

## Do You Get It?

*This Week's Readings at Mass*

- Isaiah 35:1-6, 10 • Israel's deliverance
- James 5:7-10 • Patience
- Matthew 11:2-11 • Christ's witness to John

After baptizing the crowds who came out to hear him preach in the wilderness, John the Baptist was thrown into jail by Herod. Herod was offended when John called out his adultery with his brother's wife and "all the evil things Herod had done" (Lk 3:19). The age-old practice of the powerful imprisoning the righteous played out again.

We may be puzzled why John is uncertain in this gospel passage about Jesus' identity. Weren't they cousins? Didn't John tell the crowds that Jesus was the Lamb of God when he baptized him? Didn't he tell them that Jesus was the one for whom he was preparing the way? Why the uncertainty now?

John's uncertainty about Jesus mirrored the questions that many Jews had about him. They were expecting a Messiah who would overthrow the Roman occupiers of their day. They were expecting a king who would rule their nation with great power and subdue all their enemies. They expected a king-military hero. Jesus' way of acting in the world and the company he kept wasn't what the Jews were expecting in a Savior. Yes, he was doing deeds of amazing power, but he was also hanging out with sinners, eating with tax collectors, and talking with women in public (gasp!). He also wasn't treating the rich and the powerful with special respect. In short, he was a mystery to many. So it's not surprising then that John is unsure just who this Jesus was turning out to be.

By telling John's disciples that John could decide for himself who Jesus was by his actions, Jesus trusted John would

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"Strengthen the hands that are feeble, make firm the knees that are weak, say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not!"

**Sheepish Question:**  
This week, what do I need to practice in order to make a positive difference in the lives of people around me?

"get it." After all, John certainly knew the Old Testament scriptures well and would have recognized the parallels between what Jesus was doing—giving sight to the blind, healing the deaf and the lame, and proclaiming good news to the poor—and the promise from the prophet Isaiah of the wonders God would do.?

## Questions of the Week

① What are some other examples from history of powerful people imprisoning the truth-tellers?

② When have you met someone who didn't conform to certain cultural or religious expectations but did wonderful, life-giving things?

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