

Ridin' High Cowboy Church

8771 FM 35
Union Valley, TX

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There will always be things that don't make sense and cause us to doubt, mainly because God is God and we are not so, there is a gap in knowledge.

The question is not if we will have doubts, but what do we do about them?

Mark 6:17-20 Matthew 11:2-6

Background: King Herod the great was appointed by Rome to rule Palestine (Israel) and collect taxes. He was crazy and murdered his wife, mother-in-law and three of his children, killed all the two year olds and under boys in Bethlehem. Even though he was old and would not be around, he ordered a large group of Jewish leaders to be executed when he died. This was so there would be a lot grieving at his death (even though the people wouldn't be grieving for Herod). When Herod did die, all the imprisoned Jewish leaders were set free.

In Herod's Will – his Kingdom was split into thirds to his three sons, Herod Antipas ruled Galilee (where Jesus lived), Herod Archeleus and Herod Phillip. Herod Phillip married his niece, Herodias. Herod Antipas convinced Herodias to leave with him, he married his niece who was also his sister-in-law, by stealing his brother's wife...all of this was very offensive to the Jews.

John often used Herod as a sermon illustration. John was the first to baptize anyone and he preached one sermon – Repent, the Messiah is coming so get right with God and you will know him when he comes. He was the first to recognize Jesus for who he was and his job was to tell everyone. Herod loved to listen to John the Baptist, but Herodias hated him.

Mark 6:17-20 ¹⁷***For Herod himself had given orders to have John arrested, and he had him bound and put in prison. He did this because of Herodias, his brother Phillip's wife, whom he had married.*** ¹⁸***For John had been saying to Herod, (when he rode down the street in a parade) "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."*** ¹⁹***So Herodias nursed a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. But she was not able to ,*** ²⁰***because Herod heard John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. (He knew John was right) When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled, yet he liked to listen to him. (He thought it was kind of funny).***

Herodias finally convinced Herod to arrest John. When John was in prison, his disciples began to follow Jesus. Before prison, John had been baptizing and was gaining momentum, now it's all over! He was in jail and began to doubt. And John was the last one anybody thought would ever doubt.

Matthew 11:2-6 ²***When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples*** ³***to ask him. “Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?”***

John's disciples must have been shocked at this question. John, you're the one who said he was the one for years, that was your job on earth John, it's because of you everyone thinks Jesus is the one (I prepare the way for the one who is to come), but John in this uncomfortable environment began to question and doubt.

This helps us. At some point there is a situation or environment that you could get into that could make you begin to doubt...when everything we are accustomed to is different, when things don't go like we think they should, when everything we believe gets challenged. Isn't there something self-centered about most of our doubts? If we are honest, we are like John... If John had known that his being in prison was part of the plan, it would have helped, "God just tell me what's going on?"

Listen to this... ⁴***Jesus replied, “Go back and report to John what you hear and see. ⁵The 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. ⁶Blessed is anyone who does not stumble (lose faith) on account of me.”***

Jesus was saying, I want John's faith anchored to what God is doing around him, not what is happening to him.

When John realizes what is going on around him, he will find that I am up to something and he will find his faith in the prison cell. Jesus did not answer the question, he changed John's focus.

Look back – at all the things he has done in the past, answered prayers, Salvation, think about how God has worked personally in your life, (God has a great track record).

Look around – at what God is doing around you, He may not be doing anything for you right now, but He is doing things for others around me.

Look ahead - John knew the things that were happening were told beforehand; prophecies coming true all around you; the Bible says things will get bad here on earth but that is just the beginning.

Jesus says you get extra credit for not doubting because of the things he does that don't make sense right now. Don't get tripped up by the things that don't

make sense. God says things will happen in your Christian life that will make you wonder. God has a bigger plan. Blessed is John the Baptist because he won't lose faith based on something God has not done for him.

Skip down to verse 11 ***truly among those born of women there is not one greater than John the Baptist.***

In the middle of those circumstances, God did not move one inch off His plan. He was still a God who could be trusted, and today we are still talking about a risen savior and the courage of John the Baptist.

The question is not if we are going to doubt, but what will we do with them.

When you doubt, what do you do...

1. Consider the options (In John 6, Peter says, "to whom shall we go?")
2. Refocus your attention.