

## Not what I expected...

Sometimes what we get is not what we expected

- When might that happen?
- When has it happened to you?

Sometimes life, even as we follow God,  
is not what we expected  
and is not what we would choose.

Then what?

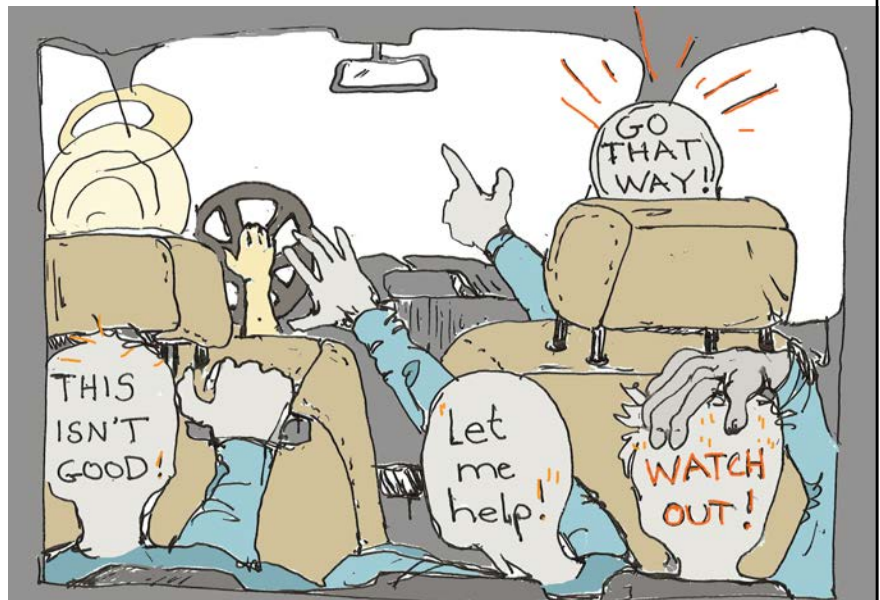
Where is that true for you today? for someone you care for?

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## Not what I expected...

Luke 7:18-35

[bib.ly/Lk7.NIV](http://bib.ly/Lk7.NIV)  
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### *John the Baptist's life & ministry*

#### • **Miraculous birth & prophecy: Prepare for Jesus**

- Parents (Zechariah and Elizabeth) could never have kids, and then they were past the age of having kids
- An angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah:  
 “Your prayer has been heard. Elizabeth will bear you a son... He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God...He will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah...to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” *Luke 1:13-17*

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### *John the Baptist's life & ministry*

#### • **Miraculous birth & prophecy: Prepare for Jesus**

#### • **He preached to prepare people for Jesus' power**

- John came “preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” *Luke 3:7*
- John said: “I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come...**He will baptize** you with the Holy Spirit and **with fire**. His **winnowing fork is in his hand** to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but **he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.**” *Luke 3:16-17*

winnowing fork = tool to separate good grain from unusable remains  
 chaff = dust left after gathering the good grain

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### *John the Baptist's life & ministry*

- **Miraculous birth & prophecy: Prepare for Jesus**
- **He preached to prepare people for Jesus' power**
- **He baptized Jesus**

– “When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove.

And a voice came from heaven:

‘You are my Son, whom I love;  
with you I am well pleased.’ ” *Luke 3:21-22*

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### *John the Baptist's life & ministry*

- **Miraculous birth & prophecy: Prepare for Jesus**
- **He preached to prepare people for Jesus' power**
- **He baptized Jesus**
- **Then he spent the rest of his life in prison**

– “But when John rebuked Herod the tetrarch because of his marriage to Herodias, his brother's wife, and all the other evil things he had done, Herod added this to them all: He locked John up in prison.” *Luke 3:19-20*

– John would later be beheaded by Herod while still in prison

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### *John the Baptist's life & ministry*

- **Miraculous birth & prophecy: Prepare for Jesus**
- **He preached to prepare people for Jesus' power**
- **He baptized Jesus**
- **Then he spent the rest of his life in prison**
- **And this is not what John expected or wanted...**
  - Perhaps Luke wanted us to find ourselves in John's experiences and to learn with him

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### **Luke 7:18-20**

John's disciples told him about all these things. Calling two of them, he sent them to the Lord to ask, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"

When the men came to Jesus, they said, "John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?'"

the one who is to come = God's Promised One to bring God's Kingdom

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**Luke 7:21-23**

At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind.

