

The Son & The Family Business

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[0 : 00] We turn again now back to the Gospel according to Luke and chapter 2, and we can read at verse 48.

Luke chapter 2 and at verse 48. 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 so on. Now this Gospel, like every other Gospel, it builds for us a profile of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we follow these birth narratives and the story that we have from the very beginning of the message coming to Sechariah and Elizabeth for the birth of John the Baptist.

And then there is the announcement to Mary herself that she is going to bear a child conceived by the power of the Spirit, and that he will be the one who will fulfill the promises of God and save his people.

[1 : 14] And when we come to see the promise of God fulfilled, we can think of the way in which that the Bible always gives us a backdrop that we're going to look back to what God did in creation and what Adam did in the fall, and the promise that God gave in those words to the serpent in Genesis 3.15 that a child from the woman would come and that he would bruise the head of the serpent.

That's the backdrop. And we have the focal point, which we have at the other end of the Bible, where we read that there is a new heavens and a new earth. There is the water of the river of life flowing from God's throne.

And there's that image of the paradise of God. And as we read our Bibles, the promises of God are one of the threads that take us through the whole of the Bible until we get to the very end.

And when you read of the coming of the Son of God into the world, that's the key promise. And it's wonderful the way in which Paul captures that for us in writing to the church in Corinth, where he makes it clear in the second letter in chapter one that all of the promises of God are yes in Christ Jesus.

In other words, when we come to Jesus, we understand that he has everything in himself, everything that God has purpose to do, and everything that we have a need of.

[2 : 46] He is the central figure in the Bible, the central figure in the plan of God, and the central figure in the faith of the people of God.

And as we read into this Gospel, so much has been said about Jesus of Nazareth. But one thing that we haven't heard so far, we haven't heard a word from himself.

But we know the interest when children are growing up, when they start talking and speaking, and what's the first word they're going to say? It's interesting. And so often it has something to do with mother in particular, and perhaps father.

We wait for the first words. And here in this passage this evening, we have the first words of Jesus of Nazareth, as we find him here in the story.

And we want to consider these first words, and to do so in particular, to explore the question, who does he think he is?

[3 : 52] And we're asking that question with the utmost respect. But we want to see from this passage, who he thinks he is at 12 years of age.

So we're going to think of the Son, that is the Son of God, and the family business, the business of God the Father.

Want to see first of all, the development that we have in the story. And the development comes with participation in the life of the church.

That's where we expect to find the Lord Jesus. He is born into a family that belongs to the house of David, that belongs to the people of God. So we expect to find him attending the means of grace, attending the things God has appointed for his people.

And we see that in verse 41. His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. They are faithful people.

[4 : 56] They are following the pattern that God has given for his people, which he has done for them in the Old Testament law given to Moses. They are following that strictly.

And just like Simeon earlier on this passage, they are devout. They are fearing God. And they themselves are waiting for the consolation for the good news that God has promised to his people.

And in this case, they are attending the feast of the Passover, which would happen on the first month, on the 14th day of the month, that would be the Lord's Passover.

And so for one whole week, they're involved in celebrating the Passover. It's a memorial day. And it's a memorial day for them because their origin takes them to think of what God did in the Exodus and in the Passover.

When you see the blood, that's the assurance to you. And so they're celebrating the very thing that from which they originated and where God set them apart.

[6 : 07] And when we think of what that meant physically, when they came to the temple, and when at three o'clock the day before the Passover, there is a massive sacrifice.

And every father has a lamb that the priest is going to sacrifice and the blood is sprinkled. And all of the busyness of that day fills with a sense, yes, of the slaughter, but a sense of the significance of the blood of the Passover lamb, which they are going to eat and going to celebrate.

And they are going up in accordance with that custom because it is their usual practice. And here is Jesus, 12 years of age.

Two years before now, his parents would have taken him to see what happens. It's part of his development. But now at 12 years of age, he is the bar mitzvah, he is the son of the law, and he has come to that time where he becomes the son of the covenant.

