Luke 7:18-35 – Is Jesus 'The One' Clint Le Page
Main Point – Jesus is The One – the Lord who saves – responding to him rightly - with full acceptance and confidence

Who do you expect to save you?-----(**SLIDE**)
When it comes to what happens after we die, many people have told me:
"I believe when you die, that's it. There's no after-life."
Or "I've been a good person, and God will accept me."
Or, "If there is a God, I'll be okay, cos I'm better than most people".-----
"I don't need a Saviour."
Many people trust in themselves.----------
Even those who follow religions like Hinduism, Islam or Buddhism, trust ultimately in their own works.-------
But who can save us from ourselves?
Save us from God's judgement to come?
And save us from this broken, sin-filled, suffering world?-------
I know for many of us, who trust and follow Jesus, we jump quickly to say,
"I know Jesus will save me, Jesus is the Saviour."
But do we really believe that, and show that?--------
'Cos if Jesus isn't meeting your expectations for a happy life now, will you keep holding onto him?-Expectations can really matter.---------

We're in this series through Luke's Gospel.(**SLIDE**)
Jesus has healed many (6.18).
In ch 6 he's finished preaching his Sermon on the Plain to crowds (6.20-49).
And last Sunday we heard how he healed a Centurion's servant from a distance.
By the power of his divine will and his word.
And he's just raised a widow's dead son back to life, revealing the power of God himself.---------
In **v18,** John the Baptist's disciples update him on what Jesus has been saying & doing.
A bit of an **update on John**.-------
Remember John the Baptist, a relative of Jesus,[1.36] was born back in ch1.
And his father, Zechariah prophesied that (**SLIDE-1.76-77**) John would grow to be a prophet who would prepare people for the coming of the Lord.
And give them a knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of sins.--------
John lived in the wilderness (**3.3-SLIDE**[1.80])
He called people to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins.
He warned them that judgement is coming – the axe is ready at the root of the trees (3.9).
And he proclaimed that the One coming after him (**SLIDE-3.16-17**), will be more powerful than him.
John is not worthy to untie the Messiah's sandal, because as Simon said last week, Jesus is the One of great worth; incomparably greater worth.----
And John said, the One to come will bring the fire of judgement.----------

So John is wondering, Is Jesus the One?
Jesus hasn't brought the judgement yet, and not even talking about it being nearly here.
So John is wondering.----------
It's **hard to truly trust people when they don't meet our expectations**.
When a friend isn't there for us in our time of need, it's hard to trust them next time.
When someone close gossips behind our back, it's hard to trust them.
When says one thing and does another, it's hard.
John the Baptist is wondering if Jesus is the One, cos he's not met his expectations yet.
That's my first point today – Jesus is The One.----------
Now John the Baptist had rebuked King Herod for his evil deeds, and for taking his brother's wife.
And John, in **ch3v20,** was locked up in prison(**SLIDE**)
In ch **7 v18** John's disciples update him on what Jesus has been up to.

And John sends two of them to go and ask Jesus this question:
'Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?'------(**SLIDE**)
As I said, it seems that all John's expectations haven't been met.
Maybe he's doubting that Jesus is the One.--------
Believers in Jesus can experience **doubts**.
Maybe you know what that's like?-------
Especially when your expectations aren't met.----------
Maybe God hasn't proved himself to you in the way you want.-----
Maybe following Jesus doesn't seem worth it.
Maybe you or a loved one has been going through pain and suffering.
And you prayed and didn't get the miracle the centurion or widow got last week.---
Maybe you question what will really happen after I die?
Or doubt that God will forgive all your sins?----------
We can have doubts, and questions.----------

