

Show and Tell

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[0 : 00] I don't know if you had this maybe at school or at nursery, but I vividly remember just having started school and really looking forward to Friday afternoon, because on Friday afternoon we had show and tell, and everyone looked forward to this.

The end of the week, when it was your week, to bring something in to show and tell the class, remember the excitement, the thrill, thinking for weeks what it would be that you would take in to class to show and tell everyone, because kids, when they're excited, they just can't contain it, can they?

When children are excited, they can't get enough of telling other people what it is that they are excited about. A family we were close to when we were in Edinburgh, they were getting ready to move to a new city.

And for a few months, they were looking for jobs, for houses, and every time we spoke to them about it, you know, how's the house hunt going? Do you know how they ended the conversation? Remember, the kids don't know yet. Remember, the kids don't know. Because they knew as soon as the kids found out, well, the news would be out, you know, church, home, school, everywhere, the children would spread the news that they were moving away.

[1 : 27] They would not be able to contain it. And that is just how we find the psalmist tonight, isn't it? Notice in passing, this isn't David, but we're not told it's David, but whoever it is cannot contain his excitement over what God has done.

For him, it feels like show and tell every day. See that? Just look in verse 5. What does he say? Come and see. Come and see what God has done, his awesome deeds for mankind.

And then down in verse 16, Luke, come and hear. Come and hear, all you who fear God. Let me tell you what he has done for me. Come and see.

Come and hear. Let me show you. Let me tell you what God has done for us, for me. Let me tell you what God has done for us, for me. And that show and tell, it is bracketed, isn't it, in this psalm? In fact, it's filled all the way through with a call to worship. Verse 1, shout for joy to God all the earth, and at the end, praise be to God.

[2 : 36] Which makes the psalmist's point very obvious, doesn't it? That in the light of the awesome, finished work of God to save his people, in that light, all people everywhere should worship this God and bow down to him and put their trust in him.

In light of the finished work of God to save, all people should worship him. And that has massive implications, doesn't it, for us tonight? Even as we gather here, and certainly as we go out of here into the coming week.

First then, come and see. And I've already seen in our time in the book two of the psalms that these psalms are geared towards the outside world.

Describe them as a kind of covenant explored course for those who didn't know the Lord. I wonder what you think about that as we've gone through. Maybe as you've read these psalms, I'd love to talk more about that.

With you. If you weren't convinced of that, surely verse one will persuade you. Shout for joy to God, whom? All the earth. All the earth.

[3 : 47] That call to worship goes out to the world, doesn't it? To celebrate God. And he just piles up those invitations, though. Shout for joy to God. Sing the glory of his name.

Make his praise glorious. Say to God. It just keeps going, doesn't it? Back in Psalm 65 a few weeks ago, we considered how sometimes the height of worship can be simply waiting for God to act.

But this is not that, is it? It is words shouted sung, said to God about God. This psalm is not a few mumbled prayers, is it?

Or a few half-hearted hymns. This is overflowing praise. You actually think, as I considered this psalm this week and a few weeks ago, that the closest we see to this, I think, in our world today is actually in football stadiums and in concert halls.

How passionately do people in stadiums and in arenas sing praise to their teams, to their players, to the singers, to the bands? You know, that seems like a world away from the Bible, doesn't it?

[5 : 01] But if it feels too far from the Bible, maybe that's because we've lost the sense of what praise is. You know, those fans in the football stadium are doing what the psalmist says, but to someone other than the one to whom the psalmist says we ought to do it.

And those things, for some people, they can be a kind of false worship, can't they, in human praise. But instead, says the psalmist, let praise be given to God.

Let his fame be sung about. Let it be his glory on our tongues. Let him be celebrated, not only by his church, but by everyone on earth.

As a side point, that should help us think, shouldn't it, about what it is we do as we come to church? On a Sunday, to worship God as we pray to God, as we sing to God, as we hear his word.

One thing we are doing is giving him the praise that only he deserves. We are giving him our full attention in worship. You think about how it is that we come to sing, or pray, or listen to his word.

