

Doubting John

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[0 : 0 0] Around football season, I always think about this story, and I know I've shared it before, but I didn't think of it until hearing this song. And I think about John the Baptist today, somebody that would find his identity in simple obedience to the God of heaven.

The story goes that a young man didn't get a lot of playing time, but towards the end of his senior year, he begged the coach to let him play. And the coach said, I'll let you start the game being a senior. You've been a faithful player. You've put in a lot of time.

The kid goes in and just does incredible, ends up playing the full game. Ends at the end of the game, they give him the game ball. And to say that he was the most valuable player for that day, the kid takes the ball and he's crying.

The coach says, what got into you? Why was today different than any other day that you played? And he said, did you know that my dad used to come to all the games and he would sit in the stands? Well, what you may not know about my dad is that he was blind and that he never saw me play.

But my dad passed away this week and I believe that this is the first time he ever saw me play. So the day I played for an audience of one. It's incredible, freeing and wonderful when you know that your life is just really for the desire to please your creator.

[1 : 1 1] Nothing else. That is all that matters is that you live for this audience of one. And we see in John the Baptist something that ought to be seen in every Christian. And that is a simple, God, if this is what you would have for me to do in life, I will not doubt you, but I will just go faithfully ahead.

And when I do have my doubts, I will bring them to you. So we read in Luke chapter number 7, and we've already read our portion of scripture today, but we'll be looking at it some more. But we hadn't seen John since Easter.

When we were going through the book of Luke, I preached the message on how would John the Baptist prepare for Easter. And we looked at some things from his life. We learned about his mom, Zacharias, and Elizabeth. And that from a young age, he had a job that was appointed for him to do.

And so we learned about him. But where has John been all the way since we last heard about him? Well, I got bad news. John got locked up, all right? John's been in the slammer. If you haven't, that's where he has been recently the last few months.

Have you ever had an awkward conversation? Hey, where's your so-and-so? And they're like, oh, he's in jail. Oh, okay, I'm so sorry. All right. Well, that's what happened to John the Baptist. And so we saw the Sermon on the Plain or the Sermon on the Mount.

[2 : 2 1] And then we saw the miracles a couple weeks ago. And it was like, where's John at? It seemed like he would really enjoy some of this stuff. But John is not there. His ministry totally takes a change, public and out and boldly proclaiming to the Lord.

And now he is in a desert prism. But he's still going to be worshiping the Lord. And so John the Baptist, Greg got a new ride, a new car.

And I asked him, he names his cars, you know, that makes sense, right? And I said, what did you name this one? He said, I'm calling this one John the Baptist. I said, why? He said, it's a forerunner. So, of course, he would name his car John the Baptist.

And so we know John the Baptist to be a forerunner. He had the special job that was prophesied in the Old Testament that he would come and make the path clear. He would preach the message of repentance.

And we're going to see at the end of this portion of Scripture two different groups of people. Those that had been baptized by John recognizing their need of repentance and those that haven't.

[3 : 18] And John faithfully did his job even though it was difficult. So as we start off this passage, you may say, who is it again? Who doubted John? You mean John the baptizer?

John the Baptist? Is that really the same John we're talking about? Israel had waited a long time for the Messiah. So we wouldn't be surprised that somebody in some story would come out and say, are you the real Messiah?

Are you really the one we're expecting? It's a very reasonable question, a logical question. But you're a little bit surprised to think that it would be John the Baptist that was asking that question.

John just came from a fantastic family. Zacharias and Elizabeth had prayed and God gave them a child. And so they would have been brought up around that family to Joseph and Mary.

And they would have heard the story of how he was born and how he leaped for joy in the womb. He would have heard of the virgin birth of Mary.

[4 : 17] And you would think, was he just not paying attention? Did he not know that? Any of you have a family member? I have my youngest son. We can tell him what we're going to do. We can get packed for what we're doing. And then we pull up and like, oh, we're at our grandparents' house.

Yeah, we know. We told you this. Like for three days now, we've been driving here. But they just never know what's happening next, right? Kind of oblivious to what's going on around them. That's not John the Baptist.

