

Visions of Hope

April 23, 2017



F4356 State Hwy 97
Edgar, WI 54426

Mission Statement:

Hope's Mission is to teach the Bible and follow Christ's example by giving back to the community and those in need

Website:

hope4centralwi.com

Email:

hope4centralwi@yahoo.com

Sunday School
8:45-9:30 am

Sunday Worship
9:30 am

Communion
1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays

Interim Pastor:

Mark Reiff
920-634-1246 (cell)
715-352-2555 (church)

Secretary:

hopelcsec@gmail.com

Duties List

April 30

May 7

Ushers

Brian Remus
Chad Erickson
Rick Bradley
Ron Kunkel

Greeters

Brian Remus
Rick & Sandy Bradley

Readers

Elaine Mueller
Jen Kunkel

Acolyte

Haylee Schreiber
Madison Borchardt

John 20:29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Hello, my name is doubting Thomas. As a matter-of-fact, many of us are doubters. We say we believe without seeing but it seems we always do something to "hedge our bets". Don't get me wrong, I want to be strong, but that Satan guy keeps jumping in and asking "are you really sure"?

We like to think we are but, no one is immune to doubt. It can and does happen to all of us. We've just got to know how to handle it when it comes. Even the greatest men and women of God recorded in the Bible had to deal with doubt. (No one is immune to doubt. It can and does happen to us all. You've just got to know how to handle it when it comes. Even the greatest men and women of God recorded in the Bible had to deal with doubt.

Jesus said of John the Baptist, "Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. Matthew 11:11. That means John was greater in the sight of Jesus than Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, or any Old Testament character you can name. Yet John doubted the most important thing of all by questioning whether Jesus was really the Christ.

John the Baptist had been cast into prison for criticizing Herod about marrying his brother's wife, an incestuous relationship. He had been there sometime between six months and two years and became so discouraged that he asked two of his disciples to go to Jesus and ask Him if He really was the Christ. It's easy to read that and not think much about it, but the truth is, it was nothing but unbelief on the part of John the Baptist.

Think about who John was. He was separated unto God and filled with the Holy Spirit while he was still in the womb. Even Jesus wasn't filled with the Holy Spirit from the womb. It is believed he lived in the desert near the Dead Sea with the Essens, the writers of the Dead Sea Scrolls. They were a people who were super-legalistic who dogmatically practiced many rituals of self-denial. He certainly had not lived what we would call an easy life. John was separated and focused on his purpose.

His entire life was committed to preparing the way for the Christ. He spent thirty years preparing for a ministry that would only last six short months. John is the one who saw Jesus and said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). To be truthful, his ministry defied logic. Thousands of people from many nations came to the middle of nowhere to hear this man preach, "Repent all of you: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And God had revealed to him that through a visible sign from heaven, he would know who the Christ was. He would see the Spirit of God descending upon the Messiah in bodily shape as a dove. That came to pass when John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River.

At that time, John was absolutely certain that Jesus was the Christ. He had zero doubt. He was so adamant about it that, he said "I saw, and recorded that this is the Son of God" in John 1:34. In Luke 3:16 he said, "I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

But, after being imprisoned for a period of time, he began to doubt. This says a number of things, but an important one is the fact that anyone can doubt. How did Jesus respond to John's doubt? Well, He certainly didn't respond the way most of us do. He told John's disciples to go back and tell him of the miracles they had witnessed and that John would be blessed if he would just believe. That's it. "Get back to work John, because your work is very important to my Father. Jesus didn't try and make John feel better by letting him know He understood his pain or by making a few complimentary comments. Jesus reserved those comments till after John's disciples left.

Jesus performed all the miracles Isaiah prophesied He would do, and threw in the healing of a leper and raising someone from the dead just for good measure. What Jesus did was He perfectly fulfilled the prophecy about Himself, and then referred John the Baptist back to that word. Jesus reminded John of the scriptures, to deal with his doubts. That's Jesus' method of dealing with our doubts, as well.

Many of us have Bibles lying around the house, some barely used and some used on a daily basis. Some of us even carry one. But when we're struggling with unbelief, we don't want a scripture; we want something tangible, something emotional that we can feel. We look for an "ah ha" moment. We would rather have Jesus just put His arm around us and say something about how everything will be all right. That would make us feel better. But overcoming doubt isn't just about feeling better; it's about getting back into faith that only comes from the Word of God. *Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. (Rom. 10:17).*

The only sure way to overcome doubt is to place our faith in the Word of God and depend on that more than the words of any human. Don't allow your five senses to dominate your thinking. We must come to a place where God's Word is more real to you than anything you can see, taste, hear, smell, or feel. When you're in doubt, refer back to the Word of God just the way Jesus told John the Baptist to do. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word.

