

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. ***Enjoy discovering more about Him!***

"PROOF" | LUKE 7:18-35 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

What is a cause for doubt for many people today?

"Those That Believe Are Blessed" (Luke 7: 18-23)

Jesus answers John's doubts by reminding him of the lives that are changing. **What does that show about Jesus? What does that mean for people?**

"Those That Believe Are Privileged" (Luke 7: 24-30)

Jesus tells the crowd that no one born of a woman is greater than John the Baptist, but anyone part of the kingdom of God is greater than him (because they've been born again). **What are benefits to being born again?**

"Those That Believe Are Wise" (Luke 7: 31-35)

Jesus challenges those who criticized John for being too removed from the world and Jesus for being too worldly, saying the changed lives show the wisdom of their ministry. **Who are the people you know today that have had their lives changed by Jesus? How do their stories impact you?**

REFLECTION QUESTION:

Jesus reassures John and the crowd that He is the Promised One by pointing to the changed lives. A changed life is still one of the most powerful forms of proof that Jesus is real and at work today, and it happens through surrendering to Him and trusting in His wisdom, no matter how different or uncomfortable His ways are. **Have you struggled with being ashamed of Jesus' ways and followers lately? How can you let God's wisdom guide you this week?**

Proof

I. Slide1 **Announce:**

A. Slide2 A.L. Baby Dedication 2nd.

B. Slide3-7 Andrew P: Video. Unity. F.F. VBS. Bottle.

C. Slide8 Introduce Foster Care Month. Each May, is a time to *acknowledge* and show our *appreciation* and *gratitude* for: *foster parents, family members, volunteers, mentors, policymakers, child welfare professionals, and other members of the community*, who help **children** and **youth** in *foster care* to *find permanent homes and connections*.

1. I thought it would be great to **hear from a couple** who has been fostering for a few years, to learn about their experience with foster care and how God led them in that direction. *Please welcome Noah/Kassie Denny.*

D. *If you're interested in Foster Care or have questions, we have **2 orgs** outside to answer any questions and provide you with additional resources. **ICA** and **CFLC**.

1. **Also**, *If you aren't able to Foster at this time*, but still want to be part of the **solution**, we encourage you to stop by the tables for some creative ideas of ways **you** can help the families *that are presently fostering*.

E. Slide9 As far as ways to engage, today's **Children At Risk** meeting is highlighting **Camp Alandale**, which is a **summer and winter camp ministry** for **kids in the foster care system**. We'd love for you to come and hear about what they do, and how you can partner with them and help provide this experience for foster kids in our county.

1. Slide10 **And one more opportunity**, we have a **monthly support group** for **families who foster and have adopted children**. They meet the 3rd Wed night of the month, which is this week. **So** if you would like to meet others who **you can encourage & be encouraged by**, join us this week at **7:00pm**.

2. **We also will be having a Potluck** for those families **Sat May21**. **If your new**, please come join us & meet some more families. *Contact Kelly*

II. Slide11a **Intro:** Proof

A. **I need proof.** Years ago a pastor friend told me about a free place for pastors to stay at in Encinitas (show copy of ordination). **I finally decided to do it. But when I showed up, the guy humiliated me. Are you really a pastor? I need proof** cuz people try to take advantage of us? Ok, recite Jn.3:16. **Seriously?** I should have left but I did it.

1. In the very old days the way **whiskey** was **proved** to be **good whiskey** was (that it had enough alcohol in it, *not watered down*). They would pour some whiskey on gunpowder touch a match to it, if it ignited it was **at least 50% alcohol**. **So** 50% alcohol became **100% proof** that it was good whiskey. **Proof!**

B. **Have you ever been shook to the very foundation of your faith?**

1. **Maybe from a difficult question** about God or His Word. **Maybe from a very difficult life circumstance:** a **death** of a loved one, a bankruptcy, a boyfriend that broke up w/you, a wife that left you, a child that left the faith

C. **If you've ever wanted proof, or experienced: *doubt, despair, questions, hesitation, uncertainty, reservation, indecision, vacillation* ... then you're in good company.**

1. Some **doubts** come from **Satan**, some from **yourself**, some from **pain**, some from **disappointment**. [It's good to have a **healthy** skepticism]

a) **Slide11b** "*God is not wounded by a reverent challenge.*" Griffith Thomas

2. Let's see what Jesus has to say about **doubts & belief**.

D. **In ch.7 we've been answering, *Who is this Jesus?* (so far: *The Lord over sickness & death*/cent servant healed - raising a widow's son). **This week**, we see *He is the Promised One*. The expected Messiah.**

1. He wasn't the Messiah everybody **wanted**, and He wasn't the Messiah everybody **expected**, but He was the Messiah that everyone **needs**.

E. **Slide11c The Main Point:** *Jesus is the Promised One.*

1. **Outline:** *Those that believe in Him are **blessed**. Those that believe in Him are **privileged**. And those that believe in Him are **wise**.*

III. Slide12 JESUS IS THE PROMISED ONE (18-23) READ

A. (18-20) Matthew tells us John the Bap was is in prison, and will be *beheaded* for his preaching.

1. Slide13a *A child of the desert, now confined in a dungeon cell in the castle of Machaerus.*¹ [Jordanian side of the Dead Sea]
 - a) It was *a rock-hewn dungeon* thought to be beneath the splendid banquet hall in which the nobility were entertained.²
2. It would be very easy for any of us to get *discouraged*. We today get *discouraged* in much better circumstances.
3. John couldn't understand Jesus ministry. *I thought he was coming to Judge not Save?*
 - a) John had proclaimed in Lk.3:17 *His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.* [But so far: no burning chaff? no fiery judgment?]
 - b) All John knew that Jesus would do ... *just hadn't happened yet!*
 - (1) When things are *moving terribly slow*, **doubt** tends to **seep down deep into our hearts**, we *grow impatient* with the Lord's timing. **Life seems to slow to a crawl.**
 - c) *Are you the one who is to come? Honest doubt is not a bad starting point, but a bad ending point.*
4. Slide13b **But** John does the most excellent thing anyone could do ... he sent his little delegation *straight to Jesus* for answers.
 - a) **Doubt** should always be brought direct to Him. **Doubt** if hidden will *fester*, if shared with others it may *spread*.

