

- We have been following the life of Jesus as told thru the pen of Luke...we are now in the Easter Season and we are going to take a break and use the next couple of Sundays to follow part of Jesus journey to the cross...As Jesus gets ever closer to his destiny ...he was concerned with the state of His disciples preparedness for his departure and the ministry they would continue after his resurrection... **He must teach them that before the Crown there is always the cross... When you can't see God's hand, trust His plan.**
 - The disciples had heard Jesus teaching, witnessed miracle after miraclethe had seen healings demonic deliverances...miraculous feedings of thousands...Jesus power over weather and water...nature and the supernatural
 - And they themselves had performed miracles and deliverances...they got the supernatural...
 - But maturity takes more than the supernatural...The process of God Developing us to spiritual maturity...requires the supernatural and the natural working together...

Each of the apostles like you and i had their own preformed ideas and beliefs...based on their personal experiences, observations, religious upbringing, their own spiritual experiences, the influences of their parents, their siblings, their peers, their traumas, and their culture.

So Jesus must confront wrong beliefs and teach new principles...Kingdom Principles over and over...

It always starts with who do you say I am...your belief who Jesus is everything...he did not ask them if they were religious or spiritual...but a personal who am I?****

This was no question out of the blue...they had seen countless miracle, been on a mission trip without Jesus with powerful results, seen him feed 4000, then five thousand...healed blind, the lame...

Luke 9:18 One day Jesus left the crowds to pray alone. **Only his disciples were with him, and he asked them,** “Who do people say I am?” ¹⁹ “Well,” they replied, “some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say you are one of the other ancient prophets risen from the dead.” ²⁰ Then he asked them, **“But who do you say I am?”** Peter replied, “You are the Messiah sent from God!” ²¹ Jesus warned his disciples not to tell anyone who he was.

- **Their foundational belief that as Jews was that the Messiah would overthrow the government and establish the long awaited Messianic and Jewish rule**

This belief was shattered in the next two sentences...

²² “The Son of Man must suffer many terrible things,” he said. “He will be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. **He will be killed,** but on the third day he will be raised from the dead.”

Mark gives more detail..

Mark 8: 32 As he talked about this openly with his disciples, Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him for saying such things. ³³ Jesus turned around and looked at his disciples, then reprimanded Peter. “Get away from me, Satan!” he said. “You are seeing things merely from a human **point of view, not from God’s.**”

- **The disciples experienced a Crisis of faith...What is a crisis of faith? a crisis of faith...is experienced when your reality does not fit with our idea of how it is supposed to be. Listen**
- **So Peter told Jesus his plan was wrong and that he would do all he could to stop it...why? It did not line up with his idea how the Messiah would operate...**

- Any time we have specific expectations of God and what he should do in any situation we set ourself up for a crisis of faith
- I must admit I have felt like Peter **And we are not alone..**
- **Peter nor the apostles, Nor the living greatest prophet of the Old Testament, and first disciple of Jesus ... nor you can grasp in the present how the future will play out...**
- **So the answer to our crisis of faith is deeper faith!**
- And Faith must run deep to endure Jesus's ways because they will conflict with what we think his ways ought to be! ...
- The application...keep your eyes on Jesus...no matter what...

Luke 7: 23 ... "God blesses those who do not fall away because of me."

**On account of the methodology I use to carry out my purposes...
Faith is not faith until it's all you're holding on to.**

- Already rocked in their security in Jesus...they are panicking that it is all out of control...

When there is a God thing going on...it will be answered or revealed in a way...

- 1. You will not figure out before hand for it is supernaturally planned...but it will be accomplished little by little in the natural...we don't grasp the future plan and how the present ties into it.**
- 2. So only God will get the credit or Glory
As John articulated. Early in his ministry**

John 3:30 He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less. ³¹ "He has come from above and is greater than anyone else. We are of the earth, and we speak of earthly things, but he has come from heaven and is greater than anyone else.

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.... He had expectations ! whenever our expectations dictate how God must move we set ourselves up Crisis...

- **For At 31 years of age..Johns ministry comes to a screeching halt...as he is imprisoned for calling out Herod on the sin of marrying his sister in law and the general immorality of the King...**

- **So John's disciples hear what Jesus is doing and yet all this injustice is going on in John's life...you know the one who introduced Jesus to the world... ..and Jesus doing nothing about it!**

LK 7:18 The disciples of John the Baptist told John about everything Jesus was doing. So John called for two of his disciples, ¹⁹ and he sent them to the Lord to ask him, “Are you the Messiah we’ve been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?” ²⁰ John’s two disciples found Jesus and said to him, “John the Baptist sent us to ask, ‘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 in the natural expectations of what he thought the Messiah would do...and how his role as the cousin prophet would unfold...and it was not happening that way...like not at all...worse**

than not at all ...he was in prison and unbeknownst to him soon to be beheaded

There are at least three reasons John doubted...Jesus as the Messiah...