There are only two times recorded in the Bible when Jesus marveled at anything. Once He marveled at the people's great unbelief (Mark 6:6, He was amazed at their lack of faith. Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village.), and in Matthew 8:10 He marveled at a Gentile soldier's great faith. A faith that made Jesus marvel is worth examining. What was different about it? The number one difference was what the centurion said, *"But speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it."* (Matt. 8:8-9)

The centurion had a faith that was in God's Word alone. He didn't have to have Jesus come to his house and wave His hand over the sick servant. If Jesus would just give him a word, that was all he needed. Contrast this centurion's faith with the little faith of Thomas, who was one of Jesus' twelve disciples. The first time the risen Christ appeared to His disciples, Thomas wasn't present. The other ten disciples told Thomas that Jesus was resurrected, but it was eight more days before Jesus appeared to His disciples with Thomas present. *"But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe."* (John 20:25)

Jesus walked up to Thomas and told him to put his finger into the print of the nails and thrust his hand into Jesus' side and to not be faithless but believing. Thomas fell on his knees and confessed Jesus as his Lord and God. Jesus placed a greater blessing on those who believe without seeing than those who believe because they have seen. In other words, there is a greater faith in believing the Word than believing signs and wonders. Don't get me wrong. I believe in signs, wonders and miracles. Jesus uses them like a bell (or sledge hammer) to draw us closer to Himself and so we realize just how much He does love us. But the ultimate, the sure word of prophecy, is the written Word of God. There is a greater blessing on just believing God's Word than there is on believing because of supernatural circumstances. Those who are looking for circumstances to confirm their faith will fail when the strong battles of doubt come along. We have to get our faith so rooted in God's Word alone that we can withstand a hurricane.

Maybe there's a reason the Lord hasn't used an emotional touch to deliver you from unbelief and doubt. There is a reason that our Father has not opened our eyes with "some type of visual miracle". Maybe it's because He loves us so much that He's trying to help us operate in the highest form of faith — faith that takes Him at His Word, believing without seeing. "Jesus is the way, the truth and the light". We all need to rely less on the outside influences of the world and more on God's influence; His written word.

Your sister in Christ
Rosie Schilling



PRAYER CONCERNS: Please remember the following people in your prayers

- Ron Bjorklund—Health issues—friend of the Peterson's
- Joyce LeVoy—UW Madison
- Shelly Sonnetag—cancer—friend of Jay Borchardt and Ken Bauman
- Sara Koss—leukemia—niece of the Kamenick's
- Jim Brant—failing health—friend of Leroy Syring
- Patty Rueter—cancer—Beth Leffel's niece
- John Hamann—home recuperating from hip surgery
- Leroy Syring—recovering from a stroke
- Scott Campbell—stage two leukemia—relation to the Streckert's
- Don Hansen—Bladder cancer
- Paulette Kroll—Myleloid Leukemia—receiving chemo treatments
- Bill Brayton—DeEtta Peterson's brother
- Amy—cancer—friend of Barb Mohr-Borchardt
- Dylan, Logan Weichelt—sons of Bryan & Stacey
- Sawyer Mueller—microcephaly—Daryl & Beth's son
- Jennifer Bohman—prayers of healing

Hope's Happenings

Sunday:	April 23	Attendance 109
Offering:	Regular	\$1495.00
	Building	\$20.00
	Sunday School	\$5.00
	Missions	\$60.00
	Loose	\$9.00
	Sign	\$190.00
	Total	\$1779.00

Ladies Night Out

Please join us on
Tuesday, May 16th
with desserts at 6:00 pm and
speaker at 7:00 pm.
Speaker is Cynthia Ruchti,
formerly on The Heartbeat of the Home
on 88.5 The Family.

The Bulletin Board

- Quarterly Meeting will be held Sunday, April 30 immediately following Worship Service
- Highway Clean-up along with Church clean-up (windows, interior, exterior, and yard cleanup) will be held 1:00 pm on Sunday, April 30. If you are walking the highway for clean-up please bring boots along with gloves. Other supplies will be provided.
- Chip Ingram Small Group Study will continue on Tuesdays, 7:00 pm and Fridays at 10:00 am throughout May.
- We would like to recognize all of our graduates. If you are graduating, please contact the church office at hopelcsec@gmail.com. with information where you are graduating from and what your future plans are. If you are graduating from High School, please include a picture, what school you are graduating from and what your future plans are. Thank you



Vacation Bible School: will be the week of July 24-28 from 5:30-8:00pm. There will be a light supper served from 5:00-5:30pm. Children age 3 through children entering 6th grade are welcome. Please turn registration forms in to Michelle Bauman or Jen Kunkel by Sunday, May 7th.

Please also watch for a sign-up for volunteers in the upcoming weeks.

APRIL MISSION PROJECT is for the Ronald McDonald House in Marshfield. Needed items are:



grocery store gift cards, fresh milk, bread, butter, chicken, beef, fresh fruits and veggies, whole grain breakfast bars, chocolate chips, raisins, flour, brown sugar, ketchup, ranch salad dressings, canned tomato/V8 juice, regular ground coffee (No canned vegetables needed at this time), single portion sizes of fruit cups, cereals, mac 'n cheese, soups, etc for family lounge, store gift cards, paper towel, Swiffer sweeper cleaning sheets, furniture dusting wipes, forever stamps, white paper, permanent black markers, Avery 5160 white address labels, volunteer house maintenance person, new shark vacuum cleaner. Any questions, contact Rose Schilling 715-352-2884 or 715-551-1266



....Your kindness means so very much. Thank you so much for the Kwik Trip gift card. It is so helpful to us. *Andrea & Katelyn Krause*

....A **HUGE** Thank You to everyone who donated money for wells that need to be dug in Nigeria. Between Peace, Hope and Grace Lutheran we were able to send enough money for 4 wells. That is totally awesome! Thank you all again very much.