

They Missed It!

Summary:

Jesus spoke often and clearly about who he was, but many missed what he was saying. God is continually speaking to us today and we should make sure we don't miss it.

Call to Worship

However long you have put aside to worship God using this Order of Service, don't miss using Psalm 150.

1. Praise the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary (which is right where you are now). Praise him in his mighty heavens (if it's dark you might be able to go outside and do that).

2. Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness.

3-5. The following 3 verses mention instruments that not many homes have a ready supply of – although dancing is mentioned so you could try that!

6. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.

Prayer

Father God, I can hardly put into words how great you are, how you have blessed me by your might power in answered prayer, in the miracles, in the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. But where words fail me, my heart overflows with praise and thanksgiving.

Praise you Lord. Praise your holy name. Amen

Song: "How Great is our God" (Chris Tomlin)

1. The splendour of a King, clothed in majesty,
Let the Earth rejoice, all the Earth rejoice
He wraps himself in light, and darkness tries to hide
And trembles at His voice, trembles at His voice.

Chorus

How great is our God, sing with me, how great is our God.

How great, how great is our God.

2. Age to age He stands, and time is in His hands,
Beginning and the end, beginning and the end.
The Godhead Three in One, Father, Spirit, Son.
The Lion and the Lamb, the Lion and the Lamb.

Chorus

3. Name above all names (how great is our God, sing with me)
You are worthy of our praise (how great is our God, and all will see)
My heart will sing, how great is our God. (Repeat)

Chorus

© worshiptogether.com songs. Used by permission CCLI 509237

They Missed It!

Prayer of Intercession

Father, I bring to you my efforts, however feeble they may be, to share the power of God and the name of Jesus with the world.

I pray for those in the front line of bringing justice to our nation of Australia;

- I pray for organisations such as Family Voice and Love Adelaide bringing a range of issues such as abortion, marriage, freedom of faith and religion to our Parliaments.

- I pray for individuals such as Dr Joanna Howe who courageously and at great cost advocates for aborted babies born alive and left to die without care.

- I pray for Senator Alex Antic who stands for his faith on many issues in Parliament.

Thank you for their skills and knowledge and expertise – and I commit to supporting them in prayer and in any other way I can.

And I pray for the hotspots in the world today – the Middle East, Ukraine and Russia, northern Africa. I pray that the God of justice and the Prince of Peace will prevail in these places. I pray for those who bring relief and compassion and God's love. I pray especially for Barnabas Aid as they support those in these places and others around the world.

In Jesus name I pray. Amen

Song: "Song for the Nations" (Chris Christensen)

1. May we be a shining light to the nations,
A shining light to the peoples of the earth.
Till the whole world sees the glory of Your name,
May Your pure light shine through us.
2. May we bring a word of hope to the nations,
A word of life to the peoples of the world
Till the whole world knows there's salvation through Your name,
May Your mercy flow through us.
3. May we be a healing balm to the nations,
A healing balm to the peoples of the earth
Till the whole world knows the power of Your name
May Your healing flow through us.
4. May we sing a song of joy to the nations,
A song of praise to the peoples of the earth
Till the whole world rings with praises of Your name
May Your song be sung through us.
5. May Your kingdom come to the nations,
Your will be done in the peoples of the earth
Till the whole world knows that Jesus Christ is Lord
May Your kingdom come in us, may Your kingdom come in us,
May Your kingdom come on earth.

© 1986 Integrity's Hosanna! Music (Admin. by Integrity Music)
Used by permission CCLI 509237

They Missed It!

Bible Reading:

- John 7:14-18

Not until halfway through the festival did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach. The Jews there were amazed and asked, "How did this man get such learning without having been taught?"

Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from the one who sent me. Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. Whoever speaks on their own does so to gain personal glory, but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him."

- John 7:28,29

Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, "Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own authority, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, but I know him because I am from him, and he sent me."

Message: "They Missed It"

Imagine with me the situation with Jesus just before the Bible reading above. He is keeping a relatively low profile in Galilee, which is about 100 kilometres north of Jerusalem. Previous visits to Jerusalem had put him firmly in the bad books of the religious authorities there but raised the curiosity of the people who had differing views about him. In fact, it was dangerous for him to go to Jerusalem because there were plans to kill him. Enter his brothers. Whose side were they on? They were keen for him to go for the Feast of the Tabernacles and probably keen to see what would happen if he stirred the pot again. But Jesus wasn't going to march to the beat of their drum, he was only interested in walking in the will of his Father. So, Jesus said, "Not yet for me. But you go." And he stayed in Galilee.

Now let's travel the 100 kilometres and have a look at what's happening in Jerusalem. That distance we could now travel in the morning, spend the day there and be home for tea, but it would have been three- or four-days travel if you were walking. The Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated to remember God's provision when they wandered in the wilderness and lived in tents. It was a joyous occasion held after harvest with lots of singing and dancing and processions and sacrifices. The processions involved carrying candles to celebrate the light that God brings. As they marched around the temple, they took water from the pool of Siloam and poured it out near the altar, perhaps on the steps of the temple symbolising the river flowing from the temple in Ezekiel's vision. And in every spare space, and covering the surrounding hills, we would see hundreds, even thousands, of shelters where the visitors to Jerusalem ate and slept. What an occasion! And in the middle of all the week's fun and celebration we would hear whispered conversations saying, "Where is he?", whispered disagreements about whether he was a good bloke or whether he was a deceiver, scammer or a trickster. Whispered because of fear of the priests, scribes and Pharisees.