And so he is here for the first time to take part in the celebration of what gives these people life and what gives them structure, the celebration of the salvation of God.

[7 : 37] And he has grown up with his family. And of course, he will have learned all of these things in the family home. But now he comes to take participation of these things in public.

He is coming to know and to understand more and more of who he is. And that's his own personal development.

But the development in the story is that his parents returned and left him behind. And that's what we read in verse 43 onwards.

When the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing him to be in the group, they went a day's journey and so on.

So the development in the story is that there is a parting of the ways. They have finished celebrating the Passover and they would make their journey back home in groups.

[8 : 49] Adults would be together. The children would be together. They would follow each other a day's journey. And then at the end of the first day's journey, they would regroup and number the families and their friends to make sure that everyone was present.

And his parents went on supposing that he was with them, that he was with his own friends and his own age group and that they would be together at the end of the day.

Supposing. Supposing Jesus to have been there is an interesting idea when we come to think of our own journey of faith, they were committed to participating in the life of the people of God in all of the festivals that God had appointed for them.

They were God-fearers. And we can be like that ourselves. We can be great God-fearers and attending to everything that God has appointed for the people of God.

And yet we can go from attending and participating in all of these things and suppose that Jesus is with us.

[10 : 03] And think that through all of our religious activity that that in itself is enough. But here they are and they realize when they come to take stock that Jesus is not present with them.

For them it's a moment of great distress. For you and for me as we participate in the life of the church, such a development is a possibility.

Because even if we have been with Jesus and Jesus is with us, we can drift into places and moments and times. And we think Jesus is still with us and we have left Him behind.

And left Him behind because as is the case here, His interest in what was happening was greater than theirs. They had done their business and they're away home.

But Jesus is not yet finished. And we read in Psalm number 40 that the Psalmist, the words that belong to Jesus, I delight to do your will, oh my God, in the scroll of the book it is written about me.

[11 : 28] Here He is at home in a sense for the first time. And we'll read of Him at the end of this Gospel talking to those who are going on the road to Emmaus and who had lost their hope and He starts speaking to them from the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

He had a personal interest that they really couldn't understand. And we think of the development of Jesus of Nazareth from the manger to this time in His life.

We keep asking who does He think He is? And it seems that in this public moment that He begins to discover more of who He is, that His interest is here because this is entirely personal.

Because the Passover will be at the center of everything that is going to happen to Him later. He is going to come and He is going to say to them that this cup is a new covenant in my blood.

The development, He comes to find Himself and to be in the place where He wants to discover more and more about Himself.

[12 : 52] The development. Secondly, we want to think of the discovery that they, after doing their searching in verse number 45, when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem searching for Him.

And after three days they found Him in the temple. What do parents of twelve-year-old children do? It's alarming that a twelve-year-old is missing.

During a day's journey, if you're going to travel a day's journey today, that's a lot of miles. And we discover after a day's traveling that our twelve-year-old child is missing.

Of course they're distressed and they take their steps back to where they had come from and they go searching diligently.

Of course they would. And after that diligent search, they found Him in the temple.

[13 : 57] It's the temple, quotes the quote where the gentiles and the woman would gather. It's the open place, not the inner place which is the holy of holies. It's the place where the gathering of the people takes place.

It's where they were. It's the place that they are left behind. So in retracing their steps, they go right back to where they were and there they discover that the Son of the Covenant, the bar mitzvah, there He is with those who are the scribes, those who are teaching.

There He was sitting with them. And in that very moment, we read that they were amazed at the way in which He understood all of the discussion that took place.

All who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answer. He is able to logically put everything that is happening in the Passover to put it in order, to bring meaning out of it and to understand it better than those who are teaching in the temple.

We see that they are amazed at His understanding and then at His answer. In this moment, He's developed from asking the questions to answering the questions because in a real way, He can talk about the Passover in a way that they cannot.

