

Charles Spurgeon Moment (CSM): “Gilt is afraid of fire, but gold is not... It is a poor faith which can only trust God when friends are true, the body full of health, and the business profitable; but that is true faith which holds by the Lord’s faithfulness when friends are gone, when the body is sick, when spirits are depressed... A faith which can say, in the direst trouble, ‘Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him,’ is heaven-born faith.” ‘Doubt breeds distress, but trust means joy in the long run... We trust the Lord when we are sad, and in due season He so answers our confidence that our faith turns to fruition, and we rejoice in the Lord.”

General Church stuff:

- Interested in serving at Elevation Church: See: www.elevationchurch.org
- Please consider joining an eGroup (small group) so you don’t have to walk this walk alone – See www.elevationchurch.org. The “e” stands for empowerment - because getting the instructions from God without having the empowerment to live them out will frustrate you. These groups are our way of putting some very wonderful people in front of you feed you spiritually.
- Stay out of “isolation silos” - you are an easy target for the enemy – and you don’t have the benefit of friends to support you. Embrace the power of numbers.
- Interested in leading an eGroup? See: www.elevationchurch.org
- Don’t over-think it – Invite someone to church – “Who do you know that is close to you that is far from God?”
- What are your Gr8ful eight?
- **Elevation Nights Tour: October 9–18, 2026 — Lubbock (TX), Dallas (TX), Oklahoma City (OK), Houston (TX), then home. Described as a full worship, preaching, prayer, and breakthrough experience. Details: elevationknights.com.**
- **Elevation College launching next week! See: <https://www.elevationcollege.com/>**
- **Reflect 2026 at Elevation – see <https://www.elevationchurch.org> › reflect - Sep 25, 2025 — 7:00P M ET. Reflect is a time where women across our church join together to deepen our faith and celebrate the goodness of God.**

Sermon Summary: Is it wrong to doubt God? When we face resistance, or God doesn’t come through like we’re expecting, it’s natural to wonder if we heard Him wrong. But it turns out that doubt is really an invitation to trust God. And when we do, we’ll find deeper faith and a connection to our purpose.

Sermon Highlights

- It is very important in times of doubt that you shrink your circle so that who you’re talking to is the Lord or someone who will take it to the Lord.
- Listen to Him, not the prison.
- Sometimes, it’s not that you doubt what God can do; it’s that you’re wondering why He won’t do it for you.
- When you’re trying to make sense of your situation in isolation, you will always come to the wrong conclusion.
- Resistance is an indication of significance.
- Let go of your plan and lock onto God’s purpose.
- God knows you have the kind of faith that can remain even if He doesn’t meet your expectations.
- Doubt is a door God can come through and take you deeper in your faith.
- Keep trusting He is enough, even when He doesn’t do the stuff you wanted Him to do.

Scriptures

Luke 7:11-27:

Jesus Raises a Widow's Son - 11 Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. 12 As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out—the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. 13 When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, “Don’t cry.” 14 Then he went up and touched the bier they were carrying him on, and the bearers stood still. He said, “Young man, I say to you, get up!” 15 The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother. 16 They were all filled with awe and praised God. “A great prophet has appeared among us,” they said. “God has come to help his people.” 17 This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country. Jesus and John the Baptist - 18 John’s disciples told him about all these things. Calling two of them, 19 he sent them to the Lord to ask, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?” 20 When the men came to Jesus, they said, “John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?’” 21 At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. 22 So he replied to the messengers, “Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The 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. 23 Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.” 24 After John’s messengers left, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? 25 If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear expensive clothes and indulge in luxury are in palaces. 26 But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 27 This is the one about whom it is written: “‘I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’”

Matthew 3:1-17: John the Baptist Prepares the Way - 3 In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea 2 and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” 3 This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: “A voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’” 4 John’s clothes were made of camel’s hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. 5 People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. 6 Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. 7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. 9 And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. 10 The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. 11 “I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” The Baptism of Jesus: 13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. 14 But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” 15 Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented. 16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

Matthew 11:2-3: 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 3:30: 30 He must become greater; I must become less.”

Isaiah 61:1: The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me,
because the Lord has anointed me

to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners,
2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor
and the day of vengeance of our God,
to comfort all who mourn,
3 and provide for those who grieve in Zion—
to bestow on them a crown of beauty
instead of ashes,
the oil of joy
instead of mourning,
and a garment of praise
instead of a spirit of despair.

Sermon Discussion

- "It is very important in times of doubt that you shrink your circle so that who you're talking to is the Lord or someone who will take it to the Lord." Who is in your shrunken circle, or who can you add to it, and why?
- "Listen to Him, not the prison." John the Baptist was in prison and starting to doubt. Share a time when you were isolated, and it made you start to question your faith. What can you do next time you find yourself in a place like that?
- "Resistance is an indication of significance." Think of a time in the past or recently when you faced resistance. How do you think it could be an indication of something significant God is doing in your life?
- "Let go of your plan and lock onto God's purpose." Sometimes, it's hard to hear God because of our expectations. Where do you think God is prompting you to let go of your plan and trust Him right now?
- "It's not that you doubt what God can do; it's that you're wondering why He won't do it for you." How can this sermon encourage you to keep trusting that God is enough, even if your situation doesn't change?

