

CHAPTER 7: JOHN THE BAPTIST: THE STORY OF NEW BEGINNINGS

GOSPEL READINGS: Luke 3:1–20; John 1:6–9, 15, 19–34, Matthew 11:2-11

1. How does John speak out and act out his prophecy to Israel?
2. What does it mean that John came as a “witness to the light”? (John 1:6-9)
3. What is the purpose of *truth* and *grace* in the introduction of Jesus’ ministry? (see John 1:14)
4. Scot McKnight refers to John’s “reenactment” of Israel’s humble beginnings. (p 67-68) Why might it be important for someone to say and act this out before the launch of Jesus’ earthly ministry?
5. How do his message and actions invite the people to a “new beginning”?
6. McKnight shares three areas of *truthtelling* (p 71-73) based on John’s message (Luke 3:1-14). Which of these three questions do you believe God is asking you to explore more...and why?
We need to tell the truth about our spirituality: where is it anchored?
We need to tell the truth about our possessions: how important are they?
We need to tell the truth about power: how do we use it?
7. How is the *Jesus Creed* lived out in the process of repentance? (ref. Mark 12:29-31)

The following questions are provided to help groups go deeper following the message at the 9:30am service.

Read Matthew 11:2-11. In Matthew’s gospel account, John awaits judgment in a prison cell and sends messengers to Jesus asking: “are you the expected one we’ve been waiting for or should we look for someone else?” (Matthew 11:3) In asking this question, it appears that Jesus is not meeting John’s expectations.

- What is the significance of this question in light of Jesus’ answer?
- Do you hear John’s words as a voice of doubt or frustration? Could there be any other motive for John to request that Jesus communicates his purpose?

Apply it.

- Where are your experiences running up vs. my expectations creating fear & doubt, disappointment & frustration?
- What might Jesus be trying to teach you in your experiences about your expectations?
- Are you more committed to your ideas about Jesus than committed to Jesus Himself?
- Who & what do you trust more: you & your own expectations or Jesus & His will for you/us?

Next week: Chapter 8, Joseph: The Story of Reputation