

Luke Chapter 2 v 39 - 52

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[0 : 00] ...the gospel by speaking about the one who was the Word. And he says this, He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made.

Without him nothing was made that has been made. Talking about Christ, the Son of God, came into this world to be our Saviour, but who is God, very God, truly God, who made all things, created all things, and yet became part of his own creation.

And the one that we're going to sing of now, who held the oceans in his hands, but also those same hands were nailed to a cross for us. Let's stand and sing.

Who has held the oceans in his hands? Coming up on the screen. Let's continue to adore and to worship our Lord Jesus as we pray together.

Let us all pray. As we come to you, our great and awesome God, as we come to seek your face and to draw near to you, we thank you that we can come with adoration.

[1 : 17] We do come, Lord, as rightly so, with a sense of awe and wonder, a sense of fear, because you are great and marvellous, holy and just and true.

You are a God who is not to be trifled with or treated with contempt, but you are a God who is high and exalted and lifted up. But, Lord, we thank you that those who know you as our Heavenly Father, those who know the wonder of sins forgiven through Jesus Christ, your Son, and those who have been born again of your Spirit.

We come to adore you. We come, Lord, to declare and to bask in the love that you have for us and the love, O Lord, you've put in our hearts for you. We come, O Lord, and gaze upon you, Lord, with a sense of wonder and delight and joy.

O Lord, we come to you, the God who is our friend, our Redeemer, our Saviour. Yes, our Heavenly Father. Lord, this wasn't always the case.

There was a time when we knew nothing of you or so little about you that we didn't understand. We didn't grasp. Lord, we were ignorant and foolish. We did our own thing and went our own way.

[2 : 31] And, O Lord, that sinful nature that still impedes us, Lord, causes us to stumble again and again. But we thank you that by your grace and your goodness you have broken into our lives.

And now we know you. We know you for who you are. We don't know you completely, Lord, because you are so great, so vast, that, Lord, we will spend all eternity enjoying, learning, and experiencing you.

But what we know of you, what you've revealed to us in your word and by your Holy Spirit, causes us to adore you, to adore you as the God of great grace, the God of great mercy, the God of great love, the God who came to us when we could never get to you, the God who, yes, created all things, yet became part of his creation, the God who stooped down so lowly when he was born at that babe in Bethlehem, when he grew up as that young man and as he came to minister and to live amongst us.

Thank you that you're not a God who is an ivory tower, standoffish God, but the God who has come to us. Come to us to reveal yourself to us, to make yourself known, but more than that, you've come, Lord, to save us.

You've come to reconcile us to yourself. You've come to restore to us the blessings and joy of knowing the living God. We thank you that those who know those joys, Lord, those who have experienced that grace and that forgiveness for sin, Lord, we thank you that it's our experience day by day, not just on a Sunday, but through the week, moment by moment, you never leave us nor forsake us.

[4 : 18] But we ask that especially this morning, as we gather together in obedience to your word, as we gather together, Lord, Lord, that you bless us and do us good. Would you speak with us and

meet with us?

Would you help us? Would you take away from our eyes those scales which still dim our sight? Would you remove the hardness from our hearts that still make us stubbornly resistant to submitting to your will?

And Lord, would you fill us afresh with your Holy Spirit that we might worship and delight and rejoice in you, not just now, but Lord, in all the days to come. Speak to us, we pray.

Meet with us, we ask. For we bring these prayers to you because you first came to us in Jesus Christ, your Son. Amen. Let's turn together in our Bibles to the Gospel of Luke.

Luke and chapter 2. We've been started before Christmas, this Gospel, and that was helpful in leading us up to celebrating the birth of our Saviour.

[5 : 24] And now we're still in his infancy and childhood. And we're going to look at verses 41 through to 52. So Luke and chapter 2, that's page 1028.

Page 1028, verses 41 to 52, to the end of the chapter. Last week we looked at the events surrounding Simeon and Anna as Mary and Joseph took Christ to the temple for the first time to bring their offering to the Lord and the wonderful prophecy, the wonderful promises that the Holy Spirit gave them through Simeon and Anna.

So let's read together then from verse 41. Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover.

When he was 12 years old, they went up to the festival according to the custom. After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it.

Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him.