Elevation Church Prayer Prompt: Dear Jesus, we're so grateful that You know the plan, and we can trust that Your plan for us is good. When life throws unexpected things our way, or we face resistance that makes us doubt if we've heard You, I pray that You help us not to listen to the prison. Remind us that resistance is often connected to purpose and that doubt is a door that can lead us to deeper faith. This week, even if the situation doesn't change, we'll choose to trust You. Amen.

AI generated recap:

Elevation Church Sermon Notes - "What If I Got It Wrong?" by Pastor Steven Furtick - August 9, 2026

Overview: A worship gathering moved from extended praise and corporate intercession into announcements and a sermon in the series "I know that voice" (installment 4). The message, titled "What if I got it wrong?", explored John the Baptist's doubt from prison (Luke 7; Matthew 11), the tension between human expectations and God's purpose, and how to trust God amid resistance and unmet expectations.

Worship and Corporate Prayer

- Exhortation to continue worship beyond the music; testify and "call on Jesus," declaring life and freedom in His name.

- Declarations: “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom”; Jesus as the “chief cornerstone” and solid foundation versus “sinking sand.”
- Intercession for those gathered in person and online, including “all over the world that we call our EFM (global online community referenced by the speaker),” asking God to touch “each city, each state, each nation, each home.”
- Faith posture: “Nothing is too big to intimidate [God], and nothing is too small to annoy [God].” Agreed prayer in Jesus’ name.
- Congregational blessing: encouraged to touch a neighbor’s shoulder and declare, “Jesus, I agree with everything you’ve spoken over their life... I call them blessed, victorious, favored, filled, and raised to walk in the newness of life.”
- Community greeting: meet five people; hug or fist-bump if needed.

Community Moments and Humor: “God is good — all the time” call-and-response. Lighthearted “I Know a Name” singing challenge demonstrating different vocal approaches, encouraging participants’ confidence in their gifts.

Announcements and Upcoming Events

- Elevation Nights Tour: October 9–18, 2026 — Lubbock (TX), Dallas (TX), Oklahoma City (OK), Houston (TX), then home. Described as a full worship, preaching, prayer, and breakthrough experience. Details: elevationknights.com.
- Campuses greeted: Columbia, Riverwalk, UC, Toronto.
- High school ministry: one-year celebration “tonight” across campuses, celebrating that “Jesus is our salvation”; invitation to all high schoolers to attend.
- Merch note: “The Living Room” apparel mentioned.

Sermon Context and Scriptures

- Series aim: not a formula (“seven steps”), but scriptural pictures of how God speaks.
- Texts: Luke 7:11–17 (widow’s son at Nain raised as context); Luke 7:18–23 (John’s question to Jesus); Matthew 3:11–17 (John baptizes Jesus; the Spirit descends; the Father’s voice); Matthew 11:2–3 (location detail: John in prison); Isaiah 35 and Isaiah 61 (Messianic signs and mission).
- Message: “What if I got it wrong?”
- Personal entry point: driving son Elijah from Charlotte to college in Lynchburg, Virginia; shared unspoken anxieties (student and parent) and parenting self-doubt; encouragement that humble questions are normal.
- Doubt handled rightly: bring questions directly to Jesus; shrink your circle to those who will “take them to the Lord” with you; avoid processing faith doubts with people who lack faith.
- “You can’t understand my doubt if you don’t understand my dungeon”: John’s doubt arose in prison (Herod’s fortress below a palace). Tight places are not always due to sin; John suffered for righteousness.
- God’s warning as kindness: like a car’s reverse sensor, conviction “beeps” so we can repent and redeem. Contrast: God uses reflection → repentance → redemption; the enemy uses regret → condemnation.
- Listen to Him, not the prison:
- Isolation breeds wrong conclusions; emotions and circumstances fluctuate.
- Do not interpret resistance as having misheard God; resistance often signals significance (e.g., disciples sent into the storm).
- Illustration: we resist most for what’s most significant (e.g., “wife” versus “Wi-Fi”).
- Expectations versus Jesus’ mission:
- John expected the Messiah with a “winnowing fork” and “unquenchable fire” (judgment, immediate national deliverance).

- Jesus' report cited Isaiah 35/61: "The blind receive sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor," notably omitting "freedom for captives."
- Application: Trust God when He leaves out the part you most wanted to hear; let go of your plan and lock into God's purpose.
- Jesus' affirmation of John:
- Though John asked, "Are you the one...?", Jesus publicly honored him as the promised messenger: "This is the one."
- God remains faithful when we waver; John's faith endured even unto death.
- Doubt reframed: doubt can be a door to deeper faith; true faith persists when God doesn't meet expected timelines or methods.

Practical Exhortations

- Take doubts to Jesus and to Scripture; don't let the "prison" narrate your future.
- Choose companions who will pray, believe, and agree with you.
- Heed conviction; repent and redeem relationships and habits; guard media inputs if you seek peace.
- Interpret resistance as potential confirmation of significance, not automatic misdirection.
- Replace unspoken grudges against God with grace; trust His presence even when outcomes differ from expectations.
- Closing Prayer and Response
- Prayer: for trust when God does not do the thing most desired; for revelation of His sufficiency and timing; assurance that He "will never fail" by being with His people in the middle of trials.
- Congregational response: standing, hands lifted, singing "I trust in God, my Savior, the one who will never fail."

