


## Greatness in the Kingdom

2026-02-01 – Luke 7:18-35

	<p>Sitting in a prison for preparing the way for the Messiah, John the Baptist wondered whether or not Jesus really was the Messiah. John's doubt, despite baptizing Jesus and hearing God speak from heaven, sets the stage for Jesus to talk about greatness in his kingdom. Come join us this week as we consider the greatness of those who obey the Lord and how to reject the world's rejection of truth.</p>
---	---

Well, if you've got your Bibles, I want to invite you to open to Luke chapter seven. We are in this series, *The Certainty of the Good News*, where we are looking at the promises of the gospel and how what we have heard, we can take assurance in. Because as we see the testimony of those who saw Jesus, and as we hear what Jesus said, we see that Jesus is the King, the Messiah, the Son of God. And today it's interesting as we are reading the Gospel of Luke about the certainty that we can have in our faith, that today we are going to be talking about doubt from the greatest person who lived up to Jesus, John the Baptist.

Today we are talking about Defeating Doubt as Kingdom Citizens.

And what we will see as we dig into this passage is a fascinating picture of how John's doubt leads Jesus to show how we should respond to doubt. And just as importantly, when we read through this passage, it helps us to see how God regards us and how we should regard both him and the world.

Because if you're out there and you're a believer, I know you have doubt. Because no believer does not have doubt. If you're a believer out there and you're like, "Well, I've never doubted anything in my life," I doubt you—and you're—I—I okay. So I'm glad we're on the same page. No one out there is offended right now.

And if you're a non-believer, you probably have a lot of doubt. You probably as we talked about communion and I said this cup is not for you—that probably didn't feel good. But I don't say that because we want to exclude you. We want to fill you with doubt, but I say that because we want to preach and proclaim the truth to you. We don't want to leave you in a place where you come in and you think, "Oh, this is, I'm good. I'm good before God." Because when Jesus said, "**Blessed are the poor...**" (Luke 6:20), he meant blessed are those who know that they are not righteous. "**Blessed are the hungry...**" It's those who hunger for righteousness and "**blessed are those who are weeping...**" those who weep because they know they cannot be righteous in their own strength. Because for those who see the world that way, the kingdom is theirs because of the blood of Christ.

As we dig into our passage today, I want to encourage each and every one of you that if you cry out to the Lord, you will be saved. And as we struggle in doubts in our lives—whether they're struggles about provision in this life or promises that God has made, whatever struggles lead you to wonder "Is God really in control? Is he really all-powerful? Can I really trust him?"—what I want to encourage you in is that what he has already displayed in your life is enough to say yes you can.

## THE CERTAINTY OF THE GOOD NEWS

Pastor Matt Johnson

---

And so we are looking today at how to Defeat Doubt as Kingdom Citizens and I want to encourage you that wherever you stand today, whatever doubts you have, the Lord sees them, he knows them, and he is greater than them.

To that end, I'm going to pray one more time and then we will jump into our passage.

*Father in heaven, we thank you. We thank you, Lord, that as we stand in a world that is full of cynical narratives that rejects you and rejects the truth of the gospel. As we struggle with our own insecurities, as we struggle with our own doubts, as we struggle with our own realities, that we know that we fall so short of you. I praise you, Lord, that the work of your Son is sure and complete. And I pray that in this time, your Spirit would be opening our eyes that we would see it, that we would understand, and that you would give us eyes to see and ears to hear what your Word has to say. Father, I pray that you would speak to me and speak through me, that these would be your words and not mine. And I pray, Lord, that if anyone here does not know you, by the end of today, they would be rejoicing in the work of the gospel and the work of your spirit and opening their eyes. We pray all of this in your son, Jesus' holy and precious name. Amen.*

When we're talking about **Defeating Doubt as Kingdom Citizens**, we're gonna be in Luke 7:18–35. And the first point we're gonna see is that we need to **Trust in the works of the Lord**. We need to **Trust in the works of the Lord**. And I hope as you hear this, you're like, well, no, duh, Matt. But sometimes I think we lose sight of the works the Lord has already done. And a lot of our doubt is centered on the reality that although he's already shown us his faithfulness, we doubt it the next time we should be thinking about how good he has been and how good he continues to be. So we're going to **Trust in the works of the Lord**, and we're going to see this play out as we look at the doubt of John the Baptist.

