



STORIES OF LIFE!

The Gospel of Luke

A Story of Doubt

Luke 7:17-35

Message #24 of 50 – S802

Sermon given on July 29, 2018



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

A Story of Doubt

Luke 7:17-35

Opening Comments

- Turn to **Luke 7**
- We continue a study through the Gospel of Luke – **The Stories of Life**
- Not all the stories of our lives are easy to understand
- There have been many times in my life when I was confused about what was going on
- Asking questions like, ‘Why is this happening?’
- Even as a Christian, and then as a pastor, times when I was confused by things God was allowing into my life, or by the things He wasn’t doing in my circumstances – would produce doubts
- Can anyone relate to that?
- Maybe you will be encouraged to know that you are not alone in feeling that way, nor are you the first person to feel this way
- In fact, we are going to look at a character this morning who we might think would be the last person to have doubts, to be confused about what Jesus was doing
- And hopefully we will learn what to do when the story of our life gets confusing
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **A Story of Doubt**
- Jesus just did two radical miracles – He healed the centurion’s servant without knowing him, seeing him, or touching him
- And then, as if that was not amazing enough, Jesus raised the widow’s only son from the dead
- **Luke 7:17**
- Everyone is talking about Jesus and His miraculous works
- Even John the Baptist, in prison hears about what Jesus is doing
- **Luke 7:18**

- Sometime after Jesus had been baptized by John, Herod put him in prison
- John confronted Herod for marrying his brother's wife
- Some of the guys who had following John reported to him what Jesus was doing
- Before anyone else did, John knew Who Jesus was **Luke 3:16**
John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."
- When John's disciples complained to him that Jesus was baptizing more people than he was he said **John 3:30**
He must increase, but I *must* decrease.
- But John hears what his disciples tell him, and he is confused
- **Luke 7:19**
- Saying, I thought You were the Messiah – was I wrong – are we looking for someone else?
- Jesus wasn't doing of those things he expected the Messiah to do and John was confused – had doubts
- **Luke 7:20-22**
- Jesus doesn't answer them – just has them hang out and watch Him
- And then Jesus does the same things that He had been doing
- Doing the same things John's disciples had reported to John in verse 18
- John was the son of a priest – he knew the Scriptures about the Messiah **Isaiah 26:19**
Your dead shall live; together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; for your dew is like the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.
- **Isaiah 29:18**
In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness.
- **Isaiah 35:5-6**
Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.
- **Isaiah 61:1**
The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor...

- Jesus doesn't answer John's question – look at My works and judge for yourself
 - **Luke 7:23**
 - 'offended' has the idea of falling away from something or someone
 - Saying to John – don't fall away from me because I am not the Messiah you expect Me to be – the Christ you want Me to be – because I am not doing the things you want me to be doing
 - Listen – there is a serious warning here for all of us in that
 - God is God! – He never makes mistakes! – He is never late! – He is never wrong!
 - But the fact remains that He doesn't always do what we expect Him to do, or what we want Him to do
 - Jesus tells John to focus on what He **Is** doing, not on what He is not doing
 - And Jesus says here that is the key to happiness
 - Focus on what Jesus has done and what He is doing
 - What has Jesus done for you – He forgave your sins and saved you
 - That alone ought to fill your heart with joy – get your eyes out of whatever prison you find yourself in
 - Whether you are in a dark prison of circumstances or on a mountaintop of spiritual experience – eyes on heaven
 - John sent his disciples to communicate his doubts/confusion to Jesus
 - And just in case someone might get the wrong idea, Jesus tells us what He thinks of John
 - **Luke 7:24-28**
 - Jesus seems to elevate John above all the other prophets of Scripture; Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah
 - Greater than the other prophets, but less than anyone in the kingdom of God **Warren Wiersbe**
- John was the herald of the King; announcing the kingdom; believers today are children of the kingdom and the friends of the King.**
- John was a friend of the bridegroom, we are the bride of Christ
 - There are, generally, two kinds of responses to the things of God
 - **Luke 7:29-30**
 - 'justified God' = testified that God is right