Next Steps / Actions

- Elevation Nights Tour (Oct 9–18, 2026): Lubbock, Dallas, Oklahoma City, Houston; details and tickets at elevationknights.com.
- High school students: attend tonight's one-year ministry celebration across campuses.
- Global participants: continue connecting and praying with EFM (global online community referenced by the speaker).

AI Generated Sermon Transcript:

- **Opening Prayer #1:** "Come on, you can give your own testimony. I was lost, now I'm found. I was blind, but now I see. Because I called on Jesus. And when I called on His name, something happened. Something special, supernatural. I love to call his name. When I hear his name, demons flee. When I call his name, darkness blurs. When I call his name, things break. Let things come alive in the name of Jesus. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. God, we thank you that no chains are holding us back today. Our hands are lifted because you are here. God, I worship you today. I have seen time and time again in my life that you are the only rock that is worth building on. If I try to build on anything else, it's sinking sand. But I thank you that today we have a solid foundation, a chief cornerstone. His name is Jesus. We come before you today in the name of Jesus. We bring prayers and petitions for all of God's people who are gathered, not only physically, but online, for all of those who couldn't make it physically. We make a connection right now with all of those all over the world that we call our eFAM. We praise you today, God, because nothing is too big to intimidate you. And nothing is too small to annoy you. So whatever we ask you for in your name, if we agree with you in the name of Jesus, it's done."
- **Opening Prayer #2:** "Your word said that if two or three would gather together in your name, it would be done by our Father in heaven. We got more than two or three, so we're here agreeing together in the name of Jesus. Come on, put your hand on the shoulder of the person next to you. The Bible says that if you touch and agree, touch the person next to you and say, Jesus, I agree with everything you've spoken over their life. The person on my right and

the person on my left. I call them blessed, victorious, favored, and filled. And raised to walk in the newness of life. In the name of Jesus. In the name of Jesus. In the mighty name of Jesus. Satan has us flee. This is the house of God. We give you praise. Clap those hands one more time.”

- We've got something special to announce. I think we got one, two, three, four, five, six, seven of us. Graham, you come too. Let's tell them all over the world where we are going to be collectively as a group starting on October the 9th. So get your pens out, get your calendars out. Get ready. And each of you take a city and then pass it down. September, I didn't tell you what it is yet. October the 9th through October the 18th. Elevation Nights Tour. That's right. 2026, the year of our Lord. And just go straight down. Lubbock, Texas. Dallas, Texas. Oklahoma City. You said that so excited. Houston, Texas. And then home. But we wanna see you there. Elevation Nights is absolutely incredible. Who has been to Elevation Nights before? It is Every song, preach every word and cast out every devil. Come on, pray every prayer. Believe God for every breakthrough. We're going to be doing that. Go to elevationnights.com.
- My outfit is sponsored by The Living Room. You can buy this online. I got this printed with my own money. Buy online, go sit down online. Show for The Living Room tonight.
- Stand up on your feet. It's preaching time. We're going to be sharing from Luke chapter 7 today. In our fourth installment of the series – “I Know That Voice.” It's been my aim through the series not to teach you so much systematically like three steps to hear from God, seven steps to hear from God. Because I figure God is way bigger than seven steps. One time in the Bible, God spoke through a donkey. So I figure if we start listing all the ways that God can speak, we'd be here too long. We would miss lunch.
- **So what I'm endeavoring to do instead is just give you some pictures from the scripture of the times when the Lord spoke, and then as we paint that picture, hopefully you will see specifically something that God is speaking to you.**
- How many have felt God speaking to you in the last few weeks as we've been journeying through his word together?
- Now in Luke chapter seven, I'm going to read two stories. The, the first one I'm not going to preach on, but it will be so helpful. for us to understand the second one. In Luke chapter 7, verse 11 - The Bible says, “soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain after his disciples in a large crowd went along with him. As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her, and he said, cry then he went up and touched the bed they were carrying him on and the bearers stood still he said young man I say you get up watch this verse 15 the dead man sat up even a body that isn't breathing knows that voice I said even a body that has ceased breathing knows that voice don't even have a pulse but I know that voice being carried out the gate and then the Bible says he sat up and began to talk Jesus was talking and then he was talking and Jesus gave him back to his mother they were all filled with awe and praised God a great prophet has appeared among us they said God has come to help his people this news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country.”
- Remember that isn't the story I want to preach about here's what I want to talk about today verse “18 John's disciples told him about all these things, calling two of them. He sent them to the Lord to ask, are you the one who is to come? Or should we expect someone else?”
- What kind of crazy question is that? You just heard that he raised somebody from the dead? And you want to know, are you really who you claim to be? from John of all people. John the Baptist. I can understand Mark the Methodist earning the Episcopalian, but this is John the Baptist.
- Talking about, are you the one or should we expect someone else? Verse 20 is funny to me. When the men that John sent, when they came to Jesus, they said, John the Baptist sent us to ask, you get it? Are you the one?
- We totally believe. But John just wanted to know. John just wanted to know. Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else? At that very time, Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses, and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. So he “replied to the messengers, Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard. The blind received sight, the lame walked. Those who have leprosy are cleansed. The deaf are here.

The dead are raised. And the good news is proclaimed to the poor. Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.”