[6 : 41] After three days, they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers.

When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.

Why were you searching for me? He asked. Didn't you know I had to be in my father's house? But they did not understand what he was saying to them. Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them.

But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man. If you'd like to turn back then to Luke and to chapter 2, where you read those events in the life, the early life, the young life of Jesus Christ.

I wonder if you could pick one moment in your own childhood that stands out as probably the most important, the most life-changing event.

[7 : 57] I wonder what it would be. Don't necessarily have to think about that now. Maybe it was that very first day that you started school and the impression it had upon you and the teacher that was there.

It may have been that very sad event when perhaps your parents separated or told you they were getting divorced. It may have been when you passed your 11 plus and went to the grammar school. It may have been when you had an accident and broke your arm. It may be all sorts for each one of us. It will be one event, one particular circumstance or situation.

It changed the direction of your life. It had a vital effect upon where you lived or the path that you were going to take, whether it be into sport or into something else.

Our childhood shapes us more than any other time in our lives. It's in our childhood that our character is formed. It's when our likes and dislikes begin to be shaped.

[9 : 06] We begin to reveal ourselves for the sort of person we are to those around about us. It's when we're moulded more particularly by our peers, our friends, our family, when we're influenced and more easily influenced.

Those of us who are parents and perhaps grandparents here need to recognise and never underestimate the importance of the time that our children are under our care.

particularly as Christians, our example influences their view of God, their understanding of faith, what it means to follow Jesus.

If we are ourselves cool or half-hearted in our Christian faith and life, then our children will see that, pick that up, and themselves be indifferent and disinterested.

But if we are passionate, if we are excited, if we are committed about the things of Christ, then that too will have a very strong, positive effect upon our children and perhaps even our grandchildren.

[10:18] Jesus' parents, his mother, his stepfather, Joseph, were people of real faith. They were serious about the things of God.

They took following God and his commandments seriously. And so there in verse 41, we're told, every year, Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover.

That was no easy thing. They lived in Nazareth, as you know, which was in the north of the country. A round trip from Nazareth, Jerusalem, and incorporating the feast of Passover and the week of the days of unleavened bread, would have taken Joseph away from his work for at least three weeks. It's a good five days walk down and five days back and the week in between. It was no simple thing, no easy thing for them to be faithful. It was costly.

It was difficult. But God had commanded that every year, his people should celebrate the Passover and they did that. Of all those Passover festivals that they had been to and shared with as a family, there was one that stood out, that stands out in Mary's mind.

[11:33] We know that because we're told there in verse 51 that his mother treasured all these things in her heart. This event in the life when the family went to Jerusalem stood out to her and clearly from her it was passed on ultimately to Luke who records it for us.

As you're aware, it's the only event in the childhood of Jesus that we are told about. The only record of between his birth and his beginning of ministry age 30.

So it must be important. If it's included here for us, it's something important. It's something that we're to take notice of as we are every episode in the life of Christ.

God the Holy Spirit has led Luke to include it here. Now, of course, we could look at it on a purely human level and we could say, well, of course, there are lessons for us to draw as parents that we're not to be neglectful of our children to make sure we know where they are and not take it for granted that they're, as they did, that they were in the traveling party.

Or on the very simple level, we could speak to our young people and tell them how naughty it is to run away and to scare their parents into worrying about them, but rather to learn the lesson that Jesus shows us at the end where he was obedient to his parents and how important that is for children to do that.

[13:03] Because that isn't what this matter is about. To look at this unique record in just that very earthly way, that very simplistic way, is really to miss out on the whole reason why I believe God has given us this little peep into this window into the life of Jesus as a young boy of 12 years old.

We're meant to see, I believe, that even here at the age of 12 the Lord Jesus' life was on course to fulfill the mission for which God had sent him into the world, the mission for which he was born.

And I believe there's two areas here that I want us to consider briefly this morning that in one sense foreshadow the ministry of Jesus, that look forward to the man he would become and the work that he would encounter and the things that he would do.

They're already present in his life here in that smaller degree but in that clear way. And the first thing I want us to see is that even at the age of 12 the Lord Jesus Christ has a single-mindedness to do the will of his Father in heaven.

A single-mindedness particularly as we see there in his response in verse 49. Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house? Well as far as everybody was concerned Joseph was his father not in the mind of Jesus.

