

Show yourself to the world

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[0:00] I wonder what are some of the skills and talents that we have in this room.! I wonder maybe some of you can do things like this. Make great paper airplanes.

This is my attempt. I'm sure you can do better than me. Let's test that after the service. Maybe you can sing really well. I've heard some good singing this morning.

Maybe you can play an instrument. Maybe you're talented in that way. Or maybe you can do something probably a bit silly. Maybe you can do something like touch your nose with your tongue. Don't do it now. I was in London last week and I saw this guy here. I don't know if this is going to work. He was an amazing juggler.

Here we go. Isn't that cool? It is great when you can do something special like that to show it to other people.

[1:16] And I was very impressed with that guy. In John's Gospel, we've seen Jesus do some pretty amazing things. He's healed the sick.

He's changed water into wine. He's fed thousands of people. He's walked on water. And it's pretty amazing. And we've just read some verses in John chapter 7 where Jesus' brothers come up to him.

People in Jesus' own family come up to him. And they say this. Verse 3. They say, leave Galilee and go to Judea so that your disciples there may see the works you do.

No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world.

That's what Jesus' brothers say. Go show yourself to the world. But they want Jesus to go to Judea because there in Judea, something special is happening.

[2:28] It's a big festival for the Jewish people called the Festival of Tabernacles. Now, hands up if any of you stayed in one of these, a tent over the summer.

There's a few of you. I did. I camped for the first time as an adult. It was quite an adventure. Now, at the Festival of Tabernacles that Jesus' brothers want Jesus to go to, it's full of tents.

Not like these. They probably looked a bit more like this. And it involved spending a week in one of these tents to remind them to celebrate how God had taken them out of Egypt where they were in slavery.

And then into the desert where they lived in temporary structures like tents. And it was a great time. A great festival.

Thousands of people would have come to celebrate it. And Jesus' brothers thought, this is your opportunity. This is your time to come and show yourself to the world.

[3:46] It would be a bit like someone saying to you, you can sing really well. So, why don't you enter Britain's Got Talent? But what Jesus' brothers say to him, it comes from a place of unbelief.

That's what verse 5 says. For even his own brothers did not believe in him. Jesus' family, his own brothers, people that maybe he was close to, they didn't believe that he is God.

That he is the Messiah, the Savior of the world. They saw the great signs that he did. How he fed thousands of people. How he walked on water.

But their expectations of Jesus are wrong. They expected him to go and show a wonderful sign like that again at this festival.

Show it to as many people as you can, Jesus. Don't act in secret. It sure is impressive and amazing.

[5:01] It is amazing that Jesus can feed thousands of people or heal people. But they miss the point. The works Jesus is performing to point to a greater work.

A greater reality that God has come down among his people. And he has come to bring salvation. He hasn't come to do what people may expect him to do.

Or want him to do. And that's the first thing that we see, I think, in this passage. Jesus' unexpected timing. Jesus' unexpected timing.

Now, I really hate being late for things. In the summer, I got to go to the Lake District and stay in a town called Keswick.

And there in Keswick, I attended something called the Keswick Convention. It's a big Christian conference. Thousands of people gather. And it's a great time.

[6:10] But the friends I was with, they weren't the best at keeping to time. And by day three, we had walked into the morning meetings late every time.

And after we'd walked into one of them, and they're just finished singing a great hymn. It's called Crown Him With Many Crowns. I was like, this has got to change. I'm going to be there on time, whether you are or not. Being late is a stressful thing for me.

Jesus' brothers think that Jesus should be going to head up to this festival at the time that it starts and showing himself to the world.

That's their expectations of Jesus. But Jesus' response is unexpected. Jesus says in verse 6, Jesus' brothers fully expect him to go to the festival at the right time and expect a grand entrance.

[7:28] Jesus going viral. But Jesus has another timetable. And it's not ours. After all, Jesus is God.

And God's timing is not our timing. And I think that's something of great comfort to us this morning. As we as a nation mourn the loss of the Queen. Something I guess we always knew was going to happen. But I don't know about you.

On Thursday, I was like, surely not today. Surely not yet. Surely a few more years. But God's timing is not ours.

And God's got a perfect plan. Time to precision. And it doesn't surprise him. The idea of not arriving to the festival on time.

