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Doubt  
Luke 7:18-35

Luke 7:18

**(OVERHEAD)**

**<sup>18</sup> John's disciples told him about all these things**

Let's backtrack a bit here. We remember that back in chapter 3 John the Baptist first prepares the way for and then baptizes Jesus. Jesus comes out of the water and is immediately summonsed by the Holy Spirit to spend forty days being tempted in the wilderness.

While God was establishing Jesus' ministry – in the wilderness – John the Baptist was knuckling up on Herod the tetrarch...who was Rome's local leader in Galilee.

Herod's got some serious crazy going on in his life. Dr. Phil wouldn't be able to help this guy. Herod is having an affair with his brother's wife, he's sexually attracted to his teenage niece, and Luke 4 tells us that Herod's affair and lust issues were on top of **all the other evil things he had done**. Added to Herod's guile is the fact that he has John arrested and eventually beheaded.

Fearless John...John is fearless and we'll talk about why later, but John just slams on Herod's sin in front of everyone. Luke 3 tells us he **rebuked** him. This raggedy...wild homeless prophet reprimanded Rome's appointed leader in Galilee. So John gets into Herod's head...big time.

- Herod wants to kill him but is fearful of the crowds
- Has him arrested, but he's intrigued by what he hears him say
- He's genuinely bummed when Herodias asks for his head
- And later when Herod hears of the works of Jesus...he's convinced John the Baptist was raided from the dead.

So John is arrested by Herod. Meanwhile, Jesus...after being tempted in the wilderness begins His ministry. And that's what we've been studying for months. In just the past two Sundays we've seen Jesus heal a Centurion's servant and raise a widow's son from the dead. And that's where Luke 7:18 comes in...**John's disciples told him about all these things**.

Luke 7 goes on:

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**Calling two of them, <sup>19</sup>he sent them to the Lord to ask, “Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?”**

**<sup>20</sup>When the men came to Jesus, they said, “John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, ‘Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?’”**

What is John doing here? Earlier I made the statement that John was fearless. Let's consider his situation for a moment. This is John the Baptist.

- John whose momma had a miraculous birth when she was 'Good as dead'. So right away John's a miracle baby cuz mom was 120 when she had him.
- John whose dad, Zachariah, had an encounter with an angel. Told him his kid would be:
  - filled with the Spirit in the womb
  - bring many Jews to God
  - and walk in the power of Elijah

Zachariah's like...I don't know...doesn't speak for nine months.

- John who heard the audible voice of God
- Who lived in the desert
- Had a huge ministry that impacted thousands
- John who Jesus Himself says about him in Luke 7:28 **among those born of women there is no one greater**

I think...maybe all of us would be fearless, at least for a season, if that were our resume. John knows his past, he knows his calling and yet he begins to wrestle with whether or not Jesus is the Messiah. John's like...I've done what I'm supposed to do – I've responded to my calling – but where was he? He's in a dungeon.

He's beginning to question things. He's questioning Jesus. He wasn't questioning Jesus back in chapter three. He tells Jesus...“I need to be baptized by you”. John does the baptism anyway and heaven cracked open. The Spirit descends in the form of a dove...and God's voice busts out – **This is my Son.**

But John's ministry has taken a turn. He's asking questions...What am I doing here? This has gone a little different than I thought. It's gone bad for me.” God...what's going on here? And so he sends his doubts to Jesus through these two disciples...“Are You the one? Are You the Son of God or is there going to be another one? Did I hear it wrong? Was I off, or are You the one, or will there be another?”

John the Baptist, who heard the audible voice of God, whose mother was elderly when she had him, who had a thriving, booming ministry where thousands and got right with God. Suddenly his ministry takes an unexpected turn and in a dark moment he finds his heart doubting.

### **(OVERHEAD)**

#### **Even the Big Boys Doubt**

➤ (Elijah's on Mt. Carmel – 400 Baal prophets – Ahab wants him dead: 1 Kings 19) John was the greatest man ever born of woman who had a distinct calling and the power of God on his life. And if a powerful prophet of God like John can have a season of doubt...then maybe we will have those seasons too.

God loves established faith. Earlier in this chapter Jesus marveled at the Centurion's faith...*I have not found such great faith even in Israel.* Jesus often tells his disciples...“You of little faith, how long must I be with you?” Like Jesus gets annoyed...“Come on, figure this out”.

So John sends his doubts to Jesus...are we going to see Jesus get annoyed? Come on...this is John the Baptist. Jesus could call him out any number of ways. Jesus could have easily said to John “Are you serious? Am I the one?”

- Weren't you a miracle baby?
- Didn't your dad have quite the little confirmation experience?
- Wasn't I with you in the wilderness?
- Didn't you hear my Father's voice of confirmation on Jesus?

Am I the one? Are you serious?” So what's Jesus' response? Verse 21:

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<sup>21</sup>*At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind.*

<sup>22</sup>*So he replied to the messengers, “Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.*

What Jesus just did is list the expectations on Messiah found in Isaiah's messianic prophecies (Is. 34, 42 & 61)...but wait...not only did he list them for John's disciples, but verse 21 says; **At that very time**...he performed them in front of their very eyes. Then he tells them to go back and report on what they've seen.

Jesus was not offended at all. I love that. In fact, in love he sends these two messengers back to John with eye witness accounts that He is the one...and that there will not be another.

When we experience a season of doubt...and you will; John sets the example for us. We're to:

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**Take our Doubts to Jesus**

The greatest man ever born to woman found himself in a season of doubt. But John didn't give into his doubts...what did he do? Took them to Jesus. And instead of sitting in the fog of his doubts and being derailed by them...he goes to Jesus for clarity.

We can take our doubts to Jesus. And if we'll do that he won't be annoyed...he'll step in. He'll give you clarity and perspective.

- My recent doubt (Realization that the Spirit lives in you 1 Cor. 3:16)

So here's how I want to encourage you. If in the last year, you've been going...“Where are You? Have You abandoned me? If that's been your heart, I want to tell you that that's okay.

I want to say to you that Jesus...died...to say to you, “I'm right here”, I'm real and I'm with you. And maybe, even this morning, if we would be willing to go to Him...he might answer your doubt with the encouragement that he's with you.

**PRAY**

- We hear often, “We won't know why until later”
- John was encouraged by Jesus and in God's plan led to his death by beheading
- But if we can go to him...Maybe God wants to assure you – “I'm here. I haven't abandoned you. Your doubts are okay. I am Him. There will be no other.”

This is the God of the Bible that sends both joy and sorrow to detach our hands of the things of the world and to attach our hands to Him, the treasure that we really need.