- We're going to go back to that verse 19 for our message today. Are you the one who is to come? Or should we expect someone else?
- **The title of my message today is a question. What if I got it wrong?**
- Have ever wondered that before? What if I got it wrong? I know you can't nod too much because you came to church with them, but what if? And you drove to church in it and the salesman told you it was a good deal, but what if I got it wrong? We're going to talk about it today.
- Opening prayer: Father, I know what you spoke to me, but I asked God. I would be so honored if you would use me, Lord. So here's my voice box. Here's my mind. Everything I got is yours, Lord. Use me in their life because you know what they need. In Jesus' name. Amen.
- You may be seated.
- Since my oldest son, Elijah, has been home now from college for a year, we can reminisce on when we went to college without having too much trauma. And when he went to college, I had this very vivid memory of me sitting in the passenger seat as we drove to Lynchburg, Virginia, where I was going to drop him off at college. I don't know if anybody in this room today is going to college over the next few days or the next few weeks, or plan to go to college at a future time in your life. I don't know if anybody in this room is questioning that decision or not, but I just feel how heavy he was as Charlotte got farther and farther behind. Lynchburg got closer and closer. He was thinking, what if I got it wrong? I could tell, not by anything he said, I could just tell by how quiet he got. I mean, first I was playing John Mayer in the car to try to cheer him up. Then I even switched over and played some music that I hated. I even resorted to playing his playlist in the car, but I still couldn't get him to smile. And I could tell that he was thinking. I'd never been this far away from home I tried to make the best decision that I could. I know it's a good school. And I'm going there, and I know my girlfriend is going to be there, and the best I can. What if this is terrible? What if I make no friends? Now, the interesting thing about that isn't of course that he was thinking that. Of course you think that when you're going up to college, leaving home for the first time. What he didn't know is that I was in the seat thinking the same thing right next to him. Not what if you got it wrong, not what if you shouldn't go to college here, because to me I'm just like, we'll drop out. This is not life or death, I hope we got it right, but we can fix that. What I was thinking more about is like, what if I got it wrong raising you? What if I didn't do enough? What I did the best I could, is dad, this is my test run, you are my lab rat. What if I got it wrong? I firmly believe that when you have your first child, you should set up not only a college fund, but a therapy fund for all the mistakes that you make on them that you will correct before you raise the other kids. So your first one gets an extra savings account. And I'm thinking in the passenger seat, did I do it right? I mean, I did the best job I could as a dad. I tried to be at every baseball game. I tried not to push him too hard, but did I push him hard enough? What if I got it wrong? What if I coddled him too much? What if I didn't comfort him enough? What if I was too soft? What if I was too strict? It's just ping pong possibilities and potential. So pain that I might have caused him and mistakes that I may have made that I may not even be aware of, even doing my best. What if I got it wrong? Because this is my first rodeo. I have no idea how to raise one up and I have no idea how to send one off. And I have never shifted. this product into the world before. So what if I traumatized you and didn't know it? What if your friends one day in college are going fishing? Because I never taught you to fish, you don't have any friends. And what if because you don't have any friends, You lock yourself in your dorm room and refuse to eat. And what if they call me and say, you've got to come get your son. Your mind can spiral pretty quickly. And I'm being silly, but not by much. Because once this question starts in your mind, you know exactly what I'm talking about. What if I got it wrong?
- What if I started the business thinking I was stepping out on faith, but it was really foolishness? The ones that really get you on the inside aren't just, what if I got it wrong? and it's going to cost me. But what if I got it wrong, and I'm dragging others along in the wake of my decision? I just thought it was kind of poetic, you know, with somebody maybe watching this, going to college, or maybe sending somebody off to college, or maybe getting married, or just

got married, or just got pregnant, or just welcomed a third child into the world, or just bought a new house, or just downsized, or just upsized, or just right-sized. Man, I think we could afford, but what if I got it wrong? Because there is no Bible verse that tells me how much my monthly payment should be. There's Dave Ramsey, and he's kind of a prophet, but I didn't find the exact verse to tell me the specificity of the decision.

