

## Message #30

## Luke 7:18-30

**Any discovery of anything begins with a question.** Someone asks a question and then seeks to find the answer. That is how things are discovered. That is how things are learned. That is the key to progress. That is the key to success. **That is the key to truth.** If a person wants to know something, if a person wants to learn something, he must ask the right questions.

John Gerstner, in his book “Reasons for Faith,” said when it comes to this universe, every human being interested in truth must ask “Why?” “Why is it here? How is it here? Why is there something rather than nothing?”

Some people ask questions because they have a deep desire to know truth. Some people ask questions because they desire to know more truth. Some people ask questions because they want to communicate truth. **But some people ask questions because they reject the truth.** They are asking questions to try to trap the truth teller.

When Jesus Christ was on earth, He was the most unique Person to ever live here. He was the God/man. The things He did and said were astounding. Multitudes of people listened to Him and watched Him and most of the people were asking the question “Who is this guy?”

There were all kinds of views floating around as to who He was. Some were absolutely convinced He was the God/Savior/Messiah/King. Many thought He was a great prophet. Some were saying He was from Satan.

Jesus Christ was constantly questioned, analyzed, criticized, debated, accepted and rejected. There were some who did really want to know the truth, but there were others who weren't interested in the truth. That point is evident from this text in Luke. Luke carefully researched this data and what He concluded was this:

**JESUS CHRIST CLEARLY PROVED HIS IDENTITY BY THE THINGS HE DID AND SAID WHICH CONFORMED TO GOD'S WORD AND MANY PEOPLE ACCEPTED HIM, BUT MOST RELIGIOUS LEADERS REJECTED HIM.**

Someone once said, “There are few persons to whom truth is not sort of an insult.” That is especially true when you are dealing with self-righteous Pharisees.

There is nothing wrong with asking honest questions to learn truth. That is exactly what John did. But the key to being right with God is the response to the truth, once it is seen and known. We have the responsibility to give a good defense of what we believe (I Pet. 3:15). What we need to realize is that some people will question us because they want to know truth and others don't want to know it, because they won't believe it. It is our responsibility to present truth.

Now there are five facts that Luke researched pertaining to this passage:

**FACT #1** – John sent His disciples to question Christ’s identity. **7:18-20**

It had probably been about a year since John had baptized Jesus Christ in the Jordan and Matthew informs us that at the time this happened, John was locked up in prison (Matt. 11:2ff).

Now John had proclaimed “Repent, the Kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 3:2). He fully believed that Jesus Christ was the Messiah and that He was the one who would set up the Kingdom. But about a year had gone by and things were not working out the way he expected. He was locked up in prison and the Kingdom had not been established and he was wondering whether or not Jesus was the Messiah or should they look for someone else.

Furthermore, Jesus has been teaching about mercy and grace and forgiveness, which is not a specific “repent Kingdom” message. So John was wondering about this. He was interested in double checking his facts.

It is important to see that the words “someone else” (**7:19, 20**) refer to another of the same kind. **John did not doubt Jesus had been sent by God and he believed that Jesus had all the character traits of the Messiah, but because of the time lapse, he wasn’t quite sure whether He would set up the Kingdom or someone else would do it.**

We need to see this point. When things are not moving as quickly as we think we should, that does not mean God is not working things out on His time schedule. We can begin to question and wonder. What we need to do is trust and wait. God is always working out His will in His time.

There are three observations we want to make about what John does:

**Observation #1** - John’s quest to know truth was based on knowing the right facts. **7:18**

Jesus Christ had a powerful reputation and His disciples reported the facts about who Christ was and what He was doing. Jesus Christ had a powerful teaching ministry and He was performing amazing miracles and no one could deny that. Truth-seeking people analyze true facts. This is how one ascertains truth—analyze true facts.

**Observation #2** - John’s quest to know truth was based on asking the right questions. **7:19-20**

John sent two of his disciples to go directly to the Lord and ask Him if in fact He is the expected Messiah. John wants to know truth and he is asking specific questions to ascertain it. This is a key to gaining truth, ask the right questions. John is not interested in his own speculations; he wanted to know God’s revelation.

**Observation #3** - John's quest to know truth was based on asking the right person. **7:19-20**

John did not send his disciples to talk to Jesus' disciples. He sent his disciples to talk directly to Jesus. This is honesty and this is integrity. He sends his disciples directly to the person to look Him in the eyes and ask Him the question. So many times people look for answers to questions talking to the wrong people.

When the disciples of John got to Jesus, they said to Him that "John the baptizer" has sent us to you to ask whether or not you are the expected Messiah, King, Savior.

**FACT #2** – Jesus sends John's disciples back to John so he may know His identity. **7:21-23**

Now Luke gives specific details here that Matthew does not give. John sent two of his disciples to question Jesus. John's disciples want to know if Jesus is the Messiah. That is their question. This is fascinating because Christ did not just say "yes" and that was it. He answers their question by offering two proofs:

**Proof #1** - He proved He was the Messiah by performing miracles. **7:21**

At the time John's disciples show up and asked Him the question, Jesus had performed and was performing many miracles in their sight. He healed diseases and He cured various afflictions and demon-possessed cases. The two medical terms "diseases" and "afflictions" would certainly have been of great interest to Luke. The noun "disease" refers to all kinds of disease sicknesses (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 305) and the noun "afflictions" refers specifically to painful diseases that are the result of a judgment of God (*Ibid.*, p. 280). Plus, He had also raised a dead boy in the middle of a funeral procession.

