

Luke 7 Pt 2 vv 18-28

Love your Enemies

III. Grieving for Self When things don't go as we planned

- **Church America's Clear Present danger: Pride- Easy Offended-Thin Skinned: Self-Pity**
 1. Not open to Holy Spirit transformation. Too busy grieving the Spirit
 2. Allowing ourselves to be conformed to/by Entitlement Mentality of Satanic World System

We are sinners deserving of nothing.
Recognizing the *demonic origin* of self-life can change everything

I must learn that **the purpose of my life belongs to God, not me**. God is using me from His great personal perspective, and all He asks of me is that I trust Him...When I stop telling God what I want, He can freely work His will in me without any hindrance. He can crush me, exalt me, or do anything else He chooses. He simply asks me to have absolute faith in Him and His goodness. **Self-pity is of the devil**, and if I wallow in it I cannot be used by God for His purpose in the world. [Chambers]

Anxiety/Anger/Weakness caused by self-pity are problems that could have been avoided [NJC]

- **Narcissism creeping into churches:** If I don't get my way taking ball going home
- **Jesus died for that sinful attitude:** Go bless another church
 1. Time to put our big boy/girl pants on
 2. Take personal responsibility for keeping our own noses straight

Time to Recalibrate Priorities: The goal is loving/forgiving one another/// **Saving Souls**
Spiritual Warriors forgive/cover sin...Take the hit/absorb hurt/turn over the pain

Not everything that happens has to do with us/ IOWs Everything is not a personal offense

Newsflash: Nobody thinks about us as much as we think they do. Offended yet?

- **Fact:** Those that are easily offended are filled with pride. God hates pride. **Period.**
- **Welcome any new people this morning**
- **Luke Ch.7**
 1. Grieving for a Friend
 2. Grieving for a Son
 3. **Grieving for Self:** Self-pity
- **Matthew 10 context:** Jesus instructs/warns/commands the 12 to go out
- Jesus heals servant/Resources a son...

18 Then the disciples of John reported to him concerning all these things.
19 And John, calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to Jesus, saying,
"Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"

- **John the Baptist** Imprisoned for calling out Herod's wife for adultery
- **John's disciples** Report John in prison: vv 1-17 Jesus healing sick, raising dead

**Notice: Reported came to John. Even after John hears of Jesus Miracles ...
"Are You the Messiah or what?"**

John 1:29 ... John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! **The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!** 30 This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.'... **32** And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. 33 I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' 34 And I have seen and testified that **this is the Son of God.**"

What could have possibly caused John to question the obvious?
Listened to stupid advice... Follow your heart

Feels like things are not working out...Are you the Coming One?

20 When the men had come to Him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, 'Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?'" 21 **And that very hour He cured many of infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many blind He gave sight.**

- **Messengers to Jesus:** Johns has doubts
- **Jesus works/talks at same time...**

22 Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the **things you have seen and heard:** that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them.

- John is in a bad place...Doubt/darkness

Is deep darkness sin?

It started when he was 24 years old. It was 1858, and Charles Spurgeon later recalled, "My spirits were sunken so low that I could weep by the hour like a child, and yet I knew not what I wept for." Causeless depression cannot be reasoned with, nor can David's harp charm it away by sweet encouragement. As well fight with the mist as with this shapeless, undefinable, yet all-beclouding hopelessness ... The iron bolt which so mysteriously fastens the door of hope and holds our spirits in gloomy prison, needs a heavenly hand to push it back. [Spurgeon]

In the end, Spurgeon acknowledged that depression may come to some believers for no discernible reason. He did not consider it an illness, a sin, or surprising condition, but an inevitable season in the life of a Christian and an *opportunity to demonstrate trust in the God who will one day wipe away every tear.*

Sometimes God will withdraw familiar comforts/feelings we previously enjoyed while walking with Him. He will allow us to grope in what seems/feels like darkness in order to test our faith for our sake; that we might learn to walk by faith and **not sight**, by faith and **not feelings**, by faith and **not by emotions**...Trusting in/waiting on nothing but His promise. As we come

through/to the other side we will have a greater understanding realization that He was near us the entire time. [NJC]

Psalm 23:4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; **For You are with me...**

- Is deep darkness always sin? Only when we allow it to **digress into self-pity**

What about John? Don't know for sure. But, in light of John's response to clear evidence Jesus is Messiah, he still seems to still ask "**Where is Jesus for me? Why am I in this prison?** Why cant I be out there still preaching? He seems to have turned inward neglecting what he knew to be true, or Jesus would not have encouraged Him to **recall Scripture**. What has this power over him? **John chose to follow his heart** in turn dig in in spite of the obvious...**and that ain't never good**. [NJC]

- **John may have questioned...**

1. God's **Ways**
2. God's **Timing**
3. God's **Love**
4. God's **Methods**

Did John expect the kingdom to be established in all its glory on his watch?
Believe his own ministry would continue alongside Jesus till then?

