

1. I will narrate the story of John the Baptist found in Mark 6:17-29

"John's disciples told him about all these things. Calling two of them, ¹⁹he sent them to the Lord to ask, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?" ²⁰When the men came to Jesus, they said, "John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?' " ²¹At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses, and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. ²² So, he replied to the messengers, "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. ²³Blessed is the anyone who does not stumble on account of me." LUKE 7:18-23 (NIV=New International Version)

A. Here are some insights into this story:

1. He was Jesus' cousin (Mary and Elizabeth were cousins so that made them cousins. It's very possible they spent time together as children playing.)
2. He was chosen for ministry from birth (Luke 1:13–17)
3. Anointed of God to announce, "Look the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29)
4. Baptizes people for a sign of repentance (Matthew 3:11)

*If anyone had a revelation from God that Jesus was the Christ we would have to agree it was John.

2. John is in extremely difficult Circumstances seemingly with no way out and begins to question if Jesus is really the deliver, healer, life giver and Messiah.

A. Do you ever feel like that because of your life's circumstances?

1. Jesus if your God of my life why are my children rebellious?
2. Why am I in financial trouble?
3. Why did you take my loved one so young?
4. Why do I live in pain and depression?
5. Do you ever say to God, "how come my life is filled with so much difficulty and my brothers/sisters isn't? and I can hear God say,

... ²²"If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me." John 21:20-22 (NIV)

TRANSLATION: Don't worry about what I'm going to do with him, what I do with him is my business be concerned for your own life.

3. Did you ever stop to think and ask Jesus, "Lord what are you doing in my life through these circumstances? What are you trying to teach me? What do you want me to learn?

* Our suffering isn't just for our growth; the lessons of our suffering are for other people. We must share the brokenness of our lives to minister to the brokenness in others.

*Blessed is the man who doesn't fall away on account of me.

TRANSLATION: BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO DOESN'T LOSE FAITH AND GET ANGRY WITH ME WHEN I'M NOT WORKING OUT HIS LIFE THE WAY HE THINKS I SHOULD.

*Jesus never said come to me and I will make your life easy, continually pleasant and problem free. No, He said:

A. "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33 (NIV)

B. "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance, ⁴ let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything." James 1:2-4 (NIV)

C. "...God has said, never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" Hebrews 13:5 (NIV)

D. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." Hebrews 13:8 (NIV)

E. "I the Lord do not change." Malachi 3:6 (NIV)

F. "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he may be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters." Romans 8:28-29 (NIV)

G. "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law." Deuteronomy 29:29 (NIV)

4. Family what I'm about to say is a hard truth and I don't say this lightly and I don't want to sound cold and calloused, but God does not owe us any explanation to anything. He reveals to us things because of His unconditional love and grace. Unfortunately, on this side of heaven we will not get all the answers to our life's questions. But this is not our permeant home.

* "Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and He will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." Revelation 21:1-4 (NIV)

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QUESTIONS:

1. Are you going through a difficult time right now?
2. After hearing this message have you gained any new insights about your suffering, trial or difficulty?
3. Are there lessons you can share that you learned through your suffering that you could share to help someone else?

