

WEEK 31:

ENGAGING THE SKEPTIC

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE:

Luke 11:29-32

RELATED SCRIPTURES:

1 Kings 10:1-13, 2 Chronicles 9:1-12, Jonah,
Matthew 12:38-42, Mark 8:1-12,
Luke 11:14-23, John 6, Romans 1:18-23, 2 Peter 3:15

“A faith without some doubts is like a human body without any antibodies in it. People who go through life too busy or indifferent to ask hard questions about why they believe as they do will find themselves defenseless against either the experience of tragedy or the probing questions of a smart skeptic. A person’s faith can collapse almost overnight if she has failed over the years to listen to her own doubts, which should only be discarded after long reflection. Believers should acknowledge and wrestle with doubts—not only their own, but their friends’ and neighbors’.

- Tim Keller

“You can’t go on ‘seeing through’ things forever. The whole point of seeing through something is see something through it. To ‘see through’ all things is the same as not to see.”

- C.S. Lewis

PERSONAL STUDY:

With which doubts have you wrestled or do you currently wrestle? Are your doubts more personal doubts related to suffering or disappointment or are they more intellectual doubts related to the big questions of the universe?

What doubts do your friends, family and coworkers have about Jesus?

Read Luke 11:29-32 and 11:14-16. What is Jesus’ main point here? Who is Jesus describing as those who “seek for a sign”? Have you ever found yourself asking or demanding that God do something to prove Himself to you? When and why?

Read Luke 11:31, 1 Kings 10:1-13 and 2 Chronicles 9:1-12. Why does Jesus say the queen of the South (the Queen of Sheba) will condemn this generation? How much work have you put into seeking out God’s answers for your questions and doubts?

Read Luke 11:29-30 + 32. (If you’re not familiar go read the book of Jonah and check out the Midtown sermon series “A Whale of a Tale” from 2009.) Why does Jesus say the men of Nineveh will condemn this generation? How was Jonah a small foreshadowing of Jesus?

How do you respond when a friend or family member has doubts about Jesus?

SERMON NOTES:



LIFEGROUP DISCUSSION:

What doubts make following and trusting Jesus difficult? How do you respond to your doubts?



Read Luke 11:29-32. What stood out from the sermon? Why does Jesus confront these people about their doubts and skepticisms?

Read Romans 1:18-23. What spiritual realities hide beneath our doubts? How do we find the hidden “belief” that is under our doubts?



Read 1 Peter 3:14-16. In light of Luke 11:29-32, Romans 1:18 and 1 Peter 3:14-16, how should we approach those with doubts about Jesus? What does it look like to be ready to give an answer “with gentleness and respect”?

How does the gospel motivate patience and sincerity in engaging our friend’s doubts and skepticisms?

Spend some time praying for God to help us deal with our own doubts and skepticisms. Ask God’s Spirit to help us see the beliefs under our doubts and to equip us to answer our friend’s doubts with patience, gentleness and respect.

