

## I Must Be About My Fathers Business

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Friends, it's a joy and a privilege once again to be back amongst old friends. It's hard to believe that five years ago just now I was preparing to come here on my placement.

A lot of water has passed under the bridge since then, both for yourselves and for myself, but we rejoice today that the work of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, it's the same and it continues.

We pray indeed as we send our regards from Park as you look forward to this new chapter in your experience as a congregation that you'll know much blessing from the Lord.

We're going to worship God together and we're going to hear some words being sung from Sing Psalms. Sing Psalms and Psalm 100. This is from the Sing Psalms version and we're going to hear it to the tune Golden Hill.

Psalm 100.

[ 1 : 19 ] Shout to the Lord with joy, all who earth belong. Adore the Lord with joyful hearts and come to him in song.

Know that the Lord is God, he made us as his own. We are the sheep for whom he cares, his people, his alone.

Enter his gates with praise, his courts with thankfulness. Your praises gladly sing to him,  
his name forever bless.

For God the Lord is good, his love is ever sure, his constant truth and faithfulness through every age endure.

[illegible]

[ 3 : 27 ] Send I bail bail bail Send I bail bail bail Send I bail bail bail Your righteousness, how we sing to Him, this day forever rest.

For God the Lord is good, His love is never true, His constant love and faithfulness, through every good and true.

Friends, let's join together in prayer. Let's pray. We give thanks, O Lord, this day for the blessing that is ours to gather in a way like this, to come and to once again be reminded of your love to your people, a love that we can see manifest even in the creation around us, a creation that so wonderfully speaks of a being that is higher than us.

And so as we come for these few short moments, as a people with a desire to worship your great and your glorious name, we pray that indeed your Holy Spirit might be in our midst.

That as your word is read and sung and preached, that it would be accompanied by your Spirit. That your Spirit would apply it mightily to our hearts and to our lives, that this would not be merely a word that makes its way to our head, but not to our heart.

[ 6 : 14 ] Rather that we would seek at all times to be doers as well as hearers of this word.

And as we reflect upon this privilege that is ours, we give thanks for this blessing of indeed even having a desire to come together.

We know that there are many different things that we could be doing on our Lord's Day morning, but yet we have come aside. We have come to share in the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ and we pray that this might even be the day where we share in it afresh.

That we may even share in it for the first time if we are yet to come and to call you Father. We live in a world that is so unpredictable, a world that is so full of pain and anguish and turmoil.

A world that is so full of pain and anger, a world that is so full of pain and anger. A world whereby in many ways we cannot trust. Yet how we give thanks for the unshakable promises of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 7 : 34 ] Promises that stand even in and through the most difficult of trials. Promises that are the same yesterday, today and will be forevermore.

So we pray for this dear congregation as they seek to open this new chapter in their experience in the weeks that lie ahead. That they would be mindful of this reality.

That they would go forth in the strength of the Lord and the power of his might. That they would by faith lay hold of these promises and the knowledge that you are a God who does all things well.

You are a God who has a purpose for his people. A purpose even for this community. That we would one and all by faith have that spirit of expectation.

That those whom you call, you will equip. So we pray particularly at this time for Thomas and for Euna and for the family.

[ 8 : 39 ] We give thanks for them and we pray that you would in your grace and mercy make this transition as seamless as possible.

Not only for them but also for the congregation. And that for your glory, for your honour, that indeed this would be a marriage made in heaven.

United in purpose. United with that desire to serve you and to see your name high and lifted up.

We know that this is man's greatest need even during these days of pandemic. As we see people struggling to come to terms with their lives as the various props that they are so used to leaning upon are taken away.

We pray that even during these days and as we God willing arise from these days. That we would do so with a fresh sense of who you are and what we are called to as your people.

[ 9 : 46 ] And that in having this renewed vigour and zeal that we would seek all the more to go out into our communities and say, Come see a man who told me all things that ever I did.

Could this not be the Christ? That we would as it were from one beggar to another, show them where to get food. So that even as they find themselves, even if we are here today without Christ, as we find ourselves perhaps feeling submerged in our providence.

