

4. Provide real-life examples that illustrate the consequences of having a spiritual vacuum among a people (e.g., in a church) or in an individual, as mentioned in Matthew 12:43-45.

5. From what you know about the ministry of Jesus and the rest of the New Testament, what do people need to do to fill the spiritual vacuum (beyond receiving Jesus as Savior)?

6. Describe a situation where you have struggled with doubt (or someone close to you has struggled). How can this passage be helpful in such a situation?

## SERMON APPLICATION GUIDE

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### Responding to Jesus

“Unreasonable Doubt”

Matthew 12:38-45

Doubt will \_\_\_\_\_ you from or draw you nearer to God.

### 3 Traits of Unreasonable Doubt

1. It ignores the \_\_\_\_\_. (Matthew 12:38-39)

The resurrection isn't only a sign for them. It's the ultimate sign for everyone and the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christianity.

1 Corinthians 15: <sup>14</sup> ...if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

2. It shifts the \_\_\_\_\_ for unbelief. (Matthew 12:38-39)

Ultimately, according to the Bible, all unbelief is, in a sense, \_\_\_\_\_.

Romans 1: <sup>18</sup> The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, <sup>19</sup> since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. <sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

Why do we suppress the truth?

- We love the \_\_\_\_\_ more than the light. Light exposes our evil. We don't want to see it. (John 3:19-20)

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Where is God leading you with your BLESS list this week?



- We \_\_\_\_\_ to believe convenient lies about God.

3. It ignores the \_\_\_\_\_ of unbelief.

Two consequences:

- Jesus says there's a \_\_\_\_\_ coming. (Matthew 12:41-42)

Acts 5: <sup>39</sup> "But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God."

- Jesus warns of a \_\_\_\_\_. (Matthew 12:43-45)

"They had had all kinds of reforms, but unless the 'house' got a new 'inhabitant,' the demons they had expelled would return with others as well. Arrogance, violence, hatred, darkness, sometimes masquerading as obedience to God's will—all these things would come in and wreck everything. Jesus had urged them to repent of all this, and to accept his kingdom-way, but they hadn't done so. They needed to know that they were inviting disaster." (N.T. Wright)

"Do I worship a God who wants to keep me down? I'll tell you the kind of God I worship. I worship the kind of God who made me in his image and coded himself into humanity, came into our world, to provide a basis through his death and resurrection that I could become something that I was not by creation. And that is a son of God. The basic message of the Christian faith is a magnificent one, that God is prepared to give the individual who trusts Christ his very life...to be able to enjoy his friendship. The capacity of a joint friendship with God is the biggest thing in my life, and it will be the biggest thing eternally. The notion that God is trying to keep us down is actually the original lie." (John Lennox)

## Personal Reflection & Small Group Questions

Please complete this study on your own, then bring it to your small group for discussion.

1. Looking over your notes from this week's sermon, what particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?
2. Read Matthew 12:38-45. What are some of the clues that the request by some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law is disingenuous?
3. How would you describe the difference between reasonable and unreasonable doubts, comparing the attitude of the religious leaders with that of John the Baptist in Matthew 11:1-6?