



Sermon – February 13, 2022
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Verses Covered This Week

Genesis 3:1 – 5

Revelation 12:9

Genesis 2:16-17

2 Corinthians 2:11

2 Corinthians 11:3

Mark 9:23 – 24, 29

Let me invite you to open your Bibles with me back to Genesis. We're going to be in Genesis 3 this morning starting in verse 1. And if you're a guest with us, whether watching online or here in the room for the first time, welcome home. We come to God's word each week declaring that He is faithful, that He has not failed us yet. Which is exactly the word we need coming to the text this morning. Because in the midst of the reality that God doesn't fail, we see for the very first time, starting here in Genesis 3, the way that man fails God over and over again. So let's think of what's been going on. As we journeyed through Genesis the last few weeks, we've seen this story of creation. How God creates all things. But now we're moving from a story of creation to a story of corruption. From a story of our identity, now to a story of our insurrection. A story of our rule, now to a story of rebellion. And right here in the text, we see where everything changes. But before we dive into God's word, I want you to take your eyes off of me for a minute and just look around the room at somebody on the other side of the room from you. I want you to see them. Make a, look at a few different people that are here. Don't they look so nice this morning? They got dressed up, they're ready to go, and it looks like everybody around you has their life together. Like everything is on track. And you might walk in here this morning feeling as if you're the only one who's hanging on by a thread, overwhelmed, discouraged, dismayed. Perhaps this morning filled with doubt. And I don't know what kind of doubt it may be for you, does anybody else kind of caught off guard by those snowflakes that dropped yesterday? It was like little pieces of cotton candy falling from the sky and then immediately dissolving on the ground. And I think I had a little PTSD from last year because it was this weekend when the snow started falling that shut the city down for a week. And whether the doubt you are encountering in your life are like those big flakes yesterday that dropped for a moment and are gone in an instant, or is the kind of lingering doubt that remains, that hardens, that causes difficulty in your life like what happened in that ice storm last year; this text has a word for us. Because right here at the beginning of Genesis 3, we see the introduction of doubt.

You see, our tendency when we come to Genesis 3 is we want to get right to the forbidden fruit in verses 6 and 7. But here's the problem. We need to recognize that what Satan does is he uses doubt to drive us towards disobedience. That forbidden fruit is only attractive when it is in the fertile soil of forgotten faith. We shouldn't be surprised that you and I face doubt in this world. I mean, even those that were closest to Jesus struggled with doubt. The disciples themselves. I mean if you think about all the things that happened. When they're there in the boat with Jesus travelling upon the sea and when the waves spin up, they are filled with a doubt that distrusts His ability to stop it. Or after Jesus is arrested, we know Peter doubted enough that he denied Jesus three times. Even after His resurrection, Thomas doubts Jesus enough that he disbelieves that He could be real unless he sees Him with his own eyes. There is this constant pull towards doubt and what's going to happen in Genesis 3 is it shows us why. It shows how it comes into the world and what it looks like for us to respond to doubt in a way that's pleasing to God.

So let's see how this text unfolds here. Genesis 3 beginning in verse 1.

¹Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" ²And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³but God said, 'You shall not eat of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die'." ⁴But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. ⁵For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Let's pray together.

Father, in this time, Lord, we're coming to You praying that You would open our eyes. Not in the way that Satan declares for Eve to do here, in a way that blinds her, but that You would open us to the truth, God, the truth of Your word. The truth that You are wise. The truth that Your ways are sure. That You are worthy of trust, God. Lord, would You meet our doubting hearts and fill us with faith. And we ask this in Christ's name. Amen.

Well, I faced a crisis of faith when I was in High School. You've heard me share some of my story in the past. I came to know Christ when I was an 8-year-old and I had a breakthrough in my faith in the 8th grade. And for a season of time, from when I was 10 until 16, we were exiled outside the state of Texas living in Connecticut. Maybe you've heard me talk about some of this before. And it was a hard season for us. And when I got to 10th grade, a crisis of faith showed up on my doorstep. And it wasn't because I was living there in Connecticut where there weren't many believers. It wasn't because I was surrounded by a group of friends, some of whom were a bad influence. What actually provoked the crisis of faith wasn't the difficult season we lived in in Connecticut; it was actually when we moved back to Texas in the middle of my sophomore year. So we moved to Houston and I left a place where on every corner there was a bagel shop and every hat had a Yankees cap on, every head had a Yankees cap on. And I moved to a place where we got to it, every corner had a church on it. And everybody had Aggie gear or Astros gear or Longhorns gear. And in that moment, everything changed for me. Everything. I had everything going for me where I was. Now I had nothing. I had an identity. I had a direction. I had a purpose in my life. But now, when I stepped into a new space, it was all gone. The identity was gone. I lost my identity. I lost my direction. And I also most spiritually lost my

