

December 14, 2022

## Steppingstone or Stumbling Block

[Matthew 11-2:3](#)

*<sup>2</sup> When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples <sup>3</sup> and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?"*

I wondered why John the Baptist sent disciples to Jesus asking: "Are you the expected one or do we look for another?"

I had grown up with the story of my own birth, which took place in St. Joseph's Hospital, my parents' third son and the first one born in a hospital. I assume John had grown up hearing family stories of his own birth as well, which was far more eventful than mine.

His father's angelic visitor while in the "Holy of Holies" leaving his father subsequently speechless. Or his mother's late life "Miracle" baby, even his own reaction at his first encounter with Jesus. "He leapt inside his mother's womb."

Charles Spurgeon's preaching shed a new light on this for me. He believed John sent his disciples to Jesus for their own welfare, not due to any doubts that John may have had. Spurgeon conceded that John may have had doubts seeing, as even Elijah became disillusioned at times. He felt John wanted them to meet the man whose sandals he was not worthy to untie.

Pastor Mehaffie said his uncle's catchphrase was "I do not want to be a stumbling block." He did not want to hinder anyone's relationship with Jesus, and John the Baptist knew it was time for his followers to turn and follow Jesus.

John felt Jesus himself would answer in such a way that his disciples would turn from him and become followers of Christ. When Jesus answered with the words the prophet Isaiah spoke concerning the coming Messiah, He was saying "I may not be acting in the way you expected, but I am fulfilling God's promises."

Jesus said do not let the fact that I am accused of being friends with tax collectors and sinners stand in the way of the truth of My miracles. Jesus Himself did not want to be a stumbling block to anyone. We need to remember that even today, Jesus may not act the way we expect, but He is always acting on our behalf.

John was removing himself as an obstacle for his followers in their pursuit of God, and I had never thought of it like that.

***Prayer:*** *Dear God, empower us with Your Holy Spirit that we become "stepping stones" in place of stumbling blocks. Enlightening your pathway for others we encounter on our journey of faith. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

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