

Going Deeper...The Bible has promises that do include explanations for how they will unfold. The vast majority of God's promises are for those in a family relationship with God...

Romans 8:15 So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶ For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. ¹⁷ And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory.

- **Those members of his family are promised...in this life...**

Romans 8: 28 And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

- *and after this life...*

1 Peter 1:⁴ and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay.

- **as a member of his family, you are also a citizen of His everlasting Kingdom**

[Psalm 145:13](#) For your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. You rule throughout all generations. **The Lord always keeps his promises; he is gracious in all he does.**

- *and this promise stands above them all...*

[Hebrews 13:5](#)....because God has said, "**Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you**

- Again scriptures give us heart thrilling promises, but are silent on how God will fulfill them. When things do not unfold as we thought they would we are prompted us to ask questions.
- **These Questions will make us think deeper about God and scripture...going deeper is valuable. It is part of the process of deepening our Faith and maturing our understanding of God.**
- The mechanics of God's future actions remain unknown. We must accept this. Reality. We cannot change it. I can't comprehend the mechanics of how God will do the things he promises to do in Scripture. But when I have unanswerable questions, questions that could discourage me and cause worry, my recourse is this: I trust God, to keep his promises in his time.
- **Wrestling with God over circumstances and tragedies and trials is one of the processes that take we go deeper with Jesus...How? When you wrestle with God**

he Wrestles back....and that is how strength, endurance is built, and Faith is Deepened

God is ever present and will never leave us nor forsake us...he is deeply involved in your present life... and that means your intentional decisions in the NOW of your life have great influence in your destiny..... and **that means we must handle the now well... your past links to your present...your now...however it is your intentional now that links to your future. your past decisions got you to today...your now decisions will predict your future... some of the circumstances you will make decisions on now are of your own making and some are not of your own making...but all your decisions are your own....and those decisions will shape your destiny...**

When I can't comprehend how God will fulfill his promises, I rely on what the Scriptures make clear to me. They display God's character and attributes. I lean on that. Knowing God resolves our unsolvable questions.

When my questions lead me to dead-end roads where answers appear absent, I go to what God has revealed. And here's what happens: my restless heart finds rest. It is what happened to John the Baptist as we discussed a couple week ago...

However God sometimes lets us see results of his promises in our lives... but not always in this lifetime

let's see how this works in scripture...recapping two weeks ago...John the Baptist was a big deal in his time... miraculous birth...called and filled to his mission from birth... became first recognized true prophet in 400 years...he was humble, bold and lived by mission... ...He was powerful in word...and influenced many to prepare for the coming of the Messiah

Last time we looked at the relationship of John the Baptist and Jesus...they were both intentional about their work in the Kingdom...the best man and the bridegroom and made the statement as Jesus became more popular and John less...

*²⁹ It is the bridegroom who marries the bride, and the bridegroom's friend is simply glad to stand with him and hear his vows. **Therefore, I am filled with joy at his success.** ³⁰ He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less.*

- He makes a great and **intentional decision**...stepping out of the limelight
- but he has limited understanding of what less truly means...his idea of less and God's idea of less are not the same thing.... a year passes...

John was thrown in Prison...for calling Herod out on his sin...what

Matt 11:2 John 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?*”

- **John knew Jesus...in fact he introduced to the world when he baptized Jesus and saw the Holy Spirit descend upon him...and God the Father speak of him...he knew who he was...he even stated he must increase I must decrease..**
- **and he was quite aware of all the miracles and teaching Jesus had been doing...all signs of Jesus Messiahship...**
- **but he had expectations of what he thought the Messiah would do, I am not sure what those expectations were...but being in prison, was definitely not one of them.....**
- **this is where we pick up today..In Johns decrease he is blessed..and more..**

today look at the reward of John's decrease and Jesus increase...so Jesus responds...

Matt 11: 4 Jesus told them, “Go back to John and tell him what you have heard and seen—⁵ 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.”⁶ **And he added, “God blesses those who do not fall away because of me”**

- **John you have been chosen to be a prophet...and you are getting the whole of what being a prophet means... direct revelations and power from God...you have great influence even though you dress in skins and eat locusts, powerful people come out to hear you....you are a life changer... **your past has led to your now...****
- **and now you also get to experience what most prophets did ...the death of a martyr...which is not what you expected...**
- **the Messiah is still the one you witnessed... you will weather the now, and I will speak blessing over you...in the midst of your trial...and you will be blessed in the future...**

not long after that we come to John's death...

