

ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE

LIVE A FAITH-FILLED LIFE

Matthew 11:1-15

- **Who are some of the greatest men you have ever met?**
- Jesus - *“Of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John the Baptist.”* (Matthew 11:11)
- **John The Baptist was a unique man with a unique message and mission (Matthew 3:1-4), and the Lord had greatly blessed his ministry.**
- *“People from Jerusalem and from all of Judea and all over the Jordan Valley went out to see and hear John. And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River.”* (Matthew 3:5-6)
- **When we’re living for the Lord and proclaiming God’s Word to others, we will receive pushback and persecution from people (2 Timothy 3:12, Mark 6:14-29).**
- *“John the Baptist, who was in prison, heard about all the things the Messiah was doing. So he sent his disciples to ask Jesus, ‘Are You the Messiah we’ve been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?’”* (Matthew 11:2-3)
- **When we experience big obstacles and opposition while living for and serving the Lord, even God’s best people can struggle with doubt and/or frustration.**
- **What doubts have I struggled with concerning the Lord?**
- *“It is impossible to please God without faith.”* (Hebrews 11:6)
- **To overcome our doubts and live a faith-filled, faithful and victorious life, we must learn what Jesus taught to John the Baptist and his disciples in Matthew 11.**
- **What can we learn from this story that will help us to live faith-filled, faithful lives?**

We Learn From This Story That:

LIFE IS FILLED WITH PROBLEMS

- *“John the Baptist . . . was in prison.”* (Matthew 11:2)
- **Problems can come into our lives as a result of experiencing life’s circumstances.**
- Jesus – *“Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows.”* (John 16:33)
- **Problems can come as a result of our own choices.**
- *“A man reaps what he sows.”* (Galatians 6:7)
- **Problems can come in our lives as a result of interactions with ungodly people.**

- *“Herod had sent soldiers to arrest and imprison John as a favor to Herodias. She had been his brother Philip’s wife, but Herod had married her.”* (Mark 6:17)
- **Even the best of God’s people can experience painful problems in their lives.**
- ***What kind of problems have I experienced, and what are some of the causes of those problems?***

We Learn From This Story That:

IT’S OKAY TO HAVE QUESTIONS

- *“John the Baptist, who was in prison, heard about all the things the Messiah was doing. So he sent his disciples to ask Jesus, ‘Are You the Messiah we’ve been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?’”* (Matthew 11:2-3)
- **Since it’s difficult to understand why the Lord allows us and others to experience so much injustice in our lives, we often have questions for the Lord or about Him.**
- ***Why does the Lord allow us to go through difficulties in our lives?***
- **Sometimes the Lord allows us to go through difficulties in order to discipline us.**
- *“The Lord disciplines those He loves.”* (Hebrews 12:6)
- **Sometimes the Lord allows us to go through difficulties in order to deepen our relationship with Him.**
- *“We were crushed and completely overwhelmed, and we thought we would never live through it. In fact, we expected to die. But as a result, we learned not to rely on ourselves, but on God . . .”* (2 Corinthians 1:8-9)
- **Sometimes the Lord allows us to go through difficulties in order to develop us.**
- *“When troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.”* (James 1:2-4)
- **Some of our questions will never be answered in this life, and probably won’t be of great significance to us in the next life.**
- *“Our present troubles are small and won’t last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! So we don’t look at the troubles we can see now; we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.”* (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)
- ***What kind of questions do I have for the Lord?***

We Learn From This Story That:

JESUS HAS THE ANSWERS

- *Jesus told them, “Go back to John and tell him what you have heard and seen . . .”* (Matthew 11:4)
- **While some of our questions won’t be answered in this life, the Lord does respond to many of the questions that we have about our life and life in general.**
- *David - “I prayed to the Lord, and He answered me. He freed me from all my fears.”* (Psalm 34:4)

- **Prayer Formula** - When my request is not right, the Lord says “No.” When the time is not right, the Lord says, “Slow.” When I am not right, the Lord says, “Grow.” But when everything is right, the Lord says, “Go!”
- The Lord - “Ask me and I will tell you remarkable secrets you do not know about things to come.” (Jeremiah 33:3)
- **What responses has the Lord given me when I’ve prayed earnestly to secure His help and/or know His will?**

We Learn From This Story That:

JESUS STILL PERFORMS MIRACLES

- “Jesus told them, ‘Go back to John and tell him what you have heard and seen - 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.’” (Matthew 11:4-5)
- **Even when the world is in turmoil and we’re battling problems and problem people and we’re struggling with doubt, Jesus is still performing miracles in people’s lives, circumstances and relationships.**
- Paul - “I pray for you constantly, asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope He has given to those He called . . . I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God’s power for us who believe Him.” (Ephesians 1:16-19)
- **What kind of miracles have I seen the Lord do in times past, and what kind of miracles do I need for Him to do in the present and future?**

We Learn From This Story That:

THE LORD REWARDS FAITH WITH BLESSINGS

- Jesus - “God blesses those who do not fall away because of Me.” (Matthew 11:6)
- **The Lord rewards our faith and our faithfulness in this life and the next life.**
- Paul - “Let’s not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don’t give up.” (Galatians 6:9)
- The Lord in Heaven - “Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together.” (Matthew 25:21)
- **If John the Baptist could struggle with doubt and frustration because of life’s circumstances, so can we; but we can overcome our doubts and concerns when we remember who Jesus is and what He’s done, and we refocus on what He can do and what He’s promised to His faithful followers.**
- Paul - “Can anything ever separate us from Christ’s love? Does it mean He no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? . . . No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears

for today nor our worries about tomorrow - not even the powers of hell can separate us from . . . the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:35-39)

- **Faith in who Jesus is, what He’s done, what He can do and what’s He’s promised to His faithful followers enables us to overcome our great doubts and difficulties.**
- *“It is through faith that a righteous person has life.” (Romans 1:17)*
- ***What is the Lord teaching me through today’s message, and how can I apply it to my life?***