They Missed It!

And then, about halfway through the week of celebrations, Jesus quietly slips into the city. No fanfare. No “big noting”. No “going public” as his brothers were suggesting. He didn't hide though. He went straight to the temple courts and began teaching. Wouldn't that have brought a crowd! And the overwhelming reaction was amazement. Although they called him Rabbi, Jesus' CV did not have anything about graduating from a rabbinical school where he would be taught about the Jewish scriptures. So, where did the depth of his knowledge, his understanding, and his teaching come from?

Simply put, his teaching came not from himself but from God who sent him. That doesn't seem too radical, does it? But the implications, there in the temple in Jerusalem, were enormous. By saying he was sent (and he repeats it several times in John 6 and 7), he is really saying he is the Messiah, whose name means anointed by God and sent to earth with a purpose to save the people. Confusion reigns! If he is the Messiah, how come the religious authorities, who know all about these things, aren't out there talking him up? And then he says he is from God, indicating that he is God, equal to God! What?! Here is this bloke walking amongst us, from Galilee of all places, and he is God?!

Add to this that they have seen amazing miracles. On a previous visit to Jerusalem, he had healed a man lame from birth, and he picked up his mat and walked - on the Sabbath! - so Jesus was in trouble for that, and to make matters worse he told them they were wrong about the law. Embarrassingly, he knows the law, and its purpose, better than the Pharisees who were the local experts and who were holed up elsewhere perhaps not willing to engage in debate with Jesus in front of the crowd. Jesus pointed out that they performed circumcisions on the Sabbath (if the 8th day was the Sabbath), and that was making the child whole, by affirming the covenant with God, and yet they complained when he made someone whole!

Decision time! Jesus had explained and demonstrated who he was. The evidence, the truth, was staring them in the face. Now was the opportunity to decide whether he was the Son of God, the Messiah, for whom they had long waited, the Son of the God that they were there in Jerusalem to worship, celebrate and praise and thank, for a whole week. BUT THEY MISSED IT! I wonder how many of that crowd, some of whom were impressed enough to think perhaps he could be the Messiah, were back six months later, standing in another crowd not far from the temple, and shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

And I wonder if I was at the Feast of Tabernacles and listening to him, would I have missed it? In the midst of all the fun, the singing, the worship, the feasting, the tradition, the much-loved annual event, would I have missed recognising the Son of God, the Messiah?

We can still do it today. Even though we may have personally established that Jesus is Saviour, that we are in God's Kingdom, we can be caught up in the trappings of worship, in the pageantry of traditional Christian events, and in the routine of church life with its meetings and rosters. Regardless of how long we have been followers of Jesus and stalwarts of our church, God still has a refreshing, renewing, challenging, life changing word or message for each of us.

They Missed It!

In Jerusalem some had to confect a story to avoid listening to Jesus. “He has a demon!” they said. Well, you wouldn't want to take any notice of someone with a demon, would you? Some gave up listening when Jesus didn't satisfy their desire for another miracle. Does our faith rely on the next spectacular event to keep our interest? Jesus at various times was extremely popular and it would be good to be in the crowd and be seen with him. Not so easy though when what he said about himself made him extremely unpopular. The “Hosanna” crowd became the “Crucify him” crowd. They missed what Jesus was saying to them. Do we miss what God is saying to us when being a Christian affects our popularity, even to the point of being hated for what we stand for? When Jesus hung on the cross with his last vestiges of dignity and popularity gone, when he was fulfilling the very purpose for which God sent him, when he was being who he said he was, the Messiah, most missed it! Perhaps the centurion at the foot of the cross didn't. He seemed to understand that this was the Son of God. His mother wouldn't have missed it as she stood in the crowd. She had been pondering these things in her heart for over 30 years. And John, standing there with her, would no doubt have put two and two together from all he had learned over three years, and eventually recorded in the gospel we are reading. But most missed it.

It may seem astonishing that so many missed it when we read all they were told. But we too have many ways God speaks to us. There is the reading of God's word in worship, and by ourselves, the exposition of his word from the pulpit, Holy Communion, the answers to prayer, the miracles in our and others lives, the small voice of the Holy Spirit in our mind, the dreams and visions, the love and testimony and advice from others. And there are probably other ways that God has spoken to you. God our Father desires to speak into our lives, to care for us, to guide us, to admonish us, and to bring us into maturity in our faith. DON'T MISS IT!

Song: MHB 88 (Charles Wesley)

1. We know, by faith we surely know, the Son of God is come,
Is manifested here below, and makes our hearts His home:
To us He hath, in gracious love, an understanding given,
To recognise Him from above, the Lord of earth and heaven.
2. The self-existing God supreme, our Saviour we adore,
Fountain of life eternal, Him we worship evermore:
Out of His plenitude receive ineffable delight,
And shall through endless ages live triumphant in His sight.

© public domain

Benediction

May the Lord open your ears so you can hear him. May he be in your heart and mind so you can understand. May he give you strength to follow where he leads you. And may there be peace wherever his leading takes you. Amen

This service was prepared by Ron Tiller, HopeNet SA