the church.
I had no idea where we were going to live and what we were going to do.
I was filled with doubt that God could provide or that he had ever called me to ministry.

So, what can we do in these moments of doubt?
How can we respond without repressing, avoiding, or ignoring it?
Psalm 77 is going to give us the answer.
It actually gives us an antidote to our doubts.
Three things to remember that can help our doubts.

I. Remember you can be honest with God (v. 1-10).

Doubt often makes us forget this incredibly basic idea.
We can tell God how we feel.
We can be honest with Him about where our faith is at.
Because the first thing doubt does is make us doubt God.
It makes us question Him.

In the garden, in Genesis 3, the serpent Satan did not just want to make Eve question God's Word,
He wanted her to question if God was really good.
If God truly had their best interests at heart.
But this Psalm reminds us of the truth.

And it shows us in all the colorful detail that we can be fully honest with God.

We do not have to pretend everything is fine.

We do not have to put on a face.

We do not have to fake it until we make it.

This is what Asaph does in the Psalm.

Verse 1, **"I cry aloud to God, aloud to God, and he will hear me."**

He cries out to God.

It repeats it twice, not because God wasn't a good editor.

Because when we cry, it repeats itself.

We usually do not just cry once.

He is repeatedly crying out to God.

He knows He can cry because God listens.

And He listens no matter what we say.

He listens when we come humbly and have all the right words.

And He will listen even when we have a bad attitude.

Verse 2, **"In the day of my trouble, I seek the Lord; in the night my hand is stretched out without wearing; my soul refuses to be comforted."**

This is the right response.

He is seeking the Lord when things are falling apart.

But look at the second half of the verse.

His hands are stretched out in endless prayer.

He continues to pray and pray and pray.

I can't hold up my hands long, but he can.

Because he has no where to go but God.

This is awesome, we should model this.

We should imitate this.

He is doing everything right.

But **"my soul refuses to be comforted."**

He is doing the right things.

He is praying the right ways.

But it is not working.
His soul is still deeply troubled.
Hours in prayer, and it is not helping.
This is someone praying and saying honestly that it isn't helping.

You ever tell someone about something you were struggling with and they asked if you had prayed about it?
Sometimes that is a good question and convicting.
Other times the response is "I have been praying nonstop!"
All I have done is pray and nothing good is working.

Verse 3, **"When I remember God, I moan; when I meditate, my spirit faints. Selah"**

And he gets really really honest about how he feels about God right now.
When he thinks about God, it does not fill him with love and joy and peace. It makes him moan.
Thinking about God actually just brings pain.
Meditating on God's Word, reading the Bible just makes him tired.
He reads it over and over again and feels nothing but sorrow.
He is being honest about the pain.

I was there after having several rough experiences at churches that really hurt me.
It made it hard to even want to come to church.
Maybe that's been you.
Maybe it's hard for you to even come and do a church because it's stings.
It's hard for you to wanna come to the table and receive communion because of the wounds that you are caring
Psalm 77 reminds us, you can tell God that.
You can tell him how angry you are. You can tell him how dumb prayer seems. You can just be honest. He can take it.

Verse 4, **"You hold my eyelids open; I am so troubled that I cannot speak."**

He actually gets a little accusatory towards God.
It seems as if he is accusing God of keeping him from being able to sleep.
He blames God for not being able to sleep.

Verse 5, **"I consider the days of old, the years long ago."**

It hurts because he remembers when it wasn't always like this.
He can think back and remember the times that God responded that God granted sleep that God answered the prayer.
But that isn't right now.

Verse 6, **"I said, "Let me remember my song in the night; let me meditate in my heart." Then my spirit made a diligent search."**

This here is a little wishy-washy.
Cause he starts trying to do the right thing to remember.
It was to remember the times that he would sing and praise the Lord when he fell asleep.
And he decides to sit down with his heart and search out the Lord to remember the good old days.
But it doesn't work and it doesn't last.
Quickly moves back into complaining

Verse 7, **"Will the Lord spurn forever, and never again be favorable?"**

He wonders and asked if God will ever show him favor again.
He wonders if God will ever bless him again.