Thinking about John's question, Luke reminds us in **v21,** look at it in your Bible:
At that time Jesus healed many people of diseases, afflictions, and evil spirits, and he granted sight to many blind people.
And look at what Jesus says,
"Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with leprosy[d] are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor are told the good news, **23** and blessed is the one who isn't offended by me."
Jesus is not angry at John, or offended by his question, or his uncertainty or doubt.
Jesus says, look at the evidence.------
That's good advice for all of us, when we're considering Who Jesus is.
We do well to look at the evidence, and invite others to do the same, reading the Bible for themselves.---------
And last Sunday, we heard about Jesus raising a man back to life.------
Think about the list of miraculous things Jesus has done:
He's instantly healed the blind, the deaf, the diseased, the paralysed. [4.40; 5.13, 15, 24; 6.18-19]
And this is exactly what the prophet Isaiah said would happen.
Isaiah chapters 35(v5-6-**SLIDE**)) and 42 (v6-7) and 61(v1-2) said it would happen.
Jesus himself back in ch4 quoted Isa 61 in his hometown remember (4.17-21)
The promise One, the Servant of the Lord, who is also the Messiah;
He would heal the blind and the deaf.
And he would preach good news to the poor.
And remember the poor, are not just the materially/ financially poor, but also those who are poor outsiders, and people who know they need God's grace.----
The poor includes those who know they need saving, and need a Saviour.------
Jesus is saying to John, and John's disciples:
I have fulfilled the promises of Scripture, the Prophecies of Isaiah.
Look at what I have said and done.
Let the evidence speak for itself.----------

Now Jesus did preach judgement – we saw that in the Sermon on the Plain.
Jesus in Luke 6 warns many, with "Woe, woe" (**SLIDE-**v24-26).
Many will be left hungry and weeping in the life to come.
V37, some will be judged and condemned by God.
Those who've not built their house, their life, on the rock of Jesus and his words, will be destroyed.
Jesus has preached judgement.-----
But it's not been his main message,[4.43] for he's preached the good news of God's kingdom.
Plus the judgement hasn't come yet.
And this likely confused John and led to his doubts.----------

John didn't realise that the judgement would await the second coming of the Messiah.
Even **Malachi** spoke of the Messiah's coming bringing fire, and judgement on sinners who've not repented (**Mal 3.5)**
But in Jesus's first coming he is the One who brings salvation to all who turn from sin and rely on him.
When he comes again, it will be judgement day.----------
But Jesus says, in Luke **7.23**, 'Blessed is anyone who isn't offended by me.'
Offended can also mean, stumble or fall.
So we are blessed when we don't get offended by Jesus and his teaching.
And don't trip and fall down over him.----------
Do you find Jesus and his words and actions offensive?----------
We'll come back to that.----------

So Jesus is saying to John and everyone, consider what I have said & done.
Look at the evidence.
Look at what Scripture prophesied in the OT, and ask yourself, 'Am I the One?'-----
Jesus is implicitly saying, 'I am'.
I am **The One**.-------
One of my favourite movies is **The Matrix(SLIDE)** from 1999.
With the theme being, we're all born into a world that isn't the real world, human beings are slaves to machines, and blind to their reality.
But There is One prophesied who will free humanity.
Neo is The One.----------(**SLIDE**)
In **Frozen**, Elsa might be the powerful Ice Queen, but Anna is the One, for she leaps in front of a sword to save her sister – an act of true love that thaws her frozen heart.-----
In Narnia, **Aslan**, is The One – the powerful Lord who saves unworthy Edmund.----
But in real life, Jesus is The One. The true Saviour.----------
Do you believe that?----------