That we would be able to lean upon the one who cannot be shaken. That we would put our trust in the one who promises never to leave us, never to forsake us.

Regardless of our circumstance, the one who is always there. And so we pray, O Lord, that you would be here with us this day. Truly that we would know something of your presence stirring us up from within.

As we receive the very breath of God into our souls. That it would be as manna from heaven leading us and guiding us all the more to that place whereby we worship.

[ 11 : 03 ] We pray, O Lord, for those who are again affected by the pandemic this time in our communities in various different ways. We pray for those who cannot be with us, but who would like to be.

We pray that you would in your mercy and your loving kindness take from them the many anxieties and fears that perhaps they may have. We pray for those who are unable to be with us for other reasons.

We give thanks, O Lord, for the progress that is being made at this time in this regard. For the fact that you have gifted men and women to indeed come up with this vaccine that we pray would bring an end to this pandemic.

How we long once again to sing your praises. How we long once again to, in a very real way, know that sense of oneness and community.

That nearness one with another. And so we pray not only for the healing of those who are suffering, but so that we might, as your people, be mobilized once again to fully worship your name.

[ 12 : 18 ] That this would come to an end. We pray for those, especially in India at this time, where we see cases accelerating day after day. That you would be with them also.

And that even in amidst these times of difficulty, they might be led to you as perhaps they ordinarily aren't led to you.

But perhaps even to other gods that you would lead them to you. And so that they would make sense of all of this, not through worldly eyes, but through the eyes that take us from time into the glorious realms of eternity.

Those spiritual eyes which enable us to see who Jesus is, why he died and what that means for us. And so we pray your blessing upon our time together today.

Forgive us for all our many sins. We confess that even as we've gathered here, we have sinned against you in thought and word and in action. We are inclined towards sin, but yet we praise your name that no matter how great that sin is, that greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world.

[ 13 : 35 ] And so we pray your blessing upon our time. And so forgive us, we ask and all we pray is in the precious name of Christ and for his sake. Amen. Well, it's lovely to see one or two young folk with us today.

Some old and new friends. Some of you seem very far away up there in the balcony. So I hope you can see and hear what it is I'm trying to say today.

What I'd like to do is just to share a little bit about what it is to know Jesus. How can we get to know Jesus?

It's the most important thing in life for us today to know Jesus. No matter what stories we know in the Bible, above everything else, the most important thing is for us to know Jesus.

And I'd like to just to show you how we can know Jesus through this one sheet of paper. Now, you'll have to bear with me because I've got a little bit of folding to do.

[ 14 : 40 ] So I'm just going to move the psalm book out of the way. And I'm going to start off by showing you how some people like to come to know Jesus, or at least how some people think they can come to know Jesus.

Perhaps even somebody in here today. So what I'm going to do is I'm going to make a fold in this. You can maybe try this at home later on yourselves. I'm just going to make one fold like that. And then another fold like this.

Maybe some of you have seen this before. Never mind, we can't be reminded often enough as to how we get to know Jesus. Now, who can tell me what this could look like?

Now, we need to add things to it for it to really look like what I'm hoping you think it can look like. But I'll give you a clue. This puts a roof. If you can tell me what this...

Just pop your hand up and I'll point at you because I can't see your faces. And you can maybe shout out what you think this looks like. Don't worry if the answer is wrong. It doesn't matter.

[ 15 : 56 ] That's how we learn. Any ideas? Oh, you're all very shy this morning. Well, this is supposed to look like a house. A house with a roof.

A house with a roof. Of course we would need windows and a door. Now, what we need to build a house is... What do we need to build a house? We need bricks to build a house.

Now, when people want to come to know Jesus, some people try not to build a house, but they try to build their lives in a way so that if they build their lives in a certain way, they'll get to know Jesus.

And so they have different kinds of bricks that they'll put into their lives so that their lives will be pleasing to God. Now, I'll tell you one or two of these different kinds of bricks.

One brick is this. Being nice to one another. Being nice to one another. People think, well, if I'm nice to my friends or if I'm nice to my neighbours, if I'm a helpful person, Jesus will be really, really pleased with me and I might get to know him better.

