

Title: Jesus is Enough  
Text: Luke 7.18-23  
Theme: Christ is enough  
Series: Luke  
Prop Stmtnt: Let the promises that Christ makes in the light inform your questions in the dark.

Whenever I visit a children's hospital, I am reminded of how many people are so deeply impacted by pediatric diseases. There are thousands of dedicated medical professionals who pour their lives into caring for children. But when I walk into these impressive facilities, I am reminded that no one really wants to be there. No child wants to be sick and certainly not that sick. No parent or family member wants to be in this situation. Doctors and nurses all wish that there was no need for children's hospitals. But there are and unless you happen to be there, it is easy to forget that they are there and they are full of little people. Most of the children that we see are running in the gym, riding their bikes or climbing on playscapes. We see them on soccer fields, baseball diamonds and in swimming pools. We don't see the sick ones because they aren't running or swimming. They are getting tests or treatments and praying that it will work. They are at home or in the hospital or going to appointments. This is their world and many of you know it too well.

As much as we loved the text from last Sunday, which told the incredible story of Jesus raising the young man from the dead, we all know this mother who lost her son was not the only parent in Israel to have a son die. Jesus raised this one back to life that day, but not the others. It was amazing that he raised this boy back to life, but if he did it for one, could he do it for others? And if he could it for others, and he didn't for you, then what are we to think about that? The mother nor the son are named. It looks as if Jesus showed up to a town where he, in the moment raised back to life a young man he had never met and gave him back to his mother that he had never met, while his cousin John, who faithfully preached, faithfully prepared the way, baptized Christ and boldly confronted the sins of the king was being held in prison. John was in prison. John believed in Jesus and believed Jesus. John declared that he was the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world. John believed that Jesus was the King that Israel had been waiting on and now the king was here and this king had raised a centurion's servant from certain death to life and a young man from death to life and John was still in prison. Why did Jesus raise the one but not rescue John? John apparently had the same question.

Read Text:

Luke's gospel begins with the story of the birth of John the Baptist with more than half of the opening chapter focusing on him. Chapter 3 describes the influential ministry of John and the circumstances that led to him being arrested and imprisoned by Herod. For almost 4 chapters, we've not heard anything about John. While Jesus has been preaching, ministering to growing crowds, performing some significant miracles and obviously increasing in influence, there is no evidence that Jesus visited John in prison or made any effort to work for his release. Had John not been faithful? Wasn't John unfairly imprisoned? Wasn't Jesus the King? John preached to

the crowds, (leaders included) to prepare the way of the Lord by making his paths straight. The king is coming and you will be held into account for your decisions. What was taking so long?

1. **Go to the Lord.** (18-20)

John had some good disciples who remained faithful to him and visited him in prison. Some of them had seen and heard what Christ had been doing and they brought this report back to John. In many ways Jesus appeared to be the Messiah, but he did not appear to be the Messiah that they, particularly John, were expecting. Are you the one who is to come or shall we look for another? When you consider the significant change of circumstances for John and how much this change flew in the face of his expectations, these questions have a lot of faith in them. John had not given up on the promises of God to send a Messiah. John was not walking away from his belief in God. John apparently expected things to change a little faster than what they had so far. Being in prison was not helping matters either. But, let's give kudos to John and we should. Next week, we will see that Jesus does. In fact, I think it is right to point out that John went to Jesus with his questions. John had some doubts. What do you do with your doubts? Doubt them! They are doubts! Don't treat your doubts like they are certainties, treat them like doubts. John did and he went to the Lord with his doubts and Jesus was not offended by it.

Look at the questions. Are you the one who is to come? Again, John is convinced that God is going to keep his promise to send a Messiah. Are you that one? Or shall we look for another? John is not giving up on his belief, but he recognizes that something is not adding up in his mind. Jesus is not doing what John expected, so maybe Jesus is not the one. These questions present a false either/or. But John does not know that. He does not know what he doesn't know. He does not realize that his expectations of Jesus (the Messiah) are not exactly correct. And they aren't. And yet, he does exactly what we should do. He goes to the Lord. He asks questions, which means that he is looking for answers.

Last week we saw how drastically the circumstances changed for the widow whose son had died and was raised back to life. It was easy to rejoice. It was easy for her to believe in Jesus. But I don't know of any of us who have had this happen to us. So why do we believe? And what do we do when Jesus does not fulfill our expectations or desires?

Let's start with an assumption. If I seek to honor God, then God will bless my life. What does bless mean? What does bless look like? In other words, what are my expectations? In John's case, he clearly honored the Lord. He also ended up in prison. In fact, he ended up in prison because he honored the Lord. Being in prison did not make sense to him. This was a question. How should we seek to understand our questions? Jesus shows us. The way Jesus answers John's questions is so good. What I want you to see is this: Let the periods inform your question marks. The periods of God are bigger than our questions of God. Here are the periods. Here are the plain things that Jesus has done.

2. **Look specifically at what He has done.** (21)

These disciples from John had seen the other things (“all these things” v.18) that Jesus had done and now, “in that hour” Jesus “healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits and on many who were blind he bestowed sight.” Let’s specifically look at this.

*“In that hour”* – Jesus demonstrated power on command. He was able to do what he wanted exactly when he wanted to do it.

*“he healed”* – Jesus exercised power for good. Jesus had authority over things that hurt us and destroy us.

