**Introduction**

* Introduce self
* Emmanuel has been going through Matthew for a while
  + Find all previous online
  + Had a break in Matthew and Ruth
  + Pick up again in Matthew chapter 12 now (read passage?)

**Jesus demands a response**

* Place yourself in the role of an Israelite in this story
  + Brought up in the Jewish tradition
    - Knowledge of the law, prophets
  + Something is happening in Israel
    - First you hear about JtB
      * Causing a stir
      * Opposes the religious leaders – the Pharisees and Sadducees
    - But JtB talks about another one, someone called Jesus
  + Stories start circulating about what this guy Jesus is doing
    - Travelling through Galilee area, teaching, saying that God’s kingdom has arrived, doing amazing healings
      * You don’t know what’s true, what’s just rumour, but these stories keep coming
      * New people, new places, new miracles, new teachings
        + A man with leprosy
        + The servant of a Roman centurion
        + He’s calmed a storm and cast out demons
        + Incredible stories of a man being lowered through a roof and being healed

And at that time even claiming to forgive sins

knowing the thoughts of the Pharisees

* + - New teachings - although not new teachings – there are links to all you’ve been taught growing up
      * Sermon on the mount?
    - People are making connections to OT scriptures
    - Difference in the way that he teaches – different to the Pharisees who have always been the most spiritual people, to be respected most highly
  + Recently the stories of what he’s teaching have become more and more confusing
    - He’s calls judgement on the towns he’s spent his time on
    - He even claims that whoever sees him, sees God.
      * Either this guy is crazy, or he is incredibly special.
  + And then you hear that he’s in the next town
    - This man you’ve heard so much about
    - This man who does amazing things
    - This man who says amazing things
    - So you pack up your things, you knock on your neighbour’s door, you walk to the next town and make your way to the synagogue
  + As you arrive there’s already a crowd gathered to see this man, this Jesus
    - The crowd is made up of all sorts of people
      * Regular Israelites like yourself – fisherman, farmers, craftsmen, stone masons, tailors
      * But to one side in their own group are the Pharisees
    - At front are a few men
      * Hear from accent they’re locals
      * Not clear which one is Jesus – ask the people around you
    - Commotion starts
      * Bring forward a man – clearly something wrong with him
      * Realise he’s the beggar from outside the synagogue
        + He’s been blind and unable to speak
        + People say it happened after he was taken over by a demon, and although others have tried to cast it out they’ve never succeeded
    - Bring him to one of the guys at the front and just like that the man healed
      * Maybe… {word, touched, mud}
      * Suddenly it’s clear which one is Jesus
      * Clear something incredible has happened
        + Before blind and mute. Now seeing and speaking.
      * Amazing. Astounding. Astonishing.
        + Not sure whether to believe your own eyes
    - People around you are asking “is this the promised one”
      * The son of David
      * You begin to think
    - Pharisees are whispering that it must be the devil at work
      * “Beelzebul”
      * Suddenly there’s a doubt in your mind
        + What if he’s actually evil
    - At first you didn’t believe any of it, but as you’ve looked in at Jesus as you’ve seen this there’s no denying it – even Jesus greatest opponents, the religious leaders, don’t try and deny it
      * And so you’re left to decide is the man who does such incredible things and speaks of joy and judgement in the kingdom of God, who has called people to follow him at a cost to themselves, who (…)
        + Is he the greatest thing to ever happen in your life, to ever happen on earth, to ever happen in the history of mankind
        + Or is he evil, someone who should never be given a platform from which to speak someone who should be locked up
* This is the question which you as in the 1st century living in galilee are faced with
* And this is the question that we in the 21st century in Northstowe are faced with

**Come to Jesus**

**Come to Jesus without shame or fear**

**Come to Jesus without shame or fear and be transformed**