[ 17 : 16 ] And so that's one brick. And then another brick is this. People will say, well, if I come to church lots and lots and lots every week, morning and evening, I'll get to know Jesus better.

And then other people will say, well, if I read chunks of the Bible, chapter after chapter after chapter, I'll get to know Jesus like that.

And then other people might say, if I pray really long prayers with really long words, I'll then get to know Jesus. Now, all of these things, boys and girls, are really good and helpful.

And once we've got to know Jesus, these are things that we naturally want to do. Well, we don't have to have long prayers with long words, but these are things that we want to do.

But yet we're never going to get to know Jesus right in here by doing these things because we need so much more.

[ 18 : 23 ] I'm going to give you a clue what we need from this piece of paper. I'm going to fold it. I hope you're not feeling quite so shy now. I'm going to fold it like so.

There we go. Now, what have I got here?

What have I got here? Any ideas? Any ideas? It is, of course, a plane.

Does that mean that we can go down to the airport in Melbos, hop on a plane, and then if we go fly high enough in the sky, eventually we will get to Jesus?

Well, of course it doesn't mean that. And I know fine that none of you think it means that. But there's something about flying high in the sky.

[ 19 : 22 ] Hands up if you've ever been on a plane before. I've been on a plane. Yeah. And when you're in a plane, you look out the window and there's absolutely nothing holding you up.

There's no ropes at the top of the plane holding the plane up. The plane would appear just to be in the sky on its own being held up. And so there's one thing you need, and you can maybe ask your mums or dads or whoever you're with today for a wee hand in finding out this word.

There's one thing you need when you're in a plane that you also need to get to know Jesus really, really well. And it begins with F. Easy.

What is it? F. What do you need? You need to have... You need to have faith.

You need to have faith in the people who have designed the plane, first of all, that they knew what they were doing. You need to have faith in the person who's up at the front of the plane, who's flying the plane, that they know what they're doing.

[ 20 : 36 ] So you go and you sit in that plane, though many of us haven't done that for quite some time now. We hopefully will soon enough. But we have to have faith that whoever designed the plane, they knew what they're doing.

And all we do is we sit and we rest on the fact that we can't do anything but trust in others. Now that's what it is to come to know Jesus.

Yes, there are lots of good things we can do. But we have to, first of all, trust in Jesus that he knows what he's doing.

Why? Well, we come back to a bit of paper again. We live, do we not, in a world, and I think I said this in prayer, in a world that is so broken and torn, and lives that are so full of sin.

We're all full of sin, no matter how good we think we are. Our lives are all torn and jagged. And so we need Jesus.

[ 21 : 39 ] We need to have faith in Jesus. But how do we get to have faith in Jesus? Where do we need to come?

If I open this up, what are we going to find? I don't know if this has worked. What are we going to find? We are going to find the cross.

The cross of Jesus Christ. And so to have faith in Jesus, we need to come to the cross. Not the actual wooden cross itself, but what happened on the cross.

That Jesus Christ died for sinners like you and like me. And if we put our trust and our faith in him and him alone, not in all the good things that we do, all that follows on.

But if we put our trust in him and him alone, what he did on this cross, we will then come to know him. Not just in here, but also in here.

[ 22 : 42 ] I pray that all of us young and old would come back to the cross every single day. That's what we're all about. That's what this church building is here for.

It's all as a result of the cross. Without the cross, friends, we have nothing. So I pray that God will bless you these few thoughts.

And we're going to read now God's word. We're going to read God's word from Luke chapter 2. We're going to read the whole chapter together.

Luke chapter 2. Let us hear the word of God.

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. There was the first registration when Quirinius, the governor of Syria, and all went to be registered, each to his own town.

[ 24 : 18 ] And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear.

And the angel said to them, fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.

And this will be a sign for you. You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased.

[ 25 : 53 ] When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.

And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child.

And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

And when the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. As it is written in the law of the Lord, every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord.

[ 27 : 12 ] And to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord. A pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons. Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon.

And this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel. And the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

And he came in the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him according to the custom of the law, he took him in his arms and blessed God and said, Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace according to your word.

For my eyes have seen your salvation, that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.

And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel and for a sign that is opposed.

