

L.C.F 3/7/16

READINGS: LUKE 2:41-52 & PROV. 3:1-6.

PREACHER: REV. ADRIAN HALLETT

SERMOM SERIES: “THE MUST SAYINGS OF JESUS”

1) “I MUST BE ABOUT MY FATHER’S BUSINESS”

We begin our sermon series today on the 'must' sayings of Jesus. There are several of them that we are going to look at over the coming weeks. Why are we doing this series? I'm sure we all agree that everything Jesus says is important, but when he uses that little word 'must' we really should sit up and take notice. We need to make sure we fully understand them and then see what they mean for us as we seek to live out our Christian faith.

Several of us recently completed “Christianity Explored” - saw that the aim of Mark was to show who Jesus was (his identity) and what he came to do (his mission) for us to then know what it means to follow him.

In fact this is the aim of all four gospels – all in their different ways seek to show the same things. Luke is no exception. At the beginning of his gospel he lines up for us the testimony of many people to show who Jesus was – the prophets of the OT, Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth, angels, shepherds, Simeon and Anna, all pointing to who he was.

Luke hammers home the fact – that Jesus is the Messiah... the Christ....the Saviour of the world... the Son of God.... God in human flesh.

Then he includes one more testimony – something that is only recorded in Luke’s gospel and so therefore it is very important and significant. What he records is the only incident in the first 30 years of Jesus’ life. There must have been many other incidents that Luke knew of... he must have heard of them.... this Jesus was no ordinary child.... people were amazed at him... impressed by him.... there must have been many other striking things about Jesus that Luke would have heard about.

But Luke chooses this one... this particular incident....because this is actually the testimony of Jesus himself – verse 49, “*Did you not know I must be about my Father's business?*”....”*Didn't you know I had to be (must be) in my Father's house?*”

In saying “my Father's house” Jesus is saying he is the Son of God. He knew who he was... he knew his identity, and Luke adds this testimony of Jesus that we also might know for a certainty that he is the Son of God.

Now, how did he come to know his identity/who he was?

1. THE PROGRESSION OF HIS IDENTITY

Did he come to know who he was through some blinding revelation? There is no evidence of that. Was he conscious of who he was from when he was born? You might come to that conclusion if you are swayed by some of the Renaissance paintings... of the baby Jesus on Mary's knee, looking all 'divine'. Was he really in the manger thinking “I am God?” I find that hard to accept – seems a bit 'spooky' to me... a bit odd. From verse 52 we learn that Jesus “*grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man*”. This talks of a natural growing and learning process... a progression.... a gradual and growing awareness.

Mary and Joseph would have undoubtedly played their part in that process. They were godly parents... they would have brought Jesus up to know the Scriptures... to be regular in worship at the synagogue... they would have told him of the miracle of his birth.... the visit of the Shepherds.... the visit of the Magi... the fulfilment of prophecy. All these things would have contributed to the natural progression of Jesus knowing his identity, so that, at age 12, he was able to say “*I must be about my Father's business*”. An amazing testimony of a boy of 12... saying he is the Son of God...knowing who he is, his identity, and why he came, his mission.... to do his father's business.

Secondly, I want to suggest that there was

2. A PATTERN THROUGH IDENTITY

By that I mean knowing his identity determined how he lived.... knowing who he was gave him his pattern of life.

This incident is not an example of Jesus being disobedient... we need to remember from other scriptures that he was sinless. This incident shows his growing maturity, the fact that he was becoming less dependent on his earthly parents. He's actually surprised that his parents are anxious about him... “where else would I be... where else did you expect me to be?” captures something of his surprise.

He knew who was... he was aware of his identity and becoming aware of his mission... to do his *'Father's business'*. But amazingly, there is no evidence that he was gripped by a sense of entitlement... that he was now on some sort of 'power trip'...that he expected to be treated differently. There is no power struggle.... no ego trip... just an obedient, submissive spirit.