- So you've got Elijah driving to college going, what if I got it wrong? And me sitting next to him going, what if I got it wrong? And he's going, what if I'm not ready? And I'm sitting next to him going, what if you're not ready? Because I think it was my job to get you ready, but how do I know if you're ready? Because I've never done this before. How many feel this in an area of your life right now?
- Come on, I'm sharing my personal baggage up here with y'all. I could use a little backup. What if I got it wrong? I thought I was supposed to quit that job in faith to step out for something new, but they haven't exactly been lining up with offers from other jobs. What if I got it wrong?
- What if I just quit because I was frustrated, not because I had faith? What if I got it wrong? It's a humble question. Some people think that you should never ask that question. You should always be confident. And those people are confidently wrong. Even when they are wrong, they are never in God.
- **By the way, most of the sermons that I've heard in church about doubt only have one point. You ready? Write this down. We're going to talk about doubt today. Ready? Write this down. Don't. Don't do it. God's been good to you. How could you doubt him now? You can't make me doubt him. I know too much about him. That rhymes, but it's not very real. Because if you never have any questions about the God you encounter in the pages of Scripture, you are cherry-picking.**
- There's some stuff in here that'll spin you around so quick, you'll be so busy talking about, did I really just read that? Did that really just say that? Can I really do that? Can I really believe that? In the scripture that I mentioned, in Luke chapter seven, it's interesting because the person who is doubting is not one of the 12 disciples.
- Instead, we find a person who actually had a job that preceded, and in some ways was priority above the 12 disciples. See, the 12 disciples that you read about, Matthew, Luke, you know, all these guys that you read about, Peter, Andrew, all the guys I've read about, they follow Jesus. This character came before Jesus.
- In fact, the Bible calls him a voice in the wilderness. We're talking about I know that voice. Here's what he said. Prepare the way for the Lord. Make straight the crooked path in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. He came declaring repent for the kingdom of God's hand. That was John. It was John, you may remember, who baptized Jesus in the Jordan River.
- Oh, yeah. John's voice was powerful. He would stand out and preach with no microphone, no PA system, no screen support. Nobody really to give him an amen because what he was preaching was so controversial it challenged their lifestyle. And as he preached, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand and people would stream out into the wilderness, into the desert to be baptized by John.
- Imagine his shock when Jesus, the one who his voice was meant to herald into the earth as a human, when Jesus showed up, to be baptized by John. Let's look at that for a moment in Matthew 3 before we go any further. "When Jesus came to be baptized by John, he was already busy baptizing others. And in Matthew three verse 11, John said, "I baptize you with water for repentance, "but after me comes one who is more powerful than I, "whose sandals I am not worthy to carry." He, talking about Jesus, will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. How can he who had no sin be washed in the water for the remission of sin? That's what John is wondering. But John tried to deter him, verse 14, saying, "I need to be baptized by you. And do you come to me? Jesus replied, let it be so now. It is proper for us to do this, to fulfill all righteousness. Jesus was not being baptized so that his sin could be washed away. He was being baptized so that yours could. In other words, he's perfectly fulfilling all of the righteous requirements because he knows that we can't. Then John consented, and as soon, verse 16, "as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment, heaven was open. At that moment, heaven was open. And he saw the Spirit of God

descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice, a voice from heaven, the voice of the Father from heaven with the Holy Spirit alighting. A voice from heaven said, this, Jesus, this is my son whom I love. With him, I am well pleased."

- John heard it. John heard it in the Jordan. He heard the affirmation. I mean, you talk about confirmation, affirmation, knowing it's God. John heard a voice from heaven saying, this is the one. So how? In Luke chapter 7, verse 18 and 19, is John calling his disciples. Remember, John sent his disciples away to follow Jesus. When he saw Jesus, he said, look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. I'm not worthy to carry his sneakers.
- I can't carry his flip-flops. Follow him. And they did. So not only was John certain, but he was sacrificially. He gave up the ministry that he had so that Jesus could have the ministry that he couldn't. And now, the Bible says that John calls two of his disciples and sent them to ask the Lord, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"
- I could understand this question if he had just received reports that Jesus was... taking long naps, and teaching boring lectures. But remember what we read right before this. The disciples just saw Jesus raise a boy from the dead. John, it was amazing. Jesus walked right up to his beard and touched it. And when he touched the stretcher, he said, Get out! And the kid just sat up. And Jesus handed him back to him. Jesus just ruined a funeral, John. They were having a perfectly good funeral. They were about to bury that boy. And Jesus said, you won't need this great flock today. You can save this for later, but not today. Tell somebody, not today, not today - Because when Jesus speaks, resurrection happens. Because dead things come alive. I know a name. I know a name that if he speaks to a brain, it'll be empty by the time he gets some say. That's what I'm talking about.
- He just raised somebody from the grave, and John said, that's interesting. Go ask him, are you the one? So do you understand my confusion at the text? How can he be so confused? when Jesus' identity is so clear.
- This is where I'm glad that we have four gospel accounts. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. John was it written by John the Baptist? It was written by the humble disciple, the one who said he was the one Jesus loved. Luke, of course, was written by a physician who also wrote the book of Acts. Mark was written as an action gospel from Simon Peter's memory. See, when you read Luke chapter 7, it says, John's disciples told him about all these things, and calling two of them, he had questions, he had confusions, and yes, one of the most powerful men in Scripture had doubts.
- **I need to say this every couple months just to make sure you know. If you have doubts and come to this church, we won't kick you out. In some churches, they will make you feel like you don't belong if you're having trouble believing. I don't understand that. I definitely don't understand it because I know how much doubt there is out there that people are just pressing down and not talking about. The number one rule in churches, don't have doubt. And number two rule is, if you do, don't say it out loud. But the number one rule in this church is bring it to Jesus. Bring it to Jesus.**
- Can we give John a hand? Instead of judging John that he had doubts, notice what he did. Luke chapter 7, verse 19. He sent him to the Lord to ask. See, that's all you've really got to do with your doubts. You don't try to press them down or get them out or shake them out or grumble. Just take them to the Lord.
- Tell somebody to say, take it to the Lord. Take it to the Lord. It's so important in times of doubt, whether you are doubting your faith, whether you are doubting your future, whether you are doubting yourself, whether you are doubting your decision.
- **It is very important in your times of doubt that you shrink your circle and only talk to people about your doubts who are the Lord or who will take them to the Lord with you. I need to say that again. Because if you start talking too much about doubt with people who don't have any faith themselves and won't agree with you, it won't be long before they will talk you out of believing altogether.**
- I need some people in my life that I can talk to. And I can say I'm struggling with something right now. Will you believe with me that I can get my act together before I blow my life up? I'm having a lot of shame right now. I'm in some patterns right now. I don't even like them, but I can't break them. Pray with me about this because I don't want to leave my wife and kids, but I keep feeling like I don't want to come home. And maybe I can't keep doing this. I

need some people in my life who will help me take my doubts to the Lord. What a friend we have in Jesus. All our sin and grief to bear. What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer.