[ 28 : 38 ] And a sword will pierce through your own soul also, so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed. And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher.

She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, and then as a widow until she was 84.

She did not depart the temple, worshipping with fasting and prayer night and day. And coming up at that very hour, she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

And when they performed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom and favour, and the favour of God was upon him.

Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem.

[ 29 : 58 ] His parents did not know it. But supposing him to be in the group, they went a day's journey. But then they began to search for him amongst the relatives and acquaintances.

And when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. After three days, they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, Son, why have you treated us so?

Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress. And he said to them, Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my father's house?

And he did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart.

[ 31 : 14 ] And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favour with God and man.

Amen. And we can maybe, just for a short time today, think about the words that we have in verse 49. And he said to them, Why were you looking for me?

Did you not know that I must be in my father's house? Well, friends, as we think today of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, I wonder what immediately springs to our mind.

Of course, when we think of the life of Jesus, a life that was so full, much can spring to mind.

I've no doubt that over the years you've heard countless sermons recalling incidents within the life of Jesus.

[ 32 : 28 ] Sermons that have spoken of the various encounters that he's had. Sermons that have spoken of the miracles that he's performed.

Sermons that have even spoken of the parables that he spoke. And as we thought about just a minute ago, sermons that have taken us to that place.

And led us to think about his death and his resurrection. And when we think of all the detail that indeed is to be found in the life of Jesus, we'd be forgiven if we didn't know otherwise for thinking that this was detail that took place over many decades.

That all these different things happened over a long ministry, perhaps over 40, 50, 60 years. But yet we know that that's not the case.

The case, of course, laying aside Old Testament prophecy. All really that we read about regarding the life of Jesus. It's all crammed very much into three years.

[ 33 : 44 ] Three years. We don't really know much before what happened. Jesus began his earthly ministry, as it were, at the age of 30, till he died at the age of 33.

And scripture doesn't really tell us what happened in his life in that first 30 years. And of course, we're interested, are we not?

We would like to know what kind of a child Jesus was. We're interested to find out about how much he realized what was before him.

How did those around him treat him? Well, today we have a little glimmer of such information.

What we see here is an interruption into this silence, if you like, of the formative years of Jesus, the younger years of Jesus.

[ 34 : 50 ] An interruption that reveals to us something of even who he was at the age of 12.

Here he is approaching his teens. I don't know, perhaps, there are those of you here today who are 12 or 13 or not far off it.

Well, as we think about Jesus today, we're thinking about Jesus at the age of 12. And we see a revelation in this version, this section of this passage, that really paints a picture of what it was he had come to do.

Did you not know that I must be in my father's house? Now, different translations of the Bible, they interpret this slightly differently.

Some of you might know this verse as reading, did you not know that I must be about my father's business? But essentially, these are the same things. Because being in his father's house was being about his father's business.

[ 36 : 05 ] So just for a short time today, what I'd like us to do is just to look at this account under three headings. We're firstly going to think about the context that we find Jesus in.

The context, the backdrop against which these words sit. Secondly, we're going to see the very real concern which those who knew and loved Jesus had for him when he was nowhere to be found.

And then lastly, we're going to think, and perhaps most importantly, about the commitment that Jesus here shows. The context, the concern, and the commitment.

Now, we see that the curtain comes up here in this particular scene. And as it does, it clearly reveals this context of Mary and Joseph making their way to Jerusalem.

They were devout Jews. They were Jews who took their faith so seriously. And so they really made it a priority in their life, in their calendar, to go up to that holy city of Jerusalem in order to celebrate the Passover.

[ 37 : 22 ] Of course, the Passover, we remember, was a celebration. It was a celebration that harked back to the nation's deliverance from that bondage of the Lord's people when they were taken out of Egypt.

You read of that in Exodus chapter 12. And what we see here is that Mary and Joseph are making their way to Jerusalem to partake in this Passover.

Now, immediately following the Passover day, there was a seven-day feast, a long feast, that was known as the Feast of the Unleavened Bread.

And so this whole eight-day period, it was collectively known as Passover. And Passover was, just by way of information, it was one of three major feasts in the Jewish calendar.

