

"I, the one speaking to you, am he" John chapter 4 verse 26

In the brilliant animated film "The Incredibles", Mister Incredible, living a secret life as a normal person, uses his incredible strength one day to lift up his car with one hand. Unknown to him a small child is watching, sitting on his trike. The next day he returns home from work to find the same child watching him intently. "What are you doing there, kid?" he asks. "Waiting for something amazing to happen", the child replies.

Fans of the film will probably tell me I've got some of the details wrong, but that was the essence of it.

Life can be full of unrealised promise sometimes. Things we were hoping for and even expecting which either didn't come about or were disappointing when they did come; adverts promising that products will change our lives when they clearly can't; people in all walks of life making great claims who ultimately don't live up to them. All these things and more are very familiar to us.

The Jewish people were also waiting for a promise. The promise of a saviour, who would restore the Jewish nation. Jesus claimed to be that person, but only a minority of the nation he came to recognised him as such.

You see, the other problem with promises and expectations is that we invariably have assumptions about what their fulfilment will look like. Then, when it looks different, we either say that it has failed, or that it is not the thing we were waiting for at all. That's one of the reasons that people rejected Jesus, and still reject him today. Another is that they realise that, if they follow him, he is going to expect them to submit to his governance and be ready to make radical changes in their lives. They like the idea of Jesus, especially the idea of his judgment of sin, but by that they mean everybody else's sin, not theirs.

When we come to Christ, we come on his terms, not ours.

Prayer

Father, like all of humanity, I naturally tend towards independence and self determination, and instinctively judge others according to my own standards. Please so work in my heart so that I will come to submit all my life to your governance, care and guidance, and allow you to set the agenda for my life. In Jesus' name, amen.

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