

## Sermon #15: *Facing Doubts When Following Jesus*

05/09/21

### **BREAKING THE ICE**

- What impacted you most about this week's message?

### **UNDERSTANDING THE TRUTH**

*Read the Passage* (Luke 7:18-23)

1. How does John's current situation of imprisonment challenge his thoughts about Jesus and His mission as the Messiah?
2. Why do you think John experienced doubts? What do you believe he expected of Jesus and what do you believe he was experiencing when he sent two of his disciples to question Jesus (hint: consider John's expectations)?
3. Do you believe that doubts are common among Jesus' followers? Name some other heroes of the faith who also experienced doubts in their spiritual journey. Do you see a "common thread" that fueled both John's doubts and the doubts recorded in scripture of other "heroes of the faith?"
4. In Luke's narrative to Theophilus, he uses this encounter between Jesus and John the Baptist to establish Jesus' true identity. Who did the people believe Jesus was (see Luke 7:16)?
5. How does Jesus's answer to John's disciples point Theophilus (and us) to His true identity (see Isaiah 26:18-19; 35:5-6; & 61:1)?
6. Jesus adds what appears to be a postscript to His message (see verse 23). What do you believe Jesus was communicating by these words? How does verse 23 apply to us in 2021?
7. Do you believe Jesus was disappointed with John for his doubts? Read Luke 7:24-28. Why do you think He waited until John's disciples had left before saying these words?

### **SEEING JESUS CHRIST**

Anyone who reads the Bible even casually can tell that John the Baptist was a great man, a man of tremendous courage and faithfulness to God. He clearly proclaimed Jesus (John 1:29). He clearly preached the need for repentance and salvation (Luke 3:3-9). He clearly magnified and exalted Jesus and humbled himself (John 3:30). He preferred a faithful death to an unfaithful life (Matt. 14:1-12).

- Focus on verse 28. What do you believe Jesus was communicating? How does this change our perspective on "greatness?" How can we be encouraged and comforted by these words?

## **MAKING IT MATTER**

More than 1 ½ years had passed since John had presented Jesus to Israel as the promised Messiah ... but nothing had changed. The Romans still held the country. Corruption in the court and the temple remained unchanged. The Herods still triumphed. The hypocritical scribes and Pharisees still sought the chief seats in the synagogue. The Sadducees still spread their unbelief. John was imprisoned for speaking the truth ... no wonder he had doubts!

1. All believers face doubts. How can doubts help solidify our faith and help us mature spiritually?
2. Jesus' own disciples faced doubts as Jesus prepared them for His imminent death. How can His words (John 16:33) help you as you face doubts today?
3. When you face doubts in your life, how do you respond? Is there a way you would prefer to respond to your doubts? If so, what is the right next step that you should take?
4. How did Jesus use Scripture to reassure John? What should we learn from how Jesus responded?
5. Are there specific doubts with which you struggle that you would be willing to share with the others in your group?

## **PRAYING FOR GOD'S POWER**

"This is the confidence we have before him: If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have what we have asked of him." 1 John 5:14-15

When we pray according to God's will it engages the power and guidance of God to bring about our transformation. If we apply these things in our own strength, then it is just legalistic obedience. But, when we humbly ask God to change us and empower us according to His will and by His Spirit, it becomes transformational AND it glorifies God.

1. Ask people to share one key, specific application from today's lesson that they want God to bring about in their life. Then take time to pray for each other in these areas.