

When Jesus Isn't What You Expected

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Matthew 11:1-3 “When Jesus had finished instructing His twelve disciples, He went on from there to teach and preach in their cities. ² Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to Him, ‘Are You the One who is to come, or shall we look for another?’”

Tension: What do you do when Jesus is exactly who God promised - but things aren't turning out the way you expected?

I. Your unmet expectations may cause a struggle with doubt.

Oftentimes the greater the GOODNESS of the DESIRE, the greater the temptation to DOUBT the goodness of God when that desire is not given.

John had a picture of what the coming of the Messiah would look like. And the picture being painted by Jesus looks different than what he imagined.

John takes his doubts and disappointment and brings them to Jesus.

Matthew 11:4-6 “And Jesus answered them, ‘Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. ⁶ And blessed is the one who is not offended by Me.’”

II. When you are disoriented by doubt, Jesus points you to what is true.

A. Look at what God has said

Isaiah 35:5-6 “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; ⁶ then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.”

Isaiah 61:1 “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.”

Jesus doesn't give John new information; He redirects him to the truth he already knows in God's Word.

When you're disoriented, what truth do you have to reach for?

B. Look at what God is doing

Matthew 11:4-6 "And Jesus answered them, 'Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. ⁶ And blessed is the one who is not offended by Me.'"

Trials and suffering can narrow our focus until our circumstances are all we can see.

Community gives you a wider field of vision for the work of God.

Unchanged circumstances are not evidence of an absent savior.

III. When you don't understand, you can still trust.

Matthew 11:6 "And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

Don't let what you don't understand cause you to stumble over what you do know.

You may not always understand what God is doing, but the cross leaves no doubt about what God has done to save you.

God helps us in our weakness. Jesus gives us communion as a tangible way to help us remember what He has done for us.

Questions for Reflection:

1. John knew who Jesus was, but his circumstances didn't match what he expected Jesus to do. Where have unmet expectations made it harder for you to trust God?
2. Jesus points John back to what God has said and what God is doing. When you feel discouraged or disoriented, what truths about God are easiest for you to forget? What helps you remember them?
3. "Community gives you a wider field of vision for the work of God." Where have you seen God at work recently - in your own life or in someone else's?
4. "Don't let what you don't understand cause you to stumble over what you do know." What is something you don't understand right now - and what do you know to be true about God that you can hold onto?