***Then John's disciples told him about all these things.*** (Luke 7:18) Now, John's disciples are telling him this with bars between them. You see, John is in prison. In Luke chapter 3:19-20 John is out by the Jordan he's preaching the crowds are coming he's telling them repent for the kingdom of God is at hand he's baptizing people and preparing them for the coming of Jesus. And as ***John speaks the truth Herod the tetrarch the guy ruling over the area John rebuked him because of Herodias, his brother's wife, and all the evil things he had done, he married his brother's wife, gross, in a weird way. And Herod added this to everything else he had done. He locked up John in prison.***

So when John is hearing about all these things about Jesus, and what is he hearing? He's hearing Jesus raised a widow's son from the dead. He healed a Roman official's servant. He's hearing about the way Jesus is teaching with authority, the way Jesus is announcing he's coming with the year of the Lord's favor. He's driving out demons. He's healing the sick. John is hearing all of this from prison. And John, who knew his task was to prepare the way for the Lord, he's like, "I think this is the Messiah. So why am I in prison? If I have prepared the way for the Lord, why have I been betrayed in this moment?" Now, you may not know this, but if you read Matthew, Mark, and Luke and look at the three accounts of John's arrest side by side, what you will find is that in Mark, John isn't just arrested, John is betrayed into the hands of the Romans. This is an important little distinction because it sets the stage. John was betrayed, Jesus will be betrayed.

When we look at John's betrayal, he's imprisoned and he's got a few followers left. They were already leaving him to follow Jesus before Jesus's ministry really had full steam. But John is arrested, imprisoned, and he's wondering "If the Messiah is here and I prepared the way well for him, why am I in prison?" **And**

## THE CERTAINTY OF THE GOOD NEWS

Pastor Matt Johnson

---

*so John summoned two of his disciples and sent them to the Lord asking, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?" (Luke 7:19–20)*

Now when John baptized Jesus a dove descended from heaven and a voice spoke from heaven and said **"You are my Son; with you I am well pleased."** (Luke 3:22) John witnessed that. He's expressing doubt here, "Well if you're the Messiah why is Herod still in charge why am I still in prison?" And if you doubt that John doubts, the Holy Spirit wants you to consider John's doubt twice. So the question shows up the exact same way. **When the men reached Jesus, they said, "John the Baptist sent us to ask you, 'Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?'"** (Luke 7:20)

John is looking at his present circumstances and saying, "God, are you, are you really in this?" I'm sure many of you have asked that question. I have. At times when I'm feeling low, when I'm doubting the Lord, I wonder, God, are you really in control in this moment? If you watch the news for even like two minutes, hopefully you're saying, "God, are you really in control of this nonsense in our world, in our nation, in our city?" Just whatever news you're watching. But John asked this question, and here's how Jesus responds.

**At that time Jesus healed many people of diseases, afflictions, and evil spirits, and he granted sight to many blind people.** (Luke 7:21) **He replied to them, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard:**

***The blind receive their sight,  
the lame walk, those with leprosy are cleansed,  
the deaf hear,  
the dead are raised,  
and the poor are told the good news,  
and blessed is the one who isn't offended by me."*** (Luke 7:22–23)

Now, first and foremost, in the Old Testament, we do not have any accounts of someone who was blind from birth receiving sight. We do have accounts in the Old Testament of when the Messiah comes, the blind will receive their sight. This refers both to the spiritually blind and also the physically blind. That alone is evidence that Jesus is exactly who they have been waiting for.

John's question through his disciples, **"Are you the one?"** is met with an explosion of kingdom power in Jesus, the Holy Spirit displaying through Jesus. He heals many diseases, afflictions, evil spirits, the blind receive sight, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cleansed. In this whole list, those five are very clear, the blind, the lame, the leper, the deaf, and the dead. But then there's a sixth one, the poor are told the good news. That one may not seem as miraculous, right? You know, I mean, a blind person receiving sight, you'd say, surely that's a miracle of God. The dead raised. Surely that's a miracle of God. The poor are told the good news. That seems like an everyday occurrence, but it's listed among the miracles Jesus has done.