way. I wonder, have you experienced a season like that in your life. Maybe it was back in high school. Maybe it's for you right now. Maybe it is later on in life. But we've all had those moments where we feel that sense of loss. And in that time period, what's happening in our hearts? We're questioning the goodness of God. Why would He allow this? Why would He do this? Why would this happen? And what we're going to find is Genesis 3 gives us the answer to that question. Because what it's going to show us is how satan sows doubt in our lives. But it's also going to give us a window into how to respond when doubt arrives. We know what's happening here in Genesis 3. We so often jump straight to that first sin with Eve taking that bite from the fruit. But what satan is doing, is he's tilling the soil of our heart. Readyng her for the rebellion that he is pulling her towards. And the way he does it is by doubt. Doubt is the gateway to deception. And what we find here is that doubt will often slither into your life unnoticed and whisper in your ear just like it does to Eve. And if we want to find lasting victory in our spiritual lives, then we need to recognize that there are 3 ways that the serpent uses doubt to test our devotion to God. And I want you to see the first one back in verse 1.

So you'll notice with me to start off that satan tests our devotion by causing us to doubt the words of God. So a new character steps into the story here right at the beginning of verse 1. You see who it is? The serpent. So if this was like a movie, all of a sudden the sound track would shift, the lights would dim, you'd have this cinematic entrance of the villain taking the stage for the first time. This is the moment. But how does he come into Eden? It's an invasion taking place into the throne room of the kingdom of God and how does it occur? When this invasion happens, it's not as if it comes with a bunch of fanfare, as if the serpent is mustering an army on the borders of our heart ready to invade through force. Instead, what we find here with the serpent and with Eve is that it's as if he has secretly injected a sleeper cell into the psyche of Eve. It's going to drive her to doubt. It's going to open her to deception. That is the way that this serpent operates. And we wouldn't be surprised by that because when you look back at verse 1, it describes this serpent as crafty, cunning, deceptive. And that's what we see as he prompts her to doubt the word of God. Now who is this serpent? You're not going to find a clear answer here in Genesis. But what we do know is that God has commanded Adam and Eve to take dominion over all the beasts of the field including this animal right here. And yet now this animal is at war with the words of command that God has given to them. You'll see on the screen the way that Revelation 12:9 describes who this serpent is. The New Testament makes clear that this is not just some random animal. Instead, it tells us the identity of the serpent. Revelation 12:9 says this:

⁹And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and satan, the deceiver of the whole world

So the apostle John is crystal clear that this beast in Genesis 3 is satan himself. This real, living, demonic force who the Bible describes as the prince of the power of the air. The god of this world. The father of lies or as you see in Revelation 12:9 he is the one who is the deceiver of the whole world. And his opening _____ comes through the demonic possession of a serpent, a snake. Now why is it that he would choose a snake as the animal to possess? Well, I love the way that one scholar put it. Here's what he said.

The serpent is a mobile digestive tract that swallows its prey whole; in this sense the serpent stands for pure appetite. At the same time, the serpent is cold, steely-eyed, and unblinking. In this respect, he is the image of pure attentiveness and icy calculation.

In other words, the serpent is the perfect picture of satan's devices. He is crafty and cold. He is deceptive, yet detached. And that's exactly what we see here with the snake described in Genesis 3:1. And what happens when he comes on the scene? What does this serpent do? What he does is he casts doubt on the greatness of God by launching a war of words. Look at how he does it there. Maybe he was even speaking in parseltongue. Who knows? Verse 1:

¹ He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?"