1. **He was in prison... he was in isolation...**left to his own thoughts.....John was a man of action it would be extremely difficult for him to be out of action in a hot and desolate prison ...sidelined in life... many of us struggle with doubt during seasons of isolation...alone...stuck... **and Jesus did not seem to be doing anything about it...**
2. **John was emotionally drained...and disillusioned...**he had served God with all his strength, even to the point of confronting Herod for his sexual indiscretions...he was emotionally spent...burned out... **mental exhaustion causes disillusionment**
3. **Where is the Justice.... why am I in prison unjustly? ... where was the winnowing fork of justice?? And Why are the Jewish people not flocking to you? Why are the gentiles so receptive to you? I don't get it!!! **And Jesus did not seem to be doing anything about it...****

So what is Jesus doing?...nothing about judging people...but healing anyone...loving them...helping all who will come to him..

LK 7: 21 At that very time, Jesus cured many people of their diseases, illnesses, and evil spirits, and he restored sight to many who were blind. 22 Then he told John's disciples, "Go back to John and tell him what you have seen and heard—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." 23 And he added, "God blesses those who do not fall away because of me"

You see the problem John had was that he was looking for what he thought Jesus should be doing now!...and was incapable to grasp fully

what Jesus actions, and inactions was actually setting up for the future fulfillment of Gods plan...

He had to die before or people would go back to John after Jesus was crucified...which would make John in a way greater and take the emphasis off Jesus...

What message Jesus sends back to John ...is at the fulfillment of what he read in Isaiah 61 the synagogue of Nazareth...exactly what he said he would do... his apostles are relistening to this

- *So does Jesus scold John for his crises of faith...caused by trouble and misunderstanding???* *No...*
- *I am so glad God sees the whole video tape of my life, and not just a snapshot of where I am now...or what I have done in the past...**John doubts Jesus and Jesus brags on him!!!***

LK 7:24 After John's disciples left, Jesus began talking about him to the crowds. "What kind of man did you go into the wilderness to see? Was he a weak reed, swayed by every breath of wind?"

- *He is bragging on the strength of the character of John...after all even in prison He is true to his mission...sending messengers to ask Jesus...are you him...or should I keep looking?*
- ***There is no quit in the man.. Jesus goes on in his bragging...***

Luke7: 25 Or were you expecting to see a man dressed in expensive clothes?

- *The answer is yes they were? A pampered man...someone exempt from the harsh life of the times..a man of this Kingdom*
- *Jesus answer...nope that was not God's plan nor was this John's Kingdom ...he belongs to another Kingdom*

*No, people who wear beautiful clothes and live in luxury are found in palaces. ²⁶ Were you looking for a prophet? Yes, and he is more than a prophet. ²⁷ John is the man to whom the **Scriptures refer** when they say, 'Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, and he will prepare your way before you.' ²⁸ I tell you, of all who have ever lived, none is greater*

than John. Yet even the least person in the **Kingdom of God is greater than he is!**" ²⁹ When they heard this, all the people—even the tax collectors—agreed that God's way was right, for they had been baptized by John.

John is the last of the O.T. prophets... He is the greatest because he actually introduced him to the world..

- Yet all of us who have come after the Lord...will know him as the resurrected King...our witness is far more complete so we possess greater knowledge than all the O.T. prophets.
- **That is why we can say without a doubt ...go to Jesus... And when in doubt...go to Jesus..**
- Everyone in here ..is like John in this way... we may have been down but we still have hope ... **its in a pile of manure, that a flower grows best.**
- John had to fight his inner voices of doubt, disappointment, confusion, being beat up and burnt out... we have to fight ours...
- **In your Crisis of Faith...Do not give up or give in....**
- John and Peter and all the apostles ..were preparing the way for people to come to Jesus...and you are too!!
- and so is Danny!!

God gives us the gift us the promises of His word, to heal us to answer our prayers, to bring justice, to make things make sense... however the timing and circumstances are in his control...but his promise to do it gives us the courage to face anything and go through it... knowing he has a timing for everything

Luke 7:23 And he added, "God blesses those who do not fall away because of me."

end

So he begins to teach them the big picture of his plans for himself in Luke 9 and he will teach them leadership principles they must learn to be effective in the Kingdom...