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 cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.”

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**Luke 7:24-30 part 1**

After John’s messengers left, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John:

“What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear expensive clothes and indulge in luxury are in palaces. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.

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### **Luke 7:24-30 part 2**

This is the one about whom it is written:

“I will send my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way before you.’

I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.”

it is written = Old Testament prophets: Malachi 3:1 plus Exodus 23:20

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### **Luke 7:24-30 part 3**

(All the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus’ words, acknowledged that God’s way was right, because they had been baptized by John. But the Pharisees and the experts in the law rejected God’s purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John.)

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### Luke 7:31-35 part 1

Jesus went on to say, “To what, then, can I compare the people of this generation? What are they like? They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling out to each other:

“We played the pipe for you,  
and you did not dance;  
we sang a dirge,  
and you did not cry.’

this generation = those who reject God’s ways (like the religious leaders)

pipe = wind instrument (like a clarinet) for joyful occasions

dirge = a mournful song for a funeral

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### Luke 7:31-35 part 2

For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’ But wisdom is proved right by all her children.”

glutton = person whose life is run by food

sinners = people who were judged as immoral

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### Luke 7:18-35

**18-20:**

- John's anticipation: God's Kingdom is coming with power and judgment
  - Prophecy about John: he would come just before “the **great and dreadful day** of the LORD.” *Malachi 4:5*
  - John said: “The **axe is already at the root of the trees**, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be **cut down and thrown into the fire**...He will **baptize with fire**...The **winnowing fork** is in his hand...He will **burn the chaff with unquenchable fire.**” *Luke 3:9-17*

21-31:

24-30:

31:35:

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*Luke 7:18-35***18-20: Sometimes God's ways don't fit our hopes and plans**

- John heard about Jesus' miracles and teaching
  - "News about Jesus spread..." *Luke 7:17*
- Perhaps John expected something **different**
  - Jesus' hometown tried to kill Him and Jesus left!
  - Jesus preached "Love and do good to your enemies" rather than bringing the judgment of God
- Perhaps John expected something **more**
  - Jesus came proclaiming freedom for the prisoners,

21-23: yet John was in prison with little hope of release

24-30: → Judgment will come in Jesus' second coming...

31:35: • Perhaps Luke's readers felt like John the Baptist...

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*Perhaps WE feel like John the Baptist*

- "**Hope deferred makes the heart sick,**  
but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life." *Proverbs 13:12*
- Our hopes and prayers often seem to go unanswered
  - The longings of our hearts: peace (Shalom): health, wholeness, deep loving relationships, needs met, ...
  - Mystery of ministry: Is it doing any good? Why is it so hard?
- Hopes deferred are **so much harder** when you believe in a God of all power and great compassion  
**who answers prayer**
- What did Jesus say to John? What does Jesus say to us?

18

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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 cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. **Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.**”

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**Luke 7:18-35**

18-20: Sometimes God’s ways don’t fit our hopes and plans

21-23: **Jesus points to initial evidence for faith, not completion**

- While John’s disciples watch, Jesus does many physical and spiritual miracles → intentional answer?
- Jesus’ answer to John’s doubts: look at the work God has **begun**
  - It is **ONLY** a beginning, with many ups and downs
- Shocking words of Jesus: “Blessed are the people who don’t leave God **because of Jesus!**”

24-30: • Blessing comes when people trust Jesus

31:35: even when there are still troubles and questions

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(All the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus' words, acknowledged that God's way was right, because they had been baptized by John. But the Pharisees and the experts in the law rejected God's purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John.)

