

Praising A Doubter

“After Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in the towns of Galilee. When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples to ask him, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?’ Jesus replied, ‘Go back and report to John what you hear and see: 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. Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.’”
Matthew 11:1-6 (NIV)

“I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John...”

John the Baptist was an older cousin to our Lord. His preaching and baptizing prepared the people for the coming of Jesus. He called the nation to come to their God in repentance and practiced baptism as a sign of dying to the old life by immersion and rising from the water to follow the Lord as new people.

John publicly gave wonderful praise to Jesus while he was free and preaching (John 1:29). He had no doubts about our Lord's identity and mission. However, as we know, he was arrested and thrown into prison and under threat of death. His awful living conditions compounded his suffering. It is not surprising therefore that he began to have doubts about his cousin's identity.

Suffering has caused many godly people to entertain questions about their faith even people as devout as John. We need to be as gentle with doubters as our Lord was with John. If you, or someone you know is struggling with your faith look at Jesus' method of dealing with John and minister grace.

While emotional support via a sympathetic ear is essential there is more help that can be given to the person in pain. Jesus asked John's disciples to look at His miracles, listen to His sermons and report back to John. So, Jesus used facts to strengthen John's faith.

Then Jesus gave wonderful praise to John calling him the greatest man of his day. So, when doubts come to us we need to do two things. First,

recognize that at times we all entertain doubts just as the great man John the Baptist did in his time of crisis. Second, look at the facts and allow them to help strengthen your struggling faith.

Facts such as the many promises in Scripture that guarantee the Lord's abiding presence, the warnings that we may suffer in this life, the teaching that we need to look forward to the end of suffering and the eternal rewards waiting for us to receive in the new earth.

Take a few moments now to feed your faith on the suggestions above and look forward to your eternal reward.

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