

Preaching Christ...
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God

Date: 31st March 2019
Services: 730, 930 Tewantin and Peregian (via video)
Series: Luke: you can be certain
Title: ... that Jesus grew in wisdom and favour
Passage: Luke 2:41-52
Outline: **The story**
The sandwich
The significance

INTRODUCTION

My first point is really our introduction this morning...

- So here is where we are heading:

1. **The story**
2. **The sandwich**
3. **The significance**

1. THE STORY

- ...the story most of us will know very well...
- ...**only** recorded material of the life of Jesus as a growing young man
- Jesus was growing up not in **Jerusalem** but in a despised, half-heathen place called **Galilee**... and in an obscure little town in Galilee called **Nazareth**
- It was the **last** place any one would have looked for a **Messiah** or a **King**...
- **From** there, his parents took him up to Jerusalem for the Passover... we don't know if this was the **first** time but we do know he went this time when he was 12.
- In the course of this event, he's **misplaced** in the **crowd**
- We can identify this... women and children usually travelled ahead... Dads and young men behind... Jesus - would fit into either category...
- Perhaps towards the end of the day, Mary notices Jesus is not there... she thinks perhaps he's with Joseph and the older boys behind...
- **Joseph** is probably thinking - I'm sure he's with his **mother**...
- They look at each other when they stop for the night - I thought he was with **you** - I thought **you** were looking after him..!!
- Neither of the two **had** him and neither knew where he **was**!
- Day's journey **out** - then a day's journey **back**
- No doubt they slept and decided we'll see if we can find him in the morning... hence we read in v46 - after **three** days they found him in the temple...
- When we've found our children we'll say - "now what do you think you're doing...?", we expect all the **standard** replies... or some **creative** response... and then **we** say - "why have you treated us like this...? we've been worried **sick**!"
- ... yet none of us have ever heard **anything** to match the response of **this** 12 year old boy gave as his mother asked - "your father and I have been **searching** for you..."

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- Jesus answers – “**why** were you looking for me...?” ... obvious answer – “well you were not where you were supposed to be”
- and Jesus answers in v49 – “Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?”
- now those of you with good **eyesight** or good **glasses**... look with me at the **fine** print... you'll see next to Jesus' answer... a little letter – (**d**) and then down the **bottom** of the page... next to (**d**), you'll see an alternate translation... Or *about my Father's business*
- now – I think that's a much **better** translation, because the word for 'house' or 'temple' is not in the Greek... in fact the best rendering of the Greek is: “it behoves me” – “it is necessary” “that I be about my Father's '**things**'!!”
- so... about my Father's “business...” which is what the old King James Version had, is not a **bad translation**...
- “Didn't you realise that **I am doing** what I am **supposed** to be doing...?”
- **Staggering** thing – all unfolding in the context of a question and answer session involving Jesus and the teachers in the temple courts...
- The methodology of instruction – pupil would ask **questions**... teacher – give **answers** – then the teacher would **interrogate** pupil to see how much of the reply he had **understood**...
- Hence... v47 – *everyone who heard him was amazed at his answers*
- Teachers were **marvelling** that this young boy was able to grasp things so **quickly**
- And in the midst of that his parents turn up and when Jesus said he to be about his Father's 'things', Luke says they *didn't understand what he was saying to them*... v50
- ...and in v51, Mary added this to her **treasure** chest of all the many things she had been pondering... //
- So **now** what? – where do we **go** with this? That's a short sermon isn't it? //
- It's **interesting** – if not **sad** – what **some** commentators say, about that these verses mean for **us**...
- For example, some have said that here was a lesson for **all** young children that they should attend **Sunday school**... **what??** //
- someone **else** said that this is about the social **development** of children... and Jesus **grew**... and this is here to show us how **we** are to **grow** as **well**...?
- I'm sure **Luke** would be saying... “**no – no!**– I didn't include that account so you would send children to Sunday School or learn how to raise **children**...!”
- So why **is** this here? /
- Some have said that it's to show us the **God**-ness – or the **divinity** of the man Jesus... that he could interact with the scholars of the day in such an **extraordinary** way... ‘see how **clever** he was – he must be **God!**’
- ...but I'm not so sure about that...
- So let me take you to my very strange **second** point and see if it helps:

2. THE SANDWICH

- So... I want you to notice this incident of Jesus as a boy in the temple is sandwiched between two **summary** statements about Jesus growing up...

