

Luke 7:18 The disciples of John reported all these things to him.

Luke 7:19 And John calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?”

Luke 7:20 And when the men had come to him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?’”

Luke 7:21 In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight.

Luke 7:22 And he answered them, “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them.

Luke 7:23 And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.”

Luke 7:24 When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

Luke 7:25 What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who are dressed in splendid clothing and live in luxury are in kings' courts.

Luke 7:26 What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.

Luke 7:27 This is he of whom it is written, “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.’

Luke 7:28 I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.”

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The early successful operation of the John the Baptist became his own stumbling block and hindrance to the Lord Jesus' work. At that time there were two works on the earth: one was the Lord's work, and another was John's. John's work was to ask people to repent, and the Lord's work was to allow believers to gain life, and then more life. This lesson is to remind us to bring people to Christ Himself and not anything else, such as our hard labor, yet without Christ.

The time when our faith is seriously tested the most is when we, like John the Baptist, constantly testify and prove that the Lord has the power to do things, but He may not do them for us during our very negative situations. It is easy to say that we must learn to look only at the Lord and not the environment, and no matter if the Lord does or does not do anything for us, we should still thank Him. **In the church life, it is always healthy to have companions, relatively mature saints, including servants of the Lord, near us to pray with and fellowship, and pursue the Lord together, abiding in the church life in order to gain Christ Himself.**

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Luke 7:22 And he answered them, “**Go and tell John what you have seen and heard**: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them.

The Lord Jesus gave a testimony of Himself in order to fellowship with the disciples of John. “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard.” This is our pattern and exercise in the church life according to our life level.

We also need to learn that the Lord did not say anything negative concerning John the Baptist who was His forerunner.

John the Baptist was someone who knew the Lord, but he, who is like us now, was still weak. And **the answer (fellowship) of the Lord Jesus was to reveal Himself more**, because to know the Lord more is the greatest help to the weaker ones like us. What the Lord Jesus answered and did was exactly the acts of services, predicted by Isaiah, which would be rendered to the blind (**Isaiah 35:5**), the lame (**Isaiah 35:6**), the leper and the deaf (**Isaiah 35:5**), and the dead and the poor (**Isaiah 61:1**), pictures of ourselves who can all be healed if we are willing to follow the Lord.

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When John the Baptist’s two disciples challenged Jesus to admit if He was the One to come or not, Jesus did not answer their question right away. Instead, He immediately (in that hour), performed miracles of casting out demons and restoring sight to the blind. He answered through His works or operation. Then, when He did answer the question, He did not provide a categorical answer, but told the two disciples to report to John what they had seen and heard. They were to answer their own question.

In the church life, how do we answer questions concerning the Bible or the Christian life? One way is to answer directly. Sometimes, this may only lead to more knowledge. Saints who ask a question may receive more knowledge about God and the Bible, but they may not be led to know God and experience God that much. Another way is to answer by way of our experience of the church life. This kind of answer may lead saints to see and hear the Lord Himself in the brothers and sisters, as they live the church life. This may also cause them not just to be satisfied with their question being answered, but to themselves testify (report) what they have enjoyed and experienced. They can “go and tell” others what they have touched. This answer may stay with them much longer and affect their living.

Luke 7:22 And he answered them, “Go and tell John what you have **seen and heard**: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them.

Luke 7:23 **And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.”**

To follow the Lord is not easy. It is so difficult to understand God. It is so difficult for people to stay in the church life. For example, in Montreal, since 2011, every Lord’s day (Sunday morning), there has been an average of 6 different new people who have come. This is truly a blessing to the church. At the same time, it is a sober reminder to us of how challenging it is to stay. Why do people come? The main reason is that our human needs are met. However, we may not understand what Christ needs. We may not understand the Bible. We hear sharing every week on the Bible, but we feel the Bible is too hard. The longer we stay in the church life, the harder it seems to get. Now, when we pray, our prayers don’t seem to be answered right away. The prayers that received immediate fulfillment now seem to be ignored by the Lord. The Lord’s word seems far away, and nothing in the Bible seems to fit our needs. Unless we see (Greek, *eido*) Christ and have had a genuine speaking from Him through His word, and testify our response to Him, there is no reason to stay. This is not to judge or condemn anyone, but to realize that without Christ, it is inevitable that we will be stumbled or offended.