Remember something, Genesis 1 and 2, how does God create the universe? He creates the world with a word. A word that John later tells us will become flesh and dwell among us. He brings order from the chaos. He organizes it through a word. But now that word from God is met by a word against God. And the same way that words were brought about to bring creation, now words are coming in warfare to bring about corruption. That's what we find taking place here. The serpent imitates, he parodies God in order to lead His image-bearers away from Him. And how does he do it? He does it not through a statement but through a question. Did God actually say? Have you ever noticed how effective it is to make a statement by asking a question? So maybe for some of you guys, you've been getting ready, maybe it was this morning coming to church and you come out dressed from the closet and your wife looks at you and says, "Are you really going to wear that?" It's a question, but it's a statement, right? Or for some of you that are in school at A&M or Blinn and you're thinking about going out on that follow-up date with that guy or that girl and a roommate comes to you and says, "Are you really considering going back out with them again?" They're saying something to you in the form of a question. And so often, the reason that a question can be effective in that moment is because statements can cause you to be defensive. But questions can bypass our defenses to foster doubts. And that's what the serpent is doing. He is stoking doubt in the word of God. Has God really said? And as he does that, he is testing our devotion. Testing our commitment to the word of God, the revelation of God, the truth of God. Ultimately the greatness of God in our lives. But I want you to notice there's something else going on here.

Look back one chapter in the passage to Genesis 2:16. Because when satan asks the question, he is actually twisting the original command that God gave her and to Adam. So look at Genesis 2:16. It says:

¹⁶... "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden,

Now look back at Genesis 3:1 and I want you to see the way he twists it. So God in 2:16 says, "You may eat of every tree in the garden." Now look back at 3:1. It says: "You shall not eat of any tree in the garden." In other words, what God limits to one tree, there is one tree in the garden that is off limits, satan expands to all of them. He extends the restrictions of God's command. Why does he do that? Because he's introducing a tinge of falsehood to drive a wedge between God and the one made in His image to separate us from His word. He twists that in order to lead us to death instead of life. And that may be the first time this shows up in the

Scripture, but we see this pull towards doubting the word of God appear over and over again throughout the Bible. I mean, just think about the way that it shows up. We doubt the greatness of God whenever Satan brings that deception into our life. It shows up, for example, in the wilderness as Israel dances around the golden calf. They are doubting the greatness of God. Or when the crowds are surrounding Jesus shouting, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” They are doubting the greatness of God. Or when the skeptics are mocking Jesus while He’s on the cross and saying, “He can save others but He can’t save Himself.” They are doubting the greatness of God. Questioning the word of God. What started in Genesis 3 doesn’t stay there. And at the core of this doubt is the question, is God really powerful enough to keep His promises, to meet my needs, and to do what He says He’s going to do? That’s what Satan is asking her. Can He keep His promises? Can He be trusted? Can His word be followed. He sows doubt in her heart in the same way that he seeks to sow doubt in the word of God in each one of our hearts today. I mean, just think about it. Think about what happens when the relationship progresses with that guy or that girl and we are tempted to doubt the word of God that calls us to purity by wrestling with the question, “How far is too far?” Or when money gets tight, we’re wrestling with how we can give whenever we need to keep more for ourselves and we’re wrestling with being a cheerful giver and how much is too much. Or when those kids are misbehaving and you’re grappling with frustration at them and you know the Bible causes you to be, calls you to be kind towards your children and you’re wrestling with how harsh is too harsh. It’s the same serpent knocking on the door of your heart, driving you to doubt God’s word just as he did with Eve in Eden. But this is not the only doubt that the serpent sows in her life and in ours. So I want you to continue on with me now down in verse 2.

We’re going to see a second way that Satan tests our devotion. It goes like this: Satan tests our devotion by causing us to doubt the wisdom of God. So look back at verse 2. It says:

²And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden,
³but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’”

So notice what happens here. The serpent doesn’t just cause us to doubt the word of God, but also to doubt the wisdom of God. And that’s why he says, that she says in response to him in verse 2, that the command said, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden.” In other words, Eve turns a question into a conversation. As the serpent questions what God said, she starts to question what God meant. Why did He command this? What did He have in mind? Was there truly wisdom behind what she was commanded to do? At the moment, she may not even realize that she is questioning God’s wisdom at all. She may not realize that even now she’s being tracked by a predator. But that is precisely what is taking place. And something else noteworthy happens here. So hold your spot, look back in the book of Genesis, one chapter again, back to Genesis now chapter 2, verse 17. You’ll notice another subtle shift that happens just like the one we saw last time. So remember, Satan already changed a command of God with his first question. But now, what happens is Eve narrows the command of God with her answer. Look at what Genesis 2:17 originally commanded Adam.