He knew the stories. He knew what was going on. He knew what happened when he was a child. And he knew all those things that were happening. And then his dad, Zacharias, preached what's got to be one of the all-time greatest messages about Jesus Christ, the coming Messiah, the desire for all nations.

I'm going to read it to you in Luke chapter number 1, verses 67 through 79. It's a larger portion. But I want you just to hear this because towards the end of my reading, you're going to see that John the Baptist as a child is getting to sit there, kind of in the floor listening.

Bryce, or Oliver, my nephew, told me this week, he said, Trent, I really, Uncle Trent, I really like to hear you preach. That makes me sleep so good, all right? And he said, one time you were preaching, and two weeks later I woke up and I had to go to the bathroom, all right?

[5 : 29] And so our kids grow up hearing. But here is John the Baptist, little John the Baptist, listening to his dad, a priest, preach about the coming Messiah.

And so listen to these words and think about John the Baptist being in that room. And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people.

And he has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David. And he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been seen, the world began, that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all that hate us, to perform the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the earth which he swore to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of his hand of our enemies might serve him without fear and holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.

Verse 76. And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, through tender mercy of our God, whereby the day spring from our high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

That is one incredible sermon. He prophesied, inspired by the Holy Spirit. He preached that, and under inspiration, in the middle, towards the end of it, he's like, and my son here will be the one that declares that Jesus is coming.

[7 : 09] If I ever preached the message like that, y'all would never hear the end of it, all right? It would show up every Sunday night. It's just incredible, this message, and that as a young child, John the Baptist is hearing it. His dad, Zacharias, had doubts.

Remember when he heard that his wife was a child and that God didn't allow him to speak until it was time for the naming of his son? And he said his name would be John and that he would be having this minister of being a forerunner.

His dad had overcome the doubts in his life and now was boldly prophesying, declaring what was going to happen. And look at the effect. We don't have to guess what the effect was upon John the Baptist.

This verse number 80, and the child grew and was waxed strong in spirit and was in the desert till the day of his showing unto Israel. And so here he was, great childhood, great teaching.

He grew up at Awana, okay? He got all this opportunity. His dad was preaching about the coming Messiah. He grew and he was strong. He has the Old Testament prophecies.

[8 : 12] He would have known in Genesis when it says, we will make man in our image. He would know the one that we're waiting for was mentioned. In Genesis when it said that man had fallen into sin and that there'd be a seed of a woman which wouldn't be because it's of a virgin birth, that was the expected one, the coming one.

He would read about Adam and Eve and their sin and then he would learn about how there was a sacrifice and he would say that the coming one would be the sacrifice. Abraham taking his son, he would have known that story from his dad and he would say that ram represents the expected one, the one that we're waiting for.

The Old Testament was filled with stories of the coming one and John would have known about the coming Messiah. He would have known of the prophecies that was pointing to this man, Jesus Christ.

And then he boldly declares that Jesus is the Messiah. Luke 3.16. Jesus answered saying unto them, I indeed baptize you with water, but one mightier than I cometh and the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose, he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

And then we read in John 1.36, John the Baptist is baptizing people as they're coming out and recognizing their need of a Savior and they're repenting of their sins.

[9 : 29] And Jesus comes and John the Baptist looking at Jesus says, behold the Lamb of God. So he recognizes Jesus Christ being the Messiah. And so all of that to say a man with an incredible upbringing, a very clear calling in his life, once who had boldly declared that Jesus was the Messiah, he doubted.

Which is to say that none of you in here today ought to think that you are not able to be in a position where you will doubt as well. We're going to talk about what that doubt looks like.

John wasn't the first one and he would not be the last one by no means. When you think about doubt and faith in this conversation, you're going to go to the book of Mark. And it's a story where Jesus confronts a father whose son has been demon possessed.

The boy was mute. He had seizures. He's foamed at the mouth. And the family said it's happened since his childhood, which leads us to believe that he might be a teenager at this point. And Jesus tells this man, Jesus said to him, if thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

And the dad responds in these famous words, which came from his heart and his mouth, but it might as well come from my mouth and from my heart. And he says, the straight way, the father of the child, he said with tears, Lord, I believe, but help thou mine unbelief.