Verse 8, **"Has his steadfast love forever ceased? Are his promises at an end for all time?"**

He wonders if God's agape never ending, endless love has just ended and gone away.
He wonders and asked God if He's no longer keeping any of those promises that He allegedly made to others.

Verse 9, **"Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has he in anger shut up his compassion? Selah"**

He wonders if God is no longer gracious or just angry at him and He's no longer showing compassionate love and mercy.

These are unbelievably serious accusations to lob at God.

He is asking and wondering if God is a liar.

If God has changed.

If all of God's Word is nothing more than lies.

Verse 10, **"Then I said, 'I will appeal to this, to the years of the right hand of the Most High.'"**

He says, he will ask God all of these questions to his face.

What we need to see here into notice and remember is that you are allowed to question God.

We serve a God who is big enough to handle your honest feelings.

We serve a God who is big enough that He already knows what you think.

He already knows what you are wrestling with and what He wants is for you to be honest about it.

This is in a Psalm, which means we are allowed to pray like this we are allowed to sing songs of worship like this is Israel would've done.

Sometimes people get in their mind that doubt makes them weak.

That it's only the strong Christians, who never forget or who never doubt God.

And that if they have questions and worries and it means that something is terribly wrong.

God's word tells us that we can and we should be honest with Him about what's going on.

If you struggle with doubt, what you feel is normal and you are not the first person to feel it.

And one of the only ways to ever get through it and to get to the other side.

It's not by faking it until you make it.

It's not by pretending it's not by putting on a big face.

It is just by being honest by God.

We can't have a relationship with God or a relationship with Jesus if we're lying to him and we're not being honest about what's going on.

It's the first thing that we need to do when you have doubt is to just be honest.

To speak it aloud to say it to God

There are plenty of examples in the Scriptures of people coming to God and being honest with their doubts.

To be honest with God about their anger, their confusion, and their disagreement with him.

Job sat and said he would question God and ask why he would allow these terrible things to happen to him.

Habakkuk went up in a tower and said he wasn't gonna leave until God answered why He was gonna let these wicked nations, prosper and punish His people.

God answered both of them.

Now God set them straight somewhat

But God didn't tell them "Don't be that honest with me."

When you have doubt, the first thing is to be honest with God.

You will never get through it without facing it.

Realize it is normal. And you probably should have periodic doubt if you are taking the Bible, God, and theology seriously.

But, don't forget to be honest.

II. Remember what God has done (v. 11-15).

Doubt can be blinding and make us forget.

It can make our circumstances feel like the most important thing in the world.

And it can make us forget thousands of years of God's faithfulness.

Verse 11, **"I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your wonders of old."**

We do not just need to remember the past.

But we need to remember the old things that God has done.

This is what we need to do too.

To go through all the other promises that God has made.

To go through all the other things that God has done.

And all the other miracles He has worked.

Then compare that to now and ask if this will be the first time God fails.

I had to do that laying on the floor next to Calvin.

I thought back to Gideon, Moses, and Joseph.

All called by God, who lost their whole army, left their whole family, and were sold into slavery despite being called by God.

I went back through the Scriptures asking if I was going to be the only person in history that God would abandon.

Verse 12, **"I will ponder all your work and meditate on your mighty deeds."**

He's looking at all of God has done and meditating on the mighty exciting things that in the past.

This generally is something that I think is helpful for us was helpful for me when we just go back through God's word.

Make a list of all the things that God has done.

Make a list of all the miracles that God has worked.

Write down all the promises that God kept especially when it looks like he wouldn't.

Just go off of your memory before you even get into every part of the Bible.

Think of the widow who was baking her and her son's last meal because they were going to starve to death and that day the prophet came to their door and fed them.

Think of the man who came to Jesus begging because his daughter was going to die and when he got home, he found out it was too late. His worst fears had come true. Jesus didn't come fast enough, and yet Jesus brought her back to life.

Think of the time that Jonah tried to run far away from God and cast himself into the sea so that he could die because he was so frustrated with God and yet God sent a whale to preserve his life because He loved him and wanted to save him from himself

The God of all of those miracles, the God, who has kept every promise that He has ever made is gonna do it again.
And remembering and reflecting on what it is that we know God has done can help us when we wonder if He can it again.