There is quite an amazing pattern to his life.... a real balance to his life. There is no resentment because his parents didn't understand him.... no frustration because they were slow to understand, just a willingness to be obedient to his earthly parents and at the same time obedient to his Heavenly Father. This must have spoken to those who know him.... to those who saw him grow up. They were impressed by his pattern of life - "*Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.*" People looked on.... and took note.

Then I want to suggest there was

3. THE PRIORITY OF HIS IDENTITY

The first recorded words of Jesus clearly state that he was the Son of God.... they underline his divine sonship. That knowledge, that understanding shaped his life... that is what determined his priorities. Knowing who he was shaped his life's vocation.... to be about his *'Father's business'*.... to serve Him and glorify Him in all things and at all times.

"I must be about my Father's business" – the 'must' here is the must of inevitability... the 'must' of the inevitable priority of his life because he knew who he was. In other words, there is no external compulsion here... there is no talking of Jesus being forced or driven in any way. This talks of a yearning....a desire deep down inside to willingly and voluntarily to be about his fathers business. That was his priority.... a priority that was so strong that other important and intimate earthly relations were subordinate to it... were secondary to that priority to do his *'Father's business.'*

Now how does all this apply to us? After all, we are not Jesus! We can't claim 'divine sonship'... if we are, then we should be taken off to the funny farm! So what does this have to say to us? How can we apply it to our Christian lives?

Last week we began the first in our series 'The Must Sayings of Jesus' - "*You must be born again*". We looked at the 'Why' – Why must we be born again? Because we are spiritually dead... unable to respond or even to understand the things of God. We looked at the 'Who' – Who must be born again? We looked at Nicodemus. Nicodemus who was very religious, very respectable and very

responsible. We noted that Jesus said *'You must be born again'* to this man – the point being, that if he needed to be born again, then you and I certainly need to be born again. We all need to be born again. And we looked at the 'How' – how are we born again? We recognised that there were steps to be taken – to repent of the futility, the arrogance of thinking we can save ourselves, and then to ask – ask the Holy Spirit to plant in our hearts that life from above.

Now, when that happens... when we are born again, everything changes. We are no longer separated/alienated from God. Our relationship with him is restored. Remember how John put it? *“Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God”*.

We are in a new relationship... we are adopted into the family of God, with God as our heavenly Father. We are not the Son or a Son, like Jesus is, but we are now children of God and God is our heavenly Father too.

That. If you like, is the progression in our identity. We know who we are... we are certain of our identity... our new identity and therefore our priorities change. Whereas before we had our own agenda... had our own priorities, we now want to be about our Father's business.

Again, this is not pointing to a compulsion.... this is not talk of being driven or being forced to do something against our will. This is a yearning ... a deep desire down desire to want to serve him and glorify him in all that we do.

A new priority... a desire that is so strong that other earthly relationships are secondary to it. Now, is that true for you and me? Are we about our Father's business or are we more concerned with our own business? Is our priority his business or are we driven by our own agenda?

This is not to say that it is always easy. Just as Mary & Joseph didn't understand Jesus, people will certainly misunderstand us.... perhaps question our priority which will be so different from theirs....perhaps criticise us because our priority will not be shared with those in the world.

Sometimes we may get the balance wrong. You've heard it said of some Christians, *“He is so heavenly minded, he's of no earthly use”*. We need to look to Jesus who got the balance right... he was about the business of his heavenly Father, and yet at the same time, able to fulfil his duty to his earthly parents.

Our aim is to be about our Father's business... that is to be our aim in our daily life. If that becomes our aim, if we hold that aim always before us, then it will

be a way of testing our habits and conversations... it will quicken us when we are tempted to become lazy... it will check us when we are tempted to go back into the world. Am I really about my Father's business?

That is to be our aim.... our desire, to be about our Father's business, remembering our OT reading – the importance of wisdom, that we too might get the balance right... that we too might '*grow in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.*'