

“THE RESILIENT LIFE”
(Overcoming the Crises and Anxieties of Life Through Christ)

“TRUST GOD IN THE MINUS – OVERCOMING DOUBT”

Text: Luke 7:18-23

INTRODUCTION: God often adds blessings to our lives. But sometimes He subtracts from our lives. We might refer to these times as “*seasons of minus*”. It is during these *Seasons of Minus*, we are sometimes prone/inclined to doubt God – *His goodness, His wisdom* or His _____ for us. In this study, we will join John the Baptist in prison and we will see how Jesus responded to his doubts. It is by considering John’s experience, we will see how when we learn to bring our doubts to Christ, we can also learn how to realign our _____ to His Word.

It is safe for us to remember that it is *common nature* in the life of a Christian to *doubt*. It is as we bring our doubts to the Lord and realign our expectations with His Word, we will also learn that the measurement of true Christian success is not fruitfulness, but _____.

Every day, God loads our lives with blessings – **Count them!** (Psalm 68:19)

Every good gift in our lives comes from God’s Hand. **(James 1:17)**

Our salvation, our families, the local church, our health and our ability to earn a living are all gifts given to us from a _____ God. But sometimes God subtracts from our lives as well. He subtracts people, sometimes material possessions, sometimes health or dreams or any number of things to which we might feel entitled. We can call these times *seasons of minus*.

God’s servant Job knew these *seasons of minus* and he came to understand that the same God who gives has the right to take it back and Job teaches us that we too can trust God during these seasons **(Job 1:21)**.

None of us has the knowledge or perspective to weigh the good and the bad, but we can still trust God even when He takes from us those things that we deem as _____.

In **Ecclesiastes 7:14**, Solomon penned these words – “*In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find _____ after him.*”

In this series of lessons – “*The Resilient Life*” we’ve looked at a host of Bible heroes who encountered some kind of subtraction in their lives. They faced the loss of security, dignity, a leader, protection, provision and more. But each of them kept _____ in God.

This last Chapter, we consider **John the Baptist** who encountered a time of loss that led to doubt and may we allow his life to become a great source of Christian encouragement to each of us.

I. THE _____ OF JOHN (Matthew 3:1-6)

John had one of the most unusual ministries found in the Bible. He experienced both blessings and disappointments.

A. GOD BROUGHT _____

Matthew tells us that John preached in the “wilderness of Judaea”...”in Bethabara beyond Jordan” – a hot, rugged and desolate area, that annually receives less than _____ inches of rain. The nearest town would have been Jericho, which was about 5 miles to the east.

Luke 3:7 we find “*multitudes came to hear John preach and to be baptized of him...*”

Of all the attention John was getting, he did not allow it to feed his _____.

John knew that his chief ministry was to “*prepare the way for the Messiah.*” (**John 1:23**)

God’s hand was obviously on John’s life, how John must have rejoiced watching the spiritual fruit of his ministry blossom!

But then...quite suddenly the unthinkable happened. John was _____ and put in prison.

B. GOD ALLOWED A _____

If we could plan the trajectory of our lives and service to the Lord, there would be no setbacks, or disruptions. But sadly, that is not how life works in a _____ world.

Jesus Himself encountered *disruptions* and *setbacks* during His three years of ministry - (**John 6:22-66**).

The Apostle Paul faced *seasons of minus* too. Paul, in his mission to plant churches in the Roman Empire and in the regions beyond was met with obstacles – *persecution, imprisonment, false teachers* and _____ ailments (**II Corinthians 11:24-27**).

Yet, we find that God uses setbacks in the lives of His Children for _____ !

It's important that we remember that God’s plan for John’s life was for him to come in the Spirit of Elijah and to “*make ready a people prepared for the Lord*” (**Luke 1:17**)

The similarities in the ministries of John and Elijah are many, but in the course of their ministries, both reached a point of extreme discouragement and _____.

CONCLUSION: John the Baptist’s directness in preaching would eventually cost him his freedom.

John preached about the sins of his day, including those of rulers. After preaching against the sin of Herod’s immorality with his sister-in-law, Herod angrily puts John in prison (**Luke 3:18-20**).

John the Baptist knew nothing about accommodating his message to the whims of ungodly people. John called out the sins of his day and called people to a place of repentance towards _____ - and Herod did not like it. One day John is preaching to thousands of people.

The next day he finds himself in prison – ***A Season of Minus.***

NEXT WEEK – “THE DOUBT OF JOHN”

II. THE _____ OF JOHN

A. DOUBT CAN _____ OUR MISPLACED EXPECTATIONS

B. DOUBT CAN _____ TO THE WORD OF GOD

C. DOUBT CAN _____ US WITH THE GENTLENESS OF GOD

III. THE _____ OF JOHN (Luke 7:24-28)

A. FAITHFULNESS IS GREATER THAN _____

B. WHAT WE HAVE IN CHRIST IS GREATER THAN _____ WE DON'T HAVE
IN THIS LIFE.

CONCLUSION: