

# Dealing With Doubt

Jesus chose His 12 apostles after a long night of prayer. He then healed the sick, cast out demons, and taught a great multitude. He encouraged a change of heart and long-term thinking. His disciples were not to be retaliatory or benefit-driven. They were to be merciful servants. He desired sincerity and obedience. He called for them to truly listen to His words so He could build a house that could not be shaken. And isn't that what the Kingdom is? Unshakable!

*Note: I've enjoyed and recommend Mark E. Moore's "The Chronological Life of Christ." Some of my comments can be found in his material by coincidence (he's not the only one making such observations articulated in his material), and other times, I've leaned on his accurate and helpful observations. He's done an excellent job making 1st-century culture and practices available.*

*No other events between His sermon on the plain and our text today. It's so good to see Jesus heal and teach. There's much momentum that you sense even as a reader. We've all experienced that dynamic day, evening, or hour with someone who restores our spirit and leaves us on cloud nine. You could conquer the world! But then you wake up, and reality smacks you in the face. **You face disease, death, and doubt.** Sound familiar? Today, we'll see an anxious master, weeping mother, and persecuted disciple. These individuals make up the Kingdom of God.*

## A Humble Ruler (Luke 7:1-10)

- A centurion's servant was paralyzed (Matthew 8:6). "A centurion was a Roman military officer in charge of roughly 100 soldiers. Interesting how most of the individual centurions mentioned in the gospel accounts are seen in a good light.
- *What grabs my attention:*
  - Jesus knows this centurion found his servant highly valuable. This particular Greek term can also be translated "child." That's Jesus' kind of person, don't you think?
  - It's embarrassing how outsiders sometimes demand more respect from insiders than insiders do from their own people, you know?
  - One could say this servant wasn't worthy of anything. That's true - what are we deserving of? Jesus even makes the point later in Luke 17:10. No, he wasn't worthy, but such a heart has the attention of the Lord. Jesus is not brutal. Like scripture teaches, "For He knows our frame; He remembers we are dust." Psalm 103:14
- **Trust and submit. Your faith is what He's looking for. Jesus also submitted to the Father while holding authority Himself. Jesus is only said to have "marveled" twice. The other time is the unbelief of the people (Jews) from His own hometown in Mark 6:6.**
  - Application then: God accepts those who have faith - not Jews only (see Matthew's account). Application today: God will accept you, not because you're worshipping with the right people, but because of your trust and submission (which will lead you to the right people). Reminder: spiritual disease is more deadly than physical disease. This portion wasn't about the servant, rather the ruler.

### A Hurting Mother (11-17)

- Here we learn of the first of three individuals Jesus raised from the dead.
- *What grabs my attention:*
  - I wonder if Jesus was thinking about how His own mother, before too long, would mourn the death of her firstborn. Honestly, I don't see how He couldn't.
  - The people see Him as a prophet. Interesting how both Elijah and Elisha raised a widow's only son. Nain is "just over the hill from Shunem where Elisha raised the son of the Shunammite woman" (Moore).
  - Jesus touches a dead body, which would typically make one unclean (Num. 19:11-13).
- **Count on His compassion. He'll comfort you one way or another.**
  - Application: I have no desire to offend those who have lost loved ones. "Jesus didn't give him/her back to me!" There's no way around it - these brethren benefited from Jesus' presence. However, for those who believe He cares what we experience, we have peace over time. I also think God is working on His part to comfort us in ways unknown to us all. We also learn from these moments and become one who comforts those who suffer. One day, we will never have to say goodbye again. This has to be sufficient. Life is complex, and we should acknowledge this reality. Let's not forget - Jesus saw her and had compassion. One day, none of us will weep anymore. Do you believe that?

### John The Doubter (18-35)

- John had been in prison around 10 months for rebuking Herod for having his brother's wife.
- *What grabs my attention:*
  - John was asking this for himself and not his disciples only (as many have tried to example away). Notice how he's not interested in giving up the search. He's simply wanting to know if Jesus is the one he is looking for.
  - "Blessed is the one who is not offended by Me." Brethren, we often stop looking for Jesus because we're angry with Him when things don't make sense.
  - Jesus is not offended by John's question. Instead, He exalts John and reveals that he was Elijah (Matthew 11:14). We've already learned this earlier in our study. Like Elijah, he served as a prophet when God's people turned away.
  - Take note of how rejecting John's baptism was equivalent to rejecting the purpose of God.
  - Some people are destined to be spiritually blind. It doesn't matter what they see - they won't see it. We've got to be wise enough to know when we're dealing with the willfully blind.
- **Ask questions with a seeking, obedient heart. He'll give you an appropriate answer.**
  - Application: I don't know what your doubts may be. Typically, we all have them. We can feel lost, like we're wandering around the wilderness. True disciples will go through this. Stay sincere and honest. Understand that God may desire you to wait for a time. Sometimes, the answer is in the experience of waiting. Sometimes, time must go by before we're ready to accept the answer. Sometimes, we learn that there may not be any clear answer, which also may provide peace once realized. However, one truth will always remain: Jesus is the way. You can stop looking for anyone or anything else. If you find yourself doing that, get your eyes back on Christ.