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- (Unfortunately the headings don't do us any favours because they prevent us seeing this as readily as we might... which is why we started reading this morning from v39)
- Will you look with me at v40? – it comes after Simeon's song and his prophecy which we looked at last week – we read:... *And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.*
- ...and now v52 at the end of **this** week's passage... *And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.*
- So – I've put these up on the screen... so you can see them together easily...
- He's **8 days old** at the point in Luke's account when he includes the **first** description and **12 years old** in the account when Luke includes the **second**.
- What we are to **make** of this...? Of why it's **there**...? of why there's such a similar phrase used **twice** and why the **temple** incident is sandwiched in between?
- Here's **one** possibility: that the emphasis here is not on the **God**-ness of Jesus... but on the **humanity** of Jesus...
- The little baby **grew**... and became **strong**... just like **all** little boys – *all being well* – **do!!**
- And as he grew in **size**... in **stature** and **strength** – so he grew in **wisdom**... (as I said in the reading notes this week, the **kind** of wisdom that doesn't leave your parents wondering where you **are!**)
- Now of course it's **true** that he was God in the manger aged **zero** – and God in the **temple** aged **12** – as he had been God from **eternity** with the **Father** and the **Spirit**...
- But he was also **human**... **man**...
- One of the heresies of the 1st century was to **deny** the **humanity** of Jesus... the claim was that the **body** of Christ wasn't a real body but only **seemed** to be a real body...
- This heresy's label was *Docetism* – and said that while Jesus was truly **God** and had come in the **flesh**, he had not inhabited a **real** body – it was a **phantom** body – **less** than **normal**. The thought was that matter – physical matter – was **evil** – and therefore **physicality** was not something God **would** or **could** embrace.
- So... in order to preserve the **deity** of Christ... they denied his **humanity**...
- And I think **we** can sometimes unwittingly deny Jesus his **humanity**...
- So let's be clear – Jesus was a **real** baby and a **real 12-year old** and a real **teenager**.
- The Father and the eternal Son, determined together that the Son would step into the world in the form of Mary's boy..., and his body had the same **biological composition** as you and me... the same **anatomy** as any male – the same **central nervous system** – the same **sensitivity** to **pain**... as any human.
- **Mary** made the same genetic **contribution** as any mother does to her child...
- **One** half of Jesus' chromosomes were provided by **Mary** his earthly mother and the **other** half provided miraculously by the creative act of the **virgin conception**...
- God became **man** and was like **any other** child... he wasn't **half man** and **half God** – he was **all God** and **all man**... he was a typical **1st century Jewish kid**...
- And he was doing **whatever** kids do... and he would say to his mates – hey – let's stand **back** to **back** and see who is **tallest**... or – let's go and **kick** a **ball** around...

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- Don't think for a **moment** that he was sort of **superman** – able to leap tall buildings in a **single bound**...
- we often imagine a kind of **comic-strip** Christ who did **magic tricks** for his **mates**....
- Don't imagine him being able to shoot every **basket** and make every **putt** and win every **race** and solve every **problem**... that is a **phantom** Christ... not the one described **here!**
- And just as he had a real **human body** – so he had a real **human mind**...
- His **mind** grew **incrementally**, just as ours did...
- You don't think Jesus emerged from the womb and was able to say his **alphabet** do you...?
- You don't think he knew his **colours** because he was God...? no Mary sat with him and taught him his **colours** just as you did with your children – or **will** do – the **grass** – that's **green** Jesus – and what colour is the **sky**? – that's right – that's **blue!**
- And he would go out and play and his parents would answer his **questions**... and over time he became better **informed**...
- He observed life, he observed people.
- Later he would say “consider the lilies of the field” how did he know that? Well he'd been out in the field observing the way lilies grow.....
- He would come to say “two men went up to a temple to pray” he said – because he'd seen them – he observed people... he grew in wisdom and stature...
- Some tenants of a vineyard ripped off their owner... he'd **seen** such things...
- Some guy wanted his inheritance **before** his **dad died**... he probably **knew** a bloke like that...
- he was **normal young man** whose dad taught him how to **hold** a **hammer** and **saw** a piece of **wood**...
- He had a **normal** development as a **human**... //
- – he grew in **wisdom** and **stature**... ///
- Does this **matter** Mark, you may be asking – **why are you making a big deal of this?** So – **third:**

3. THE SIGNIFICANCE

- Matters **incredibly!**
- Without a **human Christ**, there is no **atonement for sin**
- Without a **divine Christ**, there is no **atonement for sin**
- The Jesus who now lives to intercede for us, is the Jesus who as **12 year old boy in the temple** was saying “don't you understand that I need to be about my Father's **business?**”
...and therefore we do not have in Jesus, someone who is somehow **removed** from and **distant** from our weaknesses and infirmities... but we have someone (we read in Hebrews) who was tempted in all points as **we are yet was without sin!**
- So that this morning when we came here to church and thought, ‘I don't know if anyone here really knows me’ – ‘I don't think **anyone** knows the **longing** of my **soul**... or the ache or the hurt, or the anxiety’ ‘I don't know if there is a **person** I can **go to**...’ ...I want to tell you that there **is** someone to whom you can go and I want to **point** him out to you... as your **only** Saviour and **friend** and he is **REAL!**