Matt 14:1 When Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee, heard about Jesus, ² he said

to his advisers, “This must be John the Baptist raised from the dead! That is why he can do such miracles.”

³ For Herod had arrested and imprisoned John as a favor to his wife Herodias (the former wife of Herod’s brother Philip). ⁴ John had been telling Herod, “It is against God’s law for you to marry her.” ⁵ Herod wanted to kill John, but he was afraid of a riot, because all the people believed John was a prophet.

⁶ But at a birthday party for Herod, Herodias’s daughter performed a dance that greatly pleased him, ⁷ so he promised with a vow to give her anything she wanted. ⁸ At her mother’s urging, the girl said, “I want the head of John the Baptist on a tray!”

⁹ Then the king regretted what he had said; but because of the vow he had made in front of his guests, he issued the necessary orders. ¹⁰ So John was beheaded in the prison, ¹¹ and his head was brought on a tray and given to the girl, who took it to her mother. ¹² Later, John’s disciples came for his body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus what had happened.

¹³ As soon as Jesus heard the news, *he left in a boat to a remote area to be alone.....*

- **Jesus got into a boat had his disciples set sail for a remote place where he could grieve He grieved the loss of his cousin, friend and prophet...**

Matt14: 13.....But the crowds heard where he was headed and followed on foot from many towns. ¹⁴ Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. ¹⁵ That evening the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away so they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves.”

*¹⁶ But Jesus said, “That isn’t necessary—you feed them.” ¹⁷ “But we have only five loaves of bread and two fish!” they answered. ¹⁸ “Bring them here,” he said. ¹⁹ Then he told the people to sit down on the grass. Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and blessed them. Then, breaking the loaves into pieces, he gave the bread to the disciples, who distributed it to the people. ²⁰ They all ate as much as they wanted, and afterward, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftovers. ²¹ *About 5,000 men were fed that day, in addition to all the women and children!**

- **Johns death leads directly to the greatest mass miracle Jesus performed in his life on earth...Why? Part of the reason I believe is to squash the question John put in people's minds about Jesus...and to bless John for not falling away through his own confusion and disappointment ...**

- all of which leads to the feeding of way more than 5000 people...in a remote place...exactly like the environment John used to preach at...remote places..

John 6:14 When the people saw him do this miraculous sign, they exclaimed, “**Surely, he is the Prophet we have been expecting!**”

- Jesus grief of John provided the remote venue for Jesus greatest miracle... john would be most proud...knowing he made the right decision...
- **And that is not all this directly leads to Jesus great miracle of walking on the water...**

Matt 14:22 Immediately after this, Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and cross to the other side of the lake, while he sent the people home. ²³ After sending them home, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. Night fell while he was there alone. ²⁴ Meanwhile, the disciples were in trouble far away from land, for a strong wind had risen, and they were fighting heavy waves.

First understand this....Obedience invariably leads to trouble. Disobedience leads to trouble...One trouble build, one destroys...

The disciples, several of whom were seasoned sailors, wound up in a life-threatening storm on the Sea of Galilee because Jesus told them to go to the other side.

- The text says the wind was against for they were fighting waves head on
- They did everything right ...They obeyed him...got in the boats and went... this was about a six mile journey at best..they had been fighting the storm for a long time...
- Every sailor knows what to do when the wind is against you and is too strong for your boat – you carefully come about and run back into land with the wind behind you.
- But Jesus’ followers didn’t do that. Why? Because Jesus told them to go to the other side, and they were determined either to go to the other side, or die trying. That’s the heart of a Jesus follower.

Matt 14:25 About three o’clock in the morning Jesus came toward them, walking on the water. ²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the water, they were terrified. In their fear, they cried out, “It’s a ghost!” ²⁷ But Jesus spoke to them at once. “Don’t be afraid,” he said. “Take courage. I am here!” ²⁸ Then Peter called to him, “Lord, if it’s really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water.” ²⁹ “Yes, come,” Jesus

said. So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus.
³⁰ But when he saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink.
 “Save me, Lord!” he shouted.

- He believed Jesus had power...but also believed his circumstances were powerful...*the question was which one did he believe has more power?*
- *the wind and waves...that is a faith problem*

³¹ Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. “You have so little faith,” Jesus said. “Why did you doubt me?”³² When they climbed back into the boat, the wind stopped. ³³ Then the disciples worshiped him. “You really are the Son of God!” they exclaimed.