[10 : 51] Help me, Lord. I believe, but help my unbelief. And so this is a reality. It shouldn't be an acceptable reality, but it's one. Moses doubts.

Gideon doubts. Elijah doubts. Jeremiah doubts. The apostles are saying of people whose faith is weak at times. And then the John the Baptist doubts. And you and I, we doubt.

A very strong change we see in Peter. Most of us, when we go from boldly declaring to having those moments of doubt in our Christian life, is God all that he said he would be?

Is God going to fulfill what he has promised? Can I really trust God in this area? Most of us don't have such a drastic change, but we see it in the life of Peter, right? Peter looks out in Matthew chapter number 14, and Peter was come down out of the ship and he walked on the water to go to Jesus.

Man, he's walking by faith. But when he saw the wind boisterous and he was afraid, beginning to seek, he cried saying, Lord, save me. That drastic change from being a person who has had boldness and complete confidence to trust that he could trust in the words of God to somebody that now doubts, and immediately we see it.

[12 : 02] And even though it's not as visible in our lives, the same thing begins to happen to us when we doubt. We begin to sink. Not into the water, but into our circumstances, into this rut of life, into this situation.

It's misery, away from the joy that is available to us. And so I said we call this doubting John the Baptist. Typically, when you think the word doubting, it always goes to Thomas, and that is not fair.

You see, Thomas had made one of the strongest declarations about Jesus Christ being God. You are the Son. You are God. But in this time, he doubts. And he says, except I shall see in his hands, in John 20, 25, the print of the nails, and put my finger in the print of the nails, and thrust my hand in the side, I will not believe.

The story doesn't end there. I'll let you know here in a moment, the next verses. But he says, I need proof. I need, I am doubting. And I'm going to need to get this from Jesus. Doubt is just simply a struggle to believe.

I am not talking in here about coming on and off about a belief that there is a God. I'm talking about believing that he is all that he told us that he is. Believing that he is good, and that he is true, and I can trust him in the circumstances of my life.

[13 : 12] I know that there is God, but I'm struggling to believe. And we doubt, and we struggle. There is no temptation taken among men, but that is common. But God is faithful. What is the response to the temptation?

It's the answer that God is faithful. Because what is the inverse of believing that God is faithful? It's doubting that he is faithful. At the root of all temptation is just simply doubt.

Am I going to trust God? Am I going to do things the way that God told me that I'm going to do? Am I going to live for this audience of one, or am I going to live my life for myself? And then John the Baptist puts it in simple terms.

All right, so you're either the Messiah, and I can either stop looking for him, and I can rest in that fact. Or, secondly, if you're not the Messiah, we need to go find where the Messiah is at.

And that's what he says. Tell me, are you the one I'm waiting for? If not, we need to seek for the one. But he was going to find the Messiah, and he brought his questions to the Lord. And so what brought John?

[14 : 12] What brought John and what brings us to this crossroads of doubt and faith? And it's simply many times for us. There's many factors. But what is the most common reason that we would live according to our doubts and not to our faith?

It's a deep and personal tragedy. John the Baptist had been taken off the scene. His life that he had been living. Is prison in the desert really the reward for faithfulness and ministry?

I know the prison wouldn't have some of the modern luxuries that our prisons have, but I can assure you that the lack of cable TV was the least of John the Baptist's problems in jail. He had to feel so far away.

I told you the joke that I tell when we minister in the jails, and I'll say that, you know, Jesus is really easy to find in jail. And the reason is you always leave him here when you leave. And everybody laughs for a second, then they look down at the ground, and they say, that's not a very funny joke, is it?

All right? Is that Jesus is easy to find in jail because everybody leaves him in jail when they leave there. That wouldn't be the case for John the Baptist. Jesus or that connection to God would not have been easy for him because he had to feel like, I got to be outside of God's plan.

[15 : 23] This is not what he had for me to do. Did he really plan for me to preach this message? And then when Jesus show up, I'm just going to be put away into a prison? And Jesus doesn't even come and visit him, right?