John was already in prison, and things began to appear incomprehensible to him. He had expected that Christ would speedily destroy the powers of darkness and judge the unrighteous. [Instead], He leaves him, His forerunner, **helpless in prison**. [Geldenhuys]

John might have wondered why the power of the Messiah was not being shown in more significant acts, such as in **freeing him from prison** and calling down fire from heaven on the evil political leaders who put him in prison! [Guzik]

- **Jesus ways/timing/plan are perfect:** We choose how to respond. E.g.

Mark 8:23 [Jesus] took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when He had **spit on his eyes** and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything. Not offended

Mark 7:32 Then they brought to [Jesus] one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put His hand on him. 33 And He took him aside from the multitude, **and put His fingers in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue**. Not offended

John 9:6 ... [Jesus] spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. Not offended by the ways of God

- **Also...**

1. **Joshua:** March silently around Jericho
2. **Naaman Syrian:** Wash in Jordan and Leprosy will be gone

John is in a dark place...God's People will experience darkness at times

It is not sin until we choose to turn inward/Make God's eternal plan all about us

- **Q.** So what do we do when things aren't the way we hoped...at all?
- **A.** We press on/Press in trusting God anyway... There's a reward that kind of faith

2 Timothy 4:7 I have **fought the good fight**, I have **finished the race**, I have **kept the faith**. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Tell John to believe what the Word says of Messiah...

Isaiah 35:4 [Of coming Messiah] Say to those who are fearful-hearted, "Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, With the recompense of God; **He will come and save you.**" 5 Then the **eyes of the blind shall be opened**, And the **ears of the deaf shall be unstopped**. 6 Then the **lame shall leap like a deer**, And the **tongue of the dumb sing**.

- **What to do in our season of doubt:** Trust God's Word
 1. Not our heart/feelings
 2. Not our own understanding

Jeremiah 17:9 "The **heart is deceitful above all things**, And **desperately wicked**; Who can know it?"

Proverbs 3:5 [Let God rule emotion] **Trust in the Lord** with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

2 Corinthians 5:7 For we **walk by faith, not by sight**.

**Tell My friend John stop listening to stupid advice...Word, Satan, Flesh
I AM the Messiah and He knows it**

- **John, remember** what you told others ...This thing is not all about you

John 1:27 [Jesus is] coming after me/preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am **not worthy to loose**.

John 3:30 He must increase, but **I must decrease**.

Go tell John to read his Bible instead of looking inside/Listening to bad advice
One more thing...Tell my friend John to **stop feeling sorry for himself**

Proverbs 27:6 Faithful are the **wounds of a friend**.

Demonic Sin-Affirming/Self-Loving/ Virtue Signaling is Killing our Society.
Tough love: Not working out the way YOU thought? YOU Hoped? In YOUR time?

Get over it. Its not all about us. Bigger pan...

- Tell my friend to trust in what he knows to be true

- Stop following his feelings/Start walking by faith
- Tell my friend **that his true Friend** lovingly advises him... **Get over it**

Readers Response to Chambers Self-Pity is of the Devil comment...

"Self-pity is of the devil," Oswald says. Pretty harsh words to describe the cushy, emotional shawl I'm often tempted to wrap around myself. After all, self-pity is never completely unjustified. Life offers plenty of reasons to wall ourselves in with our pain so that we might lick our wounds and tend our battered egos. In times like these, **self-pity always appears to be a friend**, tenderly wrapping itself around our bruised feelings and commiserating with our pain. Whispering how badly we've been treated and how we deserve to wallow in the sorrow of it all. *Usually I don't recognize self-pity's demonic origin* because it seems the justifiable response. But whenever I feel the seductive weight of its comfort *pushing me down, down, down*, in my mood and in my feelings, I've learned to stop and reconsider my response.

- Self-pity brings misery to self and other. Misery that could have been avoided...

23 And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."

- Light shed on John's motivation? **John was offended** or at least on the way
- Offended because of Jesus method, timing, and plan. Didn't go as John planned?

Happy are those who let God drive!

Don't worry about turning on Navigation. Kick Back... God knows the way

Hebrews 11:8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

- Are we offended by God when He goes the wrong direction? Does He?
- Are we looking at our relationship to God as an adventure unfolding or...

Isaiah 55:8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord. 9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts."

