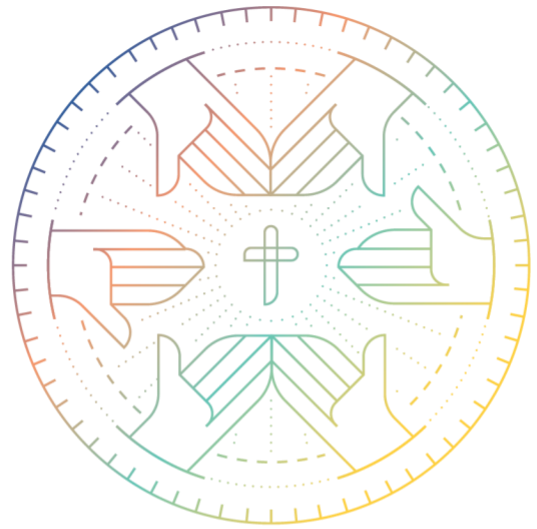


Group Life.

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ICEBREAKER (10 MINUTES)

What's one aspect of Christianity that seems to draw the most doubt among those outside the Church?

OR

Has there ever been a time in your life when you deeply struggled with doubt? What were the circumstances and how did you get through that season?

INTRODUCTION (5-10 MINUTES)

Read John 20:19-29.

What most stood out to you from this week's sermon?

Did the list of "all-star" doubters from the Bible surprise you? Were there others you could add? What does that list tell us in terms of our own doubt and God's ability to work with our doubts?

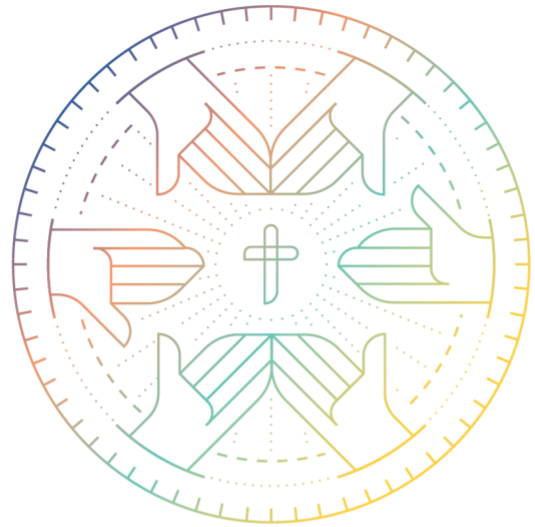
HOST Guidance: We don't need to have it all figured out in order to be used by God in his Kingdom. God uses men and women in incredible ways in spite of their weaknesses or inadequacies. We will never have a perfect faith in this life, yet we trust that God is working his purpose out in our lives.

INTO THE WORD (20 MINUTES)

Read Mark 9:21-25. What did the father mean when he said, "I believe, help my unbelief!"? How did Jesus respond to the father? What can this brief exchange teach us about doubt?

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HOST Guidance: The man seemed to be expressing the delicate balance we sometimes feel between believing and doubt. We wonder if we really are convinced or if our faith is adequate. We want Jesus to look past any unbelief that may be hiding in our hearts and help us to trust him completely.

Read James 1:5-8. How does this passage expand our understanding of doubt? Does it address the dangers of doubt or the effects of doubt? What does it mean to “ask in faith”?

HOST Guidance: When we come to God, we must not come full of doubt as to God’s ability or willingness to answer our prayer. If we do not trust in God’s goodness and his ability to answer our prayer, then why come at all? Doubt can create instability, confusion, uncertainty, which work together to make our lives unstable. Rather, we should “ask in faith,” meaning come to God with our prayers believing that he loves us and wants what is best in our lives, and that he has the power to bring about that good.

Read Romans 14:1-4 and Jude 1:22. How do these verses help us to understand our response to people struggling with doubt, hesitation or confusion in their faith?

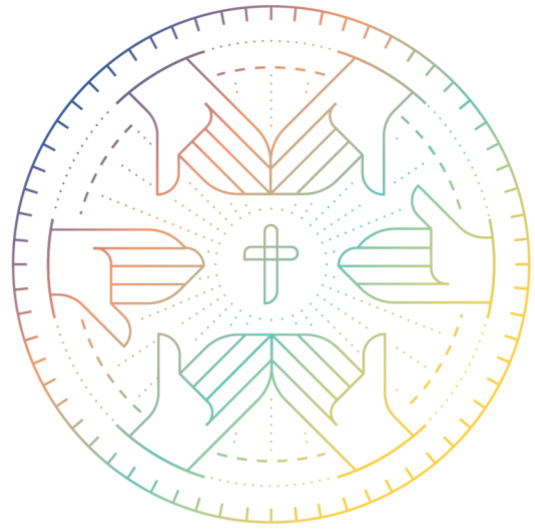
HOST Guidance: In this passage, the person who is “weak in faith” can refer to someone doubting. He or she is not fully convinced in their heart. The one who is convinced, i.e. with no doubts, should not quarrel, judge or disregard the person with doubts. We all have one Master whom we are accountable to, so we should exercise mercy toward the person who is weak.

Read 1 Cor. 13:9, Deut. 29:29 and Luke 8:17. How do these verses add to our understanding of doubt or uncertainty?

HOST Guidance: God has not told us everything that will ultimately be known. What he has revealed to us is ours but what he has not is his own. We know in part and we believe incompletely; and we look forward to the day when God will make all things known to us. In the

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meantime, we trust. We trust God's nature as good and loving and we hold our doubts before him with open hands.

APPLICATION (15 MINUTES)

Host Guidance: Below are several separate application questions for your group to consider and discuss. Choose as many questions as you have time to discuss, but don't feel pressure to cover them all.

Based on the sermon, what advice would you give to someone who is struggling with doubt in their Christian faith?

On a scale of 1-10, 1 being not very hard and 10 being really hard, how hard are you on yourself when you have doubts? Did this message help you to go easier on yourself? Remember, "Doubt is as common to mankind as sunsets are to the horizon."

How does it make you feel to hear Jesus say, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed"?

How can we turn doubt into an opportunity for spiritual growth and a stronger faith? Jesus met Thomas squarely in the midst of his doubt. Where do you need God to meet you today? What assurance do you lack? Is there a way to trade your doubt for trust?

PRAYER (10 MINUTES)

Our Savior and Lord Jesus, we hear the story of Thomas and his doubts and we are so grateful for how it encourages us. We cannot be perfect in our faith and we recognize that it wavers now and then. You have shown us that doubts do not disqualify us and that you long to satisfy our doubts with your assurances. Meet us today where we are- not where we wish we were. Thank you for your love, compassion and understanding and for being our Good Shepherd. Amen.