- Johns death led directly to the greatest miracle and to the disciples fully believing Jesus was the one...the Messiah the Son of God....
- His intentional willingness to going deeper than he can comprehend and go deeper in obedience caused the disciples to be directly influenced to go Deeper....starting with Peter...and then all the disciples...
- John was right he must decrease...becoming less in the hands of Jesus leads to being used in greater waysand that is the blessing...how you handle your now leads to your greater impact in the future!
- you are not John ...you are you and you must be intentional g and obedient to go deeper than you understand and obey what you are directed...your decrease is actually an increase
- ^{Matt 11:6} And he added, “God blesses those who do not fall away because of me”

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Here

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Strength is intentionally BUILT. you don't go up to a body builder and say ...wow God blessed you with big muscles... Knowledge is intentionally ACQUIRED. you don't go up to a doctor and say God blessed you with knowledge of the body Endurance is LEARNED. You don't go up to a marathon runner and say God blessed you with running ability...they intentionally work to acheive that...it is the same in the Kingdom...you grow spiritually by intentionally doing life God's way....how you intentionally handle now... what you are intentional about now makes for your future....

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I trust Jesus will raise the dead because he says it. He doesn't tell me how, but I trust he will produce whatever he wills. The One raising the dead is the same One who created everything from nothing. Vaults, oceans, and scattered ashes are not hinderances to him. These material things are subject to his words. He utters his voice, the earth melts (Psalm 46:6).

How will we find our friends and family at the resurrection if we're not buried near one another? No idea. But we will. Do I know the details? No. But I know the God who promises they will happen *always* does what he says. Even if we're faithless, he remains faithful he cannot deny himself (2 Timothy 2:13).

So the next time we're struggling to understand how the next life can really be so great if there is no sex in Heaven, remember: in his presence there is fullness of joy and at his right hand are pleasures forevermore (Psalm 16:11).

Okay, Lord, I trust you.

Photo by [Benjamin Huggett](#) on [Unsplash](#)
SHARE WITH OTHERS:

today we will see a few promises fulfilled after the lifetime of John the Baptist...

Going Deeper with Jesus is an ongoing intentional willingness to learn more about Him and go deeper in your trust of him...since God is ever present and will never leave us nor forsake us...he is deeply involved in your present life... and that means your intentional decisions in the NOW of your life have great influence in your destiny..... and that means we must handle the now well... **your past links to your present...your now...however it is your intentional now that links to your future.** your past decisions got you to today...your now decisions will predict your future... some of the circumstances you will make decisions on now are of your own making and some are not of your own making....but all your decisions are your own....and those decisions will shape your destiny...

Wrestling with God over circumstances and tragedies and trials is one of the ways we go deeper with Jesus...How? When you wrestle with God he Wrestles back....and that is how strength and endurance is built.

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you with running ability...they intentionally work to achieve that...it is the same in the Kingdom...you grow spiritually by intentionally doing life God's way...how you intentionally handle now... what you are intentional about now makes for your future....

God Didn't Choose Me to be A Special Needs Parent

Heather McCain

Let me tell y'all something about special needs parents. God didn't choose us because he knew we were strong enough.

Know how I know? Because there are plenty of special needs children who are, heartbreakingly, neglected, abused, abandoned, and worse by their parents.

God didn't skim over the pool of parents waiting for a child and hand pick the ones who stood out the most to raise these babies who would need extra care.

Do I believe my son is God sent? Of course. I just know there was nothing special about me that made me the best candidate to be his mama.

So often, we as special needs parents are told that we were chosen because we are somehow stronger than other parents. But this is what I'm here to tell you: we weren't always this way. We aren't special needs parents because we are strong, we are strong because we are special needs parents. And these parents I know, these freaking warrior mamas and daddies, they deserve the credit for doing what it takes day in and day out to build that strength.

These are parents who dropped their careers and learned to make it, even if it meant completely readjusting their life to new financial means. They learned terms, and medications, and even medical procedures for their kids. They power through the lifting and the bodily fluids and the sleepless nights. They have higher instances of physical and mental illness, and sky high divorce rates. They build entire businesses to employ their child when others will not. They sit through meeting after meeting to make sure their child's needs are met. Even the most conserved, quiet ones have probably yelled at someone, somewhere who was denying their child those rights. They keep track of appointments, refills, and supplies. They have slept in hospital recliners, rode in the back of ambulances, and cried in waiting rooms after their child was rolled away for surgery.

We don't tell bodybuilders that they are such because God made them strong enough.