*“many people”* – The power of Jesus was without limit. He did not run out.

diseases, plagues, demons and blindness – are big categories that represent many different kinds of serious problems. Think about the number of specialists that you can see. Allergists, Cardiologists, Neurologists, ENT’s, Physical Therapists, Pneumatologists, Dermatologists, Geneticists, Oncologists, Obstetricians, Orthopedics, and then all of those who specialize in pediatrics, geriatrics and in the specific categories of the categories. No one person can know it all. But Jesus handled all of these: diseases, plagues and evil spirits. He handled the multiple physical problems and he handled the multiple spiritual problems. He was the powerful specialist in them all. But then Luke points out the fact that *“many who were blind he bestowed sight.”* I suspect that Luke noted this so that we knew with certainty that the power of Jesus was legit. You can claim to heal someone of a disease that in the moment may not present itself with clear evidence of being true. If someone was blind and can now, see? That one is obvious. When you put this together you get a clear picture of Jesus. Jesus is able to do whatever he wants whenever he wants and whatever he wants to do is good, powerful and unstoppable. When you look specifically at what Jesus did during his ministry on this earth, you see this.

I get the sense, that when John’s disciples came and asked their questions of Jesus, that Jesus did not answer them immediately. Instead, he gave them the opportunity to observe all of this, then Jesus answered them. The answer was so good for them, for John and for us. Look at v.22.

### 3. **Listen carefully to what God has said.** (22)

Jesus takes John back to the word of God. Jesus answers John’s questions, with God’s statements. At the same time, Jesus quotes from Isaiah and applies it to himself. So, we know exactly how to interpret Isaiah’s prophecies. Isaiah was pointing to Christ and Christ knew that it was about him and he wants to make sure that John does as well.

You may remember that when John was preaching back in chapter 3, he preached from the book of Isaiah and he applied Isaiah’s prophecy about the messenger who was to come to prepare the way for the Messiah to himself. John was convinced (rightly so) that he was the messenger for the Messiah. He thought Jesus was the Messiah (rightly so), but at the moment, that is not working out exactly how John thought it would. So, Jesus answers John from the book of Isaiah but first he shows the disciples of John the fulfillment of those prophecies. Then

he quotes from Isaiah 29, 35 and a bit from 61. By doing so, Jesus is clearly claiming to be the Messiah promised in the OT. I am the one who was to come! This is part of the reason why Luke included this account here. Right here Jesus was staking his claim to being the fulfillment of the OT prophecies of Israel's Messiah.

So, did John get his questions answered? Yes. But there's a problem. John is still in prison. So, now John seems to have a dilemma. Jesus is the Messiah and I am in prison. This is not exactly what I expected from the Messiah and yet, Jesus is doing all of these things and I cannot deny the Scriptures. He is the Messiah. But I'm in prison. Can Jesus be here and be the Messiah and I not get out of prison? Wow! Jesus answers John's questions but he does not address the question behind the questions. He lets John put those pieces together and expects him to. John is going to have to adjust his expectations. Then comes v.23.

#### 4. Trust him. (23)

"And blessed is the one who is not offended by me." To offend means to cause to stumble and fall. Jesus did not promise to deliver John from prison and he did not tell John's disciples why that was not in the plan. He clearly told them and proved to them that he was the Messiah. God had come. Then he promised a blessing to everyone who is not offended by him that is to everyone who simply believes that. Jesus is enough. Let the periods that Jesus gives in the light, satisfy the questions that you have in the dark. He is enough. Jesus told his disciples on the night before he died, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." (John 13.7) If that was true for them, don't you think that is probably still the case for us?

We want people to love Jesus and follow him, and in our zeal, we can be like a shady used car dealer who doesn't tell the whole story. Following Jesus does not mean that you won't get sick, lose a job or have a rough marriage. To imply that is untrue and is not a clear picture of the gospel. We don't follow Jesus so we don't get sick, lose a job or get better relationships. That isn't following Jesus that's trying to use Jesus. No one followed Jesus better than John, but you won't find a chapter on him in "Your Best Life Now."

I talked with a dad one day whose son was diagnosed with cancer. The dad was looking for some hope and he went to his priest who, according to this dad, didn't have much to say. Someone then invited him to a more trendy, upbeat kind of a church where they were doing a series on Jesus and how he makes everyone's life so much better. This seemed to be what they were looking for, so they started going to this church and hoping that this was going to do it for his son. Initially his son's condition seemed to improve, but in the end, he didn't make it. Now the dad had no son, and no God. If you live long enough, you will face similar situations. What do you do when you question the plans of God? When Jesus raises a young man from the dead, but doesn't get you out of prison? When he heals others, but not you. When he gives sight to some of the blind, but let's you suffer. You hold on to what you know. He is God. He is powerful and he uses that power for good whenever he wants and he does whatever he wants, whenever

he wants, but he does not fix every situation in the moment and he blesses those who don't stumble over that.

Beloved, I don't know why he allows, even ordains that some of you walk through such deep waters, while others seem to get a pass. I don't know. Those are my/our questions. But what I do know (the periods, the promises) I bring to the questions. The things that Jesus does and has said are bigger than the questions. Jesus is bigger than the questions and that is enough. To some degree, we now know why.

John was the forerunner of Christ. John was the one who went before him to prepare the way for the Messiah. How did John prepare the way? He preached an unpopular message. He baptized those who identified with him. He was unjustly arrested and disgracefully executed. So, yes, he prepared the way, because that is what the Messiah was called to do and even John did not yet realize it. Jesus would not take over thrones and kingdoms until he ruled in and over our hearts. Before he could build his kingdom with us, he had to build it in us. And he had to die in order to pay for our sins before he could reign in us.