All this is going on, and then people are coming and they're telling him? It cannot be the expectation that he has. And then here are the disciples that are coming, and they're giving updates to John the Baptist.

I don't know about you, but the only jail that I can imagine is the one from Andy Griffith, all right? So there's two cells, there's a person, Barney's at a desk, and then there's a window at the back of the cell, all right? And people run, and they stand up on milk crates, and they talk to the person in jail.

And that's the only way I can imagine this looking. And so here you've got the disciples, and they're looking in, they're like, you're not going to believe it, John the Baptist. They were arguing, was Jesus going to really go to the house of the centurion or not?

But he was headed to the house. But the centurion says, you don't even have to come here. I can trust you. I can believe you're a man of faith. And Jesus healed the servant without even going to the house. And then while everybody's still arguing, did Jesus, would he go into the centurion's house?

[16 : 26] Jesus goes to the next city, and he lays his hand on the thing that is carrying a dead body, proving that he can't be made unclean, showing his compassion upon this widow lady.

And you won't believe the message that he preached upon the mount. It was incredible. And they would have shared all these stories through that little bitty window, but John the Baptist wouldn't have got the experience into that.

He wouldn't have got to have seen that. All he knows is that he's now all alone, and he's isolated, and this is not the plan that he had for himself. This is not what he thought was going to happen when the Messiah would come.

John did not have all the information available to us, but he had faith. 1 Peter 1, 10 through 11 speaks about the prophets, of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.

See, we have so much information. That's why the least in the kingdom, we testify of Jesus. He said Jesus is coming. The greatest of the prophets of his time, because he gets to know that Jesus is coming.

[17 : 40] But we know that he has come, and they diligently seek. They wanted everything they could know about him. So what's this advantage that the centurion has? It's that the centurion did not have any of these false Jewish expectations about the Messiah.

That the Messiah was going to come up and set up the kingdom. That John the Baptist had to believe that not he wouldn't be in jail, but Herod would be in jail. That his life would be made better here on earth, because the Messiah had come.

And the thing, that personal tragedy that John the Baptist was dealing with, was his unmet expectation of what he thought life would be like following Jesus.

But the centurion would not have had that. And maybe he was influenced by the common teaching of the day. Because he says, if you're not the one, are you prophesying of the one to come? Remember when they said, do you believe, they say, who do men say that I am?

And some say that you're Elias, or that person. It was believed that these men would come, and they would prophesy before the Lord's return was coming. And so John didn't get the complete picture of all that was there.

[18 : 47] So we know of the model prayer in the New Testament teaches us what to pray, but it's the Psalms, as we say often, that teaches us how we should pray. I can't tell you that John the Baptist would have remembered Psalm 73, but I can tell you that there's nobody in here that has a working knowledge of the Old Testament like John the Baptist would have, right?

Or that his father would have, or any of the people we speak about in the Bible. They were just very much dedicated to the study of it. Psalm 73, verses 13 and 14. Verily, I've cleansed my heart in vain, and I've washed my hands in innocence.

For all the day long I have been plagued and chastened every morning. Couldn't the Messiah have done something about this? Couldn't Jesus have come and visit? Is this really what the loyalty to Christ is going to get me?

Doubts come from our inability to deal with negative circumstances when we perceive ourselves as being faithful people. Lord, have I cleansed my heart in vain? Really, Lord? I have done everything that you've asked me to do.

I dressed funny, and I went out into the desert, and I preached the hard message to the people. Other people got a softer mission in life, but I did what you've told me to do. Maybe John the Baptist would have lifted up his hands in that prison cell and just said, have I done all of this in vain?

[20 : 04] And that happens when you believe you've been faithful, but God's not met your expectations. There's a story of another man that's upon a cross in Luke chapter number 23, and one man is railing at him and speaking things.

In verse 41, it says, and we indeed justly, for we receive the due rewards of our deeds, but this man has not done nothing amiss. You see, that man on the cross beside Jesus, he wasn't dealing with those doubts and those unmet expectations.