[15 : 35] And as He explores the whole meaning of the Passover for Himself, His interest being absorbed in that. And He goes from asking them questions to them asking Him questions.

And so He explains to them what the Passover really means. And let's think as we move on of the development of this child, of the child that's reading His Bible in the house in Nazareth, the child that is growing up, being instructed by His parents, the child that is being taught all of the things of the people of God, and how in going through all of that, it is as if there's a dawning more and more of the understanding in His mind that this is about me.

And who can understand what He was going through? We can hear as somebody telling a story and we discover the story as something to do with ourselves personally.

But that's nothing compared with reading the Bible and seeing that the central story of the Bible and for Jesus, His mind, His capacity to understand increasing day by day, this is about me.

And because it is that personal, there is no surprise that He is now answering the questions, the discovery of finding Jesus, the teacher, the son of the covenant.

[17 : 29] He becomes the teacher at 12 years of age, the things concerning Himself. In the scroll of the book, it is written of me.

And we follow a story and we should never lose sight of a zoned personal development. We sometimes jump from the manger to the cross and we lose sight of these years, these 30 years where there is so much silence about Jesus' life.

Here we have a glimpse of that and the glimpse is there to tell us the story. This is what's happening behind the scenes. So that the Jesus who emerges at 30 years of age, who comes to be baptized by John, who comes to preach in the synagogue in Nazareth, He is the one who has learned about Himself through everything that He was hearing in His home and hearing in His church, hearing in the life of the people of God.

The development, the discovery, and thirdly, the declaration. Who does He think He is?

What are the first words that He's going to speak? And we see in verse 48, His parents saw Him, they were astonished.

[19 : 11] 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.

They're astonished in the sense of they're blown away, we will say today, they're blown away with the way in which He is able to answer questions. But they come and in a sense they're rebuking Him because they see Him as having treated them in a way that He should not.

And because of that, they are in great distress. There is that spiritual, that agony in their hearts because He is not where He should be.

They come to rebuke Him. Why have you treated us so? Your Father and I have been searching.

The impression given at this stage is that Jesus has betrayed His Father, that Jesus should have been with Joseph and Mary, that as a son of the Covenant, that that was a duty to honour your Father and your mother.

[20 : 27] And rightly they may rebuke Him because He hasn't followed them as He should have. In the arrangements for travelling back, He should have been with the group.

He should have observed all that God had said, asked of the children of God. He should have observed that with His Father and with His Mother.

And it is that very rebuke that triggers the first words of Jesus.

And the trigger we can quickly conclude is the very question that His Mother asks, or the statement that She makes, behold, your Father and I have been searching for you.

We can't think of what's going on in His mind. He has known Joseph as His Father since he was born. And it is the question of fatherhood.

[21 : 34] It's the question of honouring your Father and your mother. It is that great question that is turning over in His thinking. And how is He now going to respond to what His Mother has said?

And it is there that He makes the declaration and He turns the rebuke back on them. In verse 49, why were you looking for me?

What a silly question. Of course they were looking for Him. He was their twelve-year-old son. And He wasn't with them.

He was lost. So of course they were looking for Him. Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?

There was something that they did not realise. And it's wonderful that Mary didn't realise it. Because the angel came to her, explained to her what was happening.

[22 : 45] That the child that was going to be born from her would be holy, the Son of God. How forgetful she seems to have been of that great moment in her life that changed herself forever and that changed the world forever.

Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house? When we see the word must in the New Testament, it's a word that speaks to us of the necessity that's arising from the plan of God.

I must go to Jerusalem, says Jesus, because that's where God has directed Him to you. The Son of Man must be given over to the hands of sinful men, because it is the plan of God.

The must, the necessity arises out of the purpose of God and the way in which He is going to fulfil His purpose and the way in which the whole of the life of the people of God is going to be lived with that sense of necessity.

The must that we ourselves must live like the children of God, that we must believe by faith on the Son of God, the necessities arising from the will and the purpose of God.