- He didn't just ask his disciples to use the one. he said go ask Jesus directly and ask the Lord directly - did I get it wrong?
- I thought you were the one when I baptized you and gave up my ministry to follow you but did I get it wrong? Why would you wonder that when you're hearing things so wonderful brother Matthew steps in to give one little detail that may help us to understand In Matthew 11, Matthew includes something in his account that Luke left out.
- Matthew 11, verse 2. When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples to ask him, are you the one who is to come? Or should we expect someone else? Luke tells you, What he asked, are you the one? Matthew tells where he asked it from, prison. And now I understand something.
- **You can't understand my doubt if you don't understand my dungeon. This prison was built by Herod and it was built on a mountain cliff. And on one side of the property you had the palace where all the parties would happen. And then beneath the palace carved into the cliff, you had a prison. John was a desert preacher. He wasn't used to dungeons. He was used to open air. And before you judge him for being in prison, he was there to preach it.**
- **Sometimes you're wrong because you sin. Sometimes you end up in a tight space because you did something wrong. And hey, there's grace for you there. When you get it wrong and God shows you that you're wrong, by the way, Learn to look for God's warnings in your life as blessings.**
- When I drive my car and I'm backing it up, sometimes it starts to beep at me and it kind of annoys me that it beeps, but I'm glad that it beeps because the beep means that I'm about to back up into something. And even if it's annoying, I don't want it to go away. Because it is telling me, hey, you might want to slow down. And the faster it beeps, the more it means that you need to pay attention. Because there is something, there's something. Touch somebody and say, the beep is a blessing. That's what I'm trying to say. The beep is a blessing.
- **When God's spirit convicts you of something in your life, that's a blessing. Just like when he comforts you. When God starts beeping and says, don't text him back. When God starts talking to you and says, you better block them real quick. When God starts talking and says, you know you can't watch seven hours of that and then pray for peace.**
- **They're all running around on the screen. Everybody's having sex with everybody. If they're not having sex with them, they're killing them. If they're not killing them, they're cussing them out. If they're not cussing them out, you can't watch seven hours of that and then pray for peace - God will say, be back up off of that.**
- **You don't need all of that. That is not condemnation. That is the kindness of God that leads me to repentance. And when God shows you something that's wrong in your life, I don't know what this is for, but there's two things. You can repent and redeem. Repent and redeem. When God shows you something wrong, hey, you were harsh how you talked to them. You can repent. and redeem.**
- **You can even open up a door to have another conversation about it. When God shows you something, when God shows you something that he wants you to change, when God says, hey, you got that wrong, God will always show you where to repent with the goal of redemption. That's the difference between God and Satan. God will take you through things and show you what's wrong through reflection. That's his tool to bring you to repentance. Repentance is his tool to bring you to redemption so that he can take what the enemy meant for evil and use it for good. The enemy doesn't use reflection, the enemy uses regret, that's his weapon.**
- And he wants to show you not only was it wrong, but you're wrong. In the case of John, he has done nothing wrong, only righteous. And Matthew says he was in prison. And when he heard, from prison about the deeds of the Messiah. He said, are you the one? Or should we expect somewhere else? You know what I think, church? Look at him. I think he had been isolated so long, I think the prison walls had started to talk down. I think it was clear to him who Jesus was in the Jordan, but it was cloudy in the jail.

- You ever had something that was clear to you in one moment and cloudy in the next? That's John. And he's doubting, but he's in a dungeon. And sometimes you will judge someone for doubting, but you don't understand their dungeon.

Kev thought:



- “Because it's hard for me to believe what you're saying when I'm facing bankruptcy. you're saying “Jireh you are enough” – Jireh needs to help me pay off my light bill and my gas bill and then it'll be enough” - it is hard for me to hear you talk about second chances - it's even hard for me to hear you talk about college - when we're trying to have a kid and we've been trying seven years and we can't have one - so the truth of the matter is you are hearing my declaration through the filter of your dungeon - And it can be hard for you to believe - not because that you doubt what God can do. It's not that you doubt what God can do. You are wondering why won't he do it for you. And this is the tension.”
- When I say I know that voice, it is that I heard their testimonies. But I'm going through my test. And I am hearing the party on the hill. But I am not in the party in the palace. I'm down here underneath it. I'm still trying to recover. I'm still trying to remend my relationship with my own daughter. I'm still trying to heal from things that happened seven years ago.
- I'm in a dungeon dealing with my doubts. So if that is you today, and I cannot predict who this message might be for, but I want to give you three points, and the first one is this. not the prison. Listen to him, not the prison.
- John sent his disciples to ask, are you the one? Or should we look for someone else? And he did the right thing, you know, because when you try to make sense of your situation in isolation, you always come to the wrong conclusion. Have you been doing that lately? Wave a pinky at me. This is when you start letting your situation tell you that what you see is all there is. I'm in this prison. What you see is all there is. I'm alone again on a Friday night. All my friends are at the party. What you see is all there is. I served that company for eight years, and they just let me go. Claude took my job. And now I'm out here with no education. And what I see is all there is. This is where it's so important that you know that voice. Because if you listen to your prison in these moments, your faith will die.
- John told his disciples, I've been listening to this prison long enough. Go ask Jesus. I hear the Spirit of the Lord saying, go ask Jesus. He knows the plans he has for you. Plans to prosper you and not to harm you. To give you a hope and future. Go ask Jesus.