¹⁷but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.

Now look back at 3:3. How does Eve narrow it? In 3:3 look at what she says:

³but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the tree of the fruit that is in the midst of the garden, and this is the key part, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’”

In other words, Eve insists that God forbid not just taste, but touch. She extends God’s command in a way that questions God’s wisdom. She becomes so fixated on what God commanded her to do that she forgets why God commanded her to do it. And that’s the way doubt so often works. When we lose sight of God’s purpose, it can cause us to question God’s goodness. And this pull towards the doubt in the wisdom of God is built around a root question that Eve is wrestling with right here in this moment. Does God know what’s best for me? So as we know, tonight is the Super Bowl and some of you will be watching it for the football and others for the commercials. And those commercials don’t come cheap. I saw this week that they set a new record, \$7 million for a 30 second spot. Can you believe that? You can do a lot of things with \$7 million. Why do they spend that kind of money? Because they know you get more eyeballs on your ad during the Super Bowl than any other way in the world. And at the heart of each of these commercials when you’re watching tonight, whether it’s selling drinks or Doritos, or cars or cryptocurrency. Each one of them is trying to do something. And what it’s trying to do at its core is cause you to doubt the goodness of your current situation so that you will be open to finding a solution for that lack of goodness through something or someone else. It shows you a need, a deficiency, a gap that only their product or service can meet. Sound familiar? That’s what the serpent’s doing here. When he calls into question God’s wisdom, he’s trying to show a gap, that there’s a lack of goodness in your life. And let me tell you, I’ve got an offer you can’t refuse. I’m going to meet it. I’m what you’ve been waiting for. I’m what you’ve been looking for. And what happens is, we begin to question the goodness of God. And when that takes place, it causes Eve to be on the brink of disobedience. It caused her to doubt God’s wisdom in a way that questions His goodness. And that doesn’t just stop right there in Genesis 3. We see that questioning of God’s goodness, His wisdom, all throughout the Bible. So when Israel is in the wilderness and God commands them to send spies into the promised land, they come back with a good report but that also is honest about the challenges they will face. And what happens? The people doubt the goodness of God. They question the wisdom of entering into the promised land. Throughout the Old Testament we see God sending prophet after prophet after prophet declaring the word of God, the judgment of God, the hope of God, the future deliverance of God. And repeatedly we see God’s people rejecting God’s word through God’s prophets in a way that shows they are doubting God’s wisdom. It happens over and over again. Even during the life of Jesus when the people of His own home town see Him at work, the people of His homeland see Him in action, and wonder, they question, can anything good come out of Nazareth? At the core of those questions, at the core of those rejections, is a doubt. It’s a doubt in the goodness of God. It’s a doubt in the wisdom of God. If we’re being honest, it shows up even in our own lives. I remember when I was 16 facing that crisis of faith when we moved to Houston. This was the core doubt that was causing my crisis. Lord, how could You let this happen to me? What is the purpose of this? Why are You allowing this to take place? It’s a question of His goodness, a question of His wisdom, as if we know better than Him. And I wish I could tell you that that pull towards a doubt in God’s wisdom stopped when I was a 16-year-old. But the reality is I’ve served as your pastor over the last 16 months, I have had seasons of wrestling with a doubt in His wisdom even now. You’ve heard me talk about, on multiple occasions, how personally hard it’s been for me to lose my best friend, John, in a tragic