[6 : 20] Is it fitting praise that we give him? Is it his glory that we come to sing, to praise? We are celebrating God for simply being God, the way we speak to him, the way we speak about him.

And in praise, we are humbling ourselves before him, aren't we? And saying, you are God and we are not God. Do you notice how the psalmist does just that in verse 3?

Say to God, how awesome are your deeds, so great is your power, that your enemies cringe before you. All the earth bows down to you.

He's turned now from speaking to everyone to speaking to God, hasn't he? And what he says is, we humble ourselves before you. We bow down. We cannot stand before you, let alone stand against you.

True praise, friends, is overwhelming praise, and it is humble praise. It's overwhelming praise, because our God is overwhelming in his greatness, in his glory and goodness.

[7 : 30] It is humble praise also, though, isn't it? Because by comparison, who are we? We are not great, good, glorious at all. Now, if we're Christians, we can struggle, can't we, to praise God, to get ourselves into that posture before him of humble praise and worship.

Maybe even tonight, as we all struggle to do that. But if you wouldn't call yourself a Christian, maybe that praise, that worship might be the very last thing that you want to give God.

Why should we praise him? Why should we praise him? Well, this is where the psalmist wants to show us something, isn't it? Why should we praise God? Well, here's something really special.

Come and see, he says. And what is it he wants us to see? Come and see what God has done. His awesome deeds for mankind.

What? He turned the sea into dry land. They passed through the waters on foot. Come, let us rejoice in him. He is showing us something just extraordinary that reveals the very heart and power of God, the great rescue event in their history.

[8 : 43] That is the exodus. God's people were slaves once in Egypt. God rescued them out of slavery and brought them to the sea.

Perhaps, if you know the story, you remember this heart-stopping moment. They are at the sea. What happens? They turn around and the Egyptians are chasing them to bring them back into slavery.

They are caught, aren't they? Quite literally. Between an immovable object and an unstoppable force. And God's people are about to be caught in the middle.

What is God going to do to rescue them? Well, what God did would be celebrated, remembered, for thousands of years, even to this day. Because we're told that God opened a pathway through the sea.

Something only he could do. A strong wind blew all night as God shielded his people from their enemies. And in the morning, two towering walls of water and dry land in between.

[9 : 50] So that all his people had to do now was walk through the sea to the other side on dry land. You can read about that later, if you like, in Exodus chapter 14.

It's well worth it. Because for God's people back then, that was the defining moment in their relationship with God.

What God would be famous for, for generations. Because that is when they were saved. That is the point at which they were saved.

Saved by God so great and glorious. That from then on, says the psalmist, when we come and see that salvation, we bow before him.

We praise him. And so when is that time for us? When we wonder, others in our lives maybe ask us, why come to church?

[10:46] Why praise God? Why live for him? Why serve him? What do we tell ourselves and others to come and see? Where do we look to see that salvation?

Well, surely the point in history we look to, to see when God saved us. That great showcase of his power to save. It is no longer the Exodus as such, is it?

But the new Exodus. The Bible is so clear that if we today had to pick one great redeeming act of God in history, it is the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross.

The cross where God opened up the way for us to come safely to him. The cross where God broke the body and poured out the blood of his son to save us from our great enemies, sin and death.

Brothers and sisters, let us not forget that we really were trapped between the immovable object of our sin and the unstoppable force of God's anger against our sin.

[11:56] And it was only Christ's death on the cross that spared us from being crushed by God when his anger collided with our sin.

For on the cross, Christ took our sins on himself so that God's punishment and anger would fall on him instead of us. And we would go free from our slavery to sin and death.

Does that, does that not make us want to praise God? Does that not bring us to our knees in awe of this God who has saved us?

Come and see. Come see the cross. Where love and mercy meet, where the son of God is stricken. Then see his foes lie crushed beneath his feet for the conqueror is risen.

Surely that is the awesome finished work that when we see it, when we show it to others, brings the whole world to fall before God. Praise him for his power to save.

[13:00] Come and see. So come and see, we say, God's great rescue in the death and resurrection of his son, the Lord Jesus. Come and see. And next, come and hear.