[14:27] In the mind of Jesus his Father's house was the temple and his Father was God the Heavenly Father. Single-mindedness to do his Father's will.

Now not many of us knew what we wanted to do with our lives when we were 12 years old or younger. Of course you do meet some children occasionally and you say to them what do you want to be when you grow up?

And already in their minds they've got this sort of idea I'm going to be a nurse or I'm going to train to be a doctor or I want to be a pilot or if you'd have asked me when I was not 12 but a bit younger than that I want to be a cowboy.

I didn't quite achieve that. Though rounding you lot up can be a bit of a challenge at times I must admit. A shepherd that's not too far away is it from a pastor?

But the majority of us either form an idea of what we're going to be near the end of our education when we've taken certain qualifications we've got an idea there or some of us in reality just sort of drift into the career or the work that we are engaged in without any real planning and determination. [15:36] But here's Jesus he's 12 years old but he's self-aware not only of who he is but of what his life's purpose was to be.

And he expected his parents to understand that as well when he says why are you searching for me? Didn't you know? Didn't you know I should be about my father's house?

Now they'd lost him for three days hadn't they? I think it's fair to say and most commentators think those three days include the one day that they travelled were travelling home the one day when they had to travel back to Jerusalem and then the third day was the day when they found him in the courts.

Jerusalem wasn't a particularly large city. And they found him there in the temple. And he was there with teachers.

We're told in verse 46 after three days they found him in the temple courts sitting among the teachers listening to them and asking them questions and it was very common for Jewish rabbis and teachers to have little classes in the temple courts where students could come and learn from them.

[16:47] We know that the Apostle Paul was a student of the Rabbi Gamaliel and he tells us that later on in Acts 22. And so when Jesus was missing he was, we can put it in one sense, in theological school.

He was engaged in the things of God. Again, I'm sure some of us have had the experience when our children were young of mislaying them when we were out shopping or doing something else. And of course we usually found them in the sweet aisle or we found them amongst the toys. Something had caught their eye, something that was interesting to them. I haven't yet met anybody whose child wandered off because they wanted to get back to school.

Jesus did. He wanted to be there in his father's house as he calls it engaging in discussion about the Lord his God, concerned about the things of following God, obeying God, living for God. That seems to be the very sense of what was happening there in verse 46. Listening and asking questions. Searching and seeking to know the will of God for his life and to be obedient to his heavenly father.

[18:03] As Jesus says later on in his ministry as he's a full grown adult he talks about my father is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.

He was one who was consumed with and lived for doing the father's will. Later on in his ministry too John records about how he went into the temple and drove out the money changers and the traders of the animals and he says you've turned my father's house into a den of robbers.

The very goal of Jesus' life was to glorify his heavenly father to do his father's will to bring about God's purposes in saving men and women that they should worship him as the true and living God. Single mindedness of Jesus to do his father's will is a challenge to us. This young boy of 12 challenges me and challenges you.

Do we share anything of that mindset that he had even then when somebody was to ask you or to ask me what's the goal of your life? What is it that you are living for?

[19:26] Could we say it's to please my heavenly father? Could we say it's to do God's will? Or do we find ourselves in fact distracted from that?

You see we are disciples of Jesus we are followers of Jesus we are those who are Christians little Christ if I can put it that way we are to be like him we are to bear his likeness his image that's what it means to be a Christian it's somebody who resembles Jesus who bears his likeness in this world his mindset in this world we are those who have received of his spirit within us that's how we become a Christian not by going to church or being a nice person or doing good or outward things primarily but having our spirits transformed by the spirit of Christ Paul writes to the Christians in Rome and he says if anyone does not have the spirit of Christ they do not belong to Christ and therefore if the spirit of Christ dwells in me and he dwells in you as believers then there must be an element of our lives that says my goal is to do the Father's will I want to be about the Father's work my desire is to be like my older brother