- Don't ask your emotions if God is still with you. Your emotions will fluctuate. Your emotions fluctuate with your blood sugar. You better go ask Jesus. Don't even ask your friends what they think about it. When it's really serious. You've got to have friends, but you've got to have friends who can go with you to Jesus. What do you say about it, Lord? I'm going to open my word. Come on.
- I am not going to take what the devil is telling me in this prison cell. I am not going to believe every thought that I think. I am not going to allow myself to believe that just because I'm facing resistance, I did something wrong.
- Can I preach about that? We think that resistance means we did something wrong. As if God speaks something and it's always easy. The proof that God speaks it isn't that it's easy. It's that he's with me when it gets hard.
- And in fact, sometimes you face the biggest resistance when you are in the most significant moments of your life. I will prove it to you. Last week I preached about Jesus in the storm. Do you remember that? And how he told the disciples to get in the boat and go to the other side. And he sent them into the wind. Don't you think they felt that wind and thought, maybe he didn't really say, go to the other side. Maybe he didn't really tell us to get in this boat. But actually, the wind was an indication that there was something so significant on the other side of the storm that they had to get to because resistance is an indication of significance.
- Let me break it down to the smallest level. If a neighbor that lives next door to me steals my Wi-Fi, I'm not gonna resist it. I'm not gonna even say anything about it. That is not a battle worth fighting. It's just my Wi-Fi. If they jump on my Wi-Fi signal, I'll probably let it go. I won't resist it at all if they steal my Wi-Fi.
- If they steal my wife, that's different than my Wi-Fi. Because now we have got to access different part of my anointing and this part of my anointing isn't the praying part this is the laying on of hands part because you can have my wife I but my life is important to me and that's worth fighting for and you can tell what's significant to me by what I resist has the enemy been resisting you.
- I suggest on your life that the enemy knows he has to fight you - lest you get through this and do something significant. I fight for you, girl.
- And here is John in prison. And I imagine he feels like some of us. And the prison walls are saying, why is everybody else getting to see the miracles? Why is everybody else getting married? Why is everybody else having babies? Why is everybody else praising God for their testimony? Why did their kids come back home to God and yours didn't? Why have they been three years sober and you can't make three months? Why has the fight been so strong? God hasn't forgotten you. He favored you. The hand of God has always been on your life. And is still on your life. And I say don't listen to prison. I listen to Him.
- How we doing? We doing alright? Listen to Him. What does the Lord say? What does He speak about my situation? But it's not only John's situation that we've got to understand. It's his expectations. It's his expectations. See, John was raised in a belief system that said, when Messiah comes, he is going to judge our enemies and free our people. So here comes Jesus.
- You got to remember, John and Jesus had a special relationship. and Mary, Jesus' mom, came to visit Elizabeth, her relative. When Mary said hello to Elizabeth, the baby in Elizabeth's womb, John, started jumping. John knew Jesus' voice before Jesus was born. John started jumping just when Mary said hello. Jesus didn't even say hello. Somebody who was carrying Jesus said hello. John started jumping. John took a praise break in the sixth month of his mother's pregnancy. When he heard that Jesus was coming. Jesus is here, Jesus is here.
- We see some people say Jesus is here, Jesus is here, Jesus is here, Jesus is here. And if you know him, it'll make something inside you jump when he shows up, huh? It'll make something inside you get excited when he shows up. John was excited when he saw Jesus. Excited enough to say, look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. But then, Jesus. Remember, when John was announcing Jesus into Jordan, give me Matthew 3 verse 12 again, please. He said, his winnowing fork is in his hand and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

