



Who Is Jesus?

Luke 7: 18 - 28

24/05/26
All Age Service
With George

You can tell an animal by the noise it makes. But how can you tell who Jesus is? That is what we see happen in the Bible

reading today. John the Baptist was a man who was sent by God to go ahead of Jesus and prepare the way for Jesus's ministry. Jesus's ministry was now underway and it is at this point that we come to our passage for today. Here John the Baptist sends some of his friends to Jesus to ask if he really is Jesus. John the Baptist's friends says, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?" Jesus answers by telling them what he is doing. He says, "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." That is how Jesus shows that he is Jesus. Jesus points to himself as being the answer to everyone's need and Jesus shows that he is the treasure to the poor. So like you can tell an animal by just their sound, you can tell it is Jesus by what he is doing. You see, in that time, diseases and death made people impure and so they were separated from God. But here is Jesus, meeting people in their separation, and uniting them to God. Meeting people in their need. This is Jesus, the Son of God and he is the friend of the poor. He is the King of Kings and yet He involves himself in the lives of those who are poorly, struggling and rejected, and He loves them.

Do you know this Jesus? You can know Him today! He is the one we can go to when we are lonely, or scared, or being bullied. He is the one we can go to when we are confused and hurting. He is the one who will love us even when it feels like no one else loves us. He is strong. He is kind. This is Jesus. How would you describe Jesus: "Friend, Healer, Counsellor, Loving, Teacher, Saviour, Lord".

Unexpected Jesus John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus, that was his calling that is what he was set apart to do, and that is what he did. But how Jesus's ministry looked was slightly unexpected. Right back in Luke chapter 3, we saw the beginning of John the Baptist's ministry. Ahead of Jesus, John the Baptist was saying, "Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath" and, speaking of Jesus he said, "His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." John the Baptist had the picture of Jesus coming in wrath to judge. So when Jesus came in a very different way, ministering to the needy, with mercy and grace, it was unexpected. Don't get me wrong, Jesus did bring judgement and he will bring judgement but Jesus came initially with grace. So as Jesus' ministry went on, this initial ministry of mercy and grace was unexpected. The truth is, who Jesus is, might be unexpected to us too. He might not be quite how we expect Him to be. He might not do what we expect Him to do. Jesus might not do what we want Him to do. We may want Jesus to bring healing. We might pray and pray, but the person we're praying for isn't healed. We might want Jesus to provide something, maybe money for food, heating, a car; maybe provide friends; children; a spouse. We might want Jesus to take something away, a hurt, a difficult situation, something painful or hard. Jesus may very well answer these prayers and longings of our heart. But He also might not. Jesus may be unexpected in what He does. Jesus might not do what we want Him to do. And then what? Do we stop believing in Him? When Jesus doesn't do what we expect or we want, do we stop believing?

When your parents make a decision that you don't understand or that makes you sad or frustrated what do you do? Shout? Stamp? Storm off? Go to your room and sulk? This is how we respond when we don't know why something is happening. This is how we respond when something happens and we want something else. But later on maybe later that day or that week you will understand why your parents didn't do what you wanted them to do. In fact, however, sometimes it is much later on, when you're an adult, that we understand why our parents didn't do all we wanted them to do. We see their reasons, and we see that they were

right. The same is true about God. We might ask God for good things, like for someone to get better, or to give us a friend, or to take away a difficult situation. And even though we ask and pray, God doesn't do it. He doesn't do what we want Him to do. Often we can't understand. Maybe later on we might understand. But maybe not in this life. This is why Jesus says "Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me." Jesus may deem it best for His power to be displayed in our weakness rather than in our strength. Jesus may call you to love people that we would rather not love. In answer to John's question Jesus points John the Baptist to himself and blesses those who are not discouraged because of the way Jesus does things. So we may not understand why Jesus goes about things the way he does but one thing we do know even if we can't understand what God is doing, we know who he is.

Remember what we looked at earlier? Jesus is Friends, Healer, Counsellor, Loving, Teacher, Saviour, Lord. Think about Jesus dying on the cross. That was unexpected for Jesus's friends. That wasn't what they thought would happen. They didn't know why that happened and they thought it was the end. But what we know was that Jesus died on the cross for our sins so that if we believe in him, he takes our bad and gives us his good. God giving up his life, was unexpected and ultimately the greatest moment in history!! Jesus might not do what we expect Him to do. Jesus might not do what we want him to do. But we know who Jesus is.

Simple Faith After answering the question, Jesus then speaks about John the Baptist. It is believed that John the Baptist was in prison at this time and knew he might never be released. This is presumably why he sends some of his friends to speak to Jesus instead of going himself. Now some people in that day might have been thinking that because John the Baptist was in prison, he must've done something wrong, was not all that he seemed to be. We see that Jesus defends his cause because he was in prison, not because he did something wrong but because he did something right and the king who put him in prison didn't like it. Jesus speaks to those around him and says how great John is and was. He says this, "I tell you, among those born of women, there is no one greater than John; yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." Jesus is saying that John was not just some passing politician, his ministry is the culmination of the OT prophets and he bridges to the new era that begins with Jesus. Not only that (and that is enough) John had a massive and faithful ministry. He'd baptised hundreds and hundreds of people. He was obedient in what he did. Not only that (and that is enough) he was a Nazarite who was apart from others by not drinking wine, vinegar and raisins, and he didn't cut his hair and was enlisted into holy service

So John the Baptist was very great! He was holy, he was obedient and he was successful in ministry. In Jesus's words, "Among those born of women, there is no one greater than John." And then Jesus goes on to say, "Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." So despite all his greatness and obedience and ministry success, John is not closer to God than a small child with a faith in Jesus. It is faith that saves not all that ministry and obedience, it is pure and simple faith. You see, faith is the great leveller. Being a great prophet is not what makes you right before God, it is faith in Jesus. Don't get caught up in externals, believing in Jesus is what matters. I've had people say to me, "I'm not on the same level as you" or "I don't have the same faith as you." And the truth is, if you believe in Jesus, that is the whole package of grace. If you have faith, you have Jesus. That is it. Don't get caught by putting yourself in a hierarchy of faith. Believe that Jesus is God and that he died for your sins. Have faith in Jesus and you have it all.

Tallest and smallest Find the tallest and the smallest person in the room. Who is the most important? Size has nothing to do with importance does it? So too with faith. Faith has nothing to do with importance. John's successful ministry didn't saved him, it was his simple faith the same faith that a child can show. Being a great prophet is not what justifies you, faith is what Justifies you. Don't get caught up in externals, believing in Jesus is what matters. Believe that Jesus is God and died for your sins. Have faith in Jesus and you have it all.