Come and hear. Now, perhaps you're wondering, what's the difference? Come and see, come and hear. It sounds like much the same thing. Well, in some ways, we are talking about the same thing, but just from two different angles.

You could think of it like the difference between maybe seeing an event on the news, watching it on the news, and then you talk to somebody who was there about what they experienced when they were there.

You've seen it on the news, and you now hear it from somebody who was there. They're both about the same thing. One is showing you in a kind of public broadcast. The other is telling you their personal experience.

And in the same way, the psalmist has said in verse 5, come and see just the objective historical fact of God's rescue. It's finished.

[14:03] It's there for all the world to see. But then, verse 16, he says this, look, come and hear all you who fear God. Let me tell you what he has done for me.

For me. This is him speaking personally now about God's power to save him, not somewhere out there, but in his own life.

Here's the difference. A well-known Scottish theologian, maybe you've heard of him or read his work, John Murray. His most famous book is called Redemption Accomplished and Applied.

Accomplished and Applied. That is what we're seeing here, isn't it? The difference between verse 5 and verse 16. We've seen redemption accomplished. Now we are hearing how God has applied that redemption to the psalmist's life and experience.

Because remember, for the psalmist, the exodus has happened. It's in the history books. It's hundreds of years ago. He didn't personally walk through the Red Sea, just as any of us personally stood at the foot of the cross when Jesus died.

[15:13] We weren't there. But look how that same power, that same awesome saving work is worked out in his life. Just read with me from verse 9 if you would.

Where he says he's preserved our lives. Kept our feet from slipping. You, God, tested us. You refined us like silver. You brought us into prison and laid burdens on our backs.

You let people ride over our heads. And here's the key to listen for. We went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of abundance.

See, we went through water and we came out in a place of safety. What does that sound to you like? Does it not sound like the exodus?

No? No? He's describing his personal experience of God's rescue in terms of that great defining rescue. God only parted the sea once, but that was enough to prove that he could save his people at all times and down through the generations.

[16:21] Now, what the psalmist is probably describing here is the experience of the exile. God's people much later were carried away into a different kind of slavery by another kingdom.

He even recognizes the fact that they were there in the first place was under God's control. God's people that he tested, he refined, he imprisoned, but he also saved as he had done that first great time.

It's a reminder, another side point, if we need reminding this evening, that whatever it was maybe that you came through, or that happened to you in coming to Christ, God has used, hasn't he, in saving you.

Nothing is wasted to God. The testing, the refining, the imprisoning, the burdening, all used by God in his sovereignty to bring us to a place of safety.

But if you're a Christian here tonight, you will have a story like this too, okay? Not a story about the exodus. But we wouldn't put it quite like this. We might say something like this.

[17:35] I was far from God and needed his forgiveness. Then, over years, months, weeks, days, hours, I saw that reality for myself.

I understood that what Christ did on the cross, he did for me. So that God saved me by giving my sins to Christ on the cross to be paid for completely.

And I put my trust in him. And I put my trust in him and his promise. I asked God to forgive me because of Christ's death. And he did. And I was saved.

That great historic objective fact of Christ's death applied, applied to our personal daily living, our salvation.

Now, there's all kinds of variations, isn't there, on that story of coming to faith in Christ. Even in this room, there's not a one-size-fits-all way that God brings people to Christ.

[18:36] But nobody who has come to Christ does not have a story to tell of how God did that, applied his rescue. Can you just think, think, just think for a minute.

How did God do that for you? Who did he use in your life? What happened? How long did it take? You might not think your story is very exciting or very worth telling.

You know, God bringing you from death to life cannot ever be dull, can it? A resurrection happened. That is not boring. However, he did it. He did it. That is what he's done.

And that is a story worth telling. Come and hear what God has done for me. You know, I used to be a bit embarrassed, actually, about my own testimony of coming to Christ and to trust in him.

I was raised in a Christian home. Well, that's really dull and unexciting. He wants to hear that. But then I thought, actually, that's not the way, is it, that God always has to work?

[19:45] And I had friends growing up here today. Well, they grew up in a church setting. They grew up in Christian homes. But they're no longer walking with Christ. Really sadly. But it made me reflect that, actually, it's an incredible thing that God has done for me.