accident. And every month I just wonder, how much longer am I going to keep asking God, why did He take him away? Why not someone else? Why now? And I know I'm not alone in that. I know there are many of you in this room or watching online who have lost a father, you've lost a mom, you've lost a friend. And we're gripped with this question, why? And even if it's not from the loss of a loved one, it's from the loss of a job, a loss of a status, a loss of an organization, a loss of an opportunity. And we find ourselves questioning God, His wisdom, His goodness. And at the core of that question is a danger. The danger of the doubt that Eve faces here. Doubting the wisdom of God is the same danger that we face. That we can find ourselves in a place where we believe we are more capable of knowing what's best for us than even God is. We want to take His place. And unless we can understand why and we see it as the valid and best reason we can doubt His goodness in the moment. And the danger, as we're going to find in Genesis 3, is that doubting the wisdom of God is fertile soil for disobeying the word of God. That's what we see with Eve. That's what we see showing up today. And that's what sets the stage for the final way that Satan tests our devotion in this passage. Look down with me now in verses 4 and 5. Let me show you a third thing. The third thing I want you to see here is that Satan tests our devotion by causing us to doubt the way of God. To doubt God's word, to doubt God's wisdom, now to doubt God's way. And let's look at how he does it there in verse 4.

⁴But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. ⁵For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

So, see here. Satan gives us one more way that he sows doubt in our life. He tests our devotion, not just by causing us to doubt the wisdom of God, but also the way of God. I mean, just think about it. What Moses is doing in Genesis 1 and 2 is he recounts the creation of the world. As he recounts the establishment of humanity, as God's image-bearers called to rule His kingdom, He is showing us a way. That God has designed the world to function, designed us to function. And when the serpent meets Eve's answer with his response, he is calling into question that way. He is calling into question God's design for our lives. And how does he do it? Look back at verse 4. He responds to her comment with an assertion. He says, "You will not surely die." In other words, he's saying that God will not keep His word. He's replacing the truth of God with a lie that calls into question the way of God for Eve and for each one of us. You see, what happens is Satan tests Eve's devotion in a way that makes the way of God seem like a barrier to true joy, a barrier to lasting satisfaction. That it is a barrier to her good, not a pathway. And that's how he says it there in verse 5. Look back at it. God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. So what Satan does is he turns the word of God upside down. And now this word of God that was going to hold her up, he makes it seem as if it will hold her back. And what he tells her is that by rejecting God's way won't mean bringing judgment from God, it will actually bring equality with God. And that rebellion against God's ways won't blind your eyes, it will actually open them to see the truth just as God sees it. The doubt that comes in here, this doubt about the way of God he is telling her, he is tempting us to believe that we can have the power to become like God. Just think about it. He tells her that her disobedience won't bring judgment but blessing. All the things you're looking for can be found if you bypass the way of God in order to get there. And that keeps showing up and echoes over and over after Eden. Where the people of God reject the way of God and as a result of it believe they are going to get the goodness of God apart from God. But in reality they receive the judgment of God. It happens in the flood. The time period of Noah. People are in rebellion and God brings judgment upon them. It happens in the wilderness. That the people of

Israel are running from God, resisting Him, and He brings judgment upon them. It happens in the exile as people are in the promised land and God brings judgment upon them for following after the false idols of the world around them. You see, what happens is in that moment, when we reject the way of God, it's actually an attempt to become like Him ourselves. That we are seeking to usurp the throne room of heaven, to make ourselves kings and queens of our own life, to find our own way. And that's the promise that satan makes here. You can have it all without the pain, without the hardship, without the challenges. And I want you to notice something. I want us to turn over to the book of 2 Corinthians, OK. Because what we find here is that this pattern in Genesis 3 doesn't stay there. And when Paul is writing to the Corinthian church in the second letter, he actually speaks about what is happening here in Genesis 3 in a way that pushes through to what it means for us. So whether you have your Bible, look at 2 Corinthians 2:11. You can look at it in your own Scriptures or you can watch it on the screens. He is showing us that this pattern of our devotion being tested by doubt doesn't stop here in Eden. So as Paul's explaining why he's writing this letter to the Corinthians, he says it like this in 2 Corinthians 2:11. Why am I writing this? Verse 11:

¹¹so that we would not be outwitted by satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.