B. (21-23) Jesus said, the **proof** is in the *healing*; the **proof** is in the *delivering*; the **proof** is in the *raising*; the **proof** is in the *preaching*.

¹ Machaerus = sword. Hasmonian king built. Herod Great took over. Then Herod Antipas at this time.

² Merrill F. Unger, Unger's Bible Dictionary, Moody Press, Chicago, Illinois, 1974, 473.

1. **Blind** eyes are seeing things they've never seen before. **Cripples** are leaping. **Lepers** once shut out of society now cleansed & restored to fellowship. **Ears** that have heard no song of a bird, or music, are listening. The **dead** are raised. Oh, & the **spiritually poor** who had no soul wealth have heard the Good News & are now rich towards God.³

C. Slide13c (22) This vs is **key**, because we hear from Jesus that *John doubted His work not necessarily Him!*

IV. Slide14a **THOSE THAT BELIEVE IN HIM ARE BLESSED (23)** *a beatitude*

A. **And blessed is the one who is not offended** (stumbled) **by me** - John is stumbling over Jesus in **how** He is at work in the world.

1. **Don't be stumbled by** Jesus' style of ministry. His timing. His patience in waiting for *His 2nd return*. His means of accomplishing **His salvation** through *the cross and res.*
2. **Slide14b Don't be ashamed by the cross.** 1 of the things that Christians have been *mocked at* for years is *believing in One who died on a cross?*
 - a) The earliest known **drawing** of a crucifixion is *scratched in plaster* in **Rome**. It's called the "*Alexamenos graffito*". The figure is that of a **human figure** on a cross, **but** the one being crucified has a **head of a donkey**. **And** the young man beside the cross, in the mocking caption says, *Alexamenos worships his god.* (around 200ad)
 - b) **Let's not be offended by him.** **Let's not be ashamed of him.** Let's also remember, John finished well. **He was beheaded for preaching the truth.**
3. **Imagine that,** your whole ministry is known for **faithfulness,** **and then you get beheaded.**
 - a) **And remember,** *Jesus is the one who could put John's head back on. Who restores all things. And gives all believers a new heavenly body.*

³ G.Campbell Morgan; pg.97,98.

B. Much **grace** must've been needed when the messengers came back to John saying, *Yes it's Him. The One who can do anything. The One who has all power. But ... he didn't say a word about letting you out. But He did say, there's a big blessing for anyone who is not offended/stumbled by Him.*

V. Slide15a **THOSE THAT BELIEVE IN HIM ARE PRIVILEGED (24-30) READ**

A. (24) What did you go out into the wilderness to see? Reeds? Fashion?

1. John had an unconventional/bohemian vibe, and loved Whole Foods.

B. Jesus clears up any miscommunication that we might have about John. He wants the crowd to know how awesome cousin John is.

C. Slide15b (28) Greater than he - This is talking about John's role not his ethics.

1. No OT prophets saw Jesus. Only the last one John the Baptist.

2. Now we are on *this side* of the cross. Again this isn't about ethics but privilege. *We get to point people to Jesus with greater clarity than all prophets.*

3. Why? Because we have so much more than Isaiah or Elijah or John the Baptist. We have so much, as NT believers. *We have the full revelation. The new covenant. The indwelling HS. And Access to the throne of God.*

Slide15c "We get to take people to God in prayer and God to people in evangelism." Tony Merida

D. Jesus gives such honor to his rugged, faithful, and fearless forerunner. Jesus gives such honor to *one who had doubts.*

VI. Slide16a **THOSE THAT BELIEVE IN HIM ARE WISE (31-35) READ**

A. We also live in a very *unreasonable* generation today. One asked, *What is the biggest problem in our nation Ignorance or Apathy?* To which came the response, *"I don't know & I don't care!"*

B. This is a searching & scathing rebuke!

1. Christ likened their generation unto little children who *wouldn't play anything.* But we all had a friend on the block growing up *that didn't seem*

to want to play anything. [*Wanna ride bikes?* Too much energy. *How about Monopoly?* Too long to play] [some call this, *the parable of the brats*]

2. **Slide16b** Many people were **not satisfied** w/either **John or Jesus' style of ministry**. They didn't like **weird John**, **nor wild Jesus**. Serious John **nor social Jesus**. Fasting John **nor feasting Jesus**.

C. (35) **Yet wisdom is justified** (proved rt **or** vindicated) **by all her children**.

1. **Slide16c** **Or, The proof is in the pudding**. Original phrase came from *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, **The proof of the pudding is in the eating**.
 - a) **Pudding** (actually *sausage*), you can't say whether it is good or not until you partake of it. It's like Christianity, you can't **try it on**, **instead** Jesus says **eat my body and drink my blood** to make his point.
2. **Slide16d** Don't miss it believers, **you and I are the proof**. We are to be **God's final answer**.

D. **End:** Let's **trust Jesus** until we **see Him**, **and** will be **blessed** if we do, we will be **privileged** if we do, And we will be **wise** if we do.

E. Keywords: