

Believe in Jesus

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[0 : 00] a lengthy passage in John chapter 10. We're reading from verse 22 down to verse 42. And at the end of that passage, that section, we're told that many believed in Jesus there, there over the other side of the Jordan from where Jesus had come when he was with those who would not believe in Jesus.

And those of you who were here last Sunday morning, remember we began or we intended to begin anyway a short series on some of the lesser known or maybe lesser preached on passages where we see Jesus speaking of himself, Jesus making declarations about himself.

Last week we were in Matthew 17. Remember, we're looking at the passage of Jesus and the miracle of the coin found in the fish's mouth.

Remember when Jesus was being asked through Peter if he paid the temple tax? And Peter said yes. And Jesus did not need to insist on his rights to pay the temple tax because, of course, the temple was his father's house.

But so that Jesus wouldn't offend those who asked that question, he asked Peter to cast his hook into the Sea of Galilee and the fish that came up had the amount for Jesus' tax as well as for Peter's.

[1 : 33] And that miracle that showed that Jesus, the Son of God, Jesus, the Royal Son, didn't insist on his rights, even showing for ourselves as Christians not to insist on our rights but to be humble servants of the Word of God, humble servants of God, doing God's will, delighting to do it because you love him and in loving him you believe in him and keep believing in him.

And it's this whole matter of believing in the Lord Jesus that we want to continue our focus on this morning because this is so much at the core, isn't it, of what we're about to tell others of the Lord Jesus Christ and to believe in his name, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Remember, as we said elsewhere, believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. And this whole aspect of belief, belief in Jesus, that we're going to continue to look at this morning from this passage in John chapter 10.

It's the passage that we read, as we said, quite a long passage where Jesus makes that declaration, makes that statement that he's divine.

Yes, he's come as the promised Messiah. He's come to bring the light of God's love, saving love into the world. He's come to shine in the hearts of his people.

[3 : 01] He's come to rescue his people from the darkness of sin. And central to that work of salvation, central to the salvation of God's people, is believing in him.

And in believing in Jesus, has all so many consequences. Of course, the main consequence is your salvation, your eternal life, secured through what Jesus has done for you on the cross.

And your responsibility to obey him, to do his will, to follow Jesus. And that's what we're going to focus on, as I say this morning. Believing in Jesus, believing on Jesus, and in believing in Jesus and on Jesus, following Jesus.

But right at the start, I have to ask you, do you believe in Jesus? Can you truly say that I follow him, that he's my Lord, that he's my God, my Savior, the good shepherd, who leads me and guides me? Can you say that? Because that question, do you believe in Jesus, it's the most important question that you're ever going to be asked. I know you're asked many questions in life, and you ask many questions in life, but the most important question relates to your soul.

[4 : 22] Do you believe in Jesus? Has that God-shaped space in your heart been filled with the Lord Jesus? Because we try and fill it with everything else but him.

But is your safety in the Lord Jesus Christ, through belief in his name? Because when we come here to this passage, of course, we read that there were many who didn't believe in Jesus.

There were those who were being confronted by Jesus, on that cold day in Jerusalem, and this whole aspect of believing in Jesus came out into the open.

Many believed in Jesus. We're told, certainly after Jesus met with these unbelievers, but many didn't. And of course, we've got to ask, why? Why did the many not believe in Jesus?

Why did others believe in Jesus? And bring that to present day. Why do people still not believe in Jesus? Well, we've got to look at these questions and through this passage.

[5 : 26] And the first thing I think we need to look at is what we might call radiance, the brightness, the glory of belief in Jesus. It's fascinating how Jim was speaking to the children in regards to the temple.

We didn't collude because that's how it works. And you know, so many events in the life and the ministry of Jesus. Centered in Jerusalem, when Jesus was in Jerusalem.

So many of these Jerusalem events centred on the temple. Remember when Jesus was age 12, he was in the temple and he declared of the temple that he had to be about his father's business and his father's house.

And you know, other examples, you know, when Jesus threw out the money changers in the temple courts, and we saw last week, Jesus paying the temple tax. And again, we're seeing here, Jesus is in the temple.

And we're told, very precisely by John here, that it was winter. It was winter. So this is a cold, very cold time of year. He, it's around December time that Jesus is there.

[6 : 35] We know that because this particular feast that was being celebrated, this feast, feast of dedication, sometimes known as the Feast of Lights, Jews still today commemorate this, the events surrounding this feast.

You know the name, Hanukkah. the Jews celebrate that every year. Why was it set? Well, it wasn't a, it wasn't one of these feasts that from the Old Testament, it was a very new feast, new to the Jews.

