

Giving Honor - Finding Hope

Summer at the Bayou – Week 2

July 10, 2022

Who are some of the greatest people you have ever met?

Jesus - *“Of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John the Baptist.”* Matthew 11:11 (NLT)

Even the best of God’s people can struggle at times with doubt and discouragement in their lives.

“When Jesus had finished giving these instructions to His twelve disciples, He went out to teach and preach in towns throughout the region. ²John the Baptist, who was in prison, heard about all the things the Messiah was doing. So he sent his disciples to ask Jesus, ³‘Are you the Messiah we’ve been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?’ ⁴Jesus told them, ‘Go back to John and tell him what you have heard and seen— ⁵the blind see, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor.’ ⁶And He added, ‘God blesses those who do not fall away because of me.’ ⁷As John’s disciples were leaving, Jesus began talking about him to the crowds. ‘What kind of man did you go into the wilderness to see? Was he a weak reed, swayed by every breath of wind? ⁸Or were you expecting to see a man dressed in expensive clothes? No, people with expensive clothes live in palaces. ⁹Were you looking for a prophet? Yes, and he is more than a prophet. ¹⁰John is the man to whom the Scriptures refer when they say, “Look, I am sending My messenger ahead of You, and he will prepare your way before You.” ¹¹I tell you the truth, of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John the Baptist. Yet even the least person in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he is! ¹²And from the time John the Baptist began preaching until now, the Kingdom of Heaven has been forcefully advancing, and violent people are attacking it. ¹³For before John came, all the prophets and the law of Moses looked forward to this present time. ¹⁴And if you are willing to accept what I say, he is Elijah, the one the prophets said would come. ¹⁵Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!” Matthew 11:1-15 (NLT)

We learn from this story that:

- LIFE IS FILLED WITH **PROBLEMS**

“John the Baptist ... was in prison.” Matthew 11:2 (NLT)

Problems can come into our lives as a result of experiencing life’s circumstances. (John 16:33)

Problems can come as a result of our own choices. (Galatians 6:7)

Problems can come in our lives as a result of interactions with ungodly people. (Mark 6:14-29)

Even the best of God’s people can experience painful problems in their lives.

- **IT'S OKAY TO HAVE QUESTIONS**

“²John the Baptist, who was in prison, heard about all the things the Messiah was doing. So he sent his disciples to ask Jesus, ³‘Are You the Messiah we’ve been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?’” Matthew 11:2-3 (NLT)

Sometimes the Lord allows us to go through difficulties in order to discipline us. (Hebrews 12:6)

Sometimes the Lord allows us to go through difficulties in order to deepen our relationship with Him. (2 Corinthians 1:8-9)

Sometimes the Lord allows us to go through difficulties in order to develop us.

“² ... When troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. ³For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. ⁴So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.” James 1:2-4 (NLT)

Some of our questions will never be answered in this life, and probably won't be of great significance to us in the next life. (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)

- **JESUS HAS THE ANSWERS**

“Jesus told them, ‘Go back to John and tell him what you have heard and seen’ ... ” Matthew 11:4 (NLT)

While some of our questions won't be answered in this life, the Lord does respond to many of the questions that we have about our life and life in general.

David - *“I prayed to the Lord, and He answered me. ... ” Psalm 34:4 (NLT)*

Prayer Formula - When my request is not right, the Lord says “No.” When the time is not right, the Lord says, “Slow.” When I am not right, the Lord says, “Grow.” But when everything is right, the Lord says, “Go!”

- **JESUS STILL PERFORMS MIRACLES**

“Jesus told them, ‘Go back to John and tell him what you have heard and seen - the blind see, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor.’” Matthew 11:4-5 (NLT)

Jesus is still performing miracles in people's lives, circumstances and relationships. (Ephesians 1:16-19)

- **THE LORD REWARDS FAITH WITH BLESSINGS**

Jesus - *“God blesses those who do not fall away because of Me.” Matthew 11:6 (NLT)*

The Lord has promised to reward our faith and our faithfulness in this life and the next life. (Galatians 6:9, Matthew 25:21)

We can all struggle with doubt and discouragement, but we can overcome those struggles when we remember who Jesus is and what He's done, and we refocus on what He can do and what He's promised to His faithful followers.

"It is through faith that a righteous person has life." Romans 1:17 (NLT)