Because if the blind receive their sight, but they're not made right before God, is that really a miracle? Yes, it is. I'm not going to minimize blind people receiving their sight. But the ultimate thing Jesus came to bring was not comfort in this life, but right relationship with this in this life and the next with God. The poor are told the good news. This is what we talked about last week. **"Blessed are the poor in spirit..."** or **"blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of God."** (Luke 6:20) The promise throughout Luke is for those who know they are unrighteous, for those who hunger for righteousness, and for those who weep because they know they could never be righteous before God. The kingdom is theirs through the work of Christ Jesus.

## THE CERTAINTY OF THE GOOD NEWS

Pastor Matt Johnson

---

If you are here today and you are a believer, you are a miracle that God has done. You are a miracle in that you were dead in your sins. Ephesians two. *You were dead in your sins and in the trespasses in which you once walked. You were a child of wrath and now you are a child of God, not by anything you have done, but because of God, because of his great mercy and his great love, he has made you alive. By grace you have been saved.* (Ephesians 2:1–5, paraphrased)

That is a miracle of all miracles. That is the greatest thing that could ever be done because it is something that none of us could do for ourselves. If you wonder, is God still active in this world today? Each believer is a testimony that God still works miracles. It may seem small, but it is not small at all, because if you are a believer, it is not again because of anything you have done, but it is because you were blind spiritually. He opened your eyes. He showed you that you were unrighteous. And through his work you hungered for righteousness you could never, have you weeped at the thought that you are a sinner, and you cried out to him and he saved you. You are covered by his blood what a wonderful thing.

When we read this passage before we even get to Jesus addressing the doubt to the crowds, which he's about to do, Jesus's starting point to address the doubts is Jesus really the Messiah is to say, "I have done the impossible again and again. I have done displays that only God could do." And in that list, number six, number six is—would that be this? I don't know. We don't need to talk about that. Number six on that list is one that we still see today. And you may say, "Pastor Matt, well, couldn't these other ones be done by God today?" They can. Again, I'm not a person who believes that God does not heal and do these other things. I'm open but cautious. I don't expect them to happen all the time. But the one miracle I know that God does all the time and often is he makes people who were dead in their sin alive through the Holy Spirit and the work of Jesus Christ.

So as we talk about **Defeating Doubt as Kingdom Citizens**, the first thing we need to do is **Trust in the works of the Lord**. And if you're a believer, there is one work he has absolutely done in your life. If you say, I need a sign from God, I hear this all the time from newer believers. They're like, "I became a Christian and now I'm waiting for God to reveal to me some miracle or do some incredible thing." If you are a believer, you were a walking corpse, you were dead in your sin and God has made you alive. And if you do not see the miracle that God has done, you're so blind to what is the most incredible thing. You, if you are a believer, are a work of the Lord. You could not be a believer in your own strength. You were dead and he has made you alive. When you struggle in doubt and struggle with the idea is God really in control of these different things, go back to the reality that he has given you his Spirit.

As we keep reading, we will realize that having the Spirit, the Holy Spirit in you is something that makes you greater even than John, which sounds crazy 'cause you're thinking John did all these amazing things, but let's keep reading because the first thing we see is we need to **Trust in the works of the Lord**. And it brings us to the reality that we need to **Rejoice in the works of the Lord**.

So John's disciples leave. *After John's messengers left, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John.* (Luke 7:24) And Jesus here could say, "Can you believe that guy doubts me? Did you guys just see what I did? How could this guy doubt me? I'm bringing people back from the dead." Jesus could speak that way. But instead to the crowds, Jesus says this, "*What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the wind? No. What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothes? See, those who are splendidly dressed and live in luxury are in royal palaces.*" (Luke 7:24–25)

## THE CERTAINTY OF THE GOOD NEWS

Pastor Matt Johnson

---

Here, we talked last week about this and it will come up again and again in the Gospel of Luke. Jesus speaks of the rich and in their culture to be rich meant that God had blessed you is what the people believed. But the reality of what Jesus is saying here is you didn't come to the wilderness to see a guy who looked righteous by the standards of this world. John wore like the hair of camels and he ate locusts and he ate wild honey. And in everything you read about John, I always picture him as looking kind of crazy, like he probably had long, crazy hair and like he's out in the wilderness. And by the way, why on earth would you go to the wilderness when you're in the promised land and you have the temple of God? And yet the people flocked to John, not because he looked like what they expected, but why? ***"Why then did you go out to see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet."*** (Luke 7:26)

John sends messengers who express his doubt and his wondering, is Jesus really the Messiah? And then what does Jesus do? He lifts John up by focusing on the faithful work that John does.