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***Luke 7:18-35***

18-20: Sometimes God's ways don't fit our hopes and plans

21-23: Jesus points to initial evidence for faith, not completion

24-30:

- John was very different from other leaders
- Jesus affirms John the Baptist
  - A bold messenger who prepared people for God's Messiah and announced Jesus' arrival
  - John was the greatest because he was the final step before Jesus
    - Greater than Moses, Isaiah, Elijah, Jeremiah, ...
- Even in John's doubts & being rejected by powerful

31:35:

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**Luke 7:18-35**

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21-23: Jesus points to initial evidence for faith, not completion

24-30: **All who trust God & Jesus have invisible greatness**

- Yet the least in the Kingdom is greater than John!
  - Emphasis on the greatness of the Kingdom
  - Even for the lowest in society: tax collectors
  - Even a “nobody” or a “sinner” who genuinely trusts
- Rejecting Jesus brings a great loss!
  - Even for the highest in society: Pharisees, rich, ...
  - Rejecting Jesus and Jesus' representatives (John and prophets) = rejecting God and God's blessing

31:35:

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Jesus went on to say, “To what, then, can I compare the people of this generation? What are they like? They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling out to each other:

“We played the pipe for you,  
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this generation = those who reject God's ways (like the religious leaders)

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### **Luke 7:31-35 part 2**

For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.' But wisdom is proved right by all her children."

glutton = person whose life is run by food  
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18-20: Sometimes God's ways don't fit our hopes and plans

21-23: Jesus points to initial evidence for faith, not completion

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**31-35: Blessing is only for those who trust in and follow Jesus**

- "This generation" = people who reject God's ways
  - When God's ways don't match our expectations
  - When God's ways don't match our values
- "Children of Wisdom" = those who trust God, even when it isn't easy or obvious
- "Proved right" = declare and experience the unfolding good works and plans of God

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*Luke 7:18-35*

- 18-20: Sometimes God's ways don't fit our hopes and plans  
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 ...even in the troubles and uncertainties

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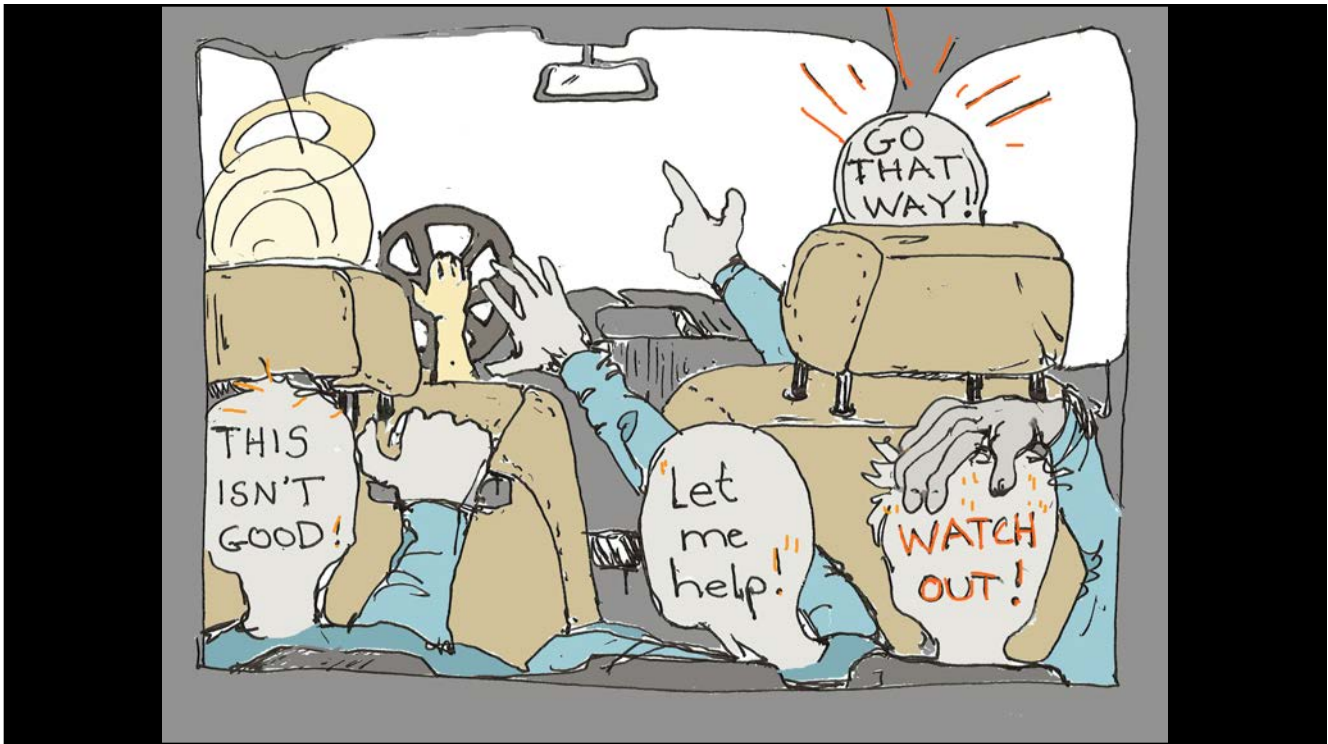
*The Big Idea*

