

WEEKLY SERMON

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Who are you?

John 1, 6-8 and 19-28

'Who are you?' is a question that we all face regularly. Whether it is when we check into a hotel or appear at the doctors for an appointment or when we are interviewed for a new job.

It's a question that can be answered on many levels: for some, we can simply say our name. 'I am Calum Crombie' is normally enough to identify myself for a doctor's appointment, but when I am being interviewed that isn't enough. I need to provide more information; to let those interviewing me know more about who I am and the job that I would do for them. They want to know my qualifications, my skills, what inspires and enthuses me. They need to know if I will fit in with their team, if I will provide something that they don't currently have.

When we start a new job the scrutiny about who we are gets more intense. Our new co-workers want to get to know what makes us tick. As friendships develop they get to learn our family situation, our hobbies, what we like to do outside of work, what we do to relax and unwind.

John the Baptist faces this sort of scrutiny from a crowd of religious leaders in the gospel reading today: 'Who are you John?' they say.

John replies firstly with who he is not: 'I am not the messiah', 'I am not Elijah', and 'I am not the prophet!'

Unfulfilled, the priests and Levites push for more, 'Who are you? Let us have an answer ... what do you say about yourself?'

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'make straight the way of the Lord,'" still didn't really answer the question, although he linked himself directly with prophecy from the Old Testament.

Even when he is challenged further, John determinedly responds by saying who he isn't.

John as a person always points away from himself, 'to the one who coming after him', the person of Jesus. Who John is, is someone who points unashamedly at Jesus.

This is the very nature of his character, his essence. As we travel through Advent, we look forward to the one who is to come, but perhaps we should take a lesson from John the Baptist. Maybe we should be looking at ourselves and how much our lives are pointing to Jesus.

Who are we? People whose lives reflect Jesus.

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