I remember when I was younger I used to think that if I could just see a miracle that would really help me.

I struggled with doubt, and I thought man if I could just see God heal somebody that that would do it and then I saw God miraculously heal somebody and didn't do it.

And then I thought man, if I could just speak in tongues if I just had incredible spiritual gifts that would help me just be full of the Holy Spirit I would never doubt and should be the best Christian ever and I did speak in tongues and it didn't fix it.

You see it all throughout the Scriptures God does something amazing and then they forget.

Jesus feeds the 5000 and then immediately they run out of food and the disciples are hungry.

And Jesus tries to walk him through and remind them of what he just did and the disciples are like. I don't understand what you're talking about. We know you fed those people there, but we're hungry now.

Jesus was trying to get His disciples to do what God's ord wants us to do. We need to remember all the times that God has been faithful for and everything that God has done in the past.

Verse 13, **"Your way, O God, is holy. What god is great like our God?"**

It's a wonderful question because it's not just praising that our God is unbelievable and great and worthy.

What does also is doing is saying you don't like this God what other one do you have?

Take your doubts to their logical conclusion.

Maybe you're not sure if God loves you.

Maybe you aren't sure if God's Word is right on sexuality.

Maybe you aren't sure we can trust the Bible at all or if God is even real.

What other god is great like our God?

Do you wanna follow the god of Buddhism that says suffering isn't real and pleasure and goodness isn't real and all we need to do is try to detach from everything in life and not care about anything and if we can just reach that Nirvana moment then we get to just become one with the universe and that's it.

Does that sound better? Is that gonna help you when your child dies unexpectedly?

OK, what about the worlds primary belief that everyone can just do whatever they want and none of it really matters because we just make our own meaning up and when we die, nothing happens?

Is that better than the god that we have in Jesus?

Go search go look after other gods

There are places in scripture tells them go run to those run to your idols worship. Then when that fails and none of it works come back to me and I'll forgive you.

I think of it is one of my favorite moments when Jesus is teaching something hard and the crowd doesn't like it and they leave. Jesus looks at the disciples. Ask them if they're gonna leave too and they just say where else are we gonna go? You have the words of eternal life.

I love it because it's honest, because it's acknowledging who Jesus is. And it's something I have to say and I have prayed many times in my life. Times, I have been angry at God because He hasn't shown up the way that I thought he would. Because He hasn't provided for me in the way that I thought He would. Because He's allowed some in incredibly difficult circumstance in my life something I thought that I should never have to face. And over and over I come to stay God where else can I go? You're the only one who has eternal life. It's okay to doubt, to be honest. But remember, He is the only true God and the only place to go.

Verse 14, **"You are the God who works wonders; you have made known your might among the peoples."**

He continues to just pray that we do serve the God who works wonders. We do serve the God who makes Himself known among His people He comes and he works miracles and ways that they know that He loves him and that they know He is here

Verse 15, **"You with your arm redeemed your people, the children of Jacob and Joseph. Selah"**

They have been redeemed. The children of Jacob and Joseph have been purchased and ransom by God. Which story does that refer to? there's too many it's almost impossible to answer

It could be referring to the children of Jacob and Joseph, who were stuck in slavery for hundreds of years.

Hundreds of years, it looked like God abandon them and forgot them, and they would never return to the promised land.

Until God called Moses out of the burning bush, and worked a miracle after a miracle after a miracle to bring them home.

Could we have God ransom and redeemed his people when they were taken and enslaved and the time of the judges.

Almost a dozen different times when they were captured, and God came and redeemed them.

It could be the time of Babylonian captivity when they were taken and removed and taking all the way out of the land to a far away, placing God went to that place, and he brought them home.

Most of all could be the way that He redeemed his people to send Jesus Christ, his son to save us not just from the physical suffering that we would face from the eternal.

How Jesus redeemed us all from sin and death forever.

We need to remember the gospel.

And when you doubt go through God's word and remind yourself of the stories.

Another good thing to do would be to remind yourself of just the stories in your own life.

When you find yourself down and you find yourself struggling, go back through your own story and remind yourself of all the times that you've seen God show up.

