

Jesus: A Friend of Doubters
Series: Luke
November 26, 2017 Pastor Bill Bump

Spiritual doubt can be a painful, anguish-filled experience. Territory that seemed secure is now under attack.

Today's lesson is found in Luke 7 and deals with the doubts of John the Baptist.

Main Point: Jesus is a compassionate friend of those who have doubts.

John expresses his doubt.

Luke 7:18-19 ¹⁸ *The disciples of John the Baptist told John about everything Jesus was doing. So John called for two of his disciples, ¹⁹ and he sent them to the Lord to ask him, "Are you the Messiah we've been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?"*

John's doubts may take us by surprise because he had seen Jesus up close and personal.

John 1:29 *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"*

Some reasons John the Baptist doubted:

1. John's disillusionment

John had promised that the Kingdom of God was at hand, and yet, now he wasn't seeing signs that it was close by. He was perplexed.

Isaiah 40:3-5 ³ *Listen! It's the voice of someone shouting, "Clear the way through the wilderness for the Lord! Make a straight highway through the wasteland for our God! ⁴ Fill in the valleys, and level the mountains and hills. Straighten the curves, and smooth out the rough places. ⁵ Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together. The Lord has spoken!"*

Luke 3:15-17 ¹⁵ *Everyone was expecting the Messiah to come soon, and they were eager to know whether John might be the Messiah. ¹⁶ John answered their questions*

by saying, "I baptize you with water; but someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I'm not even worthy to be his slave and untie the straps of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.¹⁷ He is ready to separate the chaff from the wheat with his winnowing fork. Then he will clean up the threshing area, gathering the wheat into his barn but burning the chaff with never-ending fire."

2. John's adversity

John is in a prison cell.

The good news is that God is willing to handle our questions and our anger.

Where did John go with his doubts?

He sent word to Jesus Himself.

Luke 7:20 *John's two disciples found Jesus and said to him, "John the Baptist sent us to ask, 'Are you the Messiah we've been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?'"*

The first place that we must look when we doubt is the Bible.

John 20:31 *But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.*

Romans 10:17 *So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ.*

How did Jesus respond to John's doubts?

Luke 7:21-23²¹ *At that very time, Jesus cured many people of their diseases, illnesses, and evil spirits, and he restored sight to many who were blind.²² Then he told John's disciples, "Go back to John and tell him what you have seen and heard—the blind see, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor."²³ And he added, "God blesses those who do not fall away because of me."*

Jesus showed John the validation and confirmation of the Old Testament predictions about the coming Messiah.

Then, Jesus proclaimed that John's doubt and uncertainty had no impact on his standing in the Kingdom.

Luke 7:28 *[Jesus said], "I tell you, of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John. Yet even the least person in the Kingdom of God is greater than he is!"*

Conclusion

Jesus wants followers to investigate His truth.

Jude 22 *And you must show mercy to those whose faith is wavering.*

2 Peter 3:9 *The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.*

If you ever have doubts about your faith, realize you are in good company.

According to Luke's presentation of the facts, Jesus is the Son of God and there is salvation in no one else.

If a doubter will place their faith in Jesus, they will be saved from their sins and be given eternal life.