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- **But God does not leave us in that state if we choose to apply the remedy he has for us...**

Luke 7:23 And he added, “God blesses those who do not fall away because of me.”

- **On account of the way I do my Will... When Zechariah was told Elizabeth by the angel Gabriel they conceive a baby and Zechariah would name him John...who would become John the Baptist..**
- *Luke 1:13 But the angel said, “Don’t be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John.*
- *¹⁷ He will be a man with the spirit and power of Elijah. He will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord*
- **Zechariah tells him that is impossible because that is not how nature works...they are to old...**

LK 1: 18 Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I be sure this will happen? I'm an old man now, and my wife is also well along in years." "

- Zechariah want to help the angel out with some pertinent information...though he likes the idea of have in a son...the timing is all off...not just a little but by years... **the angel Gabriel was so thankful for that information...so he responds**

LK 1: 19 Then the angel said, "I am Gabriel! I stand in the very presence of God. It was he who sent me to bring you this good news! ²⁰ But now, since you didn't believe what I said, you will be silent and unable to speak until the child is born. For my words will certainly be fulfilled at the proper time."

- **Every part of God's plan was thought out before hand...the circumstance, people, place, ...to achieve the desired end...which is good...be still and trust... and wait for God's plan to be completed. Though it takes time it will be exactly on time**
- **we have 2000 years of hindsight...so we understand what he was talking about...**

This happened in the Galilee area...while traveling north toward Capernaum

MK 9:30 They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, ³¹ because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise." ³² But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it

They get back up to home base in Capernaum...To Peter's Home

Mark9:33 They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the road?" ³⁴ But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.

- **They were discussing and arguing out of their unbelief, panic, worry, anxiety, doubt and trauma of the future Jesus paints ...**
- **They have been rebuked for their lack of faith by Jesus**

- **It sounded prideful...but they did not want that exposed so they remained quiet...**

Mark 9: 35 He sat down, called the twelve disciples over to him, and said, "Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else."

- **He sits down...sitting down is a teachers position.....He calls them like a teacher calling the class together....they gather around him and stand most likely...a students position...**
- **I would be thinking ...Oh Man another teaching moment...just what we don't want...is this more bad news...**

1. He gives them another first...the first law of Spiritual Leadership...

- **Notice he does not condemn their desire to be first...he redefines how one achieves that position.....it is not about...Power, position and prestige...He states that status ...comes from humility coupled with service...**

2. The greatest among them is the one who serves the other 12 best...the one who seeks to help others succeed. Is the greatest...

3. And when you help them succeed you advance also...you help the other twelve advance you advance twelve fold...

That is a first ...that is not how their society runs... the powerful are served by the lessor...In His Kingdom the greater is he who helps the lessor succeed

******Have you ever had situations and experiences in which, by the very process of defining your expectations you also planted the seeds of your disappointments?**

Psalm 5:3 In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps.

Proverbs 16:9 Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails....

when our light seems to go dark... we go from being salt to salty because a crisis in the natural rocks which will also cause a crisis in our faith....Crisis of faith...What is a crisis of faith? a crisis of faith...is experienced when your reality does not fit with our idea of how it is supposed to be. Listen Any time we have specific expectations of God and what he should do for you and others you care about...or if you believe certain things are going to happen or turn out as a result of God's action, whether it's a physical, mental financial spiritual relational need, you set yourself up for disappointment followed by insecurity

- He was preparing
- Comprehending some things clearly and some dimly...some not at all
- But he sought the Lord in his doubt...when he felt like a failure...may we do the same..
- With his greatest fear of misleading people about Jesus...he ran to Jesus...he thought he had missed his purpose...but he was not giving in...
- In your Crisis of Faith...Do not give up or give in....
- So John in prison made the decision to not fall away to keep following Jesus...how do we know? he was not released by Herod...which means he did not change his statement ...to be released...he did not say it was ok for Herod now to marry his brother's wife...
- his decision now to honor God would change his life in the natural and spiritual legacy...remember he is only about 32 years old ...where is the blessing?

Two thousand years later...he is still a blessing to us... ...Zechariah and Elizabeth did become parents of the greatest prophet In the OT..Peter became the Rock!

His word never fails!

God gives us the gift us the promises of His word, to heal us to answer our prayers, to bring justice, to make things make sense... however the timing and circumstances are in his control...but his promise to do it gives us the courage to face anything and go through it... knowing he has a timing for everything

End

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

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....

- **After he was killed, John's disciples came and buried his body, and then went and told Jesus all that had happened**
- **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...**

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.” 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!