Jesus said: "Blessed is anyone who does not stumble  
 on account of me."

Jesus was giving both a warning and an invitation...

**Blessing comes  
 when we trust and follow Jesus  
 even when He doesn't run things  
 the way we would expect or want**

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### Back-seat Drivers

- Not in the driver's seat
- Excessively comment, question, and critique the driver

Jesus is the driver of His Kingdom,  
the renewal of all creation

With Jesus in the driver's seat,  
sometimes we question His driving...

- **Hearts:** we worry, despair, doubt, get angry, "long for Egypt", ...
- **Mouths:** we grumble & complain & criticize & question
- **Feet:** we take the wheel or get a new driver or leave the car



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*The Big Idea*

**Blessing comes  
when we trust and follow Jesus  
even when He doesn't run things  
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*Application*

- Trust Jesus...  
even when things aren't the way we expect or want
  - Luke's purpose: "...so that you may **know the certainty** of the things you have been taught." *Luke 1:4*
    - Not merely historical accuracy
    - Rather: The absolute truth of the Gospel  
as the fundamental definition and foundation of our lives
      - Jesus is building His Kingdom and His Church  
even when we go against God's ways  
even when others (in power) go against God's ways  
even when we have more troubles and pains and challenges  
so we join His work as we trust Him with our lives

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### *Application*

- Trust Jesus...
  - even when things aren't the way we expect or want
    - Faith is trusting the love, power, and grace of Jesus even when it seems like He has forgotten us or left us or led us astray or let the wrong people steer or...
      - His ways are often surprising, but never faulty or late
    - No human being is worthy of this kind of trust!
    - When Lazarus was sick, Jesus chose not to go see Him
      - Jesus let Lazarus die
      - so He could raise Lazarus from the dead
      - and teach the disciples (and us) that He can be trusted even in the most extreme troubles

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John (the apostle) told of a time when Jesus' actions and teaching were really hard for the disciples. They were grumbling, and Jesus asked them, "Does this offend you?"

John said: "From this time many of his disciples **turned back and no longer followed him**. 'You do not want to leave too, do you?' Jesus asked the Twelve.

Simon Peter answered him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.' " *John 6:66-69*

**Peter didn't say: "It all makes sense to me! This is easy!"**

**Peter did say: "We trust you alone as the Holy One of God."**

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### *Application*

- Trust Jesus...  
even when things aren't the way we expect or want

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### *Application*

- Trust Jesus...  
even when things aren't the way we expect or want
- Obey Jesus boldly, even when the road isn't clear
  - Love and follow God with all that we have and are
    - Follow the road He has called us to with courage and hope
  - Love our neighbors as ourselves
    - Even our enemies and those who attack us
  - These things can be costly = suffering
  - “So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and **continue to do good.**” *1 Peter 4:19*      commit themselves = put selves in His protection

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### *Application*

- Trust Jesus...  
even when things aren't the way we expect or want
- Obey Jesus boldly, even when the road isn't clear
- Rejoice that we are citizens of the Kingdom of God!
  - The “least” in Jesus’ Kingdom is greater than Moses, or David, or Jeremiah, or Daniel, or Ezekiel, ... **Really!!**
  - Even when, **and especially when**, the other “kingdoms” we’re in (country, church, family, friends, ...) aren’t what (we think) they are supposed to be

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### *The Big Idea*

**Blessing comes  
when we trust and follow Jesus  
even when He doesn't run things  
the way we would expect or want**

**Where in life are you struggling with the way God is running things (or letting them be run)?**

**Here is an invitation to being blessed by God Himself:  
Trust and follow Jesus, and rejoice that you are His**

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