[8:29] That would have been stressful for me. But it's not for Jesus. He has his own timetable. I wonder if you ever say something like, but I want it now.

Maybe you get home from school. And you're really hungry. And you want dinner. And you want dinner to be now. But mom or dad or someone else says, no, not now.

It's not going to be ready now. Or maybe it's a hot day. And you've been on the beach. And you've been promised ice cream. But not yet. But you want it now.

Or maybe you're really looking forward to a present for your birthday. And you're like, I just want it now.

This is such a cool present. I want it now. Why can't it be today? Can I just have it early? And I guess that's a bit like what Jesus' brothers want for Jesus.

[9:36] They want him to go now and show himself to the world now. Just show yourself. Come to the festival with us now.

But Jesus says, my time has not yet come. It wasn't time for that yet. It was actually quite a dangerous time for Jesus.

In verse 1, it tells us that the Jewish leaders were there looking for a way to kill him. They wanted Jesus dead.

They didn't like Jesus. But Jesus knew that. And he knew it wasn't time for him to be arrested yet. And to go to the cross where he'd die. It wasn't time for that yet. I wonder if we have unrealistic expectations of what Jesus should be doing.

[10:46] Of when Jesus should be doing something. Maybe we keep praying for something. And it just doesn't happen. Maybe we're not yet in a place where we believe in Jesus.

Maybe we're praying for some kind of sign. Just show me this and then I'll believe in you. Jesus' brothers were expecting him to go.

Go to Judea. Go show some signs. Jesus' friends. But they didn't believe in Jesus yet. Jesus has come.

And the Bible tells us that at just the right time he came. And at just the right time he died. Romans 5 verse 6. You see at just the right time.

When we were still powerless. Christ died for the ungodly. That was the greatest sign that he could ever show. Being lifted up on a cross.

[12:00] That's how Jesus was going to show himself to the world. And at just the right time. God's time. Not our time. And it wasn't until after Jesus died on the cross and rose again.

It wasn't until then. That it seems. At least some of Jesus' brothers believed. In Acts 1 verse 14. It says they all joined together.

Constantly in prayer. Along with the women. Mary. Jesus' mother. And with his brothers. They did come to believe.

But it wasn't yet. It wasn't until after Jesus showed that great sign to the world. Jesus does things we may not expect.

We may not expect the Savior of the world to look weak and die on a cross. But he did. He died to save us.

[13:02] He did. Because otherwise we could not believe in him. We could not be saved. That was his perfect way of salvation.

At the perfect time. That's how Jesus showed himself to the world. We're going to see more from this passage in a moment.

But first we're going to sing. We're going to sing of Jesus. The Lamb of God. Who gave his life for us. Let's sing. Stand and sing when the music begins.

You're seated. Great. So we've seen Jesus' unexpected timing. As Jesus' brothers say to him. Show yourself to the world. Not yet. Not yet. And then the other thing that I think we see that's unexpected is Jesus' unexpected hatred.

[14:05] See, someone who does great things. Someone who feeds thousands of people. Who heals the sick. Who changes water into wine. And you don't expect people to hate them.

And yet that's the case with Jesus. We've seen already how there are people who want Jesus dead. They're plotting to kill him.

Verse 7. The world cannot hate you. But it hates me. Because I testify that its works are evil. Jesus says people hate him. And it feels surprising. I want to tell you about my favorite board game. Okay. My favorite board game is this. It's risk. Every time I tell people that this is my favorite board game.

[15:13] It usually involves people sighing. They're like, risk? Really?

Is that really your favorite board game? Do you really want to play risk? That's the kind of reactions I get to that. A few people like it. But most think it lasts too long.

And it's too random. And I don't get it. It's a game. It's meant to be fun. It's meant to be enjoyable. Why do people not like risk?

It divides opinion. And you know what? Jesus does too. Gathered here this morning. Most of us would probably say we love Jesus.

We love to read about him. We love to sing about him. We love Jesus. But Jesus says the world hates him. And it is so.

[16:15] Jesus says so. Because his message is that the world is evil. As you came into church this morning, if I went up to each of you and said, hello, it's really good to see you.

Welcome to church. You're evil. That's actually a really hard thing to hear, isn't it? But Jesus comes and he says that to the world.

He says that we sin. We do wrong things and God hates it and it needs to be dealt with. And that's uncomfortable.