Not only in giving me a faithful covenant upbringing, but also keeping me in the faith and giving me a new heart to make that faith my own.

That is not boring, is it? When you think about it. It's been one of the best things about the last year and a half for me being here, actually, is hearing the stories of people here as people have come to profess their faith for the first time.

I think I can speak for all the elders when I say that's the best thing about being an elder in this church. I'm not sure any of the elders would disagree with me about that. Because it's just spectacular.

Every single story is precious to God and written in heaven. Because however that story goes, whatever has happened, it ends with a settled confidence in Christ to save me.

[20:53] And that is special every time. Let me encourage you to reflect on how God has done that for you. To consider that precious. Brothers and sisters, what is your story?

What has God done for you? How well do you know that? How well do you remember that? When was the last time you told somebody what God did for you in bringing you to Christ?

Because like the psalmist, we all have something, don't we? If we are Christians tonight, we all have something to show and tell. Show and tell, don't we?

We have a savior to show. Like Philip, we can say to people, come and see. Come and see the Christ. Come and see the Messiah.

Come and see what he's done. Come and see the cradle and the cross. Come and see the table, the tomb. Come and see his empty grave and the everlasting king now on his throne.

[21 : 58] Come and see. If we know Jesus, why would we not want to invite people to come and see him? Like children bursting with excitement for show and tell.

Is he not the most precious thing to us? Do we not long to show, to tell him? Now that showing of him, that's not something that needs us to tell our story, our personal testimony.

Okay, that can help. We'll come back to that. This is a step back. We simply want people to know the story of Jesus, don't we? The gospel. The gospel. And sometimes to help us show people Jesus, people sometimes find it helpful to learn a simple gospel outline.

Because however many people there are in this room, the gospel doesn't change when we tell it, does it? It can be helpful even to learn the basic building blocks of the gospel to help us be ready to share it when we have opportunity.

It's a good question, isn't it? If I asked you, how well do you think you could explain the gospel to somebody outside of the church? How clearly could you explain it?

[23 : 09] How readily could they understand it? Maybe that's something to talk about after the service with somebody next to you. Maybe when you get home as a family, maybe with a friend, maybe in someone in your life group to talk about it, to work on it together.

How clearly can we explain the gospel, show Christ? There are some good outlines out there.

There's no shame in using one. Is there two ways to live?

Maybe you've heard of that. It's really popular. Recommend that to you. Or come and see. Come and see for some people at some stages might be, mightn't it?

Come, just come to church with me. Come and see what it is that Christians believe, who it is we worship. Come to Christianity Explored. Okay, that's out of date now.

But some of you have done that. And it's amazing to see what God is doing just simply through a simple invitation. A simple invitation. We here, we want to make it as easy as possible.

[24 : 09] As easy as it possible. It's not, it's never easy. But as easy as it can be for you to tell somebody, come and see Jesus. Come and see Jesus.

We've come to the end of Christianity Explored. Pray for those who've done it. Pray that God would do great things as he has been doing. If you want to know more, you can ask somebody who's been on it.

Because it's been fantastic. Amazing. Or come and see. Here's one. Come and see. Could be. Come and read a gospel with me. Come and, on our lunch break, come and read Mark's gospel with me.

That might be the scariest one of all. But where do we meet Jesus? We meet him in the scriptures, don't we? We meet him in the gospel.

It's just another way God has given us, isn't it? To show Jesus to the world. And why would we be ashamed or afraid to introduce Jesus to people?

[25 : 08] We have a savior to show. And we have a story to tell. And again, our personal story isn't the gospel. Just simply our personal testimony cannot save somebody.

People need Jesus, not me and you. But it can help. Just like the psalmist, it puts flesh on the bones. And that this rescue did not simply happen 2,000 years ago somewhere in the Middle East, done and dusted.

But that God actually has saved somebody living today through that finished work. It helps, doesn't it, sometimes to tell people what God has done for us so that they can see that it works.

It's real. We can share that with somebody. And this is something we can all do if we're Christians. Something we want to help each other with.

I'm not saying, and nobody's saying, go out this week like some kind of solo performer. And show people and tell people about Jesus.