These two guys showed up as these things were happening. These miracles were specific Messianic miracles that would establish He is the God/Savior/Messiah. **So these two disciples could certainly testify and trust what they had seen. Furthermore, they could certainly trust the Scriptures.**

**Proof #2** - He proved He was the Messiah by quoting Scripture. **7:22-23**

Jesus knew that John was a serious student of God's Word and buried in various texts of Isaiah (29:18-19; 35:5-6) are clear predictions and prophecies about these specific kinds of miracles the God/Savior/Messiah/King would perform.

Now by specifically quoting Isaiah 35:4-6, Jesus makes a key dispensational point. John was looking for the Messiah to pour out the vengeance of God and establish Israel's Kingdom. Christ does not mention verse 4, but mentions the Messianic miracles that prove His identity. Before Jesus would come back to pour out the vengeance of God, He would suffer and die (Ps. 22; Is. 53).

What Jesus is saying to John's disciples is go back and report to him the miracles I have done and then quote Isaiah to show I am performing Messianic miracles that fulfill O.T. prophecy. Then Jesus said, "blessed is the one who does not take offense at Me," but believes in Me.

**FACT #3** – Jesus evaluates John's character. **7:24-28**

The text does not say what prompted this. It may be that when John's disciples left, some of the people were wondering about whether or not John was becoming weak and unstable in his faith. He had baptized most of them and introduced them to Christ and perhaps they doubted John's commitment. So Jesus decided to Personally analyze John's character. It is an honest, refreshing analysis comprised of four realities:

**Reality #1** - John is not a man who wavers. **7:24b**

John was not some wavering reed in the wind; he was a solid, strong, stable spiritual man. He was not the kind of man who was tossed to and fro by various winds of doctrine. He was as solid as a rock; he was a man of steel.

This is what we all should want Jesus Christ to say about each of us. We don't want Christ saying there is a guy who shakes like a coward this way and that way with every wind that blows. What we want Jesus to say is there was a strong, solid, stable believer.

**Reality #2** - John was a man with proper priorities. **7:25**

The concept of "soft clothing" is the concept of very expensive and fancy clothes. This was luxurious attire worn by people with lots of money. These would be the kinds of clothes the Pharisees would wear. It was top of the line.

When the people went to see John out in the wilderness, what they saw was not a man living in a beautiful home and wearing beautiful clothes. They found a man wearing a garment of "camel's hair" and a "leather belt" (Matt. 3:4).

John was no rich entrepreneur. Jesus brings this up about John to show that his commitment level and his priorities were right.

**Reality #3** - John was the greatest prophet. **7:26-28a**

Of all the prophets who ever lived, John was the greatest because he had the privilege of being the prophet who went before Jesus Christ and introduced Him to the world. He was more than a prophet; He was a sent messenger, who prepared the way for Jesus Christ (**v. 27**). As a prophet, he not only prophesied about Jesus Christ, he pointed Him out. There would never be another prophet who had this great honor. This is honor that only John had.

We are never more honorable than when we are introducing the truth of Jesus Christ to the lost world.

Now Jesus said John was the greatest man ever born of a woman (**v. 28**). Think of some men born of a woman—Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon, Isaiah. John was greater than them all. Why? Because he had the most honored privilege—actually physically introduce Jesus Christ the God/Savior/Messiah/King to this world.

**Reality #4** - John was subordinate to Jesus Christ. **7:28b**

We must keep the context in mind. The context is one of questioning the identity of Jesus Christ. Even though John had been a faithful and unique prophet of God, it was not a relationship with John that could put one into God's kingdom. It was a relationship with Jesus Christ.

John's message was one of earthly repentance. Jesus' ministry was one of eternal deliverance.

**FACT #4** – Sinful people favorably responded to Jesus Christ. **7:29**

There is an article “the” before the noun “people.” So Luke is referring to people who specifically admitted they were sinners and had been baptized by John demonstrating that.

These people realized that John's ministry had been one of introducing them to Jesus Christ. These people acknowledged this truth.

These people realized the message of justification. They understood God's justice could not just let them into the Kingdom. They were sinners and they needed to be washed from their sins and Jesus Christ was the only one who could do that.

**FACT #5** – Self-righteous Pharisees rejected Jesus Christ. **7:30**

Those religious Pharisees and Scribes absolutely refused to allow John to baptize them. They refused to admit they were sinners who needed a Savior. The religious experts missed out on a relationship with the one Person who could get them into the Kingdom.

There is one Person and one Person alone who can forgive you your sins and take you to heaven. That one Person is Jesus Christ. So here is the critical question all need to ask—Have I believed on Jesus Christ and asked Him to be My Savior so I may go to heaven?