

Solid Rock Christian Church Manassas, Virginia

Bible Study - June 16, 2022

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Title: "When Your Faith Is Weak"

Subtitle: "Without a Doubt"

Scripture Reference: Matthew 11:2-6

"Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, **Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see. The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.**"

I. Introduction [Part I]

A. In reading the selected passages of Scripture for this study session, some would say that John the Baptist was at his lowest point in his ministry. Based upon your point of view, you might say that at one time, he was the most famous or infamous person in Israel. His preaching had influenced multitudes.

B. But now, things are different. Most of his disciples were following Jesus and John's popularity had diminished. John himself had said, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

C. Maybe John the Baptist started to have some doubts about his ministry or even some doubts about Jesus. John asked himself, "Is he really the Messiah?" So, he decided to send word through his disciples to Jesus to get his questions answered.

D. Bear with me for a few minutes and lets put ourselves in John the Baptist's place, who is now in prison, and lets send the following letter to Jesus.

Dear Jesus,

I am writing to inform you that I have been thrown into prison by Herod. I have a lot of time to think since I have been here. I have been thinking about all of the things I have preached about you, even before you began your ministry.

Remember how I told everyone that your winnowing fork was in your hand and you would thoroughly clean your threshing floor? Remember how I said you would burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire? To me that meant that you would take care of all injustice and you would correct all wrongs with your righteousness.

To be quite honest with you, Jesus, I never thought I would have to write a note like this. Things haven't quite worked out like I thought they would.

I was sure that you would have straightened things up around here by now. Rumors have it that Herodias wants my head. If you are wondering when to get out your winnowing fork to start cleaning up, now would be a pretty good time to start. That is, if you are the one we are expecting.

Respectfully Yours,
John the Baptist

P.S. If we are to look for someone else, please let us know.

E. A few days later, the mailman delivered a letter to John's jail cell. He anxiously opened it, hoping to receive news that Jesus was arranging for his quick release from prison.

Dear John the Baptist,

The blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them.

Agape,
Jesus

P.S. Blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over me.

II. Introduction [Part II]

A. If you take a good look at a resume' of John the Baptist's life, it reads like a who's who of non-doubters.

Resume' of John the Baptist

Name: John (the Baptist)

Birth: Miraculous! My mother was advanced in years and was barren. An angel appeared to my father Zacharias and told him that my mother would give birth and that my name would be called "John."

Prophet Qualifications

- Filled with the Holy Spirit in my mother's womb.
- Forerunner before Messiah in the spirit and power of Elijah.
- Fulfilled prophecies in the Old Testament (Isa. 40:3; Mal. 4:5-6)

Ministry Experience

- Baptized Jesus in the Jordon River.
- Saw the heavens opened and the Spirit descend upon Jesus as a dove.
- Heard a voice from heaven telling me about Jesus, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."
- Preached to the multitudes. Started with no disciples but grew a following of thousands.

Other Comments

Willing to live on meager salary. Cheap to clothe and feed. My garments are made of camel's hair. My diet consists primarily of locusts and wild honey.

B. How could a man like that possibly experience doubt? Perhaps many people wrongly assume that all the great men of the Bible never had any doubts, but we find that was not the case.

C. David, a man after God's own heart, experienced doubts. Listen to what David wrote - "How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? For ever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me? (Psalm 13:1)

D. The great prophet Elijah also doubted. After he had conquered the prophets of Baal and Asherah, he fled from Jezebel because he thought God wouldn't protect him (1 Kings 19:3)

E. Jonah put his doubts into action when he ran from God and hid in the bottom of a ship going to Tarshish (Jonah 1:3,5).

F. What is doubt? Doubt is not unbelief, but it is not faith, either. It wavers between faith and unbelief, unable to make up its mind about what it wants to be.

