



Luke 7:18–20

18 John’s disciples told him about all these things. Calling two of them, 19 he sent them to the Lord to ask, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?’ 20 When the men came to Jesus, they said, ‘John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?”’”

Reflection

(Today's reflection is given by Craig Tubman)

John the Baptist is our last Old Testament Prophet. We met him back in chapter 3 of Luke's account declaring words from Isaiah 40,

A voice of one calling in the wilderness,

“Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.

5 Every valley shall be filled in,
every mountain and hill made low.

The crooked roads shall become
straight,

the rough ways smooth.

6 And all people will see God's salvation.””

Other Gospel accounts paint John as a wild man. He was uncouth, unkempt declaring a message of repentance for God's kingdom was coming near. His whole persona matched his message – that the comfortable lives we are living are about to be interrupted by God himself and so you'd better get ready.

He saw himself as the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy of one calling in the desert to prepare the way for the LORD. Was Jesus this LORD? Was Jesus the one Isaiah had prophesied would come, with John now the final voice of preparation? The point of this section is that John didn't know!

John had expected Jesus to bring wrath, destruction, fire and judgement as Luke

records him declaring in chapter 3 will come upon the unrepentant. Of course the reason why John the Baptist sends messengers to Jesus here in chapter 7 is because he himself is in prison. Arrested by Herod. Surely if Jesus was the Messiah – the reigning Son of God, he would have intervened in such an arrest and saved the final prophet from the injustice of Herod? But no. John remains in prison. Was Jesus the LORD he had foretold would come?

John's message to Jesus, in his classic style was direct: Are you the one? Or should we expect someone else? That's not just the question of the John the Baptist, it is the question that lies at the heart of Christian faith and the message of the Bible. Is Jesus the one worthy of our trust and worship? Or should we look for some-

one else?

Of course the 'someone else' in our setting today is really broader than just a person. Still, at its core is a cry for a saviour. A cry for 'the one' or 'the thing' that will repair the brokenness and make sense of our conflicting experience of life. I read some time ago that there are four key questions that every human has asked regardless of their culture, gender, or place in history:

1. Who am I?
2. What's my purpose?
3. What's wrong with the world?
4. How do we fix it?

Whether you're a farmer in the ancient world or the founder of a tech start-up in 2018, these questions linger. And it is

these questions that lead us all to look for saviours. A saviour to give us identity as well as to fix the brokenness.

John the Baptist sent message to Jesus: 'Are you the one?'

We have plenty of avenues promising salvation in today's society. If you're into physical activity there are a whole chain of gyms encouraging you to put fitness first. That physical conditioning will lead to identity and solutions. In the corporate world the hours are long and the toll can be large, but there is always the promise of reaching the next level, reaching a higher pay grade, and then finally having the financial security that will give you the identity and solutions you need. There are a host of reality TV shows claiming that if

you get married or achieve your own food dream or renovate that house just right, then you will have found your saviour.

John the Baptist sent message to Jesus: 'Are you the one?'

That's really the question at the heart of our faith. Is Jesus the one God has sent in whom I will find identity, purpose, an understanding of what is wrong with the world and a way to fix it? Or he is just another religious guy peddling a useless message?

Think & Pray

Our world has always been and will continue to be filled with false saviours. These saviours aren't all bad but they don't have

the capacity to meet our deepest longings. For these go beyond the immediate to our place in the universe and the God behind it. In our next devotion we will hear Jesus's response to John's question but in the meantime why not reflect on your own answers to those four big questions?

1. Who am I?
2. What's my purpose?
3. What's wrong with the world?
4. How do we fix it?

Has following Jesus made a difference to your answers? Do you see yourself as a follower of his, a child of God through faith in the one true Son? What impact does this have on your life and your purpose?

Why not take time to reflect upon this to-

day, bring it before God in prayer and listen in tomorrow as we hear Jesus reply to John the Baptist.