

HOLD ON, JESUS ...

Saying Yes When You Want to Say No

When Jesus Disappoints • *Matthew 11:1-6*

Pastor Kenneth J. Spiller • March 26, 2023

***BIG IDEA:* Trust God in whatever He says and submit to His will in whatever He sends.**

➔ **Have you ever had a time in your life when Jesus didn't do what you wanted Him to do? What happened? How did you respond?**

Pastor Kenneth began his message sharing how he prayed for a woman with a bloated arm to be healed. When he finished praying, she wasn't healed. This was a time that he felt like Jesus hadn't done what He was supposed to do.

In this morning's text we meet a man who found himself disappointed because Jesus wasn't doing the sort of things that he thought Jesus should be doing. This person's doubt and disappointment are surprising because he helped prepare for the ministry of Jesus. This man was Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist. (John's ministry told in Luke 1:5-25 and described in Mark 1:2-10). John the Baptist baptized Jesus and John heard God say to Jesus **"You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased."** (*Mark 1:11*). John said of Jesus, **"Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!"** (*John 1:29*).

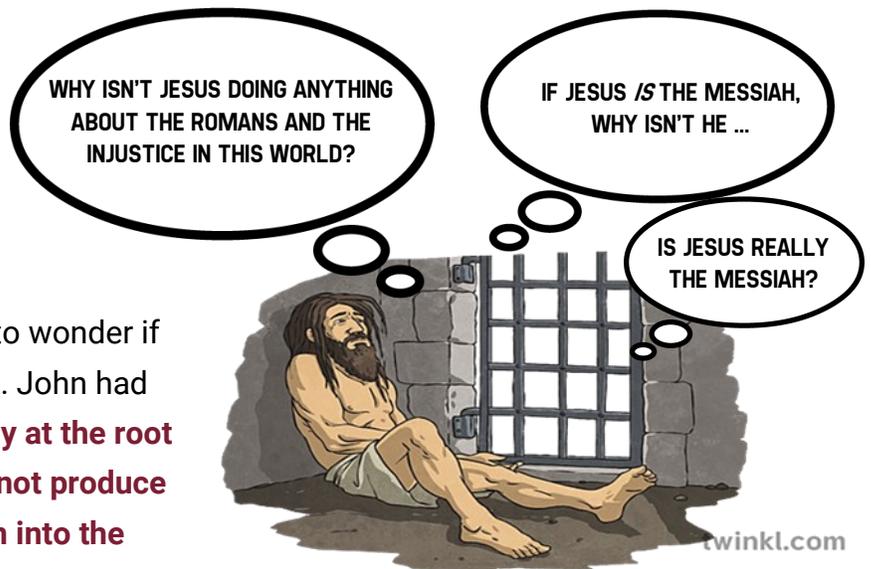
John had a very exception ministry. He had very exception fruit. He had a very exceptional attitude. We see evidence of this in John 3:30, where John the Baptist says of Jesus, **"He must increase, and I must decrease."**

➔ **What does it mean when John says, "He must increase, and I must decrease."?**

➔ **What might this look like in today's world?**

Still, John was disappointed with Jesus.

In this morning's text we find John in prison where King Herod had put him for doing what was right. As John sat in that cold, dark jail cell, as things were getting worse for him, he began to wonder if he had been wrong about the Messiah. John had warned people that, "**The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.**" (*Matthew 3:10*) John may have wondered many things:



- Where is the axe and when is Jesus going to start swinging it?
- Is Jesus *really* the Messiah?
- Could I have been wrong about Jesus?

This is John's "Hold on, Jesus ..." moment.

➔ **Have you ever felt like John did when he was in prison, full of questions and with little clarity?**

John the Baptist, the greatest prophet who ever lived, according to Jesus (*Matthew 11:11*), struggled with doubt and disappointment because Jesus wasn't doing what he thought He should be doing. John's disappointment and doubt reveals a couple of things.

1. Disappointment and doubt often come in difficult situations.

John was in prison because of his faithfulness to God. Difficult situations have a way of making us ask the famous question: "Why God?"

➔ **Share about a time when you've asked, "Why God?"**

2. Disappointment and doubt often come from unmet expectations.

Disappointment happens when our expectations and reality don't match. Many thought the Messiah going to be a holy man who proclaimed God's judgment on sinners – but Jesus ate with

sinner!

➔ **When have you been disappointed because your expectations and reality didn't match?**

In Matthew 11:4-6, Jesus answers John's questions by pointing to two things:

1. Biblical Revelation

Jesus answers John's questions by pointing back to prophecies about the coming Messiah. Jesus uses phrases from Isaiah 35:5-6 to describe the works He was doing: miracles, healing, preaching the good news to the poor. Jesus opened the eyes of the blind. He is the One the scriptures have been pointing to, and because He's the Messiah, we can trust Him.

This leads us to this message's big idea: **Trust God in whatever He says and submit to His will in whatever He sends.** Jesus points to the work that He is doing and says, "John, look at what God is doing. Scripture is being fulfilled right now!"

2. Joyful Submission

Then Jesus makes this wonderful claim: we can fight disappointment with joyful submission. In Matthew 11:6 Jesus says, **"Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me."** The person who doesn't fall or stumble what Jesus says and does is blessed. Don't stumble over Jesus, submit to Jesus. Even when life doesn't make sense, we can trust in Jesus.

So, how can we deal with disappointments so they don't turn toxic?

When you're disappointed, develop healthy ways to vent your disappointments.

In John's disappointment, he knew where he could go to – to Jesus. In Matthew 11:3 he asks, **"Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"** Disappointments are part of life. When you're disappointed, develop healthy ways to vent your disappointments.

➔ **What is a healthy way that you might vent your disappointments?**

When you're disappointed, develop a healthy perspective.

Sometimes when we're disappointed, our emotions get the best of us, and we don't quite see the whole picture. We're disappointed because our perspective doesn't match God's perspective. John sent his disciples to Jesus, Jesus sent him back facts. Jesus replied, **"Go back and report to John what you hear and see: 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.” (Matthew 11:4-5) Jesus helped John with his perspective. When you're disappointed, develop a healthy perspective.

➔ **How might you develop a healthy perspective when you feel disappointed with Jesus?**

When you're disappointed, take care of yourself.

Sometimes our disappointments can lead us to destructive behaviors like not eating well, not sleeping well, and no margin in our life. These behaviors are destructive and can lead to more disappointments that deepen and continue the cycle. Make sure you're taking care of yourself.

➔ **What strategies do you need to develop to take care of yourself when you're feeling disappointed?**

When you're disappointed, work out what is disappointing you.

Discover why what's bothering you is bothering you, and work through it.

So, what do we do when Jesus doesn't do what we want Him to do?

We turn to Jesus. We listen to what He has to say. We open up our Bibles to see what God says. And we submit to God, knowing He sees the bigger picture and knows exactly what He is doing.