- Baptism of John = acknowledge their sin, and need for a Savior
- ‘Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God’
- What was God’s will - acknowledge their sin, and need for a Savior
- That is God’s will for everyone – they rejected God’s will
- That verse is a problem for 5-point Calvinists
- Some will reject the will of God, no matter how He presents Himself to them
- **Luke 7:31-35**
- The Pharisees and lawyers were looking for a Messiah who conformed to their view of how He should present Himself
- John came with a hard message of repentance and impending judgment
- Jesus came with a message of grace, healing, and deliverance
- Those who reject God’s will for their lives – who won’t acknowledge their sin, and need for a Savior – will find a reason to reject every expression of God’s grace, mercy, and love
- They want a god who is small enough to allow them to pretend that their imperfect righteousness is good enough
- Isaiah said our best righteousness is as ‘filthy rags’ – not good enough
- Every human needs a Savior – and it is God’s will that everyone would turn from their sin and receive Christ
- John, as he sat in that dark, dismal, depressing prison had believed that Jesus was the Messiah, the promised Savior
- But now he has doubts – Jesus wasn’t the Savior John was expecting
- He hadn’t stop believing, but he was having doubts
- It was obvious by the things Jesus was doing that He was someone, but He wasn’t doing what John expected the Messiah to do
- Jesus responds to John’s doubts by telling him to look at what He is doing and then
- **Luke 7:23**
- There is an enormous difference between doubt and unbelief
- John believed, but had doubts – the Pharisees and lawyers did not believe and rejected the will of God
- Having doubts about the things of God is not sin
- We don’t usually have doubts when everything is going our way

- All believers, at some point in their life, will have doubts/confusion
- Times when, like John, things are not the way you expect them to be
- You are expecting God to do something, and He doesn't
- You have prayed for God to heal someone – He didn't – took them home
- You expect God to deliver you from some difficult circumstance – He doesn't
- You have begged God to save someone from their sin – they are still in it, or have gotten worse
- What do you do when your life is confused by doubts
- Doubts are not sin, but they are dangerous, they are the first step to being offended by Jesus
- Blessing or happiness is for those who are not offended by Jesus
- As we prepare to close – what to do when your story is confused by doubts because life is not going the way you want or believe it should
- Will give you 3 things to remember and three things to do
- When you are confused by doubts remember these absolutes
- Remember – **God is love!**
- God's nature is love **1 John 4:16**
And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.
- Nothing in your life changes God's love for you
- Second thing to remember – **God is perfect!**
- God never makes a mistake! Not ever! **1 John 1:5**
This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.
- There is a reason for everything in your life – even the confusing things that are causing doubt
- Third thing to remember – **God is different!**
- God's Word tells us a lot about God, but not everything
- There are some things about God that we cannot understand **Isaiah 55:8-9**
"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."
- Sometimes the things I don't understand are because God is different than I am

- Remember – God is: love – perfect – different
- Then do these three things – First – **Grasp**
- John had doubts, so he reached out to Jesus
- When you are confused or have doubts grab hold onto Jesus – pray, talk to Him – don't let go until He answers
- Second – **Grow**
- John had wrong ideas about who Jesus was supposed to be and what he was supposed to do
- That is, sometimes, the source of our doubts and confusion – get to know Jesus better
- Third – **Gather**
- John couldn't get the answers he was looking for himself – so he got his disciples to go to Jesus on his behalf
- The Christian life is not meant to be lived in solitude, but in community
- Doubts and confusion are cracks, gaps, or weaknesses in our faith
- Our enemy will exploit those to get you to be offended by Jesus – to get you to fall away
- When life gets confusing and you have doubts – remember God is love, perfect, and different – then do: grasp, grow, and gather
- If you do – you will be blessed – God will be glorified, others will be blessed, and your faith will grow
- **Pray!**