Now turn over a few more chapters to 2 Corinthians 11:3. So he said, "I'm writing so you won't be outwitted by satan because we're not ignorant of his designs." Now look at 2 Corinthians 11:3. Here's what he says:

³But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

There's a warning here. And what's the warning? The warning is that this is what satan does through our doubts. He leads our thoughts astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. Because at the heart of satan's schemes is a test of our devotion that causes us to doubt the word of God, the wisdom of God, the way of God. You see, the problem that Eve has back in Genesis 3 is the same problem you and I face. Think about it. Eve is talking to satan about her problems with God rather than talking to God about her problems with satan. Have you thought about that? Eve is talking to satan about her problems with God rather than talking to God about her problems with satan. And through this conversation, she is led astray. And that same pattern happens over and over again from Eden to today. That doubt drives us towards disobedience. But that's the amazing reality of the work of Jesus Christ. The God man who takes on flesh. He comes to this world and every way that satan can drive Him towards doubt, He resists it. In the wilderness satan attempts to cause Him to doubt that He is truly the Son of God and to manipulate Him into sin. He refuses. When he tempts Jesus to doubt that the cross is really necessary, they're in the Garden of Gethsemane, He stands firm. He goes to the cross so that He can make a way for us in salvation. The only one who's distrust has not driven them to disobedience is Jesus. And as a result of that, all of us stand condemned. That's why our doubt can be so deafening to us. It can weigh us down. It's so hard to bear. It's because we know that doubt is the doorstep to the disobedience that brings death. So what do we do? How do we find freedom? I can't help but think about, there's this story in Mark 9 and we don't have time to look at it in depth, but if you want to write it down in your notes, Mark 9:23. There's this father that comes to Jesus. And he's desperate. He wants help from this One that he knows has healed others. He comes to Him pleading, "Would You help me? My son has been possessed by a

demon for years, from his early childhood.” And he comes to Jesus pleading for help. And in verse 23, Jesus’ response to him is, “All things are possible for the one who believes.” And you can imagine hearing that in the moment. This dad who has watched their child suffer for years. Whose gone on the roller-coaster of ups and downs, getting his hopes up that maybe finally this demon’s gone, and then crash whenever a new situation happens. And he’s filled with doubt. And now this healer, this Savior, comes to him and says, “All things are possible for the one who believes.” How would you respond in that moment? I imagine it would be pretty similar to what he says. Mark 9:24, here’s how he says it:

²⁴Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!”

Now I just wonder if that’s the cry of some of your hearts today. I want to believe. I want to trust. I want to hope. I want to leave this doubt behind. But have you gone the next step to crying out to God, “Help my unbelief!” You know, I’m gripped by the reality in that passage, down in Mark 9:29 what Jesus tells us is that there’s something unique about this particular demon that He’s just cast out of this boy that speaks to the heart of our desire for freedom from doubt today. In Mark 9:29 Jesus is speaking about this demon and this is what He says.

²⁹He said to them, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.”

Maybe the reason you find yourself stuck in doubt is because you’ve been looking to yourself for deliverance. You’ve been talking to others for deliverance. But Jesus reminds us that if we want to find true and lasting freedom from our doubts, from our disobedience, and from the death that Genesis 3 brings, we will only find it through prayer. Let’s take a moment right now to do exactly that if you’ll bow your head and close your eyes with me. I want to pray for some of you specifically today. I just want to ask you, if you’d be willing to take a step of faith right now. If you find yourself in a season of doubt, you’ve been wrestling with the word of God or the wisdom of God or the way of God in your life, I want to pray specifically for you. And so what I’m going to ask you to do is would you just raise your hand right where you’re seated right now if you’re wrestling with doubt in your life? Hold it up where I can see it so I can pray over you. It’s OK. There are plenty in the room around you right now that have that hand up. And if you don’t have that hand up, I want you to pray along with me specifically for them. You can set those down as we pray.

Father, in this moment we know that You are the good shepherd, the great physician, the mighty one, the one who is high and lifted up. Lord, we don’t understand it all. Your ways are above our ways. Your thoughts are above our thoughts. But I am pleading with You now for these men and women who raised their hands today who are wrestling with doubt in Your greatness, who are struggling with doubt in Your goodness, who are wrestling with doubt in Your grace. That You would show Yourself faithful. That just like the demon possession of this boy, that You would allow this doubt to come out from them through the prayers we are offering even now. And would You set us free to walk in newness of life in a way that pleases You even in the broken path that we see emerging from the wreckage of Genesis 3. And we ask these things in Christ’s name. Amen.