- Yo, John Jesus was coming with a fork where you thresh the wheat and throw it up and then let the chaff fall off and burn in the fire. And John was like, this is what Jesus is gonna do to all of you who don't believe. You see that chaff in that fire, you see that fork, my God is strong and mighty, he's about to burn, you better turn or burn, get right or get left, and get on the bus, Gus, no cuss, don't discuss much, this will burn you up in the fire, in the fork.
- And then they come to John, they're like, John, it's amazing, he's opening blind eyes. John's like, that's nice. But what about the fork? Yes, amazing, man. People who were never able to speak are speaking. He just loosens their tongue and they're speaking. It's amazing. That's great. But the fire. In fact, when they were coming back to John, Jesus said, tell them that the blind see, death here and the dead live and the good news is preached to the poor. He was quoting Isaiah 35 and Isaiah 61.
- So imagine you're John. Imagine you're John. And you're expecting a fork in the fire. And you're in prison. And they come to you and they're like, okay, we got a message from Jesus. We asked what you told us to ask him. Are you the one? And John's like, uh-huh. What did he say? And look at their report. The mute speak, the lame walk, the coming of sight to the blind, the dead live, the good news is preached to the poor.
- Now John knows that Jesus is quoting Isaiah 61. The blind receive sight, look at this, in Isaiah 61, the Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. Now I've got to slow down and show you this. Go back, please, to Luke chapter 7 when they're telling him what Jesus said or when Jesus is telling him. then the message can take back, please. John the Baptist sent us to ask people when it was to come, we should expect someone else. And then Jesus starts talking to the messengers. Next verse, please. Jesus at that very time was curing many disease, so he replied, you've got to get on the same page here, go back and report to John what you have seen and heard. The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed. And the good news is proclaimed to the poor. Go back to Isaiah 61.
- The spirit of the Son of the Lord is on me because the Lord is among me to proclaim good news to the poor. So John's like, go ask Jesus that I said are you the one. In other words, he's doubting. In other words, are you going to do what I expect you to do? to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners. So John's sitting there, he's like, oh, he's about to get to the part about freedom for the captives, which means he's coming to get me. But what do you do when God doesn't say the part you want him to say? Because Luke chapter seven says, That Jesus said, go tell John, that the blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed. This is Luke 7, 22. The dead hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.
- And John's like, yeah, yeah. And bind up the brokenhearted and set the captives free, right? But Jesus doesn't say that part. What do you do when Jesus leads out the part that you wanted to hear the most? Because all he said is, does not stumble on account of me.
- **In other words, John, I need you to let go of your plan and lock into my purpose. I need you to let go of what you thought. God's speaking to somebody today. I need you to let go of your plan and lock into God's purpose because I'm not going to do what you wanted me to do. I know you were waiting on a fork. I know you were waiting on a fire. I know you were waiting on freedom. I know you were waiting on all of these things to happen.**
- **But John, I need you to know that you are someone who is so significant that I can trust you enough to leave you in that situation. And I know that even if the situation doesn't change, even if I don't come when you want me to, Even if I don't do what you want me to. Even if I don't answer your prayer like I'm answering all of theirs. I know and believe that you have the faith to remain even when you don't see the release that you're praying for.**
- **And so John is saying, where's the fork? Where's the fire? And Jesus is saying, where's the faith? I need you to believe about me. in this season of your life, that I can still do what you knew I could do when you were jumping around before you were born.**
- Does somebody say, I still believe it? I still believe it. I still believe it. I still, somebody shout it at the top of your lungs. I still believe it. I still believe it. Wow. Where's the fork? You mocking me? I believe this stuff. I believe every word of this is true. I believe that God can do something even in a dungeon that all the world's powers could not do in a palace. I still believe it. I still believe it. I didn't get what I wanted when I wanted it, but I still believe it. And then the

Bible says that he turned around to the crowd and began to say about John, what did you go into the wilderness to see? Reed swayed by the wind?

- Not John. If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear expensive clothes and indulge in luxury are in palaces. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you. And more than a prophet. Keep going. This is the one about whom it is written. I will send my messenger ahead of you who will prepare you. They're waiting for you.
- Hold that frame. This is the one. Do you remember what Jesus said to John? The deaf hear, the blind see. Do you remember what John asked Jesus? Are you the one? Look what Jesus said about John. This is the one. Here's what I'm trying to say. John stopped believing in Jesus, but Jesus never stopped believing in John. And I get to know that if I'm faithless, he remains faithful. And by the way, John didn't stop believing long.
- The Bible records that he was actually willing to give his life for Jesus in prison. Even when they cut his head off, he didn't turn back from what he knew was right. That's the kind of faith John had. So Jesus said, let me tell you about John. Because some people think, you know, if you have great faith, God will always give you everything you want. That's one version. But another version says, another version says, that God knows that you have the kind of faith that can remain and stay and believe and trust even if He doesn't meet your expectations.
- **In human relationships, when an expectation isn't met, one of two things happen. One is it gets filled in that gap, and it gets filled with grace. You know, hey, you didn't meet my expectations, but I understand. The other is it gets filled with a grudge. Do you have a grudge against God that you haven't mentioned in your heart right now? From what he didn't do for you that you wanted him to do? He said, I trust John enough that I can give him my word, and that will be enough.**
- What a beautiful story. I used to think this was the worst prison story in the Bible. Because in Acts chapter 16, they sing at midnight, and the chains come loose, and everybody gets free. I used to think that Joseph was in prison, and then he got out of prison because he interpreted a dream. I thought that was amazing. I thought that when Peter was in prison, and an angel came and broke his chains off and got him out, I thought it was amazing.
- **But you know what? I think what seemed more amazing to me to encourage my faith, is that John never got out of prison, but his faith never left either. Even though he doubted. You doubt, that's good. Doubt is just a door. Doubt is a door that God can come through and take you deeper in your faith. That's all right, but just John, don't fall away. Keep trusting that he is enough, even when he doesn't do the stuff. that you want him to do. Because I have learned in my life that it is the moments when God does not do what I want that my faith really has a chance to demonstrate.**
- **Closing Prayer: "You know, God never looks at you and thinks, what if I chose the wrong person? Even when John was doubting, God still knew, that's my man, that's my prophet. I can trust him enough. Father, my prayer for your people today is that they would trust you enough that when you do not do the thing that they most wanted you to do. And God's going to get you out of this. And God's going to come and open the prison doors. And I pray that you will do that. But sometimes, God, when you allow us to stay in the situation that we're in, I believe there is a greater revelation that you want to give. So show yourself strong, God. Show yourself mighty. Show them that you are still enough, even when they feel like they are not."**