

A NEW BEATITUDE

¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: ¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” ²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. ²¹ He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

Luke 4:17-21

¹ The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, ² to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, ³ and provide for those who grieve in Zion--to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.

Isaiah 61:1-3

¹⁸ John’s disciples told him about all these things. Calling two of them, ¹⁹ he sent them to the Lord to ask, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?” ²⁰ 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?’”

²¹ At 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 cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. ²³ Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.”

Luke 7:18-23

- I. When God puts a period where we want a comma we immediately are tempted to offense and doubt.
 - A. John knew a lot.
 - B. Yet it was what John did not know that was his Achilles’ heel.
 - C. It’s a season of Gap, Pause, Selah, Halt, Breathing
 - D. John sought the comfort that comes through vengeance.
 - E. Jesus ends and remains on the subject of grace.
 - F. A grace so staggering it seems obscene.
- II. Three species of Doubt
 - A. Factual Doubt is concerned with the foundations of belief--are they well-grounded biblically, logically, historically, philosophically, scientifically, and morally?
 1. Factual doubt is simple versus compound doubt.
Sufficient information should satisfy the factual doubter.

2. Yet when fairly simple but unanswered questions are not forthcoming, factual doubt can fester into another kind of Doubt.

B. Emotional Doubt/When it's not about what it's about.

* This doubt is a painful, subjective, mood- and passion-oriented experience.

1. Emotional doubt often passes as its factual sister. However, it actually is not so much about facts but how we feel about facts.
2. Conclusions are drawn from moods or feelings not the facts themselves.
3. "What if" questions are a staple of emotional doubt.
4. Medical states, unresolved childhood issues, lack of sleep, bad diet, faulty God pictures, and anxious personality types are most prone to emotional doubt.
5. Unanswered factual questions fester into painful emotional doubt.

C. Volitional Doubt--this kind of doubt is chiefly concerned with one's will.

1. Volitional uncertainty has to do with one's unwillingness to implement a choice regarding what one knows to be true.
2. Lack of walking in the light can deaden our capacities for interest, passion, and participation in life.
3. The religious leaders at the time of Jesus are a good example of Volitional Doubt. They knew "truth" but were simply unwilling to act upon it.

4. C. S. Lewis points out that people who leave the faith rarely leave on the basis of facts, but simply drift away unwilling to walk in what they know.
5. Volitional Doubt must be challenged and warned against. No amount of facts can convince someone who “will not” believe.