Jesus is there a family resemblance between me and him between you and him do I resemble him am I like him am I following in his footsteps am I single minded or am I actually half hearted half

minded cruising as it were through life Jesus was single minded even at the age of twelve to do his father's will the second thing I think that we see here perhaps a little more subtly but it's certainly clear is that Jesus' sufferings begin Jesus' sufferings begin even at the age of twelve with him being misunderstood notice there verse 50 Jesus speaks to his mother and his stepfather but they did not understand what he was saying to them they didn't understand what he was talking about it wasn't because he was using texting language as some of our young people do when they speak to us or send us a message or whatever and you go it's a foreign language to me

I don't understand youth speak no it's not that at all is it they just didn't understand they didn't grasp they didn't get hold of the fact that he was about his father's work these are the very first words aren't they verse 49 very first words that we have recorded of the person of the son of God living in this world we take his words seriously we take his words as important they're searching words they're challenging words they're life changing words and these words of Jesus reveal his surprise that Mary and Joseph did not grasp what was going on and we can understand their perplexity we can understand their anxiety of course we can we've all had that when our child isn't there who is one minute there at the right hand and then suddenly they're gone we can sense that fear and for them three days that must have been driving them up the wall be a pretty thoughtless inconsiderate parent who didn't worry in a similar situation to that but when

Jesus is told of their worry and anxiety his response is not to calm their fears isn't it when Mary says son why have you treated all this father and I have been searching anxiously for you most of our children would go what are you worried about I'm fine there's nothing for you to worry about I'm okay he doesn't do that he actually questions them why were you searching for me didn't you realise I had to be there's almost a gentle rebuke in what he says even at the age of 12 to them surely you above all people should have known that where I would be and what I'd be doing why does he presume that why does he surprise well we've looked at it haven't we in chapters 1 and 2 Mary particularly and Joseph too they've had these angelic visits telling them out the child is to be born that he's the Messiah he's the son of God he's come to do this great saving work even from the very lips of Mary she sung about what God is going to do through her son and then just last week but for them 12 years ago there was the meeting in the temple and Simeon comes and takes Jesus in his arms this babe and says here's the one who's going to lift up and pull down here's the one who's a light for the Gentiles here's the one that

[24 : 20] God's prepared for salvation if anybody should have got the picture if anybody should have expected Jesus to behave differently from all the other boys and girls and from all their other children as well it should have been Mary and Joseph had she forgotten those promises had everyday life in Nazareth become so normalized that for the past 12 years Mary had just slipped into a sense of complacency in respect to Jesus he's just a really good son so proud of him but somehow the idea that he is the son of God living and walking amongst me and amongst us has been lost there surely is an earthly lesson isn't it in that sense can't we be complacent with our Christian faith and the fact that Jesus is with us day by day we can become complacent it's almost an ordinary thing we're surprised when God calls us or speaks to us or challenges us or meets with us or we're just not expecting it just not expecting it's just we plot along through life and we're

Christians and it just goes on and we shouldn't expect God to do miraculous things or incredible things or surprising things of course we should we're engaging with the living God who created the world we're in relationship with the one who turns lives upside down we're followers of his and servants of his but we're not told why Mary and Joseph didn't understand but they didn't understand they didn't get it sadly the truth is they didn't get it for a long time in fact even when we look at the ministry of Jesus later on we're surprised to see that even by the age of 30s he begins to heal the sick and he begins to teach about the things of God even then they were confused and misunderstanding of who Jesus was back in Luke in chapter 3 we're told about

Jesus entered a house and again a crowd gathered so he and his disciples not able to eat when his family heard about this they went to take charge of him for they said he's out of his mind and who are his family well we're told who they were just later on in verse 31 Jesus mother and brothers arrived standing outside they sent someone in to call him they thought he he was acting peculiar and strange he's out of his mind as he's healing and as he's teaching as he's proclaiming it's not just his family is it that misunderstand him it doesn't end there the whole of his ministry on earth the whole of Jesus life was one long experience of suffering misunderstanding understanding when he went to Nazareth and he went to the synagogue and he begins to speak to them about the things of

God and about the things of the gospel the people turn to one another and they say to one another where did this man get this wisdom these miraculous powers isn't this the carpenter's son isn't his mother's name

