

# Liturgy for Nights & Days of Doubts

I would that my heart was ever strong, O Lord,  
my faith always firm and unwavering,  
my thoughts unclouded,  
my devotion sincere,  
my vision clear.

I would that I dwelt always in that state wherein my belief, my hope, my confidence, were rooted and certain.

I would that I could remain in those seasons  
when assailing storms seem only  
to make faith stronger, proving your presence,  
your provenance.

**But it is not always so,  
these are those other moments, as now,**

**When I cannot sense you near,  
cannot hear you, see you, touch you—  
times when fear or depression or frustration overwhelm,  
and I find no help or consolation,  
when the seawalls of my faith crumble  
and give way to intrushing tides of doubt.**

**Have I believed in vain?  
Are your words true?  
They seem so distant to me now.  
Is your presence real?  
I cannot feel it.  
Do you love me?  
Or are you indifferent to my grief?  
Under weight of such darkness,  
how can I remember the sunlight of your love as anything more than a child's dream?  
Under weight of such doubt,  
how can I still proclaim to my own heart with certainty that you are real?**

And so, Jesus, I do now the only thing I know to do.  
Here I drag my heavy heart again  
into this cleared and desolate space,  
to see if you will meet me in my place of doubt.

Even as you mercifully met your servant Thomas in his uncertainty,  
even as you once acted in compassionate response  
to a fearful father who desperately pleaded:

*I believe, Lord. Help me with my unbelief!*

**For where else but to you might I flee with my doubts?  
You alone have the words of eternal life.**

*A LONG SILENCE IS KEPT*

**This I know to be true, my Lord and my God:  
You are not in the least angered  
by my doubts and my questions,  
for they have oftened been the very things  
that lead me to press closer in to you,  
seeking the comfort of your presence,  
seeking to understand the roots of  
my own confusion.  
So also use these present doubts  
for your purposes, O Lord.  
I offer them to you.**

Even as the patriarch Job  
made of his pain and confusion a petition;  
even as the psalmist again and again  
carried their cries, their questions, their laments  
to you; so would I be driven by my doubts  
to despair of my own strength and knowledge  
and righteousness and control,  
and instead to seek your face,  
**knowing that when I plead for proof,  
what I most need is your presence.**

In your presence I can offer my questions,  
knowing you are never threatened by my uncertainties.  
They do not change your truth.  
My doubts cannot unseat your promises.  
You are a rock, O Christ,  
and your truth is a bulwark  
that I might dash myself against,  
until my strength is spent  
and I collapse at last in despair,  
only then to feel the tenderness of your embrace  
as you stoop to gather me to yourself,  
drawing me to your breast  
and cradling me there,  
where I find I am held again by a love  
that even my doubts  
cannot undo.

**O Lord, how many times have you graciously  
led me through doubt into a deeper faith?  
Do so again, my Lord and my God!  
Even now. Do so again!**

You alone are strong enough  
to carry the weight of my troubled thoughts,  
even as you alone are strong enough to bear  
the burden of my sin and my guilt and my  
shame, my wounds and my brokenness.

O Christ, let my doubts never compel me to  
hide my heart from you. Let them rather arise as  
questions to begin holy conversations.  
Invert these doubts, turning them to invitations  
to be present, to be honest, to seek you, to cry  
out to you, to bring my heart fully into the  
struggle rather than to seek to numb it.

Let my doubts become invitations to wrestle  
with you through such dark nights of the soul—  
as Jacob wrestled with the Angel—until the day  
breaks anew and I am fresh wounded by your  
love and resting in the blessing of peace again in  
your presence.

Now O Lord may the end result of my doubt  
be a more precious and hard-wrung faith,  
resilient as the Methuselah tree,  
and a hope more present and evergreen,  
and a more tender and active mercy  
extended to other in their own seasons  
of doubting.

**So help me, my Lord and my God.  
I have no consolation but you.  
Meet me now in this eclipse-shadow  
of my doubt. Lead me again into your light.**

**Amen.**