It was only about 200 years old at this point because they were celebrating an occasion when the Jewish people were delivered from a particularly nasty individual, a man called Antiochus Epiphanes.

the Syrian leader, the Syrian leader who'd occupied Jerusalem, he'd blasphemed the temple, he'd set up a pagan altar in the temple and that ruler was overthrown by, again you probably heard of him, Judas Maccabeus and the temple recaptured and rededicated to God and that was in December and the Jews celebrated and keep celebrating that event and one of the ways they celebrated was lamps, a bright shining on the darkness of winter, lights and candles in the homes as well as in the temple all pointing, as one person said, because the right to worship shone upon us at a time when we hardly dared hope for it.

So, Jesus is in the temple at this particular time of year, this Feast of Lights, this feast that was commemorating the deliverance of the Jewish people from this particularly nasty ruler and now move on, move on from that, from that first festival of light, the very first one, and what do we see?

[8 : 35] Who do we see? Who do we see? At that very moment when it's the Feast of Lights, the Feast of Dedication, what do we see here? We see Jesus. We see Jesus, the light of the world.

We see Jesus who came to shine the light of God's love into the hearts of his people. We see Jesus, the new temple, the new temple of God, the one through whom we have access to God. And John tells us as we said that Jesus was at the very temple in the very time when it was the festival of dedication, the festival of lights, surely telling us that Jesus is the light.

He's the true light, the one who came to be the, who is the light of the world. But, as we read, there were many who didn't believe in Jesus, many who remained in darkness, many who rejected Jesus even though Jesus gave the evidences that he is, the true Messiah, the true Son of God.

People who prefer to remain in darkness as you see there in the end of verse 22. But something else I think that we, we can't skip by in the end of verse 22, as we're told it was winter.

[9 : 53] I think that's just a, you know, okay, it's the time of year when Jesus was at the temple. Yes, I mean, we're told that he's walking in the temple, so he's not outside it.

He's in the colonnade, so he's undercover. Okay, that tells us it's cold, it's winter, but isn't it more than just a time of year that we're told? Surely we're being, we're being pointed to of the spiritual atmosphere around the cold, rejection of Jesus.

This refusal to, to come into the light of Christ's love, this refusal to come into the, the true warmth of his, of his love and his grace.

And so, here we're being directed to see that in contrast to the coldness to the rejection of Jesus, that we see the brilliance, the brilliance of the Savior.

We see the radiance of Christ. And that tells us of the, the radiance, the, the, the glory of, of believing in Jesus. You who know him a Savior, you shine for him.

[11:01] You reflect his love, reflect his light and tell others of the glorious gospel. But if belief in Jesus speaks of the, the radiance, glory of Jesus, love for sinners, as we say, we're to shine, you're to shine, you're to tell others and show others the joy of the Lord.

God, tell others, show it, shine for him. But of course, there's that contrary aspect, the contrast to radiance, the contrast to, to, to brilliance, the contrast to, to glory, the glory of belief in Jesus.

There's darkness. There's the, that darkness to refuse to believe in Jesus as we see from verse 24 onwards. And in that cold, threatening reception that Jesus receives, those people will not believe in Jesus.

We see that in verse 24 because we're told that, well, it's not long before Jesus is surrounded by a group of people who are very hostile to him. I mean, there's Jesus, just use your mind's eye, he's walking in the shelter part of the temple and all of it, and this group of people surround him.

And there's menace. There's menace in, in that surrounding of Jesus. They're not there to, to worship Jesus. They've already decided in their minds or hearts that Jesus isn't the Messiah.

[12:39] And they're coming to him with a loaded question. How long will you keep us in suspense about whether you're the Messiah or not? And they're basically saying, you know, Jesus, up to this point, you've annoyed us, you haven't actually said, I'm the Messiah, but you've done things that you want us to see, to, to believe in you as the promised Messiah.

Well, tell us, tell us, are you the Christ or not? And notice, notice how Jesus answers. He doesn't answer them directly because he knows their hearts. He knows that they want a political leader.

He knows that they want a leader who will somehow lead a rebellion against the Roman conquerors. That's the kind of Messiah that they're looking for, someone on their own terms.

Jesus says to them, you've missed the point. You haven't seen me as I am because you're blind. I told you, verse 20, I told you and you do not believe.

Jesus wouldn't say that. Of course he wouldn't say, I am the Messiah and lead a rebellion against the Romans. No. Jesus wanted people to see by his words and by his miracles and by his teaching that he truly has come to bring, not in a political kingdom, but to bring in a spiritual kingdom, to bring in the kingdom of God.