You had the Feast of Weeks. You had the Feast of Tabernacles. And, of course, according to the Jewish law, it was a requirement for the males to attend these feasts.



[ 38 : 32 ] We read of this in Deuteronomy 16, verse 16. Three times a year, all your males shall appear before the Lord your God at the place that he will choose.

At the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Booths. This shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed. Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God that he has given you.

We fast forward quite some time now, and we find ourselves, not in the day when these words were penned, as it were, but we find ourselves in first-century Palestine.

And we find that many of the Jews at this point have been dispersed. And because they've been dispersed, it simply wasn't practical for them to come to these three feasts.

It wasn't always possible for them to make that journey. And so, consequently, what we see is that many men would, at this stage, come only to Jerusalem.

[ 39 : 44 ] Jerusalem. They would come to Jerusalem. They would make a point of coming to Jerusalem for the Passover. They saw this almost as the main event, the most important event of the Jewish calendar.

But it wasn't only men that came to the Passover. It was, of course, a requirement for the Jewish males to do so. But there was nothing to forbid the women from coming to the Passover.

And, in fact, the rabbis would encourage the women to come along with their husbands or on their own to the Passover. And, of course, this was seen very much as a sign of being devout to the faith.

Those who would take that extra step. Those who wouldn't just do the bare minimum, as it were, but those who were wanting to do all that they could in terms of worship.

That's why we see Mary and Joseph here. Mary is coming along with Joseph to the Passover with this desire in her heart to worship.

[ 40 : 57 ] Now, this journey from Nazareth, it would have been in no way an easy journey. It wasn't like us. We just have to hop into a car and go off to wherever it is we want to go.

This was an 80-mile journey that would have been, of course, on foot. It wouldn't have been easy. It would have taken perhaps three or four days, depending on the pace of those who were taking this journey.

But as the people, as Mary and Joseph went on this journey, they weren't alone. What would happen was that the people would congregate together.

Perhaps families would go with families and they would all make their way together as one band of people, or what is known as a caravan of people that would make their way together to Jerusalem.

And this was essentially just to protect them from highway robbers, from being attacked by robbers if they were on their own. And if they were together, they would have, as it were, safety in numbers.

[ 42 : 02 ] What would happen was that the women and the children, they would go ahead, they would set the pace, and then everyone else would follow on. And when they would arrive in Jerusalem, this would be a city full of people.

A city that would be buzzing with people, hundreds of thousands of fellow pilgrims, those who had come with that spirit of worship, those who desired to offer those sacrifices to God.

And because of this, the streets, we see lots of sheep around us here. But this is the middle of a city, remember. And the streets would have been filled with the noise of countless sheep.

We've got young friends here who've come from Edinburgh, and I know that it would be very strange for you to see the streets of Edinburgh, the Royal Mile, full of countless sheep. But that's the way it was at this time in Jerusalem.

And so there would have been a real atmosphere as this group of people made their way to Jerusalem. Now, of course, amongst this group was Jesus.

[ 43 : 21 ] Amongst this group was a 12-year-old Jesus. And for Jesus, this would be a particularly significant Passover at the age of 13.

In the 1913, what would happen was that under the Jewish law, the boys, they would become accountable. They would become accountable, and they would become accountable by a ceremony that was known as Bar Mitzvah.

And what would happen was that on the two years, on the run-up to this Bar Mitzvah, the younger boys, the 11-, 12-year-old boys, they would go with their family to Jerusalem just to prepare them, just so that they could see what lay ahead.

It was no different for Jesus. He followed this same ritual, if you like. But we need to pause there.

Because although this was no different for Jesus, Jesus himself was so different, even at the age of 12.

[ 44 : 33 ] Even when he was conceived in the womb of Mary by the Holy Spirit, he was different. And I can't help but think of Jesus in this scene, in this context.

Here we have Jesus amongst all these sheep that are about to be offered as a sacrifice for the people coming to sacrifice before God.

And there he is. There he is as the sacrificial lamb. The one who had come into the world.

The one who, indeed, would die the death for many. The one who, as the sacrificial lamb of God, would be offered without spot and without blemish.