John's death leads directly to the greatest mass miracle Jesus performed in his life on earth... 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!”

Just as John stated when he baptized him... John would be most blessed...5000 people heard the good news of Jesus...and that is just the beginning....2000 years later this man also blesses us, in being an example of Faith in Crisis!

Freedom happens when you abandon how you think it ought to be and you embrace what actually is...and doing that you realize your resources are scant...you really need God! And you find your dependence on God only increases during times of trouble...

God gives us the gift of the promises of His word, to heal us to answer our prayers, to bring justice, to make things make sense... however the timing and circumstances are in his control...but his

promise to do it gives us the courage to face anything and go through it... knowing he has a timing for everything

End

*******He expounds more on this... So Welcome the least...Because when you do you welcome the King and His Father...**

*Mark 9:36 He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them, 37 “Whoever **welcomes one of these little children** in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.”*

- 1. In those times women were viewed as second class citizens and children as third class citizens. They were not even included in the count of the crowd of 5,000 which Jesus fed with five loaves and two fish.**
- 2. Children were considered a liability until they could grow up and serve and earn a living to support the household.**
- 3. The one who is most like a child...the least in position, prestige and power... ranks highest...Why? because Children know they don't know...that is why they ask a billion questions...they are Sponges**
 - They know they need others...they know they cannot make it alone...they are dependent on others
 - They don't have near the amount of ego problems adults do in “following the leader” ...

- They like to play with other children... which is mutual submission...you be mom or dad...I am the baby and visa versa...rather than always compete with them...
- a child does not hold long grudges against other children; soon he forgets that they fought and becomes friendly again.
- They believe the impossible is possible...or else why would anyone believe in Santa? One guy going to every house in the world in one night?
- And...they don't mind getting dirty...

Jesus speaks of welcoming a child the powerless as being the equivalent of welcoming Jesus- and that in turn is the equivalent of welcoming God the Father.

God gives us the gift of his promise to heal us to answer our prayers, to bring justice, to make things make sense... however the timing and circumstances are in his control...but his promise to do it gives us the courage to face anything and go through it... knowing he has a timing for everything

Do you have your own notions of how God's blessing system should work?

- **Have you ever had experiences of "waiting on the Lord?" Waiting for Him to do something that seemed so right?**
- **How about waiting for so long that it seemed you were waiting in vain? How did that waiting affect you?**
- **Have you ever had to wait on the Lord during periods of illness, unemployment, singleness, wayward children, infertility, or spiritual dryness? For how long? What challenges, encouragements, affirmations, discouragements, did you experience during those times of prolonged waiting?**
- **Have you had any waiting disappointments that caused you to feel that somehow God short-changed you in life?**
- **Take Heart! The Lord never wastes a trial that includes Waiting!!**

*****The disciples got this a little...ok were ok but what about them... John interrupts with a burning question...Ok we are all equal but at least were better then others...Right??**

- **John reveals his heart.... He and They are not only competitive with each other but also with other servants of the Gospel...other disciples...**

MK 9:38 "Teacher," said John, "we saw a man driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us."

- **Can I stop him ...please...cause only we can do miracles right???**
John ... felt the need to fight for greater market share and personal following...hey this is our monopoly...

- The man was doing a wonderful work of God. And helping people...But John did not accept him because he was not one of them.
- I am sure the demon possessed man was happy this guy drove him out...but who cares about results...

*****Exclusive people are dangerous and petty creatures and they cannot please God.**

- They often try to hinder the work of God in the name of God...
- **Someone else was effectively doing the works of one belonging to Jesus but that person was not them...so he must be stopped...Right Jesus??**
 - **Jesus reply...DO NOT STOP HIM.... It is not only about you guys!!!**

MK 9:39 "Do not stop him," Jesus said. "No one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, ⁴⁰ for whoever is not against us is for us. ⁴¹ I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward.

- **I tell you the truth!!! In other words really John listen to me about this...**
- **If he is doing a miracle in my name...he is connected to me...and if he is connected to me.... He is connected to you!!!**
- **If someone so much as gives a glass of water because he is connected to me...even that will be rewarded by me!!!**
- **Serving others even a little gives you heavenly reward and stature...**
- **So service is the currency in Heaven ...and all service counts...**
- **There is no such thing as to little a service ...all service in the name of God is remembered by God and rewarded by God**

- **In fact whether it is miraculous or a cup of water God honors and rewards it...mind blowing**
- **I want and need both...How about you?**

So that is the deal...when Jesus sets someone free...they are now served by his people...and then they becomes servants!

End