***"This is the one about whom it is written:***

***'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you;  
he will prepare your way before you.'" (Luke 7:27)***

This is from Isaiah. It's a prophecy about John pointing that John will pave the way for the Messiah to come. And Jesus is saying he is exactly the one you think he is. He is the one who would prepare the way. Jesus here is saying in so many words, I am the Messiah. But he is focused on John and John's work.

John was out in the wilderness and his people were coming to him. He was saying, repent. He was baptizing them for the forgiveness of their sins. He was saying, you are not righteous before God. And the sinners and the tax collectors were coming to be baptized. Not everyone was, as we will see, but many were coming and they were walking humbly. He was preparing the way so they would be ready when the king came. Jesus says, ***"I tell you, among those born of women, no one is greater than John."*** (Luke 7:28) John is the one who prepared the way for the Messiah. He is the greatest prophet leading up to Jesus.

When you read those words, I read those and I think, does that mean he's greater than Abraham? Does that mean he's greater than... And in the kingdom, I don't think we're supposed to spend all our time on comparison, but these words seem pretty clear. To the people of that day, this guy, who right now is expressing doubt about me, but prepared the way for me, he is the greatest who has come before me. ***"But the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."*** (Luke 7:28)

Now, I don't want you to get a big head. But if you're a believer you're a part of the kingdom of God. And if you're sitting here thinking, "All right, so I'll have a bigger house in heaven than John," you've got the wrong thought process here. How does Jesus display his greatness? It's through his humility, washing feet, loving to the end. You see the picture of Christ and he is not out there making himself look great. And the point of this is not for us to look at how great we are, but there is something you have that John didn't have. Now, the Holy Spirit was on John from when he was in his mother's womb. We saw that during our Advent series, but the Holy Spirit was on him. But until Jesus died and rose, the Holy Spirit could not be in him or anyone else. If you are a believer, you have the Holy Spirit in your heart. You have been sealed by the Spirit. It is a work that could not be done until Jesus died and rose. And so that is what this means that you are greater.

## THE CERTAINTY OF THE GOOD NEWS

Pastor Matt Johnson

---

If what you take from this is, I've got it made. When I get to heaven, I'm one step ahead of John the Baptist. I don't need to do anything. You've missed the point of the kingdom. But I want to make sure you know that when Jesus is saying this, he is saying, what I am coming to bring, is greater than the greatest thing that has preceded me and the least in my kingdom is greater than the greatest things that have preceded me. And so as we think about defeating doubt, what does Jesus do here? His points are not to diminish someone for wondering or doubting. He lifts them up and points to the works that they have done. I think this is important for us.

I've been mentioning Ephesians two. We were dead and our sins were made alive through the work of Christ because of God's great love. By grace, you have been saved. And at the end of Ephesians two, one through 10, it talks about we've been saved by grace to do the good works that God has prepared for us. I think sometimes in my doubt and in my struggles and from talking to many of you over the last two and a half years, I can say when you have doubts and struggles, it's hard to think that when God looks at you, he sees you as his child because you know he knows everything about you. But the promises we have throughout Scripture, when he sees you, he sees you as his chosen child, redeemed by the blood of Christ. He sees you and has good works prepared for you. His focus for you is not to just beat you down, but to lift you up as you seek to follow him.

I think here about any good and loving parent, when your child comes to you feeling like a failure, I hope you don't say "You are". You speak truth, right? So if your kid's been bad all day and they say, "It feels like you're mad at me all day," it's like, well, "you've been bad, but hey, let's focus on the good. I know you can walk. I know you can do this better." I hope that you've had that experience with one of your parents. I know not everyone is lucky enough to have that. But when we look at the Lord and the way that he responds to those who are doubting, he doesn't respond by saying, you have good reason to doubt. He says, look at the works I've done through you. Trust in the works I've done in you and follow me. That is how we should regard ourselves when we have doubt, not because of what we have done.