And there he is as a young 12-year-old boy, surveying this scene, looking upon all that they are doing, taking very little notice of this boy.

[ 45 : 38 ] Yet he is there at the centre. Just like he is here today at the centre. We can be so busy with a religious activity, friend.

That is true. We can neglect to remember who is at the centre. We can neglect to remember what it is we are all about. We can become zealous about much to do with the church, but still, in all our zealousness, Christ is left to the side.

Just as I said earlier, the cross is left to the side. We cannot see the wood for the trees. There he was, right there in the centre.

Now, Luke doesn't really describe any features of this particular Passover. And instead, what he does is he jumps ahead to the story afterwards.

And as we pick up the story afterwards, we see that Mary and Joseph and all of the rest of them, they are now making their way back home. Which brings us to our second point, the concern that they have.

[ 46 : 47 ] No doubt they are uplifted in their spirits. They have spent time with like-minded brethren. They have had fellowship one with another and perhaps with those that they haven't seen for an awfully long time.

And as they make their way back, no doubt they would be discussing what they had seen and what they had done and who they had seen. I remember when I was younger and I used to go around the communions on the island, coming back in the car.

It was a wonderful time if we'd had a rich time of fellowship somewhere, just to discuss all that we'd heard. To think about the wonderful truths that had been perhaps revealed afresh to us.

And so, in the same way you can just imagine them coming back, chatting one with another as they go back home. But of course any joy or fellowship that they were having, as we see here, it was to be short lived.

Because as they make their way back home, what do they realize? They realize that Jesus is missing. Remember at this point he's only 12 years of age and he's not there.

[ 48 : 03 ] He's not amongst them. Any parent here today, you know perhaps what it's like if even for a split second your child has disappeared. Perhaps you're in a shop on the mainland or wherever and your child has disappeared.

You have that feeling almost of the blood draining from you as you think of what could perhaps have happened to your child. But Mary and Joseph would have been no different.

As they realized that Jesus was nowhere to be seen, they would have been anxious. Perhaps someone had wanted to speak to him, his mother or his father.

Perhaps that's how they discovered how he wasn't there. We don't know, but we can just imagine them going around the group. By this stage they were a day's journey out of Jerusalem. They'd been away for a whole day and so you can just imagine them going around everyone asking, Have you seen Jesus? Have you seen Jesus?

Where is our Jesus? You can just think of them being sick to the stomach. It's at this point that people have often said, well it was their own fault.

[ 49 : 14 ] What kind of parents were these? How on earth could a parent lose sight of their child for a whole day? It just doesn't seem thinkable in our context today.

But before we're too hard on Mary and Joseph, we have to think about just that. We have to think about the context. Context is always key for our understanding, perhaps differences to what we ourselves are to be, what we ourselves are used to.

The fact is that Jesus, he could quite easily have gone from one person to another person in the group without having been missed at all.

Perhaps Joseph thought that Jesus was with Mary and the other children. Perhaps Mary thought that he was with Joseph and the men.

And so you can so easily see how assumptions could have been made that led to them quite legitimately not knowing where Jesus was. Yet he is nowhere to be seen.

[ 50 : 31 ] So what do they do? Well, there's nothing left for it, but for them to turn back, to go back to Jerusalem and to make that journey to the holy city once again.

To retrace their steps and to hopefully find Jesus there. No doubt stricken with fear and worry. Unsure as to what lies before them.

And when they go to Jerusalem, although many people would have left by this point, this was still a city. And so essentially looking for Jesus would be like looking for a needle in a haystack.

And we know that they searched for a whole day, a whole day, through every nook and cranny, asking, questioning people.

Have you seen him? Where is he? Where could he be until eventually, eventually they go to the temple?

[ 51 : 36 ] We read in verse 46. After three days, that's a day traveling out of Jerusalem, a day traveling back to Jerusalem and a day searching for Jesus. After three days, they found him.

Where did they find him? After three days, they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

Here he was in the temple. He decided to stay where he was amongst all of the Jewish leaders of the day.

Now, this was quite a normal scene. Students would often gather around teachers in order to stimulate discussion. Dialogue was, of course, a characteristic of teaching in Judaism.