[26 : 14] We are a church family, aren't we? We do this together. We're doing it now. We do it together. Pray for each other. Share people with each other that you want people to pray for.

We support one another in it. We walk together. We witness together. We show and tell together. Peter says in 1 Peter chapter 3, always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

And so all I want to ask as we finish this point, which is the biggest point in the sermon, is how prepared are you to give an answer for the hope you have?

How ready would you be? Are you? To explain to somebody why it is you trust in Jesus. We get worried about that because we think it means that we have to be ready to answer every question that somebody might have for us about our faith.

And we can't do that, so we say nothing. It doesn't mean that. It simply means being ready to tell somebody why it is that you have put your hope in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[27 : 27] How clearly could you do that? How ready are you to do that? How prepared are you to do that? Finally, come and praise.

This is the point, isn't it? Why show? Why tell? Well, praise. It said at the start, those two invitations, come and see, come and hear. They are bracketed by a call to worship.

And this is surely the point. And this is surely the point. We show and tell because we want all people. God wants all people to worship him. It's John Piper who said famously, mission exists because worship doesn't.

Think about that. Mission exists because worship doesn't. How would we be tempted maybe to finish that sentence? Mission exists because people need Christ?

Well, yes, that is true. That's a great motivation. Our love for the lost, a great motivation for mission, witness. Yes, but Psalm 66 lifts our eyes, doesn't it?

[28 : 30] And lifts our vision, lifts our hearts up also to God and his glory. Is that not the main motive for our lives lived for him? The main motive for our witness?

Because the primary purpose of people seeing and hearing about God's power to save is so that they can give God the glory and praise that he alone deserves. Is it not the worship and glory of God that we live for?

So that our being here together, our being here to praise him, pray to him, hear from him. And when we leave here to live for him, to obey him, to serve him, in short, to worship him, that is what he has saved us for, is it not?

A life of worship, a whole life given over to the praise of him who loved us and gave himself for us. I wonder tonight, do you think of your life like that?

If you're a Christian, do you think of your salvation like that? I think today this happens less and less because of the culture that we live in, but it can still crop up.

[29 : 40] The way of thinking that says, I'm a Christian now, I'm saved now, but my life has kind of gone on as it always has. And church is kind of there when I need it.

I hope that's none of us. Because the reason that God has shown us and told us what he's done for us is why, so that, verse 1, we can do what?

Shout for joy to God. Sing the glory of his name. Make his praise glorious. Say to him, how awesome are your deeds.

That is why he has saved you, for his own glory. And if you wouldn't call yourself a Christian, or maybe you're a new Christian, you need to know that becoming a Christian is not the end of the road.

It is the beginning of a new life. The beginning of a life given over to praising and thanking God in our words, our thoughts, our living, our behavior for his rescue.

[30 : 42] Jesus didn't say, did he make converts of all nations? You heard those words this morning from him, didn't you? What did he say? Go and make disciples of all nations, lifelong followers.

He says the Father is seeking worshipers, worshipers, to worship him in spirit and in truth. Walking with Christ, it is for all of life, isn't it?

And so let us praise and worship God for what he's done for us tonight. And as we go out into another week, let us worship him in our lives, our thoughts, our words.

Let us show and tell others, too, what he has done for us in Christ, so that they, too, would join in that praise. And so that the whole world would be filled with the glory of the Lord as the waters

cover the sea.

Let's pray for that together now. God, our Father, great and glorious God, we do praise you for your rescue of us in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[31 : 58] Father, forgive us when we think little of your rescue. Forgive us, we pray, when we take for granted what you have done for us.

Lord, forgive us, we pray, when our praise is not worthy of you. Lord, forgive us, we pray, when we are ashamed to show and tell Christ to a world that so needs him and is devoid of worship of you, for lack of knowing you.

Father, how we thank you for the privilege and joy and gift it is to know you through Christ. Father, we pray that we would be overwhelmed with praise and thanksgiving and joy to you, even this evening, Lord.

That you would make us ready to go out into our normal lives this coming week, full of praise to you and ready to witness for you. As we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. Amen.