If you come away from this sermon thinking, "I'm greater than John the Baptist and God, when He looks at me, says just great job," we do need to walk humbly before the Lord. We need to recognize where we have struggles and we need to cry out to Him. My goal in this sermon is not to get you to ignore and not follow through; instead, it's to encourage you that when you have those doubts, you should trust in Him and cry out to Him.

The Old Testament theme is rejoicing in the works of the Lord and trusting in the works of the Lord. What do we see? God says, "I'm the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I'm the God who brought you out of Egypt." God reminds us again and again of His saving works, and He reminds us repeatedly of what He has done so that we would trust what He will do. So in our doubts, we should look at how He has acted and trust that He will continue to remain faithful to His promises, because He will.

And this brings us to the last point. We need to **Reject the world's interpretation of the works of the Lord.** We need to **Reject the world's interpretation of the works of the Lord.**

After Jesus says, I tell you, among those born of women, no one is greater than John, but the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he, there's this little parenthetical point. ***And when all the people, including***

## THE CERTAINTY OF THE GOOD NEWS

Pastor Matt Johnson

---

*the tax collectors, heard this, they **acknowledged** God's **way of righteousness** because they had been baptized with John's baptism.* (Luke 7:29) Now, when it says they acknowledged God's way of righteousness, it's a good translation of a very weird Greek word. It's they recognize the vindication of God's goodness. Vindication is the key word here. The idea is they realize that what God has said is true and they say, "Yes, that is righteous. Yes, that is good." And they're not saying it as we choose righteousness over God and we get to decide and judge God, but they are saying they agree with what God has said and done.

*But since the Pharisees and experts in the law had not been baptized by John, they rejected the plan of God for themselves.* (Luke 7:30) As Jesus is saying this, the crowd is filled with people who are walking in humility and people who are walking in pride. For those who know how poor they are, they hear these words and they look and they think, "Yes, God's way is the right way." But for those that John the Baptist called a brood of vipers, the religious leaders, the Pharisees, the experts in the law, when they hear this, they don't hear this and say, "God's way is righteous." They say, "we are already righteous." Woe to the rich, woe to the full, and woe to those who laugh. Theirs is not the kingdom of God.

After this, Jesus goes on to say,

"To what then should I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like? They are like children sitting in the marketplace and saying to each other:

*We played the flute for you,  
but you didn't dance;  
we sang a lament,  
but you didn't weep."*

*For John the Baptist did not come eating bread or drinking wine. And you say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man has come eating and drinking. And you say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is **vindicated** by all her children."* (Luke 7:31–35)

Now, Jesus here is comparing the religious leaders and those who think that they are in a position of righteousness to little children, that no matter what you say, they say it's wrong. Now, there's a fascinating thing here. Depending on what study Bible you have or commentaries you read, that "*we played the flute for you, but you didn't dance,*" some people say attach that to John the Baptist because they're saying, John the Baptist, we said, look how righteous we are and you rejected it. And Jesus, *we sang a lament* for you, but you're coming and eating and drinking. There's all these different arguments, which is about which, and I'm going to tell you what I think. And I want to say either interpretation leads to the same result. The people that are encountering the ministries of John and Jesus that think they are righteous are rejecting.

I think when it says, "*We sang a lament, but you didn't weep,*" John the Baptist is out there. And what is John doing? John is out there and he is proclaiming to the crowds, repent. And the religious leaders are hearing that and they're scoffing. Because they say, he doesn't know. Look how righteous we are. Look how fed and satisfied we are. When Jesus came and Jesus comes in abundance, right? In in Luke 4, he came to preach the good news to the poor. He came in the year of the Lord's favor and he comes in abundance. He's going among sinners and tax collectors. He's telling the disciples, let down your net and they come up with a boatload of fish so much that the boat's sinking. He's doing all these things in abundance. And so they criticize him for the abundance. "*The Son of Man has come eating and drinking. And you say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.'*" (Luke 7:34)