He knew that he was a sinner, and he deserved to die on the cross that day. But here's John the Baptist feeling like he had obeyed Jesus perfectly. He had obeyed God perfectly, but now things aren't meeting his expectations, and he has doubts.

And Jesus addresses the heart of the problem to John the Baptist. So John the Baptist asked his disciples to go ask Jesus a question. They do it exactly like John had asked, and then immediately, I wish I could have been there that day, and it said, And in that same hour, he cured many of their infirmities and plagues and evil spirits, and unto many that were blind, he gave sight.

Then Jesus answering said unto them, and this is important what he says. So we've learned about two miracles, and it took like 15 verses, and the next thing you know, Jesus is doing miracles right and left all around them, all right?

[21 : 16] And he's saying, you disciples that are going to go back to John the Baptist, hey, what's this? Okay? And Jesus does the miracles, and he says, tell John this. Go ye and tell John what things you have seen and heard, and how the blind see, the lame walk, and the leopards are cleansed.

The deaf here and the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached, and blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. He told him to go back, and tell him these things have happened.

And he said, blessed are them that won't be offended in me. The last thing that we know that John the Baptist would have heard from the Messiah, maybe there was more, but not more that's recorded, but John the Baptist being a student of God's word, that speech that those disciples had to give, had to remind them of a passage.

Isaiah chapter number 61 verse 1, and the spirit of the Lord God is upon me, speaking of the Messiah, because the Lord has anointed me to preach the good tidings unto the meek. He has sent me to bind the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prisons to them that are bound.

That Jesus here says, I am the Messiah. I am doing all the things that they said that the Messiah was going to do, preaching the good news to them. I'm healing those that are lost.

[22 : 27] And John the Baptist had to come to peace with the say, if Jesus wanted me out of this prison, I would be. And if he doesn't, I'm going to trust that this is God's plan for my life.

And there was a great blessing that must have been given to him in that. And he was not offended by the life of Jesus Christ. During this time of doubt, John received all that he needed. He learned that Jesus cared for him.

He learned that Jesus was all powerful. He learned that Jesus was aware of his situation. He learned that if Jesus thought it was best to deliver him, he would be delivered. Neither Matthew nor Luke nor John share the reaction of John the Baptist after this point.

But I just have to believe, just like Asaph in Psalm 73, he looked at that prison cell differently. And he said, this is what God has called me to do. And I'm going to do it in a way that lives for this audience of one that is pleasing unto him.

So we see here that John knew where to turn with his doubts. John went directly to God with his doubts. We see this in other doubters in the Bible. Psalm 73, it says, when I thought to know this, it was too painful for me until I went into the sanctuary of God.

[23 : 39] Then I understood their end. Remember doubting Thomas, how I told you that he wanted, that he doubted. And he says, until I see the hand and the feet of Jesus, I am not going to believe.

Later on in verse number 26 of John chapter 20, it says, And after eight days, again, his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

Asaph, John the Baptist, Thomas, said, I'm going to take my doubts to God. I'm not leaving. Thomas didn't say, I don't believe it because I don't see it. I'm out. He said, I'm going to stick around until I get to talk to Jesus, and I'm going to ask him about my doubts.

And so those of us in your doubts, you turn to him, and you ask him these questions. John let his suffering drive him to God with all of his thoughts and emotions rather than from him. God knows him.

Bearing his pain would do no good. He goes to God with all honesty. And so Jesus answers to John, is this is who I am, not this is what I'm going to do.

[24 : 49] Jesus said, I am the Messiah. And he showed it to the disciples, and the report went back to him. When we go to God with our doubts, he will remind us that he is the creator.

He will remind us that he is all powerful. He will remind us that he sees us, and that he knows us, and he loves us. And just like in the story of these other men, that should be enough, and we should take that to him.

And then, as a side note here, and the messengers of John were departed, then that's when Jesus begins to speak about John. I would have thought, man, it sure would have been nice if he would have said all those nice things about John.

And then it would have got to go back to John, and he would have heard, if the disciples says, you're never going to believe what Jesus said about you. That's what, when I first read this, I wanted to see, was that the case? The disciples get to come back to John the Baptist and say, hey, you won't believe all these wonderful things that Jesus said about you, that you were not a reed shaken in the wind.