We come to the next scene and Point two, John is the great one.(SLIDE)
V24, John's disciples have left to go back to him, and Jesus speaks to the crowd about John.
And three times in 3 verses, he asks them, what they went out to the wilderness to see?
Remember John had been living in the wilderness, preaching in the wilderness, and baptising people in the Jordan river.
Jesus says, did you go out to see nature & nice scenery?------- No!
Did you go out to see a rich person in expensive clothes?---------- No!
You went out to see a prophet.
A specially appointed messenger of God who proclaims God's word to people.-------
But Jesus says, **v26,** John is not just a prophet, he is more than a prophet.
V27, he's a prophet who actually had a prophecy about him.
John wasn't just 'a prophet'.
He prepared people for the coming of the Lord God himself.
Because he prepared people for Jesus, the incarnate SoG.------
Jesus quotes **Malachi 3v1(SLIDE),** the last book of the Old Testament.
And Jesus says, John is that messenger, who prepared people for the coming of the LORD, capitals, L-O-R-D.
John prepared people for the coming of the Creator, the one true living God, the great 'I am', who comes to earth in his eternal Son, Jesus.
No one else has ever had such a great role.
That's why no one else is greater than John, **v28.**
Since the creation of the world, no one has had a greater job.----------
But; with the coming of Jesus the new age bursts into the world and the old age.(**SLIDE**)
And John was the greatest human being born, in the BC era, the old age.(**Lk 16.16)**
But Jesus comes and brings in the new age.
The old age will pass away.

But we now live in the overlap of the ages (**SLIDE**), with the Kingdom of God coming through Jesus
And all who live and are saved by Jesus in this age, we are blessed.
We know the truth about who Jesus truly is, we know what he has done for us, in his sinless life, sacrificial death and resurrection.
We know if Jesus is our Lord and Saviour, we have God's Spirit with us, personally.
We have more light, more knowledge, more blessing, than even John the Baptist.
Do you understand that? How blessed we are?----------
We live this side of the coming of Jesus, this side of Easter and Pentecost, and that's why, **v28**, the least in the Kingdom of God is greater than John the Baptist.--------
I don't think we realise the enormously privileged position we are in.
Remember the resurrection hope that the risen Jesus gives us.
Remember that we know Jesus is coming back again, to bring judgement on the world, but salvation for all his people, all who've trusted him.
We know the truth.------
More than that, through Christ and by the Spirit, we are new people, born again, by faith in Jesus.
We are not BC people, we are AD, after death, people.
John is a great One, because he prepared people for the Lord God's arrival on earth.
Yet we are even more blessed.----------

When we remember and know and get, all we have through Christ, all you can have through Christ; it will change how you respond to him.
Point 3, Responding rightly to the One.(SLIDE)
Let's look at how people respond to Jesus in our passage.
v29, 'when all the people, including the tax collectors, heard this, they acknowledged God's way of righteousness, because they had been baptized with John's baptism. **30** But since the Pharisees and experts in the law had not been baptized by him, they rejected the plan of God for themselves.'
Many people in the crowd had gone to listen to then be baptised by John.
John then pointed people to Jesus, and they listened to him.
Many who embraced John now embrace Jesus.-------
And Jesus's words about John helps these everyday people & sinners, to conclude that Jesus is speaking rightly.
That Jesus leads them into God's way of righteousness.-------
But the Pharisees, these religious leaders who really know their Hebrew Bibles, they'd rejected John's message.
They didn't think they really were sinners who needed forgiveness.
They trusted in their own righteousness.
Therefore, they rejected Jesus as Lord, and so rejected God's salvation plan.-------
We must respond rightly to Jesus to get right with God.
God's plan is to offer salvation to everyone, through faith and trust in Jesus.
And if people reject him, they miss out on salvation, and remain separated from God.---
What about you?--------
Have you accepted that salvation comes through trusting and following the Lord Jesus?
Is he your Lord?----------

Then in **v31** Jesus speaks to the Pharisees, and everyone:
"To what then should I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like?"
He compares them to childish kids who reject playmates, no matter what they're asked to do.---(**SLIDE**)
Like little children they wont dance when the pipe is played.
And they wont cry when a sad song, is sung.
Either way, they refuse, and are never satisfied.----------

When John the Baptist came with his self-denying lifestyle, talking about sin & judgement (the sad song), they rejected him.

And we Jesus came doing the opposite, the rejected him too.

They labelled him a party-goer.

He'd go to peoples' dinners, and heal people; he talked about salvation, and how to enter God's kingdom.

