

THE REALLY GOOD LIFE!

(The Life of Christ Series)

The Gospel of Luke

Exit Strategy

Getting into situations is one thing; getting out of them is another. Whether it's a business deal or a military confrontation, whether it's a relationship with another person or God Himself, a truly wise person carefully plans his or her exit strategy as well as when their entrance into important issues of life. Jesus taught this in regard to discipleship using two practical parables in **Luke 14:27-33**. In life we had no part in deciding our entrance, but it is entirely up to us to have a wise exit strategy when we leave.

John the Baptist was an exception regarding his entrance into life – he was predicted in the Old Testament and his purpose was clear in the New Testament (**Luke 1 & 2**). And still, near the end of his days, he was concerned that his exit strategy be executed graciously and wisely. Imprisoned, awaiting his execution, John may have had some nagging doubts about his understanding of Jesus and the kingdom of God he thought would come in his day. To settle his and his followers' concerns he sends two of his disciples to Jesus just like he did with others at the beginning of his ministry (**John 1:35-37**). He knew that with him in prison and his ministry now winding down, they would be without leadership and guidance unless they transferred their allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ. There had been a sort of unhealthy competitive spirit between John's disciples and those following Jesus (**John 3: 22-4:2**) so John wisely attempted to promote unity among them before his exit from history. It has been said that people are often remembered for how they enter and exit the stage of life – John's entrance into life, the role he played and his gracious exit are remembered as an award-winning performance that won him high reviews from Jesus, 20 centuries of encores in the Bible and hall of faith honors in heaven above.

Are you living your life with a wise, biblical exit strategy in mind? Are you investing your time, talent and treasure in things of eternal importance? Are you diligently studying the holy Bible as your script for life? Is spiritual growth resolving eternal questions so they won't be haunting your faith when your part of the play is over? How about your family and friends who don't yet follow Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord – are you trying to send them to Jesus for His touch upon their hearts, lives and souls? In many ways your exit strategy will dictate how many curtain calls you get from those who knew and remember how you handled your scene on this earthly stage. And you will be so glad you put the Author and Finisher of your life's story first in all you do from now on (**Hebrews 12:1-2**). It will take hard, disciplined work, but it will be worth it all when we see Jesus – after all it was His-story in which we played out our part according to His script and His direction. How you 'bow out' of this life will determine how you feel when you bow down before the Savior some day (**Philippians 2:9-11**).

When Doubt 'Bugs' You

For God's people 'private enemy #1' is doubt. Doubt undermines faith, breeds fear and in the end causes spiritual fruitlessness and moral failure. Doubt is not only Satan's favorite medium in which to work his wiles, but it is also a trait of the flesh found in all human beings. Doubt is that negativity attitude of soul-sickness that refuses to trust whatever can't be felt, seen or heard with one's physical senses. Doubt keeps you away from completely knowing Christ prior to salvation and then detracts you from experiencing Him by faith after you do believe. Although most times of doubt are only temporary pests that buzz about the mind and soul awhile before vanishing, it is generally true that even the best Christians are, at least occasionally, pestered with doubt. Even John the prophet (baptizer) struggled for a bit with bothersome concerns about how Jesus' campaign for the Kingdom was going (**Luke 7:17-35**). This pivotal section of Luke's gospel reveals that even the forerunner of Messiah needed affirmation that he had wisely hitched his hope to the right Cause. Sitting in prison for his outspoken sermons about moral and spiritual repentance for the coming kingdom, he sent two of his disciples to Jesus for confirmation and consolation. Jesus healed him of doubt, affirmed his faith, and filled him with boldness to be faithful to the end. Doubts may also come to you like pesky spiritual gnats that bug your mind, heart, and soul once in a while, but when they do, be sure to go to Jesus for faith and assurance to repel doubts and their devilish source, with His love and grace (**1 Timothy 2:8, James 1:5-8, 1 John 5:4**).

SURVIVING SPIRITUAL SLUMPS

(Jesus' deliverance of John the Baptist from Doubt & Despair)

The Healing Grace of Personal Testimonies

*“And this report about Him (the miracle of the resurrected son in Nain – vs. 11-16) went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region. Then the disciples of John reported to him concerning these things. And John, calling two of his disciples to him sent them to Jesus, saying, “Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?” When the men had come to Him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, ‘Are you the Coming One, or do we look for another?’” And that very hour He cured many of infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many blind He gave sight. Jesus answered and said to them, “Go tell John the things you have seen and heard; that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them. And **blessed in he who is not offended because of Me.**”* **7:17-23**

The Healing Power of Encouraging Words

*“When the messengers of John had departed, He (Jesus) began to speak to the multitudes concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed those who are gorgeously appareled and live in luxury are in kings' courts. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written: ‘**Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You.**’ For I say to you, among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; **but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.**” And when all the people heard Him, even the tax collectors **justified God, having been baptized** with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.”* **7:24-30**

The Healing Relief of Spiritual Truth

*“And the Lord said, “To what then shall I liken the men of this generation, and what are they like? They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, saying: ‘We played the flute for you and you did not dance; we mourned to you and you did not weep.’ For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ **But wisdom is justified by all her children.**”* **7:31-35**