



Daily Devotionals: With Jesus One-On-One | January 16, 2022

Day 1 – Devotion

Have you ever gotten to a point in your life where you wondered, “Was it worth it? What was it all for? Did I truly make an impact? Was it all a waste of time?”

We heard a message on John the Baptist where he was struggling with some of these big questions because he wasn’t sure if all that he had done in life was worth it or if he had been mistaken about who Jesus was. We’re going to dive deeper into this story, looking at John the Baptist’s miraculous conception, his effective and unorthodox ministry, his imprisonment, his doubt of who Jesus is, and an execution as a result of petty political maneuvering.

John the Baptist found himself in bleak circumstances. He had numerous followers coming to listen to his teachings and to be baptized. Yet, John spoke out against Herod, a puppet king of the Romans in Galilee, who had taken his sister-in-law as his own wife. As a result of John speaking against a ruler’s sexual immorality, he was imprisoned and eventually executed.

Tomorrow we’ll focus our time in **Luke 7**, where John sends messengers to Jesus, but for today, let’s imagine ourselves in John’s shoes. He’s been faithful since birth to what he was set apart to do. He’s followed all the rules, baptized many, including Jesus himself, and Jesus is even recorded saying, “Among those born of women, there is no one greater than John” (**Luke 7:28**). So, imagine yourself imprisoned, alone and waiting on what you assume is death. You’ve done no wrong, and you’ve been faithful to God all the days of your life. Doubt begins to creep in. *What if I was wrong? Did I put my faith in the wrong person? Was this all just a big waste of time and I am about to die for this? For what?!*

We have all been deceived at some point in our lives. Broken promises, unmet expectations, betrayal. Unfortunately, these all seem to be dependable realities of the human experience. But this situation is unique in that John is doubting if Jesus was who he said he was. I think we all can agree that, at some point, we’ve all had doubts about our faith and what we believe.

Just like Jesus doesn’t berate John’s disciples in this week’s text, or Thomas who famously doubted the resurrection, Jesus invites us to “come and see” and consider the implications of what we’ve seen.



Questions for reflection:

- How should followers of Jesus think about doubt? Is it good or bad or neither? What are your thoughts about it?
- Have you ever experienced doubt regarding your faith? What did your doubt surround? What precipitated that doubt? If you're still in it, what questions do you still need answered? If you've come out of your doubt, what helped you overcome it?
- If you were to ask Jesus, "Are you really the One??" How do you think he'd answer you based on his response to John the Baptist?
- What are the implications of Jesus' "come and see" approach to doubt? How does that approach impact you when you have questions?

Pray for openness to learn from John the Baptist this week. Pray for the ability to express your doubts, frustrations, and feelings honestly to God.



Day 2 – Bible Study Breakdown

Today, let's read about how John the Baptist sent messengers to Jesus to ask if he was the Messiah. There are some questions embedded within the reading below, asking you to consider what you just read. Take your time with these questions. There are also some final reflection questions after your reading.

Read Luke 7:1-10.

1 When Jesus had finished saying all this to the people who were listening, he entered Capernaum. **2** There a centurion's servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die. **3** The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant. **4** When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, "This man deserves to have you do this,**5** because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue." **6** So Jesus went with them.

He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. **7** That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. **8** For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

9 When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel." **10** Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well.

- Imagine yourself as one of John's disciples who's seeing what Jesus is doing as he heals. Knowing you're following a man who's pointing to Jesus as Messiah, yet who is in jail, how does this affect your perspective on Jesus and his miracles?

Read Luke 7:18-28.

18 John's disciples told him about all these things. Calling two of them, **19** he sent them to the Lord to ask, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"

- What do you think these disciples are thinking after they leave their master in jail and go to Jesus?



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

21 At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. **22** 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 cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. **23** Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.”

- How does Jesus’ response in these verses sit with you? He doesn’t answer the question directly but tells the disciples to report back what they’ve seen and heard.

