

DEEP SIX STUDY

October 25th, 2026

Awakening – “Questions That Make Us Walk Away”

MESSAGE HIGHLIGHTS *(You can view the full message online at capecodchurch.com/watch)*

Opening: We’ve been studying the story of Barnabas Bates, the young Baptist preacher who ignited the Cape Cod Awakening in 1809. In 1819, just 10 years later, he publicly denounced his faith from the pulpit of the church he was leading in Bristol, RI. How does that happen? For Bates, like many others, his doubts led to questions that made him walk away. So what are we supposed to do with those questions?

1. The Questions That Make Us Walk Away (Luke 7:18-20)

- We might think that “If I was there with Jesus when he walked the earth, I wouldn’t have had any doubts.” It turns out, though, that even those closest to Jesus struggled with doubts and questions – including Jesus’ own cousin, John the Baptist.
- John, who had baptized Jesus and even announced him as the Messiah, was unjustly imprisoned by Herod Antipas, the Jewish king. After wasting away in prison for over a year, John began to question who Jesus was (because Jesus hadn’t come to rescue him) and sent two of his own disciples to ask Jesus, “Are you the Messiah, or should we keep looking for someone else?”
- Here’s the thing about doubts and questions about faith: they almost always result from our circumstances. We can come to believe that our faith is meant to produce “good” circumstances for us, and when our situation changes it can challenge our notions of who God is.
- Often, the problem is that we’ve inherited images and ideas about who God is that don’t really match what’s in the Bible. If we trust those “Gods” we’re prone to disappointment and disillusionment if they don’t come through for us. Here are a few examples of unbiblical “Gods”:
 - a. The Genie God – The desires of my heart are good and pure, so God is going to give me everything I need and ask for (if I just pray with enough faith).
 - b. The Feel-Good God – If I’m faithful to God, he’ll ensure that my life is stress-free and happy.
 - c. The Feel-Bad God – God may love me, but I know he doesn’t *like* me – because he knows how messed up my life is. So why try?
 - d. The Anti-Science God – Teaching from our youth can set up a false dichotomy that believing in God requires denial of scientific evidence about the world.
 - e. Simple God – We can assume that God requires blind faith and a simple approach to trusting him.

2. Answers On the Way Back

- John’s questions from prison grew out of his circumstances – he couldn’t understand why Jesus, if he was in fact the Messiah, wasn’t taking charge as king of the world. But that passage in Luke doesn’t end with John’s questions; Jesus answers them in a beautiful (and instructive) way:
 - a. Focus on Jesus (Luke 7:21-22 ^{NIV}) – Jesus’ response to John starts with a reminder of what he (Jesus) had been doing: miraculously healing people. His message: “Focus on who I am and what I’ve done.” The same is true for us; focus on who Jesus is and what he did: he rose from the dead.
 - b. Be Honest with Your Doubt (Luke 7:23 ^{NIV}) – God is not offended by our doubts and questions; Jesus can take it, so honestly bring them to him.

- c. Don't Let Doubt Be a Destination (Luke 7:24-28^{NIV}) – Our doubts and questions may be part of our journey, but they can't be allowed to be our destination. Let them bring you to Jesus.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE

These passages may provide additional insights related to the subject of this week's message. All verses are NLT unless otherwise noted.

Isaiah 35:4-6; Matthew 3:1-6; Matthew 7:7-8; Luke 24:36-40; John 1:29-34; John 20:24-29

Video of the Week: [The Messiah](#) by Bible Project

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Has there been a point in your adult life where you've doubted that God wasn't who you were led to believe he was? What were the circumstances surrounding that time of doubt?
2. What do you think are some of the most common (unanswered) questions that lead people away from the Christian faith?
3. Read Luke 7:18-19 again. If John's disciples "told John about everything Jesus was doing," why do you think John was still uncertain about whether Jesus was "the Messiah we've been expecting"?
4. Of the five false "Gods" highlighted in the message, which one are you most prone to allow yourself to believe is real? Explain your answer.
5. Jesus' answer to John can be seen as his answer to our questions as well: "Focus on me, and on what I've done." How does simply focusing on Jesus' Resurrection help to overcome our doubts and questions about science, disappointment, circumstances, etc.?
6. What does it look like if we allow our doubts about faith to become the "destination" of our lives?