

EVEN PREACHERS BECOME UNSURE SOMETIMES

Matthew 11:1-3

Introduction: Nobody knows everything, however some think that they do. Everybody has somebody they look up to and go to for advice, pastors being among the most popular ones whose advice is asked. It would be thought that those who have dedicated their lives to serving the Lord would be the ones most capable and able to answer questions relating to the things of the Lord. However the name "Thomas" comes up often and he had been given the title "Doubting Thomas" by many for he was always the one who had a question, who doubted when he first heard something. There is another man of God who also had his doubts at one time and of all the people it is most surprising to hear this man express his doubts about Jesus. The man was John, the Baptist. There came a time when he had questions about the very man he had preached about and presented to the people as the "promised One." So, everybody, even preachers, are not always sure about spiritual things.

I. OF ALL PEOPLE, WHY WOULD JOHN THE BAPTIST EVER HAVE DOUBTS ABOUT JESUS?

1. For three years John had preached that Jesus was the promised one, even had baptized Jesus, even made the statement that he was unworthy to tie Jesus' sandle laces.
 - Had he grown tired of waiting for Jesus to assume the public position as Messiah?
 - Was he asking to reassure his own followers?
 - Or did he really have reservations about what he had been preaching about Jesus?

2. It must be remembered where John was when he began to be unsure about Jesus.
 - John had been put in prison.
 - John was in a cell where darkness and dampness brought on a feeling of despair.
 - Have YOU ever been in an attitude of despair, where nothing seemed to boost your spirits?
 - John was losing all hope of ever being free again.

II. WHAT WOULD DRIVE JOHN TO BECOME UNSURE ABOUT JESUS BEING THE MESSIAH?

1. It wasn't because he didn't know Jesus very well.
 - He and Jesus were cousins.
 - He had personally baptized Jesus.
 - He had actually heard God's voice of approval at Jesus' baptism.
 - He had recommended and even pointed out Jesus as the promised One.

2. Had John committed sin and God had left him, thus causing him to have doubts about everything?
 - All of us know that sin separates from God and leads to doubts.
 - Our conscience can be silenced after a time of sin, we all know this.
 - Putting off repenting of sin long enough can cause us to not be bothered with the conscience.
 - However, John had done no sin and therefore it wasn't sin that caused him to have questions.

3. What then caused the famous preacher to have doubts about Jesus being the promised One?
 - Remember where John was - in prison, solitary confinement - he had plenty of time to think.
 - John was idle, he was bored to death, so he began to rethink the past three years.
 - How many of us can identify with John as being bored to death, idle?

- It was not John's doings to be in prison, it was not his fault that he was idle, with nothing to do but think.
 - How many are like John today, not in prison, but because of sickness, widowed, alone for some reason and all that they have to do is remember - remember the good times and wish and wonder.
4. What brought about some of John's questioning about whether he had been right about Jesus being the promised One was that Jesus was not doing what he thought Jesus should be doing
 - Jesus ought to be bringing Israel back to power, ridding itself of Roman rule.
 - Jesus ought to be doing more physical things than spiritual things.
 - Jesus was supposed to be bringing in the physical, visible kingdom of God.
 - Whoa! How many today have those same kind of thoughts? God isn't doing this or that right?
 - Why doesn't God care? Where is God anyhow? Why doesn't God stop all this mess?
 5. Then, where was Jesus? John was in prison and Jesus had not even sent word or visited him.
 - John perhaps considered himself as the most loyal, even introduced Jesus to the people and now he was suffering in prison and Jesus hadn't even sent word that He cared.
 - Jesus could do something about his imprisonment couldn't He?
 - Again, so many feel like John. "Where is Jesus? Where is my reward? I served Him for all these years, I did this, I did that...." "Jesus owes me....."
 - We forget that Jesus came to change us INSIDE, not to make any of us rich or famous. He has not changed. Only the devil pays wages and his wages are "death."

III. HOW DID JOHN HANDLE HIS FEELINGS OF UNCERTAINTY ABOUT JESUS?

1. He didn't allow his questions and feelings to fester to grow and ruin his fellowship with God.
 - He was not quitting, if Jesus was not the promised one, then he would go look for the real One.
2. He sent word to Jesus about what He was thinking.
 - He didn't ask what somebody else thought about Jesus, He went straight to Jesus.
 - We don't need to ask anybody else about Jesus, we can go directly to Him, ourselves.
3. As usual, Jesus was Jesus! He never showed anger at anybody, even Thomas, who expressed doubts about Him, neither did he with His cousin, His dear friend John the Baptist.
 - Jesus simply sent word back to John asking him to just take a good look at what had really been happening.

CONCLUSION:

1. Has Jesus changed? Can Jesus still meet any/all our needs?
2. Is His grace still sufficient for anything we might need?
3. Can we still go directly to Jesus ourselves instead of going through someone?
4. Everyone, sooner or later, will have questions, doubts, but remember, Jesus is the same, always.