[24 : 10] And what is the necessity for Him? I must be in my Father's house.

His first words tell us who He thinks He is. His self-consciousness is that He is in the first place the Son of God and that He has come down into this world to do the will of God the Father.

And it's perhaps unfortunate the way in which we have the translation here that suggests to us that He must be in a particular location, in a particular building, which is perhaps the temple.

I must be in my Father's house, whereas the whole idea behind the way in which the Greek speaks in this passage, it is to be in the things of my Father, to be minding my Father's business, to be looking after the affairs of my Father's kingdom.

And that's why Jesus came. We hear at His baptism in chapter 3, the voice coming from Him, and you are my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

[25 : 33] We hear the way in which He goes forward in life and the way in which He gives Himself to doing the will of the Father, to subduing to all that the Father has commanded Him to do, that even in the Garden of Gethsemane, where He prays, when He realises what He must pass through in the will of God and in the purpose of God, Father, if it is possible let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not my will but your spidan.

I must be doing the business of my Father, I must be involved in my Father's things. And we hear Him on the cross, and after the darkness and the abyss of being forsaken, we hear Him at last, Father, forgive them, and Father into your hands, I commit my spirit.

At the center of His consciousness, every step that He takes is that God in heaven is His Father, and in every moment of His life, He submits to all that God has called Him to do.

He is the King who is going to be the servant of God, and in serving Him, He goes forward in life. And interestingly, what He'd on in the next verse, He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them.

He didn't abandon His Father and Mother, He went back with them to the family home. And there is a sense of double submission, and there is the sense of the divine and the human, the mystery of who He is, that He is the Son of God and also the Son of Mary, that the frail child in the manger is indeed all human, but at the same time He is all God, He is the God-man who has come to be our Savior.

[28 : 02] And so He goes after giving them the lesson, after speaking out from His own heart. He goes and He submits to them.

And in conclusion, we see that Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man.

He was submissive to God as His Heavenly Father. He was submissive to His parents in Nazareth. He grew in favour with God and with man, and all that He did displayed His humanness and displayed His divine.

And all of these things together make and made Him the Savior that He now is. And when He cries out on the cross, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

It's the mystery and the wonder that God is forsaken by God, the Son of God is forsaken by His Father. The unthinkable has happened because, it must happen because of the necessity of the will of God.

[29 : 27] And from that moment, and because of that moment, we, tonight us, the people of God, can answer the same question, who do we think we are?

Well, if we believe in the Lord Jesus, if we trust in Him, the answer to that question is very close to His, but not the same.

But it is that we are the children of God, and that we know God as our Father. And that's what makes us who we are as the people of God, and as the Church of Christ in the world.

Who does He think He is? What do His first words tell us? This is who He was. This is what He was thinking, and He goes forward in His life to prove that in every step of obedience, despite the cost that He was obedient to death, even death on a cross.

Amen. May God bless these thoughts to us with bow heads in prayer. Most gracious God, we rejoice in You and in the gift of Your Son.

[30 : 37] We can never fully appreciate what that gift meant. We are thankful for the measure of understanding that You have given to us. We pray that like Your Son.

We may develop ourselves and grow in understanding of what Your purpose and will is, what it means to be Your children, and so to be able to live for You and to have Your joy and to live day by day as those who truly understand and who have the assurance of Your love in our hearts and the joy that follows Your people no matter where they go in life.

So bless Your word to us, we pray. Here's what we ask and go before us, having mercy for we ask these things for Jesus' sake. Amen. So closing, Psalm is Psalm number 40 in St.

Sam's, and that's version number 7. The Psalm that has the words to do with the delight of the Lord Jesus and the way in which the scroll of the book contains everything about Him.

Psalm number 40, from verse number 7 to verse number 12, then I declared, Lord, I have come. It's written off me in the scroll.

[31 : 56] I want to do Your will, my God. Your law is in my heart and soul. From verse 7 to verse 12 to God's will.