[14:02] I mean, all that he's spoken of himself had already shown that he's the one sent by God the Father. The miracles point it is divine power. The signs pointed to that he truly is the Messiah.

The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me. But despite his words, his words of truth, despite the actions that showed that he, who he is, despite the healing and the restoration and all the miracles, people didn't believe.

Many didn't believe because they wouldn't believe. They were blind to what was staring them in the face. These Pharisees, these others who, as blind guides, were leading the blind.

Spiritual blindness because they wouldn't see. Isn't that so often the same reason today why people won't believe? the same words that were heard of Jesus 2,000 years ago still heard today.

The same miracles that we read off that happened in Jesus' day. The same words of Jesus heard as were heard 2,000 years ago.

[15:23] But there are none so blind as we'll not see. Maybe, maybe there's someone here this morning and maybe that's been your approach to Jesus. Because you won't open your eyes to see Him as He truly is the Savior of the world and you won't allow the evidence of His power, the evidence of His love to show you, to convince you that yes, He truly is the one whom He claimed to be, the Lord, the Savior, the Redeemer of His people.

But Jesus came to open eyes of the blind and to turn people to faith, to believe in Him as the Son of God, the One who was sent from heaven to earth to save His people.

And He can open your eyes if you're willing. Blindness, spiritual blindness. That's one reason why people won't believe but we're told there are other reasons.

You see in verse 26, you do not believe because you're not part of my flock. The people that were surrounding Jesus, they'd assumed that they were the flock of God.

They'd assumed because of their upbringing, because of their nationality. I mean, they said, we are part of God's people.

[16:42] But not for a moment did they know and recognize that without the Lord Jesus as Savior, they were not part of God's flock, God's people.

And Jesus, you see how He strikes at their spiritual arrogance and says, you're not part of my flock. I mean, earlier Jesus had spoken of Himself as the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me.

And now He comes back to that, my sheep hear my voice, I know them and they follow me. So how do you know that you're part, that you're within the flock of Jesus?

You know, because, well, Jesus tells you here because you hear the voice of Jesus, you hear the voice of the good shepherd and you follow Him. And you've heard the sound of the gospel, you've heard the good news of salvation, you've heard Jesus say to you, come to me, all you who are heavy laden and I'll give you rest.

And you heard that voice and you came to Jesus. You gave your life to Him, you believed in Him, you submitted to Him, you gave your life to the Lord Jesus in faith and obedience and you follow Him.

[17:54] You followed Him when you came to know Jesus as your Savior and you continue to follow the Lord Jesus. You heard the voice of Jesus and you followed Him because you knew that that was and is the voice of the good shepherd.

Many years ago I was a very young teacher in the Isle of Barra and I actually lived in a very isolated community. Each shepherd had his own flock and that flock responded to that shepherd's voice and to that voice alone.

I remember as a very naive young man from the city I used to marvel at that when that happened every time my neighbor who had a flock of sheep and every time he called they all immediately went to him because they knew that was the voice of the one who would lead them and provide for them and give them what they needed.

Whenever I called them they just ran away because they knew who was their shepherd. and surely that's what it is for the Christian.

You who know the Lord Jesus who believe in him you know him because you know his voice. You discern that voice and you obey what he says through his word.

[19:15] You know it's the one who feeds your soul. You know the Lord Jesus when he speaks to you through his word that that word nourishes your soul that provides for you.

and you know it's the one who leads you and continues to lead you and is leading you to your heavenly home. It's the voice you can trust and you believe in Jesus.

And in this world that we're living in there are so many competing voices. Many your voices call you to believe in this thing or that thing but the Christian follows the one voice the voice of the Lord Jesus.

because you know that that's the voice that spoke the word that saved you. And you'll follow the Lord Jesus in your humility.

But people you see that were encircling Jesus with all their antagonism they didn't well they heard Jesus speak but they didn't discern that it truly is the voice of the Saviour the voice of the divine Son of God.

[20:22] And they wouldn't follow him. They saw Jesus as a stranger you didn't see him as the promised Christ the one from heaven who came to give his life for others.

And I pray that you know so we're thinking of those who rejected Jesus and I pray there's no one you know continuing to reject Jesus even now. You know that you're not prepared to listen to his voice and to follow him.

I don't know how many years you've maybe even sat in this building and listened to the voice of Jesus speak through his word. You've had opportunity after opportunity you still haven't come to the Saviour.

Well don't shut out your ears to that voice and because there may well be a time when the voice will not be heard but he's calling he's calling even now to come to him with brokenness of heart to ask for his forgiveness and to receive you into his flock by faith.

