

“SHOULD WE LOOK FOR ANOTHER?”

Luke 7:18-20 The disciples of John reported all these things to him. And John, calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, “Are You the One who is to come, or shall we look for another?” And when the men had come to Him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, ‘Are You the One who is to come, or shall we look for another?’ ”

You know - we struggle with this passage. In fact, I recently discussed this passage recently with one of you and you weren't sure what to make of it. Even heard it (coincidentally) on a pad cost (and was encouraged to hear we shared the same understanding of the passage). I was curious and pulled out my Matthew and Luke Truth Commentaries to see what they had to say. One commentary was saying the exact opposite of the other one regarding John's question. One believes the question was on behalf of the two disciples while the other believes the question was from and for John. I agree - I think John asked the question for himself.

Why do we struggle with this passage? Well, because it's uncomfortable to see a man who is supposed to be so strong in the faith asking such a fundamental (and seemingly doubtful) question. It's difficult for us to harmonize strong faith with questioning. But brethren - is it really that hard?

One of our youth made me think of John the Baptist. They stand for the truth. They stand for Jesus. They stand up for the belief in God (not only do you have to defend Jesus, but the concept of God). Let me read what they wrote: *“In an increasingly atheistic/agnostic world, many Christians even as early as middle school are called upon to defend not only their faith in Jesus but their belief in a God at all to critical peers. Having done this many times myself over time, it causes me to become a bit jaded with regards to the number of unsaved people and level of confusion about God out in the world (sheep without a shepherd). Quite frankly (I'm not proud of this) it makes me frustrated about how God does not directly communicate with anyone anymore (beyond the Bible). Because of this, sometimes when I am defending myself to a critic of Christianity, they raise a point that I can technically defend but have trouble believing. For example, why create mankind if it was obvious to God that most of us would spend eternity in torment? Multiple people have brought this criticism and others like it to me, and I have to admit sometimes it bothers me even though I can technically defend it. How can we have faith in God when he does things we can't understand (including not giving us the insight to understand)?”*

First of all - I want to praise them for their continual search and questioning. Isn't that what John did? He didn't give up and take the question to a non-believer. He didn't take it to the world. This youth brought it to us, because he believes, is seeking, but has faced some confusing/difficult situations. I believe John did as well. Was John inspired? Yes, but not every second of his life. Did he believe that Jesus was the Son of God? Yes, but time was going on and things were probably not as he thought they would be. If He's the one . . . why am I in prison? Why is He dealing with others in such a way? Perhaps . . . where's the physical kingdom? If we have work to do . . . why am I here? Etc. It's no different than, “Why make us if majority will go to hell?” Etc. What would we rather him do . . . pretend like he's not asking the question? Feel ashamed for asking such a question? Give the

impression that faith requires you never feel discouraged, fearful or doubtful? Or, teach that we learn how to keep the faith during discouragement, fear and doubt? You don't think John was lost or had lost faith because he asked that question, do you? You notice how Jesus answers, correct? He goes on to defend and compliment John (another reason why I believe the question was for John). I think we should do the same.

John wasn't the only one:

- Moses ([Numbers 11:10-15](#))
- Elijah ([1 Kings 19](#))
- Jeremiah ([Jeremiah 20:14-18](#))
- Job struggled. David struggled. My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?
- Abraham ([Romans 4:16-25](#) with [Genesis 15:1-8](#)). We talk about Sarai laughing, but it may be good to remember this as well. Let's also take note of [Genesis 16](#) when Sarai makes the decision that the child wouldn't come by her, so she gives her Hagar and he went along with it. You may argue that he didn't hesitate, because the son would still come from his loins (even if through Hagar), but you'll still have to deal with [Genesis 17:15-19](#). Listen, it's not perfect . . . yet it is.
 - Listen - I can't perfectly explain all of this. We may be making too much of a distinction out of [Genesis 18:9-15](#). It doesn't say the Lord was upset with her. Her problem is that she lied about it, but God could have asked Abraham the same question, "Why did you laugh? Is anything too hard for me?"
 - Jesus seems to acknowledge the difficulty of believing while not seeing ([John 20:28](#)). As we learned in our 1 John study, "*If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.*" [1 John 4:20](#). I mean, let's get real - at least John the Baptist got an answer back from his disciples. It's not odd to want that, but here we are. It was tough even when others could see and talk to God. What I'm saying is . . . you're not going crazy.

Two Truths:

- We need to be humble and careful:
 - [Job 38:1-3](#) "*Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: 'Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to Me.'*"
 - *But many times I believe God is purposeful working in such a way as to produce faith. How He dealt with Abraham, for example, was no coincidence. He tested Him. Leading Moses to a wall of water was a plan, but He split the seas. One of the greatest gifts of the Old Law is learning about His testing mankind so we'll be confident that He's present, but you must remember: most of all history man has not seen such miracles. He wasn't talking to everyone everyday. Most of us have been in the same boat.*
 - *It may feel like you're losing your faith when in reality you're being challenged for the first time. You've entered the war. You're increasing your faith!*