G. James 1:8 tells us that doubt is being double-minded, which makes a person unstable in all his ways.

H. A double-minded person has certain characteristics. The one who doubts is:

1. **Up and Down Emotionally.** He is tossed by the wind like the surging of the sea. Whenever we doubt, we are controlled and manipulated by our ups and downs.
2. **Tossed To and Fro Doctrinally.** He is being directed by outside forces rather than being guided from the inside by faith. Ephesians 4:14 talks about being tossed to and fro by

every wind of doctrine. The one who doubts does not have a firm grasp on what he or she should believe doctrinally.

3. **Answering Yes and No Mentally** - This double-minded person says yes at first, then a little while later changes the answer to no.

III. How To Deal With Doubts

A. Doubts occur when what we expect to happen isn't happening, or what shouldn't be happening is happening.

B. Circumstances are in direct conflict with what we believe. This causes us to be confused and waver between the two, wondering which is right.

C. How then, can we deal with doubts? Is there any way we can increase our faith and decrease our doubts? Yes, there is!

[First] Question your doubts, not you faith.

1. Instead of questioning your faith, question your doubts, That is what John did. Rather than letting his doubts continue to plague him, he investigated them. He knew truth would stand up for itself because it could pass the test of scrutiny.
2. So, John packed up his doubts and sent them to Jesus. The answer Jesus sent back revealed that John needed to make some adjustments in his belief system.
 - a. He had been preaching about Jesus, quoting from Isaiah concerning the *Messiah's second coming*.
 - b. When Jesus sent word back, He quoted verses from

Isaiah concerning His first coming.

- c. John was confused because he had the right person but the wrong timing.

Comment: John wasn't wrong in what he believed about Jesus, but he needed to make adjustments in his theology.

Point: Doubts can be a stepping stone, rather than a stumbling block, if we will allow them to expose weak points in our belief system so that we can correct them.

3. We are all growing in our understanding of God. Apollos, who was mighty in the Scriptures, was teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus. But Priscilla and Aquilla took him aside and explained the way of God to him more accurately (Acts 18:24-26).

Point: Faith will always grow, and doubts will diminish whenever we adjust our belief system to line up more accurately with God's Word.

[Second] Concentrate on what you know, not on what you don't Know.

1. Doubts will arise when we think about things we don't know the answers to. Jesus responded to John's questions by trying to get him to recall the things he knew to be true.
2. "John, I have made the blind man to see. I have healed people who have been paralyzed and have cleansed lepers. I have made deaf people hear, and I have even raised people from the dead. I have also preached the gospel to the poor. Who else can do these things, except the Messiah? If you concentrate on these facts, your doubts will leave."

[Third] Trust in the Lord with your heart, not your head.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding." (Prov. 3:5)

1. When we doubt, we have a hard time making decisions. God wants to help us in the decision-making process, but it requires that we trust Him.
2. That sounds easy, but the difficulty arises when He instructs us in ways that contradict our minds. That's why He tells us to trust Him with our entire heart and to not depend on logic in making decisions.

Points:

- 1) Trust comes from believing that our Father knows what is best for us.
- 2) When we put our trust in the Lord rather than our own understanding, doubts will disappear.

It is once again interactive time. Please complete the Scripture passages that following by filling in the blank spaces. All passages have been taken from the King James Version of the Holy Bible.

"As for God, his _____ is _____: the word of the Lord is _____: he is a _____ to all those that _____ in him."

[Psalm 18:30]

"The _____ of the Lord are _____, rejoicing the _____: the _____ of the Lord is pure, _____ the eyes."

[Psalm 19:8]

"There is a way which _____ right unto a _____; but the end

_____ are the _____ of _____."

[Proverbs 14:12]

"_____ me thy way, O Lord, and _____ me in a _____ path, because of mine _____."

[Psalm 27:11]

"In God is my _____ and my _____: the rock of my _____, and my refuge, is in God. _____ in him at all _____; ye people, _____ out your heart before him: God is a _____ for us."

[Psalm 62:7,8]

"Call unto _____, and I will _____ thee, and _____ thee great and _____ things, which thou _____ not."

[Jeremiah 33:3]

Thank you for joining in another Bible Study session and my prayer is that you have been blessed.

Jude 3

Pastor Austin