So listen to the voice that Jesus calls in fact tells that you're secure forever. You see that in verse 28 I give them eternal life and they'll never perish.

[21 : 47] God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him will not perish. Jesus is echoing these words he will not perish and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

You know again when you see a shepherd with the lamb in his arms that lamb will not be taken by the wild animal that's trying to attack it.

It's safe and secure and the Christian that's in the arms of Jesus will not be snatched out of his grip. There's so much in this passage that tells us why people won't believe in Jesus.

Think of the argument the sort of what we might call a hollow way of thinking about Jesus even refusing to see him in his greatness as the divine son of God.

Yes hearing his voice but not believing in him. And again Jesus points that out certainly in verse 30 where Jesus says I and the father are one that tells of the great truth of the trinity different persons and yet one God the father is in me says Jesus and I and the father you sing these words at Christmas it was actually based on an ancient creed about Jesus son of God begotten of the father before all worlds God of God light of light very God of very God begotten not made being of one substance with the father yes it's a mystery the mystery of the trinity but it's a mystery that we're given to believe that truly Jesus is the Christ he's the son of God he's the one who's come from heaven and there in the temple there in Jerusalem there were those who would not believe that Jesus is the son of

[23 : 47] God they wouldn't put their faith in him they wouldn't believe in him they wouldn't accept that Jesus is truly divine and isn't that so often still the case today every car street corner there are those Jehovah's witnesses who will deny the Lord Jesus as divine there are even those in different places who will deny the Lord Jesus as savior as God as God the son people who will not receive the Lord Jesus in all his greatness in all his glory and who simply want to be rid of Jesus just rid of him but may there not be anyone here for whom that's the case that you just want to be rid of Jesus but no believe in him trust in him take him at his word as he claims that he truly is who he is because as we turn to the last part in verse 42 there are reasons for believing in Jesus you notice up to verse 40

Jesus is with those who are confronting him rejecting him Jesus is not going to remain with them he's not going to linger with those who persist in rejecting him I mean as you saw there as you read there he even tried to put him to death there and then it wasn't the right time for that to happen and Jesus retreats to the east side he crosses the river Jordan he's left the city and he's gone to the country he's gone we might say far from the madden crowd he goes to the place where John the Baptist had preached he preached of the saviour to come and it's in that place where these country people receive Jesus you might even say a simple people with a simple face they're not going to be hostile to Jesus they're not going to exercise spiritual blindness they're not going to present all kinds of hollow arguments in not receiving the truth of Jesus but these people that had that simple faith in Jesus they'd already heard John the Baptist tell of the one to come who is saviour of the world the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and these people in the east side of the Jordan they didn't need the miracles to know that to believe that they didn't need any kind of spectacular display to convince their skeptical minds no they believed in Jesus someone's written this those who genuinely are the chosen of the Lord don't need spectacular displays to lead them to the saviour the simple truth will win it isn't that the reason for believing in Jesus the simple truth the simple truth that Jesus is Lord Jesus came from heaven to save his people from their sins that Jesus loves me this

I know for the Bible tells me so the simple faith that points to the Lord Jesus and for you for me to respond to that faith by how believing in him wouldn't it be wonderful you read there in verse 42 many believed in him there wouldn't it be wonderful if these words would be as it were put into our own context that many in Livingston many in Livingston even Livingston Free Church believed in him there and you who have given your life to Jesus you who have believed rejoice believe and keep believing there be times when yes your faith is tested but you keep believing and you are strengthened by the word of God in that belief because you know we live in a world of many belief systems many religious beliefs many philosophical beliefs they all claim to have some kind of empowerment or focus or purpose in living but there's only one we would say one belief that truly gives life the one belief that truly and fully satisfies the one belief in the

Saviour who's true and of course that belief is believing in the Lord Jesus believing in the one who came for you to live for you to die for you to give him the glory you who know him as Lord and

Saviour give him the glory now give him the praise give him your life your whole heart of devotion
serve him keep serving him believe in him keep believing in him and know him as your Lord as your
Saviour Amen let us pray Lord we bless you for your word we bless you for your truth we bless you
Lord that you have given to show us the one way of salvation even through the Lord Jesus the way
the truth and the life and may it be Lord that all who are here this day will truly give their lives to you
and believe in you and trust in you and have faith in you so Lord lead us we pray go before us bless
us we ask bless us even in our fellowship one with another now and we ask these things in
[29 : 45] Jesus name Amen well let's close in Psalm 36 on page 44 Psalm 36 we'll sing from verse
5 down to verse 10 your steadfast love is great oh Lord it reaches heaven high your faithfulness is
wonderful extending to the sky 5 to 10 Psalm 36 to go on to God