That's how people learned, by discussing, by dialoguing. We see this with Paul in the synagogue in Acts 17 too. And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days, he reasoned with them from the scriptures.

[ 52 : 49 ] Now, the word reasoned here simply means to discuss. He discussed with them from the scriptures. And so that's what we find. Jesus learning from the rabbis.

But he's only 12. He's only 12. 12. Now, of course, Mary and Joseph are no doubt relieved. Here is their son.

Here he is, safe and well. All of those horrendous scenarios that would have flashed before their minds, now they need not think about. Here he is, right before their eyes.

But what we see here is this. This is the beauty about scripture. It never, ever shies away from humanity, who we are by nature.

We always see what it is to be a human being. No matter where we look in scripture, Old Testament, New Testament, there we are in all our rawness.

[ 53 : 49 ] And we see this with the reaction of Mary and Joseph. Because just like any parent, what do they want? They want answers. Where have you been?

What have you been doing? And his mother said to him, Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress.

Now normally we would think that this was a perfectly reasonable and expected question to ask. But we need to again pause.

Mary and Joseph needed to pause. They were caused to pause because this wasn't a normal situation. This wasn't a normal situation because this wasn't a normal child.

This was a promised Messiah. He was, of course, normal in his humanity and his physical needs. We know that. But this wasn't any child. This was the promised Messiah.

[ 54 : 57 ] And so Jesus, yet he's not being disobedient. He couldn't be disobedient. But what he was doing was this. He was, even in these young years, he was reminding his parents in this very act of who he was and why it was he came.

Of course, this was to mark a turning point. This was to mark a transition in the life of Jesus. Jesus hadn't intentionally tried to hurt his parents.

But what he was doing was showing forth that there had to be a break from his parents. There was a necessary break that would come between him and his earthly parents.

This bond could only go so far. Because ultimately, he wasn't born to be Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus from that little backwater village of Nazareth. That's not why he was born. He was born to be Jesus Christ. The Messiah.

[ 56 : 10 ] The Redeemer. The Savior. And as he would later say himself, he came not to do his own will.

He came not even to do the will of Mary and Joseph. He came to do the will of his Father who sent him.

And of course, although this break, if you like it, it wouldn't be fully realized until 18 years after this. This whole incident, nonetheless, as it punctuates the pages of Scripture, it serves as a reminder of the fact that Jesus was no less the Messiah now at the age of 12 as he would be at the age of 33.

And of course, no doubt, Mary and Joseph in the ordinary every day of life, they need reminded of that. They could lose sight of who he was.

Verse 49. And he said to them, why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my father's house?

[ 57 : 22 ] In other words, where did you expect me to be? Here I have had the opportunity to sit and to listen and to learn from these great teachers who've come from all over to Jerusalem.

And I was going to make it my priority to be amongst them. Of course I was. That's why I'm here. This was an opportunity that he would never get in Nazareth.

Here were some of the greatest minds in Judaism. And of course, not surprisingly, Jesus, even at the age of 12, was longing to discuss the things of the law, to discuss, as it were, God's word.

Why were you looking for me? Why did you not know that I must be in my father's house? That I would be doing my father's business? That I would be involved with all that pertains to my heavenly father?

At this point, we might object. We might say, well, why would the God-man seek to ask questions from other men?

[ 58 : 36 ] Why would the God-man, the all-knowing God, seek to ask questions from the teachers of the day? Surely, if he was God, he simply knew it all.

Well, of course, we have to respectfully tread very, very carefully here, because there's a lot about this that is shrouded in mystery. There's so much about this that's simply too deep for us to understand.

But what we can do, friends, is we can go by what is shown us in the scriptures. And we cannot ignore the fact that although we read that Jesus astonished the teachers in the temple with all the knowledge that he did have, nonetheless, he was still growing in knowledge.

That's a fact. It's a fact because we read of it in verse 52. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and with man.

How do we today get our heads around that? We cannot in many ways. But the theologian, Louis Berghoff, in his systematic theology, he helpfully says this.

[ 59 : 53 ] It's one of these, perhaps, verses that I'll need to read twice just so that we can digest it. The splendor of his deity should not be stressed to the extent of obscuring his real humanity.