We don't tell doctors that they are such because God gave them the knowledge.

Strength is BUILT. Knowledge is ACQUIRED. Endurance is LEARNED.

So, to my fellow special needs parents: I acknowledge everything you do for your child. I acknowledge that it has taken a lot of heartache, exhaustion, research, growth, frustration, days you felt like you wouldn't get through, nights that seemed to go on forever, and dedication to your child to build the strength you are often told you must have already had.

YOU get credit for being the parent that you are. YOU.

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- **John you have been chosen to be a prophet...and you are getting the whole of what being a prophet means... direct revelations and power from God...you have great influence even though you dress in skins and eat locusts, powerful people come out to hear you....you are a life changer... **your past has led to your now...****
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- **the Messiah is still the one you witnessed... you will weather the now, and I will speak blessing over you...in the midst of your trial...and you will be blessed in the future...**

Jesus has all power...but this is what is difficult and takes you deeper in him...he does not always use it like we would want him to....

not long after ...In chapter fourteen we read of his death...

The Death of John the Baptist

14 When Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee,^[a] heard about Jesus,² he said to his advisers, "This must be John the Baptist raised from the dead! That is why he can do such miracles."

³ For Herod had arrested and imprisoned John as a favor to his wife Herodias (the former wife of Herod's brother Philip). ⁴ John had been telling Herod, "It is against God's law for you to marry her." ⁵ Herod wanted to kill John, but he was afraid of a riot, because all the people believed John was a prophet.

⁶ But at a birthday party for Herod, Herodias's daughter performed a dance that greatly pleased him, ⁷ so he promised with a vow to give her anything she wanted. ⁸ At her mother's urging, the girl said, "I want the head of John the Baptist on a tray!" ⁹ Then the king regretted what he had said; but because of the vow he had made in front of his guests, he issued the necessary orders. ¹⁰ So John was beheaded in the prison, ¹¹ and his head was brought on a tray and given to the girl, who took it to her mother. ¹² Later, John's disciples came for his body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus what had happened.

*Matt 14:10 So John was beheaded in the prison, ¹¹ and his head was brought on a tray and given to the girl, who took it to her mother. ¹² Later, John's disciples came for his body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus what had happened. ¹³ As soon as Jesus heard the news, *he left in a boat to a remote area to be alone.....**

- **Jesus got into a boat had his disciples set sail for a remote place where he could grieve He grieved the loss of his cousin, friend and prophet...**
- **His disciples would no doubt have questions about Jesus not saving John...they had all witnessed his miracles...**
- **was there a limit to his power? Was he truly the Messiah?...**
- **it was settled in John the Baptist mind...but as we shall see not theirs...**

Matt 14: 13.....But the crowds heard where he was headed and followed on foot from many towns. ¹⁴ Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. ¹⁵ That evening the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away so they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves."

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- **John would be most proud...knowing he made the right decision**
- **And that is not all this directly leads to Jesus great miracle of walking on the water...**

Matt 14:22 Immediately after this, Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and cross to the other side of the lake, while he sent the people home. ²³ After sending them home, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. Night fell while he was there alone. ²⁴ Meanwhile, the disciples were in trouble far away from land, for a strong wind had risen, and they were fighting heavy waves.

First understand this...

- **Obedience invariably leads to trouble.** The disciples, several of whom were seasoned sailors, wound up in a life-threatening storm on the Sea of Galilee because Jesus told them to go to the other side.
- The text says the wind was against for they were fighting waves head on
- They did everything right ...They obeyed him...got in the boats and went... this was about a six mile journey at best..they had been fighting the storm for a long time...

²⁵ *About three o'clock* in the morning Jesus came toward them, walking on the water.

²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the water, they were terrified. In their fear, they cried out, “It’s a ghost!”²⁷ But Jesus spoke to them at once. “Don’t be afraid,” he said. “Take courage. I am here!” ²⁸ Then Peter called to him, “Lord, if it’s really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water.” ²⁹ “Yes, come,” Jesus said. So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink. “Save me, Lord!” he shouted. **Short prayers are powerful**

- Peter had what is called **cognitive dissonance**, the term cognitive dissonance describes **conflicting thoughts** or beliefs (**cognitions**) that occur at the same time, or when engaged in behaviors that conflict with one's beliefs.

Jesus said one thing...the storm said another...which one will you believe Peter????.....

He had to filter the information... information that conflicts with what one already believes, in an effort to ignore that information and reinforce one's beliefs.

