

Sermon Discussion Guide- Week of Nov 10, 2019

I've Got Questions: Are You The One?

Pastor Hall (8, 10:30 Selah), Guest Preacher Rev. Jason Nelson (9:15, 10:30 Trad.)

Getting Started- Life Updates, Prayer Requests & Opening Question (15 min)

- Anything to share about personal events since you last met or about applying last week's message on I've Got Questions (and So Does God): Do You Believe This? (John 11:17-27, Lazarus)
- Are there any joys or concerns that you would like to share with the group for the closing prayer time or for group members to hold in prayer during the week? (please note them below for later)

- Opener Question: Which do you think is more telling, who a person claims to be or who others claim they are? A person's words or a person's actions?

Review the Sermon (15 min)

Please read aloud the sermon scripture, Matthew 11:1-6. Know that it is ok to skip some questions below in order to manage the time for discussions in each section.

After Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in the towns of Galilee. 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?"

⁴ Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵ 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. ⁶ Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me."

⁷ As John's disciples were leaving, 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? ⁸ If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces. ⁹ Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you." ¹¹ Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

- If you had to give a one-minute summary of the sermon message this week, what would you say?

- How do you think Jesus felt when the messengers of John the Baptist delivered the message (verse 2)?
- Why do you think John the Baptist was questioning Jesus' identity at this time (vs 2)?
- How can we tell the difference between counterfeits or "posers" and the real thing?
- How many others do you think could speak to the truth of Jesus's claims in verses 4-6?
- How is the thought comforting that even someone like John the Baptist, of whom Jesus said among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater, has doubts sometimes in harsh circumstances?

Other Related Readings (10 min)

- Would a volunteer please read aloud Isaiah 35:1-7.
- Why do you think Jesus chose to mention his actions which parallel particular events in Isaiah 35 in His response to John the Baptists question (Isaiah 35:5-6)?
- What is the broader message of this passage? What hopeful messages or promises of God are given to Israel in this prophecy in verses 1-2?
- How is the difficulties of the human situations acknowledged in verses 3-4? Do you think John the Baptist was encouraged by these verses that came just before Jesus' scripture reference?
- The verses Jesus did reference (vs 5-6) begin with "Then will..." which grammatically presents the signs Jesus references as indications that "your God [has] come, he [has] come with vengeance; with divine retribution he [has] come to save you." What then was Jesus saying about the kingdom of God here?
- Since John the Baptist understood his role to be one who was to "prepare the way for the Lord" (Mark 1:2), how would he be encouraged by Jesus' scriptural response?

Personalizing and Applying The Message (10 min)

- As you reflect upon the sermon and the additional readings above, what are points of encouragement or challenge for you personally?
- What can we learn from John the Baptist about how to deal with our doubts?
- Have you been in circumstances that have led you to question God's presence or awareness or activity in life's problems? Anything you would care to share with the group in confidence?
- How do you suggest Christians deal with nagging questions of faith?
- What signs do you see today that indicate Jesus the Son of God has come and the kingdom of God is here?

Witness & Closing Prayer (5-10 min)

- John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus by living in and advocating for a movement of seeking the Lord in humility and faith. In what ways can our words and actions help prepare the way for Jesus by people who have yet to receive him?
- John claimed "I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God." (John 1:34) If given opportunity, what ideas or experiences would we share with others seeking the truth about God?
- The group leader or another volunteer who took notes on the prayer requests shared earlier in the meeting, may now lead the group in closing prayer