24 After John’s messengers left, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? **25** If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear expensive clothes and indulge in luxury are in palaces. **26** But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. **27** This is the one about whom it is written:

“I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.”

28 I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.”

Questions for Reflection:

- Since we don’t see it, what do you think John’s reaction to Jesus’ words was?
- How does Jesus’ response show his ideas about his Kingdom as opposed to the expectations of others?
- Like Jesus listed the good things he had done among the people, what can you point to in your life or in the life of others that show this same power working today?



Day 3 – Scripture Survey

To fully understand John the Baptist and where he's in **Luke 7**, look at the other places that John shows up in the Gospels.

As you read these passages, answer the following questions:

- How does this deepen your understanding of John in **Luke 7**?
- Where else in Scripture can you find similar elements to what we read about John?

Luke 1:5-24

Matthew 3; Mark 1:1-11; Luke 3:1-22; John 1:19-34

John 3:22-36



Day 4 – Story Work

In this series, we're looking at people who were one-on-one with Jesus and how these interactions changed them and can change us. What's unique about this week's passage is that John the Baptist never directly interacts with Jesus in **Luke 7**. He sends some of his disciples to observe what Jesus is doing, ask Jesus some questions, and to report back.

Although John wasn't with Jesus in this passage, he spent lots of time with him and his whole life was devoted to preparing people for Jesus' arrival.

So, what does this have to do with us? How does this relate to our own lives? We're not in jail because of our faith. We're not eccentric preachers in the desert eating insects and wearing strange clothes. Yet, we have all been in situations where we doubt, feel disappointment, and wonder what it was all for.

Spend a few minutes in prayer asking God what you might take from this story from John's life. Still your mind, preparing to think deeply and ask God to bring to mind what He wants you to discover.

- What expectations are you putting on Jesus? Are these expectations that are supported in Scripture by the words and actions of Jesus or are they coming from someone else?
- When have you been disappointed by God? How have you handled that? Do you pray about it? If so, how? If not, why?
- What is God inviting you to "come and see"? How can you reflect upon what God has already done in your life or in the lives of others?



Day 5 – Application

We've spent the week learning about the life of John the Baptist. We've looked at doubt and frustration with God, the story of John's life with its highs and lows, and we've imagined ourselves in this story. Yesterday, you considered your doubts and disappointments, considered what invitations you have from God to "come and see", and reflected on what God has done in the past.

If you wrote down answers to these questions, take some time to prayerfully reflect on these questions today. If you didn't write them down, spend some time in prayer thinking about these questions again, and write out your answers.

Once finished, reflect on these questions as ideas of how to implement what we've read and pondered this past week:

- After praying and reflecting over these questions, are there people in your life you need to share these thoughts with?
- If you're in a season of spiritual doubt, anger, or frustration, have you shared that with anyone else?
- How can you share these honest feelings with others and invite them to pray for you and encourage you as you walk with God through this season? It can be intimidating to express honest feelings of doubt or anger about God, but it's best to express these feelings to God and to invite others close to you into the conversation. The Psalms are full of raw emotion covering the full spectrum of the human experience. God isn't afraid of hearing what we are feeling, and we should take whatever is on our mind and heart to Him. Share this with your life group or another trusted believer.
- Likewise, you can do the same with any invitations from God. It could be a celebration of God bringing you out of sin or a difficult situation, an invitation to serve, digging deeper into Scripture, or sharing your faith more boldly at work. Don't hold onto these things yourself, share it with your life group or your community.
- Finally, I think we all should spend time reflecting on what it means to have the same attitude of John the Baptist that, "He must increase and I must decrease" (**John 3:30**). Where in your life do you need to step aside and let Jesus become the priority and not yourself? Pray about this. Spend time in silence listening and contemplating this. It may not be any different than the invitations from God, or it may be something else entirely. Once you know what it is, don't keep it to yourself. Share it in your community and ask them to pray for you, encourage you, and hold you accountable to taking steps to do this.