- **He had what we will all have going deeper with Jesus... mental conflict over what Jesus says...and what I see Happening..So He panicked!!**

➤ **in other words a Faith Issue**

³¹ Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. “You have so little faith,” Jesus said. “Why did you doubt me?”

- He hit the issue on the head...there was doubt about him...more than the storm...but personal...John and now Peter
- Faith is always personal

³² When they climbed back into the boat, the wind stopped. ³³ Then the disciples worshiped him. “You really are the Son of God!” they exclaimed.

- John's death led directly to the greatest miracle and to the disciples fully believing Jesus was the one...the Messiah the Son of God.....
- His intentional willingness to going deeper than he understands and go deeper in obedience caused the disciples to be directly influenced to go Deeper....starting with Peter...and then all the disciples...
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- Matt 11:6 And he added, “God blesses those who do not fall away because of me”

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First understand this....

- They did everything right ...
- They obeyed him...got in the boats and went...about a six mile journey at night
- Put Jesus in the safest boat ...with expert fisherman...Peter, Andrew James and John
- When the circumstances were beyond their control and they were afraid they went to Jesus for help...it was a form of prayer

Obedience invariably leads to trouble. The disciples, several of whom were seasoned sailors, wound up in a life-threatening storm on the Sea of Galilee because Jesus told them to go to the other side. The text says the wind was against for they were fighting waves head on them.

- Every sailor knows what to do when the wind is against you and is too strong for your boat – you carefully come about and run back into land with the wind behind you.
- But Jesus' followers didn't do that. Why? Because Jesus told them to go to the other side, and they were determined either to go to the other side, or die trying. That's the heart of a Jesus follower.

1) Where they failed was in their belief that they were going to drown and that Jesus did not care....

³⁸ *Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"*

- The disciples panicked because the storm threatened to destroy them all, and Jesus seemed unaware and unconcerned.
- Theirs was a physical storm, but storms come in other forms. Think about the storms in your life—the situations that cause you great anxiety.

Whatever your difficulty, you have two options: You can worry and assume that Jesus no longer cares, Which caused great fear in them...

- He led them to circumstances beyond their control...and he did not care...
- They obeyed him and now they are going to die and he did not care...
- They are screaming at him "DON'T YOU CARE" sometimes we do that!
- **Especially...When we find ourselves in desperate circumstances due to loss or illness, or experiencing an unexpected tragedy of the death of a loved one, or an excruciatingly painful disintegrating relationship.**
- **These men's families were going to be without husbands and fathers and he did not care**
- The religious leaders had warned them about Jesus!

- What they were saying is that Jesus' caring of them sometimes takes breaks...
- or sometimes other things have more control or more power than him...
- their circumstances clouded their understanding of God's care!
- **Had they understood God's care they would have realized that divine care never takes a break, even when it leads into rough waters....**
- Or they could have taken option two... you can resist fear, putting your trust in him.
- When you feel like panicking, confess your need for God and then trust him to care for you.

They thought they were getting Jesus across the lake...he was getting them across the lake and through a storm...all of which he had control over...

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They had what is called **cognitive dissonance**, that really made me start thinking that perhaps I am living in a state of mental contradiction, Jesus had the power to heal...and would be controlled by men...

- the term cognitive dissonance describes **conflicting thoughts** or beliefs (**cognitions**) that occur at the same time, or when engaged in behaviors that conflict with one's beliefs.
- In simple terms, it can be the filtering of information that conflicts with what one already believes, in an effort to ignore that information and reinforce one's beliefs.
- Not only did the disciples have mental conflict over what Jesus just did and said...they enter into a new ones...
- Power verse humility...serving and leading..
- When the disciples are on ...they are spot on...
- When they are off...they are way off...
- Though they were growingThey still had pride problems that resulted in relationship problems...

Here is a blessing....

[Psalm 127:3-5](#) **Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from him....**

that is a beautiful statement...however, I don't think there has ever been a pregnant woman whose wish was a special needs child...

listen to what Heather McCain writes about being a special needs Parent!

Let me tell y'all something about special needs parents. God didn't choose us because he knew we were strong enough. Know how I know? Because there are plenty of special needs children who are, heartbreakingly, neglected, abused, abandoned, and worse by their parents.

God didn't skim over the pool of parents waiting for a child and hand pick the ones who stood out the most to raise these babies who would need extra care. Do I believe my son is God sent? Of course. I just know there was nothing special about me that made me the best candidate to be his mama.

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