

Text: Luke 7:11-17

Theme: Prove It!

June 5, 2016

“Show me the evidence. I want to see the facts! I want some proof!” Have you ever found yourself saying or, at the very least, thinking such things? When it comes to God’s power, it’s not uncommon for us to say to ourselves, “Prove it to me, Lord. I want to see the evidence. I want You to do those amazing things in my life. Then, I will believe in Your mighty power.” If everyone who ever thought such things actually verbalized them, we’d all be amazed at how many are silently saying to their God, “Prove It!”

I. Our God is and always has been a God of evidence. A. Unfortunately, we often ignore His evidence. 1. We ignore it because we are skeptics. How many of you remember a time when your son or daughter repeatedly asked, “Why?” As parents, we know the “when all else fails” response, don’t we? “Because I said so; that’s why!” But as adults, we still ask, “why?” We still question the mind of God and the actions of God. Truth be told, we are skeptics. We don’t like the word used to describe us, but it’s accurate nevertheless. We aren’t convinced; we are still thinking about it; the jury is still out, at least in our minds.

2. Not only are we skeptics, but we are also doubters. Doubting Thomas - who could forget the guy who doubted that Jesus was alive? Since the beginning of time, there have been doubters. Adam and Eve, they were doubters, Moses, Joshua, Elijah, John, Peter. How many names would you like? What’s even more unnerving is that there are still doubters among us. Some days, it’s me. Other days, it’s you. Sounds strange, almost unbelievable. Along with Doubting Thomas, we could just as easily add Doubting John, Doubting Mike, Doubting Susan, Doubting Julie, and so on. Doubters may have dotted the past, but doubters like you and I, we are the doubters of today.

3. Skeptics, doubters and waiters - that’s who we are. But what are “waiters?” They’re those who are waiting for God to do something spectacular, waiting for God to make Himself known in some undeniable way. They’re the ones who are waiting for the events in our Old Testament and Gospel to occur in their family. Perhaps you are thinking, “I may be a skeptic and a doubter, but at least I’m not a waiter.” You and I, we don’t want to categorize ourselves with the waiters, but within us, we, too, are waiting. We may keep it well-hidden, but it’s still there. We’re secretly waiting for God to step in, to do the right something that turns our lives upside down.

B. As we find ourselves saying, “Prove it,” Jesus tenderly speaks to us as He says, “Consider the evidence.” 1. “I created the world out of nothing.” If I gave each of you a glob of clay, could you create something? It might not be the latest and greatest thing everybody needs to own like a selfy-stick, but you could create something. Now, could you create something out of nothing? As we’re searching for evidence, Jesus says, “I created everything in this world out of nothing. How much more evidence do you need? I created each flower, each blade of grass, each tree. If it’s out there and it’s good, I created it.” The verdict is in. We have the evidence.

2. “I raised the dead.” In our Old Testament and Gospel lesson, what did God do that you and I couldn’t do? They were dead, but Jesus brought them back to life by speaking a word. Creation out of nothing is impressive, but bringing people back to

life, I doubt we could ever do anything even close to that! Although we are proof-seekers, Jesus says to our hearts, "They were dead, but now they are alive. What more do you need?" If only our hearts would grasp those events and enable us to believe that that same power is available today, we would have it made. To our doubting hearts, Jesus says, "What I did then is no different than if I did it yesterday."

3. "I changed the heart of Saul to Paul." Saul was an extremist. He was as far away from God as you could get. But through a single event that doesn't seem all that amazing when you look at it, God changed Saul to Paul. In a moment's time, He moved Paul into the opposite camp, the believer's camp, and the greatest spokesman for the believers. If God can change a heart like Saul's, do we need more evidence? Have we any reason to question God's power today? The road to Damascus event may not happen in Medford every day, but the fact that God did it once is proof that He can do that and even greater things any time He chooses.

4. "I have performed past miracles as evidence." Why did Jesus perform the miracles we have recorded? John tells us, "These things are recorded that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ and that by believing you may have life in His name." Every miracle in the Bible is our proof, our evidence that God has unlimited power. We may be the skeptics and the waiters, but Jesus speaks with great compassion to our hearts, "Believe the miracles of the past. Stop waiting for more proof because you already have all the proof your heart needs. Tell your heart it's enough and your heart will believe that it's enough."

5. "I have guided you to this very moment." Now, we're getting a bit personal, aren't we? To us, Jesus says, "If the other evidence still isn't convincing, look at your own life. I have been in charge since day one. I created you in your mother's womb. I have protected and guided, led and carried you. I have always been at your side." In our weak moments, we may still seek proof, but when we come to our senses, the evidence surrounds us. We are walking evidence of the power of God. We are the proof; we are evidence for others, but, most importantly, we are evidence for ourselves, evidence that leads us to trust instead of requiring more proof.

6. "I have your future carefully planned." In the simplest of terms, Jesus says, "I'm one step ahead of you. Because I love you, I have planned your future and it will be a great future when you believe it will be a great future. It may not unfold as you imagined; it may have its share of obstacles that challenge your faith, but take heart, I am in charge and I guarantee that great things will come from your life." It's a humbling moment when we realize that God is not only walking beside us, but He is also walking ahead of us, blazing the trail so that we are able to accomplish His incredible plan.

7. "Show me the evidence. I want to see some proof" - those may be words that quickly enter our minds, yet as we consider His evidence, we find new words on the tip of our tongue, words more fitting, words like, "Now thank we all our God." Amen.