Jesus possessed a true body and a reasonable soul. And because of this, he he was subject to the ordinary laws of human development.

That was fact. That was him in his humanity. That's not taking away in any way, shape or form from who he is as God.

But that's the reality of the glorious reality, in fact, of the incarnation. That's how today he identifies with you and me, because he knows what it is to be human.

Yet here he is, he's affirming his divine sonship. He's affirming his mission to do the will of his father.

[ 61 : 18 ] Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my father's house? Now, this statement is is not only the crux of this passage, but as one commentator says, the definitive reality of Christian theology, the definitive reality of Christian theology.

And so ultimately, he was not the son of Mary and Joseph, but the eternal son of God. And in this acknowledgement of his sonship, what do we get?

We get, do we not? Just a glimpse into his divinity, into the fact that this is God. This is the God-man.

See, in Jewish culture, to be a son, it meant so much more than just being a male offspring, as it were. The young child would be considered, that is true, as merely being a boy.

But only when this boy, or when this boy would become an adult, what would happen is that this son would be considered, of course, it's a different context again, but this son would be considered to be a son in the fullest extent of what it was to be a son.

[ 62 : 40 ] Because at this point, he was then seen as being equal with his father, equal under the law and in terms of adult responsibility.

And so technically, to be a son was in this culture to be equal or to be at one with his father.

And so here in claiming to be about his father's business, what Jesus is doing is claiming to be part of that trinity.

To be part of the oneness of that trinity. A trinity that had in the councils of eternity, again in many ways too deep for us to understand, agreed to the business that would have to be carried out.

Yes, that business of Jesus growing in knowledge, of course. Yet knowledge that would lead him to carry out the ultimate business of dying on the cross for his people.

[ 63 : 45 ] Friends, time, I'm sorry, has gone. But as we leave it there today, perhaps I could just ask you this question. Is this your motto?

I must be about my father's business. I must be in my father's house. You might not be a Christian here today. This isn't your motto if you're not a Christian.

But what is your motto? Where is it or what is it that you must be doing in life? What is it that takes the highest position in your life?

What is it? How does it compare to Jesus? How does it compare to the finished work of the Messiah?

Friends, it doesn't. It doesn't stand up. We've seen that even in the days that we live in. As people have all these things that they've relied upon, taken from them, they have nowhere to stand.

[ 64 : 43 ] Come to Jesus. That you would be about his business. We've seen the context. We've seen the concern. We've seen the commitment. And as we close today, friends, and as you look forward as a congregation to this exciting new chapter that the Lord in his mercy has given you.

You have a context. The context of Carl away here. Full of souls needing to hear the gospel. Full of men and women, boys and girls who, if they are not saved, are heading to a lost eternity.

That is a solemnity. That is a solemnity. But the reality of the lostness of the lost. That is your context. And as God's people, you are called to have a concern.

A concern for the fact that they have not yet come to know Jesus. They have not yet found Jesus, if you like. Do you have, and me with you, do we have that concern?

In the context of Carl away, do we have that concern for souls? Well, that concern for souls, it ought to be seen in the commitment that we see here in the life of Jesus.

[ 66 : 01 ] Even at the age of 12, I must be in my father's house. Everything else takes second place. I must be doing this. It's more important than my mother and father, my husband and my wife, my son or my daughter.

This is the most important thing in my life. So friends, for all of us, as we go forward, as you go forward, God willing, in the weeks, the months, the years that lie ahead, stick to the cross.

[ 67 : 08 ]

Let us pray. Lord our God, we praise your name today that you haven't left us to ourselves. That we are but instruments in the Redeemer's hand.

Those promises that are yea and amen in him. Go before us then, we pray, and forgive us for Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen. Friends, apologies, I've kept you longer than I intended, but the final singing is going to be from Psalm 46.

We had this in Park last Lord's Day, and I think we all could see just the beauty of the worship in this style. Psalm 46, God is our refuge and our strength and strength, a present aid.

[ 68 : 33 ]

[illegible]

|| Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Stand for the benediction.

[ 71 : 52 ]

Amen.