But it was after they departed, because what he was teaching was not for the benefit of John. John got everything he needed from his Savior in that answer. But the answer was for the benefit of those people that were watching, that were around.

[25 : 55] John got to hear, blessed is he who shall not be offended in me. But those that were around the lost and the believing people, they needed to hear about this man, John the Baptist. After going to God with our doubts, we should return to worshipping him.

Psalms 73, until I go into the sanctuary, understand their end. When we go from a temporal view of life to an eternal view of life, the sanctuary reminds us that not knowing what is next in our lives is not a problem as long as we can fully trust in the one who knows.

John says, if this is what God has given me to do, I can do it, because blessed is the one who's not offended by him. So instead of the surprising not having answers, we can rejoice knowing the one who needs to know does.

Isaiah 55 tells us that our thoughts are not his thoughts, neither our way is his way, as saith the Lord. For the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than yours, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

So after you bring your complaint and you ask God for wisdom, you should stop, you should listen, and you should recall who he is and what he has done. And then lastly, you can find rest in your prison cell.

[27 : 09] I used to tell teenagers when they were new to the church, I'd say, hey, I'll only bail you out of jail one time without telling your parents. It wasn't a very good joke, and parents didn't really appreciate it, but one day, after many years of telling that, I got a phone call late into the night, and they said, hey, Brother Trent, remember that joke you always made?

Well, I'm in jail, and I need you to come get me, all right? It was something small about a license plate and insurance and, you know, all those small details you need when you drive a car. And they said, I need you to come get me, and it was late at night, and I told Stephanie, I'm going to wait until the morning, all right?

A night in jail will not be that bad. You know what I found out the next morning? It was pretty bad, all right? I wish I would have, I wish I would have wouldn't got the person sooner, all right?

And it was just cold and miserable. They weren't harmed, but it was just so lonely and so many thoughts. There was no rest. There was no sleep that was given to them. But there's, unlike the person in that story, there's a great comfort when you know that God has led you into the valley.

Psalms 73, Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reign. So foolish was I and ignorant, I was as a beast before them. Nevertheless, I am continually with thee. Thou hast hold me by my right hand.

[28 : 19] Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory. And so it's not a joy in the fact that all of our problems go away, but it's the joy that provides us reassurance that we have the presence of God in our difficulties, that we can have the presence of God in our prison cell, that we can recognize that we are living life and it isn't God, it isn't off script, that somehow God didn't lose track of us, that somehow John the Baptist was not some kind of character that just fell off into the background of the story, and that God did not care about him, but this confidence that his presence is there with us.

It should give us an incredible peace that even though we're being misunderstood, that we can find joy in the simple obedience. Psalm 73, 25 and 26, Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.

My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. If John the Baptist remembered Psalm 73 when he said, Did I wash my hands in vanity?

When he got that answer back from the Messiah, he had to say, Though my heart and my flesh may fail, my strength is in you. God, your presence is all I need. All I needed to know was that you knew where I was at and that you care about me and that I'm living in obedience.

So John's simple obedience in his trial was still preaching very boldly and loudly. And so in Mark 9, 22, Jesus answered and says, All times I was cast him into the fire and into the waters to destroy him, but if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us.

[29 : 54] That's what this dad said with his son in this bad condition. He says, If you can just help us, if you could just show some compassion to us and you could help us, you know, when you ask Jesus to help you with your unbelief, when you cry out to God and say, Help my unbelief, you will always receive mercy.

You will always receive him showing compassion upon you. And so doubts arise because people have these wrong expectations and the view of the plan for their lives may be different than what God had for them.

But God showed great mercy upon John the Baptist. You know, it would be wonderful to get to be the man in the desert that God had set aside that was preaching and just baptizing person after person after person.

But isn't it also wonderful to be the person that God had put in the prison cell who said, You guys say that you won't believe the message from John the Baptist because he lives this life like this.

But for the same reasons you won't believe him, you won't believe me because you say I'm gluttonous and I'm living such a free life. And so the gospel presentation was going there upon those Pharisees that day in two directions.