But the religious leaders labelled Jesus a glutton, drunkard & friend of sinners.---

And the majority of people still weren't satisfied.

Their expectations were never met.----------

Now Jesus was a friend to sinners.

And he would die to save sinners.----------

And that is good news for everyone.----------

But most were never satisfied with what he said & did, such that they would go all-in with Jesus.----------

For many people then and now, Jesus doesn't meet their expectations.

Most would not come to him with full confidence, or truly accept him as their Lord.-----

Either, people think they don't need a Saviour, "I'm good enough thank you", "I'll live my own way thank you".

Or "Jesus hasn't given me what I want in this life now"

Or they look to some other truth, some other way of righteousness, some other way – to find fulfilment, find satisfaction, find heaven.

Is that you?----------

But Jesus says, look at it there in **v35**, v35,(**SLIDE**)

"Yet wisdom is vindicated/ proved right, by all her children."---------

All who had wisely listened to John and now follow Jesus, are right.

And will be proved right in the end, vindicated in the end.

God's wisdom will have the final say.

So if God says, you want to be saved and come to me, you come through my Son.

If God says that, we are wise to listen.----------

And in the end, everyone will know that following Jesus as Lord, is not only right, it is worth it.----

When Jesus returns, we will be vindicated.----------

As we near the end, I want to bring us back to **v23** – 'Blessed is the one who does not stumble, or isn't offended, by me', says Jesus.(**SLIDE**)

Jesus and his good news is a stumbling block to many.

Like I said at the start, sometimes our pride, self-reliance, or blind ignorance stops us seeing how much we need a Saviour, and stops us depending on Jesus.

The Pharisees refuse to go through the doors of repentance and reliance on Jesus.

Have you gone through that door?----------

But maybe you Christian, have served Christ and sacrificed for Christ.

Yet your wants and expectations for life now are not being met.

So maybe you are doubting it is worth it.(**SLIDE**)

I say to you in love - Don't give up on Jesus. Don't walk away.

Continue to trust and obey.

Jesus is the One, don't rely on someone else.

Everything else is sinking sand.----------

Or maybe your **doubts** come from a different place.(**SLIDE**)

A man called **John** grew up in a non-Christian family, but met other Christians at uni who witnessed to him. Eventually John overcame his skepticism & unbelief, and became a Christian.

He says, I started out with confident faith in Jesus.

5 years later my father died from lung cancer, without ever, to my knowledge, professing faith in Christ. Watching him die painfully and slowly inevitably made me question my faith in new ways.

How could a God of love allow such a slow, painful and lingering death?

Was it really possible to believe in a bodily resurrection?

Would a loving God really send people to eternal punishment in hell forever?

I had faced some of these questions intellectually, and knew what the Bible said. But now they were no longer abstract questions, but bound up with the loss of someone I had loved.

It took me several years to recover a confident and assured faith after that anguish.-----

Doubt, whether short or long, usually robs people of their joy, peace and delight in God. It can prevent people from serving wholeheartedly and sacrificially.
It turns people inward, and is a hidden struggle many Christians face.------
Catherine is in her early 30's. She became a Christian through an Alpha course. She has struggled with depression and is resentful she is still single. Recently a new Muslim colleague joined her team at work. She finds him attractive and he asked her to date him. He attends Mosque regularly, but says all religions are really the same. She has started to wonder whether it can be really true that Jesus is the Only way to God.-----
John, the author of this helpful book(**SLIDE**) says, **Catherine** needs to be convinced again that Jesus is Unique (Jesus is 'The One').

Islam and Christianity can't both be true. She needs to be encouraged in her relationship with Jesus.

To find her contentment in him and his good plans for her.----------
And we can experience that as we come to Jesus with our doubts, focus on him, his word. And talk to a Christian friend.----
What about you?----------
Jesus is the One; The Lord who saves, and is worthy of our commitment.----------
How will you respond to him?----------
And if you have doubts or unmet expectations, What will you do?------
Let's pray.