**Matthew 28:16-17 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.**

Doubt is a powerful, powerful thing. There’s an old story about Satan having a yard sale. A man went and looked around. He came to a couple of worn out tools that had a huge price tag on them. Shocked, he asked Satan. “Why are they so expensive?” Satan smiled and said, “These are my most used tools – doubt and discouragement. When one won’t bring a Christian down, the other almost certainly will.”

Listen to John 20:25 *The other disciples therefore said to him (Thomas), “We have seen the Lord.” So he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.”* We know that Thomas had doubts. Matthew 28:16-17 *Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but* ***some****doubted.* It doesn’t say – but one doubted… it says some of the 11 standing there doubted. The 11 that had seen so much and some doubted. The word doubted means wavering belief.

Of course, we all recall Peter getting out of the boat in Matthew 14 and walking on the water, but then sinking. He was doing fine and then sunk – what happened? Verse 31 says *And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”* Doubt. It’s a powerful, powerful thing. One of the things that makes it so powerful in the Christian church is that it is often hidden, to the point that some Christians are living a double life! In the four walls of the sanctuary and around other Christians, all doubts are hidden, but when alone… Satan makes full use – tossing the believer like a boat on a stormy sea.

Did you know that research shows that 1 out of every 4 Christians is struggling with doubt right now? If we have 50 people here today, 13 are struggling with doubt. In fact, 2 out of 3 Christians admit to having at least one season of spiritual doubt in their walk. Most will admit to even more. 25% of Christians admit that they still have some level of doubt about the Gospels. Doubt should not be ignored or dismissed. It must not be something that is not talked about or hidden. Because the most troubling statistic of all is that, of those who have doubts, 46%... almost half… will simply quit coming to church. The doubts, coupled with the fact that they have no one to talk to about their doubts, added to the fact that some will make them feel ashamed if they express doubts, makes them throw up their hands and leave the church.

But there’s good news. There’s cure for doubt! There’s a four part treatment for doubt and I’m going to give you that treatment today. I call it the four Ps of overcoming doubt. There are four key ingredients to overcoming doubt, stepping out of that season of doubt, and living a life of victory like we all know is possible. The good news is that we know the cure… the bad news is that so few are willing to put in the work. The four Ps of the cure are Prayer, Position, Practice, and Partnership. Prayer, Position, Practice, and Partnership. The first step in fighting back against doubt is Prayer. When doubts come, pray. Listen to Philippians 4:6-7 *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.* Prayer must be filled with Thanksgiving. Make the requests and worries known to God. Talk to Him like the Friend He is. He will give you Peace that surpasses all understanding. Prayer is step one on the way to banishing doubt.

The second step is to position yourself firmly on your beliefs. To fight doubt, we must take a firm stand on what we know to be true. Feelings are given way too much place in our world today. I know that’s an unpopular thing to say. The world would have us sway in the wind with our feelings and make all our decisions based on how we feel. If it feels good, do it. If it doesn’t feel right, don’t do it. I cannot think of a worse foundation for lifelong decisions than feelings. My feelings can change in seconds! If I decided to do something different every time I felt different, there would be no consistency at all! Instead of feelings, we’re to bring our thoughts under control. 2 Corinthians 10:5 *casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.* Doubt comes. When it does, we must position ourselves firmly on the things we know of God. Romans 10:17 says *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* Positioning our feet firmly on the word of God is step two on the way to banishing doubt.

The third step is to practice our beliefs. Practice is important. When we’re working to build up muscle in the gym, we practice. When we’re trying to do well on a test, we practice. Listen to Philippians 4:8-9 *Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.* What we practice becomes our habit. If we practice doubt and discouragement and woahest me thinking, that becomes what springs to mind in every situation. When we practice scripture and thankfulness to God, that’s what springs to mind. What we practice, we become. Isaiah 26:3 says *You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You.* God will keep us in peace when our mind is stayed upon Him. We trust in Him because our mind is focused upon Him. Refuse to allow doubt in prayer, refuse to give doubt position, refuse to practice doubt. Practice is the third step on the way to banishing doubt.

The fourth step is to make a partnership with faithful brothers and sisters. Satan has no trouble devouring the Christian who stands alone. True, Bible believing, Christ loving brothers and sisters taking the time to draw alongside one another and share struggles is what partnership looks like. In Titus 2, we see that the qualities of a sound church are older men teaching younger men, older women teaching younger women, admonishing, teaching, exhorting one another in the faith. Part of this partnership has to be that those who are struggling with doubt or sin have brothers and sisters in Christ that they can be completely honest with – no fear of being made to feel ashamed, but that they know they are loved and will be heard and helped. Notice those words – heard and helped. Not lectured and lambasted. Heard and helped. There is little more powerful in the church of Christ than a mature Christian willing to help and love those who are struggling or suffering. Step four is make a partnership on your way to banishing doubt.

Prayer, position, practice, and partnership. All four are so critical, but the fourth may keep someone from leaving the church, never to return. Each feeds on the other. Prayer leads to a firm position. Position is strengthened through practice. Practice is affirmed through a healthy partnership. Partnership leads to stronger prayers. Doubt doesn’t stand a chance when the 4 Ps come to call.

There’s little that will drive a Christian away faster than feeling like everyone has their life together and he or she is falling apart. It’s part of Satan’s plan of doubt and discouragement. This week I want you to consider - who might you partner with? What P could stand the most work in your relationship with God? We will never reach a lost and hurting world by pretending to be a Christian that has it all together. Don’t be afraid to show the scars. A bleeding and scared soul who is seeking Christ may finally find hope in the healing that Jesus did for you.