- God NEVER goes the wrong direction. Why not **Let Him drive...**

**Happy are those who trust Me/My Word completely
If Jesus says go the other side we will make it in spite of any storm**

- John is never getting out of jail. He will never see the Lamb of God die for him
- He will be meeting Abraham, Isaac, Jacob sooner than he thinks. Then he will understand
- After the cross Jesus will take them all with Him to Heaven [John gets to other side]

Contrast Paul in Philippians with John: Both in Jail/Both will lose their heads

Philippians 1:20b ...in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

- **Go back and tell John...**

1. Don't be offended by My Ways...I'm smarter than you

2. Don't be offended by My Timing...I dwell outside of time. My timing is perfect
3. **Don't doubt My Love...**you will know it when I pick you up on way to Paradise

IOWs Even [especially] when you don't understand what I'm doing...don't doubt My love
I am for you...I will get you to the other side!

Philippians 4:11 ... I have learned in whatever state I am, to **be content...****13** I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

How does Jesus offend us. He offends our sense of pride regarding how things should be done/When they should be done. **Instead of being offended by Him cause Him to marvel at your faith**

Luke 7:9 [Centurion: Just say the Word] When Jesus heard these things, **He marveled at [the Centurion's words]**

Matthew 15:27 [Gentile's woman: Help me my daughter is possessed.] **I came for Jews not dogs** [Words to get offended by...unless your humble and trust God] 27 And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." 28 Then Jesus answered and said to her, "**O woman, great is your faith!** Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Childlike faith trusting in the Father
Especially when everything looks like it's going sideways

Q. How do we know if we're offended by God? A. When we ask **why** instead of **what**
Q. What do we do when our questions cannot be answered by what we see **A.** Trust Him anyway

- **Tell my friend** to trust what He know is true by the Word
- **Tell my friend** to stop being led by feelings and walk by faith
- **Tell my friend** that his true Friend lovingly says. **Get over it...you know better**

Jesus a friend that presses in closer than a brother. Be that kind of friend

IV. John the Baptist Greatest Man

24 When the messengers of John had departed, Jesus **began to speak to the multitudes** concerning John...

Kicking someone who is down is evil. Devil does that/God does not...ever
God desires victory in our lives...He bows down to lift us up

1. **Peter** Gave His hand when he sinking from fear and doubt
2. **Thomas** Took his hand to His wound...quenching Thomas' doubt
3. **David** Stooped down to make me great

- Jesus waits for John's friends to leave before addressing the crowd
- **The John of the last couple of days was not the John I know**

Let Me tell you what I think of John despite his season of doubt...

24b... "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? 25 But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed those who are gorgeously appareled and live in luxury are in kings' courts. 26 But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and **more than a prophet**. 27 This is he of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.'

Jesus speaks to the crowd who witnessed John rocking the world

- **What did you walk miles to see. What did you see?**

1. Man not easily shaken/Firm and unshakable
2. Man not self-indulgent/Self-disciplined. Locusts/Honey
3. Mans man. Toxic/Dangerous. Repulsed by Weakness/Deceit/Compromise

**You went out to the wilderness to see a Prophet and you did!
Got money's worth/What you paid for and more.**

Now...Let Me tell you how I evaluate John despite his season of doubt...

28 For I say to you, among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist...

- **Greatest Prophet...**

All prophets said Jesus is coming...John said Jesus is here!
Greatest prophet and more than that...

Matthew 11:11 ... among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist

More than the Greatest Prophet...
John is the Greatest man who ever lived!!

- **Why did Jesus address the crowd?**

1. Jesus addresses the confused crowd with precious/healing words re. John
2. **Sets the record straight...makes crooked thinking straight**

Proverbs 15:23 ...a word spoken in due season, how good it is!

Proverbs 18:21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue...

Proverbs 25:11 A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold In settings of silver.

- **Don't be mistaken about John...He rocks**

A Prophet. More than the Greatest Prophet
A Man... In fact, the Greatest man who ever lived till then

- **Q. What does it mean to be great in God's economy?**
- **A. Ability to accomplish the will of God. John was good at that...**

28b...but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

- **Before the cross...** None greater than John the Baptist. None.
- **After the cross...** All believers are/will be greater than John.

How? Indwelling of Holy Spirit enabling us to more fully/efficiently accomplish God's will

1 Corinthians 3:16 ... you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

OT Spirit came upon God's people...**NT** the Spirit now indwells believers
IOWs We the Bride of Christ replaced the Temple of Stone to be God's Dwelling.

- **Also...**

When the Lord Jesus came, he began calling out a group of people who are even greater than John the Baptist. How can they be greater? Because they are **in Christ** and **clothed with His righteousness**. [JV McGee]

SUMMARY: John the Baptist: Horrible, no good, very bad day. Followed his heart into darkness/doubt

- **Jesus sets John straight** Let Me be God. My ways, timing, method, My love are perfect
- **Jesus sets people straight** Don't write John off for having a mini crisis. Happen to anyone
 1. Greatest OT Prophet as he walks onto pages of NT
 2. Greatest man till that time as per Jesus.