

# BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT

## 1. The Trap

Start off with feedback from Sunday's message. What did those that were there - or those that have caught up online - take away from it? What encouraged them, what informed them and what challenged them?

Read Matthew 11.1-11

*4 Jesus replied, 'Go back and report to John what you hear and see: 5 the blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. 6 Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.*

- Philip highlighted the way some doubt is to do with the way our **heads** work – our personalities and the package of beliefs we hold. Can you identify with this? Are you more trusting or more sceptical by nature?
- Other doubts are to do with the way our **hearts** work – a change of circumstances or a crisis. Have you seen this in your own life or in the lives of others? What was the result?
- v2. John the Baptist's crisis of faith came not just because of what Jesus *wasn't* doing (rescuing him from prison) but because of what he *was* doing. Have you ever had doubts because of what you experienced God doing or not doing?
- v3. *he sent his disciples to ask him, 'Are you the one who is to come?'* John the Baptist was able to be completely honest with Jesus about his doubts. What must this have been like for both of them? When you have doubts are you able to bring them honestly to God, or do they take you further away from him?
- v4-6. Jesus doesn't address John's questions or tell him to ignore his doubts and 'just believe'. He simply points him to the evidence of changed lives and God's power. What have you 'heard and seen' of Jesus that helps you trust in him, even when your own prayers and questions aren't always answered?

Big Idea: 'Doubt is normal and necessary - you can't develop a mature faith without it. The key is to bring your doubt to Jesus.'

Share honestly in twos and threes the things that cause you to doubt. Pray for each other that you wouldn't stumble because of the way God works. Pray instead that you would be blessed as you trust in him and walk honestly with him.

Pray for those that you know whose doubts – both head and heart - have kept them away from Jesus. Pray for God to meet them with mercy and inspire them with a genuine faith.