Remind yourself if the prayers that you prayed

The big ones that you can never forget and even the small ones of the time not long, where my family prayed for a cardinal out our back window with a broken wing that looked like it would die or get eaten by cats.

And we prayed for that bird and God healed it.

God did it, but if we don't remind ourselves periodically one day we will forget, and no one will remember.

So when you when you're down, remind yourself of all that God has done.

III. Remember to behold God (v. 16-20).

We do need to remember to behold God.

Some of you might remember this because it was the whole point of one Revelation 4 in the throne room of God.

It encourages that we just need to look at God and just behold him and stop trying to figure everything out and wrestle with everything in their times we just need to sit and we just need to look at him.

The same thing is true I think when we find ourselves doubting.

Sometimes we just need to be quiet and just look at God.

And it seems like this is part of what the Psalmist does in verse 16, **"When the waters saw you, O God, when the waters saw you, they were afraid; indeed, the deep trembled."**

So he talks about how when God delivered Israel, the water saw God was afraid.

It is this beautiful depiction and a poetic description of God taking His people through the sea and of the plagues that happen.

And it really just begins with just the waters look and behold God and then look what happens.

It's not like God comes up and tells the water OK water. It's your time to go over here and you go over here and make things happen. It is just that creation beholding Him and it changes them.

The red sea didn't split because the big wind came in or conditions just happened to be perfect. It happened because they held God and they moved.

The lightning didn't strike on the mountain just because of the perfect meteorological conditions, but because they beheld and saw God.

When you look to God, when you behold God, it will change you.
It changes you.

And a true of us and it's true even creation.
That when creation sees God it is changed.
And if that is true for the water and the winds and the waves, how much more is that true for us who can behold, you can see God with our eyes and hear Him with our ears

I love verse 19, **"Your way was through the sea, your path through the great waters; yet your footprints were unseen."**

They don't get to see everything of God.
They don't get to see His footprints, but they know that He led His people through the sea, and through the great waters and they followed Him.
We behold part of God but not the whole thing.

Verse 20, **"You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron."**

That God has led, and God is leading his people like sheep because he is a good Shepherd. I let them with Moses and Aaron.
Ultimately, when we are doubting what we need to do is to just look at God and see Him.
Because every time that we do that it changes us and every time we do, it strengthens our faith.

Now we can see, we can look at God and behold him in His word as we read it ourselves as we hear it read in the local church.
We can behold the body of Christ as we gather as the body of Christ it helps us behold Jesus.
We have behold Jesus, as we hear His word proclaimed, and the gospel preached.
We can be hold God, as we see the image of God and another human being and every face that we see as we go throughout our lives.
We can behold God as we come to him in prayer and a contemplation, meditating on his words and meditate on what he has done there in the privacy of our own prayer clauses we can see Him.

We have a God when we come to the table and we look at the bread and the body of Christ that was broken and the cup in the blood that was spilled.

And every single time that we look, and we behold him, it changes us. You cannot look and behold God, and not be changed anymore than you could stand at the top of Mount Everest and look out in the world and be amazed and moved.

Now does beholding God take away all of your doubts forever now. Does beholding God even fix the moment of struggle that you were feeling? No.

But every time you do, behold, Jesus, it makes you a little bit more like Jesus.

One of my roommates in college was an aspiring bodybuilder, and he was massive. So big he almost looked and acted like a cartoon character. He could balance a giant water bottle just on his chest when he flexed, and it was all muscle.

He didn't get that muscular by going to the gym one time.

His biceps didn't get that big because he did one really big curl.

It took thousands of reps over countless hours over years that slowly shaped and sculpted his body into this incredible image.

It was a similar way in our faith in our walk with Jesus you'll become just like Jesus from one awesome experience.

And you're not gonna conquer your doubts and grow in your faith just from one moment of remembrance.

A lot of it is gonna happen slow one rep at a time one prayer at a time one recounting what God is done at a time as we slowly grow in our faith.

The antidote to doubt is remembering to be honest, remembering what God has done and remembering to behold God.

And each act of remembrance slowly makes us more like Christ.

One moment at a time.