Mary and aren't his brothers James Joseph Simon and Judas aren't all his sisters with us where did this man get all these things and they took offense at him they took offense at him he's just an ordinary bloke he's just somebody's grown up in our town they just didn't see that here was the son of God walking amongst them and as he stood and spoke and taught the only attitude was to say he's got high ideas hasn't he he thinks he's above himself he's too big for his boots of course we know of those who opposed him didn't he those who are his enemies the Pharisees and religious leaders not surprisingly they didn't understand him they said you work for the devil aren't we right to assume that Beelzebub the devil works through you but probably what I mean must have been the most painful for him was that those disciples those 12 those men that he chose those they took under his wing that he taught and lived with day by day even his closest friends failed to grasp Peter speaks to

Jesus when Jesus says I've got to go to Jerusalem and I've got to die and suffer and rise again but it says no that's never going to happen with you Jesus has to rebuke him and say get behind me Satan you've got the thoughts of man not the thoughts of God must have been a lonely furrow wasn't it a lonely path for him or everywhere he turned people just thought he was mad or a demon possessed or he was wrong he was the only sane person in the universe the only sane person who actually knew the reality of who God is and who he was and what his ministry and his life was about his disciples didn't fully grasp that until after his resurrection Luke in chapter 18 we're told the disciples did not understand any of this meaning was hidden from them they did not know what he was talking about only after his resurrection only after

[30 : 14] Jesus had been raised again probably after the coming of the Holy Spirit did they actually understand John and chapter 12 at first his disciples did not understand this only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him that they had done these things to him it seems to me that in the life of the Lord Jesus and in fact in the life of the believer these two things are inseparable to be sold out for God means to be misunderstood by others to be single-mindedly seeking to do good God's will means that we will be misinterpreted slandered misunderstood dear friends as Christians we shouldn't be surprised that when we seek to talk about our Christian faith to others they give us a sideways look they take a step back they're indifferent sadly that's not just the case is it with those who are of the world it can even be within our own families as well it can even be amongst our own church as well because we live for Christ because we're sold out and committed to him and we're looking for the things of eternity the heavenly things the things that last then we are different to the rest of humanity that lives for the material the temporary the now the here these are the things that motivate these things that drive them these things that guide them and lead them and shape them and fashion them but for the Christian it's something different and it can be hard to be faithful hard to keep on going with so little encouragement that's why we do need one another as Christians that's what we do need to urge one another on in the faith that's what we do need to say to one another how are you doing in your walk with Christ are you following him closely are you living for him daily we need that encouragement because around about us there's so much discouragement hard to be faithful and even as a young man 12 years old as Jesus knew that he knew that he knew that his father's will was the most important thing in his life yet there came the beginning of that opposition the beginning of misunderstanding right in his own home but what do we read rather than turning away rather than becoming embittered rather than becoming resentful verse 51 he went to Nazareth and was obedient to them because he knew that was his father's will his father in heaven one of the ten commandments is to honor your father and mother that's what he did he kept the commandments of his heavenly father and he was faithful to obey his parents for 18 years we're in silence again aren't we except we know that he's not turned off the course this event in his life does not redirect him into thinking well I should give up all these ideas and thoughts of being the very messiah and the savior of the world but rather we find there in verse 52 that his character is shaped and fashioned to prepare him for the ministry that he has the work that's been assigned to him by God the father let me urge you dear friends let me encourage you dear believers whether you are 12 14 older younger nearing the end of the journey keep pressing on keep on going don't be discouraged by attitudes around about you pursue what God has begun in you for some of you you're at the very start of your lives the start of your usefulness

for God don't be distracted into thinking that life has other purposes which are greater than that set your face to follow him and remember this that you're not as it were following a path which you've got to cut through for yourself you're following in the footsteps of Christ your master and your friend he's gone before whatever we face whatever difficulties whatever handicaps whatever problems he's gone before and he's experienced them and more than that he is there to help and support us whenever we need him in Hebrews in chapter 4 the writer urges us to remember Jesus the great high priest the one who is in heaven for us who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses our struggles we've one who's been tempted in every way just as we are but he didn't sin so therefore let us come to the throne of grace confidently that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need keep going keep on young old follow the way of Jesus let's sing together our final hymn reminding us of Jesus our friend reminding us of what it means to follow him 225 I found a friend oh such a friend he loved me air I knew him my father
DC now may the God of peace who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus that great shepherd of the sheep equip you with with everything good for doing his will.
And may he work in us what is pleasing to him through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.