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- He was a **full on human being**... God is not some **distant, removed, remote, impersonal force or power!**
- ... a **human** Christ who **knows** us, has walked this **planet**... who knows our **experiences**, who feels **everything** we feel, who knows the **full** range of emotions we know – **joy** and **grief** and **loss** and **excitement** and **anxiety** and **uncertainty** and anticipation, and having nowhere to lay his **head**...; we have in Jesus a God who **grieves** with us and **walks** with us and **strengthens** us... and who **knows** us... and who knows **life**...!! //
- And you can **run** to him today... and can share **everything** with him... and find **grace** to help you in your time of **need**... //
- That's the **first** way it matters ///
- And there's a **second** way this is significant... and it has to do with the **Father's 'business'**... the Father's '**things**' that it was **necessary** for him to be about... what *was* that business?
- He wasn't talking about **carpentry** that's for sure...
- As Jesus grew in **wisdom**, there must have been a growing **self-awareness** in this young man... times where the **awareness** of his **god-ness** must have come **upon** him... // we're not to think that he emerges from **womb** fully aware of these issues...
- Perhaps it was time spent at this very **Passover** where he began to understand the significance of the Passover and the Messiah who would one day come to deal permanently with **sin**? We don't **know!**
- What then is the **business** of **God** to which he **refers**?
- He had a **role** to play which had been planned before time...
- We don't have to **guess** because we have the rest of the NT
- We could gather just some of the verses couldn't we?
- From John 1:18 – *...the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.* He came to reveal God.
- Or John the Baptist when we saw Jesus called out – *behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world...* (John 1:29) Yes, this was the Father's business.
- Or he came to be *the resurrection and the life... whoever believes in me will live, even though they die...* (John 11:25)
- Or that he did **not** come to be **served**, but to **serve** and give his life as a **ransom** for many (Mark 10:45). Yes, that's his Father's business.
- Or he came to shed the *blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.* (Matthew 26:28)
- Or the Apostle Paul – 1 Timothy 1:15 - *Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. The Father's business.*
- Or 1 John 4: he came that *He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him...* Or the very next verse: *he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.* The Father's business.
- He had to be about this Father's business... making him known... living a perfect life, taking away the sin of the world... pouring out his blood for our forgiveness... **dying** so we might **live**.....!
- And that is why he cried out at the cross '**it is finished**' ...

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- The work that he'd been set to do by the Father, had been done
 - he wasn't saying – **pew** – I'm glad **that's** over.....
 - he was saying he'd finished his **Father's business**... he had made the atoning sacrifice for sin, that we might be forgiven..
 - So this is **wonderful news** for us to celebrate **again** this morning... for us to **revel** in, for us to **enjoy**, for us to **drink** in and for us to **respond** to in **praise** and **heartfelt thanks**...
 - Jesus fulfilled the Father's **business**....
 - ...he did it... he did it **perfectly**, he did it **wonderfully**, he did it **sacrificially**... he did it in **love**... for **you**... /
 - And if you are a **believer** here this morning – you are his – you are **his now** and **forever**... and you can be **certain** and **assured** and **confident** and grateful and **thankful**...
 - If you're here among us this morning and **not** yet a believer – we're so glad you're here... – let me tell you that **every** human without **exception** is **entitled** – in fact - **invited** – **urged** – **commanded** - to **come** to **Jesus** and **trust** him as their **Saviour**...
 - He commands **all people** everywhere to **repent**... that is, to turn their life around... / and he promises that **when** they **do**... they will be **forgiven** and have **eternal life**...
 - Here is the **invitation**... to all who are **weary** and **heavy laden**... - to come... be forgiven...
 - It's the **best** invitation the people of Noosa and Peregian will **ever** receive...
 - I'm sure you **know** by now, that's it not about whether you've been **baptised** or **confirmed** or take communion or get to **church** or **serve** on a **roster**... or even whether you have good **morals** or the **highest** of **values**... the **issue** is, have you ever **come** to **Jesus** and **admitted** you're a **sinner**... because it's the Father's **business**, through **Jesus**, to **save** / **sinner**s...!!
 - You can do that this morning... you come and see me after the service and I would love to guide you in how to do that... so that you too can walk out of here **forgiven**, **assured** and **confident** of where you stand.
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- Well, let's sum up, we've looked at the **story**, the **sandwich** and the **significance**...
 - A normal young boy who grew up as **all** young boys do and grew in wisdom and stature...
 - the grace of God was upon him and he grew in favour with God and man...
 - And he began to be about his Father's **business**... which was to **reveal** the Father, live a **perfect** life and die so that we might **live**...
 - And he did it **perfectly**... until he cried out on the cross, "**It is finished**"
 - He **knows** you, he **loves** you, he **lived** for you, he **died** for you... and then he **rose** for you and by his **Spirit** – so that he might be in the closest proximity to you, you could imagine, by dwelling in your **heart**...
 - ...and he will reside there...until he **comes** for you or comes **again**, to take you to be with him for **all eternity**...
 - Do you love him?