[30 : 59] From the life that God called John the Baptist to live and from the life of Christ and that Jesus Christ used John the Baptist as an object lesson as he preached the gospel. I don't know about you but I couldn't think of anything greater to put on my resume in life is that Jesus Christ was able to take my life and to show people the gospel being lived out.

And so John the Baptist in the prison cell still spoke very loudly. So John says, Jesus I wanted to check with you and make sure that you are the desire of all nations that I've been waiting for and now that you are that's all that I would need to know.

And so Jesus will help you if you see your unbelief today. Unbelief will rob you of your joy and purpose in life but the presence of unbelief in us is often subtle.

You don't always see it clearly and many times it seems understandable and even justifiable. You don't believe that God can work in your circumstances and you've created a very good story of why that is true and I want to tell you that your story is doubt and I want to tell you that your story is allowing temptation.

I'm going to tell you that your doubt is sin that you need to trust and believe in the God of heaven. Hebrews 11 6 but without faith it is impossible to please him for he that cometh to God must believe that he is and he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

[32 : 19] What was John the Baptist doing that day? He was diligently seeking him that in his doubt he went in faith to the Lord for answers. If you want God to confront the doubts in your heart that are keeping you from fully experiencing the joy and peace that is there you need to recognize that you may be a prisoner in a cell of your own making and just like John the Baptist you need to call out to God and say help me with my unbelief.

Search my heart oh God and see if there be any wicked way in me. You know my thoughts you have tried me and you have seen me Lord and I found in Jesus he is still giving answers to people in their doubts and I will tell you the day.

And so what will help you fight your unbelief is asking him to expose it in there where it has been concealed. Don't fear discipline but fear that fear unbelief. Don't fear going to God in your unbelief fear the unbelief because it will destroy you.

It will take all that joy from you. It will take that knowledge that you're living according to his plan in your life. And so where did John the Baptist take his doubts? He took them to Jesus. What did Thomas do with his doubts?

He waited around eight days because he says I need to talk to Jesus. Where do you need to take your doubts today? You need to take them to God. And that's going to help you overcome those temptations in your life and to live according to knowing that he is watching and seeing you that you're living according to the plan that he has for your life.

[33 : 42] Let's pray together. Heavenly Father thank you for such a strong and vivid picture Lord of a man with such a great upbringing who had declared you boldly but now he's at a position of doubt.

Lord I thank you that in the Bible you don't hide these stories from us. You don't only tell us about the heroes of great faith but you give us stories of people that look like us and that act like us and Lord I believe there could be people in here today Lord that aren't living a life based upon faith that they're still seeking for somebody with answers because they have not realized that they have found in you all that they would ever need.

Lord I pray that temptation will be overcome today because people would live according to faith. I pray if there's unbelieving people in here today they will not seek for another person but they will find that you are the one we've been waiting for.

With every head bowed whenever I closed and Kristen plays the piano as I do on every Sunday morning and I pray that is done on every Sunday until Jesus comes back I just ask you if you do not know that Jesus Christ is the Savior and you've had doubts could I encourage you to take those doubts to Him and to pray to Him and say God help my unbelief help me recognize that you are the one and only that I can put my faith and trust in.

You can talk to the Lord there in your seat you can talk to me in the four year afterwards but what I would really encourage you to do today is I would encourage you to raise your hand acknowledging that you don't have faith in Jesus Christ and that you have doubts and you want those answered.

[35 : 18] If you would raise your hand I would give you some simple instructions of how you could go to a counseling room and learn about the answers the doubt that are given by Jesus. Without your story in here today would you raise your hand acknowledging your need of a Savior.

Now I speak to my brothers and sisters in Christ recognize the doubt in your life that area of temptation that you've been facing that area of attitude that you have it's not acknowledging that He is true and go to Him and say Lord I need to speak to you about this help my unbelief and as a result of going to Him Lord I believe that we would find great joy today as we leave this place.

Heavenly Father I pray that you would be with my brothers and sisters in Christ as we take a moment and we bring to you our doubts and we ask you to help us in our unbelief.