That's why the Jewish leaders want to kill him. They thought they were rather good people, actually. They followed all the laws in the Old Testament and even more than them.

The ones that they added on top. They were, they thought, good people. Really good people.

[17:21] But even then they sinned. Nobody can follow all the laws of God perfectly. They wanted Jesus dead.

And one of the Ten Commandments is do not murder. When I was in London last week, seeing that juggler, like people in London are very, very happy to stop and watch someone juggling.

But I also saw someone preaching on the street. People are not so happy to stop and listen to someone preach. In fact, they'd really rather they didn't.

People are happy to see Jesus heal or walk on water or feed thousands of people.

They're very happy with that. Maybe that's true for you this morning, too. You're very happy to hear that Jesus came and he fed 5,000 people.

[18:28] But you're not so happy to be called a sinner. Someone who does wrong. You're uncomfortable with that idea.

You hate it. You just can't sign up to that bit. You feel that you're relatively good. You know many good people.

Yet Jesus is clear. We do sin. We are evil. There is something not right in us. There is darkness. We're not as good as we think we are.

People who hated him and wanted him dead, arrested and put on a cross. They did because they hated him.

It may be unexpected. But Jesus is clear. The world hates him. He says later in John's Gospel, If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.

[19:42] Don't be surprised if you're at work and there's colleagues of yours who may like you, but they just don't want to hear about the Christian stuff.

Don't be surprised if you're at school and people say, Surely you don't follow that Jesus. Surely you don't go to church on Sunday. I was sitting in a barber's a few months ago, having my hair cut, as that's what you do in a barber's.

And I was hearing a couple of the people that work there talking about a Christian friend of theirs, referring to him as the Jesus nutter.

It can feel really hard to live in a world that hates Jesus. A world that hates the gospel message, the good news that we have to share.

And so we need to keep seeing who Jesus is in a world that hates Jesus. We need to see his glory, to see, yes, the one who fed thousands of people, the one who's raised the dead, who's healed the sick, who's changed water into wine, but more than that, see how he's shown the world on the cross, that it's Jesus, God, come down in the flesh.

[21:20] would die. Would die for us. Would have such great love for us. Even though we sin, even though we do wrong, even though we are evil, he would die so we can be forgiven.

So we can have life. We need to keep looking to the Lord Jesus. In a world that may feel discouraging, a world that hates Jesus.

And so the third and final thing that we need to ask this morning is who do you say Jesus is?

We need to respond to Jesus. And it strikes me that it's a little bit like Marmite. Hands up. It's quite a famous thing. Love or hate Marmite.

Hands up if you love Marmite. There is no right or wrong answer here, but you are right. And hands up if you hate Marmite. That's okay. That's okay. It's quite a strong taste.

[22:26] Yeah. We either love Jesus or we hate Jesus. Jesus in this passage, he does go up to the festival.

And we'll see what happens there in the next few weeks. He goes later on his own, not with his brothers, not with all the crowds of people at the start.

He goes later. And as he arrives there, the crowds mumble amongst themselves.

They chat. And it's interesting seeing their response in verse 12. Some said he is a good man.

Others replied, no, he deceives the people. They're split. They're split. They're split. And what they think about him.

[23:40] He divides opinion. Some say he is good. And if Jesus is good, he is perfectly good.

And if he is good, then he is true. And the message that he comes to bring, it is true.

That we are sinful. That we are evil. But he has come to offer life to people when we believe in him.

But if Jesus is not good, then he's a deceiver. We've been taken along by the lie. Meeting here is pointless.

Jesus is more than just a person who does great signs.

[24:42] He is God who at just the right time gave his life for us. He is hated by the world because he shows us that we are evil and we need a savior.

So who do we say Jesus is this morning? A deceiver? Someone not worth following?

Or is he good? So good that he is worth following. He is worth listening to. He is worth seeing as your only savior because we are sinful and we need his forgiveness.

We need the life he offers as he showed to the world as he was lifted up on a cross to die. The life he offers.

We need that. And if we believe he is good, will we stand up for him in a world that hates him?

[25:50] We will say, Jesus is so good. More than just someone who does miracles, he's shown himself to the world in dying on the cross.

This is good news to you, to us all, to a world that hates him. And this is such good news.

There is nothing better, nothing more precious than knowing this, Jesus. Let's pray.

Let's pray. Let's pray.