## THE CERTAINTY OF THE GOOD NEWS

Pastor Matt Johnson

---

The irony, however you want to interpret it, is that the Pharisees and the tax collector or the experts of the law, what they have done is they have said, "all right, you say it this way, so we're going to say it the opposite. Oh, now you say it the opposite. We're going to say it this way." They are never willing to sit on the works of God. When the people were repenting before John, the tax collectors and the Pharisees wanted to arrest John. When Jesus is out healing and doing incredible things, he's going to feed thousands of people. He's going to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and show it through his healings and his works and driving out demons. And they're going to say, "it doesn't matter that you're doing all of this because you did a bit of it on the Sabbath." They're going to reject him because what we see as we read through this, as we read through the rest of Luke, is that as this stage is set, the world is going to reject him again and again. They reject him when he leads. They reject him when he comes in peace. They reject everything about Jesus and ultimately it leads to his death on the cross.

***Yet wisdom is vindicated by all her children.*** (Luke 7:35) To all who walk humbly before the Lord and put their trust in the Lord they will be justified This is a little reference back to Proverbs 8, but ultimately it is speaking of for those who trust in the Lord, in the end it will show that they were right to do so. And so we must **Reject the world's interpretations of the works of the Lord.**

If you read carefully through all of the different arguments Jesus has with the Pharisees, at one point they'll argue one side and then they'll argue the other, and that is not just a thing of the first century. This is a reality today that the kingdom of God, the world utterly rejects the kingdom of God from any and every angle. There is an evil one. And for the world that is blind to the wisdom of God, there are so many who reject. My simplest example of this, I've talked about this before, but it is still the thing that hurts my brain the most. When I was an 18 year old, what I was told was Christians are stupid. Because what is evidently clear that you can see with your eyes, Christians say isn't true. What is evidently clear and observable, Christians hate science. They hate observable fact. 20 years later, observable fact about gender has no bearing on reality anymore for the world. It's like a funny thing looking at the way the world goes back and forth, but it's not a funny thing. It's a depressing thing.

There's a reality that when you start to look at, like, you look at the deconstruction movement where people are walking away from the faith. And on the one hand, they'll say that Christians don't care about the poor. And then you look at the data and the church is one of the greatest organizations, the greatest organization overall for giving to those in need. You look at the narratives that the world puts out there and then it's, "Well, the church gives and gives." and then that data gets out there and all of a sudden the world's response is, well, actually they give to organizations that are problematic and this and that and that. And the reality is, is that no matter where you go, the world seeks to be against it. No matter what worldview you take, no matter what you seek to land on in Scripture, the world will be against it and will come at one angle. And will come at the other. Satan is the father of lies he doesn't just come at one angle and say oh they stopped me there he comes from any and all angles.

When I talk to young people who are struggling in their faith, one of the things I get most depressed by is they'll start talking about influencers who are like, "Well, I read this Bible verse, and it shows that the Bible contradicts itself." Then I'll say, "Well, what do you do with this and this?" and they'll say, "Oh yeah, that's a good point." They'll say, "But this other influencer says the verse means this," and they'll start talking, and we'll have this whole conversation where I'll be sitting there thinking, "Is anything you're saying rooted

## THE CERTAINTY OF THE GOOD NEWS

Pastor Matt Johnson

---

in the historic church?" Because when you look at Scripture and you look at how it's been interpreted over 2,000 years since Christ came, do you know how little has changed? There have been seasons of reform, and there have been seasons of change in the church, but the core values that were present in Acts 2 are present to this day. The church has not wavered. Humans have wavered, but the Church of God, the body of Christ, has not wavered. The world will seek to attack from any and all sides. They did it in Jesus's day. They will do it today. The evil one is not satisfied by Christians who stand on the truth, because that is the worst outcome for the dominion of darkness, the kingdom where Satan reigns.

If you are a believer, I want to encourage you that you need to guard your heart and your mind from what this world will put in it. If you like a couple months ago, I heard about a debate between an atheist and a Christian and I watched it. And after watching that debate, all of the sudden, my algorithm was full of the atheist guy. And I was interested a few times. And I will say I was interested because I was like, I want to hear what are the arguments out there. But all of a sudden, I noticed that everything on YouTube was bent towards atheism. And all of a sudden, I was like, well, how do I fix this? And so I started to work on fixing the algorithm. I searched some different pastors I like listening to their sermons of to try and offset it. And it took a very long time to kind of get it back towards a God-honoring thing. But what you have to understand is when the world starts to push on you, if you are not prepared, you are going to find yourself hearing the world's interpretation all the time.