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Many like to talk about Jesus. However, the Lord Jesus healed many people of various diseases, such as those who could not walk, those who could not see, those who could not hear and those who were lepers and demon possessed. We are actually the same. The Lord has healed us so that we can see and understand what we could not see. Sometimes we are deaf and we cannot hear what the Lord speaks to us. Sometimes we are affected by Satan. Then the Lord heals us. The Lord then tells us, “Since I healed you, you will be My witnesses. Go and tell people, and even more people, what I have done for you , and spread My gospel. Go out and bring more people to be saved.” This is not to just talk about Jesus, but to experience Jesus and then testify concerning Him.

Luke 7:23 And blessed is the one **who is not offended by me (Lord Jesus).**”

We always think that the Lord will listen to our prayers and will not fail to answer our petitions. Once the Lord does not listen to our prayers and/or does not answer our petitions, we will complain to Him, blame Him, and say that He was "not working." **This is to be offended or stumbled. How many times have we been like this, just as John the Baptist was?**

God's work in us has only one purpose, which is to enable us to gain the Lord Himself. For this, we must learn to pray until we can have faith in the Lord. For example, we pray and fellowship for one thing and keep praying and fellowshiping. **When we meet the Lord during such prayers and fellowship, it means that the Lord has answered us.** These prayers and fellowship have generated our faith in Him and caused us to gain the Lord Himself.

The Lord does not desire to offend or stumble anyone. In the case of John the Baptist, since John did not understand the Lord and His operation in his experience of Him, he stumbled himself. He was not stumbled by the Lord.

Luke 7:24 When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see?

A reed shaken by the wind?

Luke 7:26 What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.

Jesus' speaking to the two disciples of John and to the crowds was different. To the two disciples, whose level of life would have been quite high, His speaking was straight, exposing John the Baptist's weakness and perfecting the disciples so they would not be stumbled. However, to the crowds, whose level of life would have been lower, His speaking commended John, highlighting his firm stand for God (not a reed shaken by the wind) and his strict lifestyle of self-denial (not dressing in soft clothing).

How do we speak to the saints? Our speaking should not be generic, but specific, depending on the life-level of our audience. To those who are able to take it, our speaking may be straight, in order to perfect them. The higher the level of life, the more direct the speaking may be. In order to raise up pillars, our speaking may even appear to be unkind. However, to new brothers and sisters, our speaking may be very tender and kind, full of encouragement. If our speaking is too harsh, they may be stumbled and leave the church life. We need to seek the Lord to be able to discern.

Luke 7:28

- The Standard of **God**

“For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: **but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.**”-Luke 7:28



Grace over Greatness

- God's standard is above man's standard
- John the Baptist is the greatest among men yet less than the least in the Kingdom of God
- We must never believe that our good works alone can justify us in the eyes of God
- Our lack of worth further illuminates the greatness of **the grace of God**
- Our justification isn't in a successful ministry but in the salvation of the Saviour
- This is obvious to the believer but the enemy will use any means to make God's people stumble
- We must be sober minded and vigilant; pride's favourite meal is a saint/angel with a great ministry/position
- Let us regularly remind ourselves (and praise God) that we are saved by grace through faith, not of works

“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”

-1 Corinthians 10:12

Luke 7:28 I tell you, among those born of women none is **greater than** John. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is **greater than** he.”

In the Old Testament time, even the great believers like **Abraham, Moses, and Elijah** merely saw Christ from a distance" (**Heb.11:13**). John the Baptist saw Christ personally. Thus, **he was greater than those born of woman**. We saints who have been born of water and the Holy Spirit (**John 3:5**) have Christ living in our hearts (**Col. 1:27**). John the Baptist knew Christ, but Christ was still outside of him. Therefore, **we, who are in the kingdom of God, are greater than** John the Baptist.

Do we have such a realization that we are more blessed than those great prophets in the Old Testament and John the Baptist when we live in the church life? In the church life, we can have **boldness (faith)** in the Lord and diligently and constantly turn to our spirit where the life-giving Spirit dwells, live in the reality of the kingdom of God, and exercise in carrying out the various services according to our life level.