

Introduction

- How people behave in public and in private can be very different
 - for celebrities of different sorts this is an especially sensitive area!
 - many of my childhood years were in Whitburn, home of the last West Lothian deep mine, that closed following flooding in the miner's strike; NUM Scotland leader was a guy name "Mick McGahey", from Fauldhouse just up the road; his publica image was the firebrand leader of the miners, working for the rights and benefits of others in his union; however, the local reputation was somewhat different - and he had the name of "moving swiftly on" when he came across people who might know of his background...
 - maybe this is some of the draw for [Celebrity Love Island](#) or [Celebrity Big Brother!](#)?
- I wonder what it was like to know Jesus out of the spotlight?
 - before he was famous, before his public ministry?
 - how did those who knew him, spent time with him, respond to him?
 - we only have tantalising clues in the gospels...
 - the nearest we come is as he is about to begin his public ministry, and particularly in his encounters with his cousin John the Baptist...

Exposition

- See paper notes - didn't get chance to type up!

Application

- Again, need to ask the "so what?" question!

Preaching Narrative

- Tricky!!
 - just because an incident happened doesn't mean we know clearly why it happened or what significance it carries!
 - for instance, there's a classic incident in Judges 3:15-30, where Ehud is the Judge sent by God;
 - here we have a deceptive left-handed assassin who sticks his short sword so far into the obese king, quite possibly while he was in the loo, that the handle was covered over by the fat!!
 - Ehud is a left-hander, with all the negative connotations that carried in the period, and after his assassination he proceeds to massacre 10,000 Moabites!
- So - should we go out an massacre Moabites? Or fat kings? Or what?
- Have to read very carefully the implications of a passage - what was the author's intention, within the context of the book...

1. Our Understanding of Jesus

- For us, here, this passage is certainly about the identity of Jesus:
 - the question for everyone is, "who is he?"
 - John the Evangelist is setting the scene for the gospel, setting up the players
 - and in doing so he challenges even some of our preconceptions about who Jesus is!
- Can be hard to allow familiar words to challenge and reshape our thinking and understanding:
 - greatest problem for a proof-reader is reading what you expect to find there!
 - here, for instance, there are real overtones of judgement in the "Lamb of God" phrase that we might easily miss!
 - Jesus is judge of the whole earth; it is before him that everyone will stand on that dreadful day of the Lord and give an account of our lives!
- We need always to bring our understanding of who Jesus is before Scripture, never becoming stale or formulaic!
 - there is always more to learn, to understand, to take in of Jesus!
 - so always be thirsty!

2. Point to Jesus

- Second application comes through John's example:
 - here is someone who, even if he down-played his own ministry, was greatly esteemed by the Lord Jesus:
 - *"I tell you the truth: Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."* (Matthew 11:11)
- Here is someone of significance, of importance, someone who in himself fulfils OT prophecy:
 - but his constant priority is to divert attention **away** from himself and **onto Jesus!**
 - see again the progression: v.21 "Who are you [John]?" but by the time we get to either v.27 "He [Jesus] is the one" or v.34 "I have seen and I testify that this [Jesus] is the Son of God"!!
- This is the example we should be following!
 - and this very conversation is an example of how!