If I can say even more boldly we talked about this at Ironman at our table a little bit yesterday we are not meant to have the amount of information available at our fingertips and a reality in this world one of the ways that Satan wins all the time as we seek to follow and then we struggle in our doubts and all of these different things is Satan convinces us that we're experts in forensics and science and politics and world trade and the economy. And we think we're experts in all of it because we listen to seven different things that tell us, and then we decide which one is true. But the reality is that if this isn't our source of truth, all those other sources aren't going to lead us anywhere good.

This is where I think in the church, one of the things we have to do is we have to not let the world be the one to set the narrative. The Pharisees and the religious leaders of that day, the experts of the law, and I keep going like this when I say experts of the law, they knew the Old Testament backwards and forwards, and when the Messiah came, they wanted to kill him. It's possible for someone to know a lot about the Bible and know nothing about God. If we are to seek to follow the Lord, we need to lean on the church. We need to lean on one another. We need to trust in the Holy Spirit and we need to trust in the word of God. When Jesus came, he came in abundance for his people. When Jesus came, he showed the truth and he gave us the Holy Spirit.

If you are struggling in doubt, I want to encourage you trust in the works of the Lord. I want to just come back to that because you are a work of the Lord. You are a miracle. When people say, well, I see all that stuff that Jesus said in the Bible, but he's not doing any of that today. You are proof positive that he still works in that way. Rejoice in what he's done. Rejoice in what he's doing. Stay focused on him and do not allow what the world has said to infiltrate and push you off of the center you have in Christ.

Let's pray.

## THE CERTAINTY OF THE GOOD NEWS

Pastor Matt Johnson

---

*Father in heaven, We thank you for this day. Father, we thank you that as we read about John and his doubts, we see how you lift him up, and more importantly, we see how you lift all up who put their faith and hope in you. Father, we thank you that our hope is found in nothing less than your Son. And we thank you that he died on the cross for our sins, he rose from the grave, he ascended to heaven, and he is returning. Father, I pray we would be a people who trust in your works and rejoice in your works and do not allow the world to infiltrate or move us off the center that you have given us. We pray, Lord, that we would be founded on you. We pray that you would be our cornerstone, our strong foundation. And we praise you, Lord, for all that your Son has done for us. We pray all of this in his holy and precious name. In the name of Jesus, amen.*



Digging Deeper – **Greatness in the Kingdom** – Luke 7:18-35

1. What stood out to you from the sermon?

**Read Luke 7:18-35**

2. What stands out to you as you read through the passage?
3. Check Matthew 4:12 and Mark 1:14 and consider John's location when he sends messengers to Jesus. What do you think is on John's mind?
4. Read Luke 6:20-26 and consider: how does John's present state match what Jesus has proclaimed about the kingdom?
5. John's doubt leads Jesus to display an incredible series of miracles. What are the miracles Jesus listed. Which of those do we still see at work today? (hint, there is one that is still explicitly happening today)
6. After hearing the questions, displaying his power, and responding to John's disciples, how does Jesus speak of John to the crowds who are around him?
7. Is John's doubt what John is remembered for? Why or why not? What can we learn from this?
8. Who are the ones who respond well to the message Jesus has in the passage? What sets them apart from those who respond poorly?
9. Consider the final few verses and the criticisms against John and Jesus. Where do they fall apart logically?
10. How do these compare to modern criticisms you hear against Christians and the Gospel?
11. What is the encouragement Jesus gives to end this passage?
12. As you read this passage, if you are a follower of Jesus, you are greater than John the Baptist according to the words Jesus says in this passage. That greatness does not mean anything worth bragging about but should be an awe-inspiring reminder of what God accomplished through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Take time to consider the greatness you have received in Christ. Write out a prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord for what he has done.
13. Take some time to end in prayer by sharing prayer requests and praying for one another.