

The Father's Business Luke 2:21-52

We have had a number of children born to Heritage families this year and are expecting quite a few this year also. It's a time of preparation, hope and prayer. Parents want to do everything they can to be the best parents. Joseph and Mary did that also and did their best to fulfil the law for a newborn.

First: Jesus as a Baby. 21-38

a) Presented at the Temple. 21-24

Teana and I studied grief while we were away and were surprised to find its first occurrence in

Genesis 6:6 - *And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.*

"Grieved" = *'āṣab* = *to pain or to hurt*

It's just very interesting, meaningful, and practical to know that God hurt before us.

But it isn't only the Father, who is pained. Jesus's birth and circumcision involved pain.

1 – 21a – 8 days - **Circumcision** is the covenant sign between God and Abraham's children. Jesus's circumcision identified him with the ruined race he came to save.

It reminds us that everyone must take part in Jesus' cutting, his cross, or be cut off from God forever.

2 – 21b – 8 days - **Naming** – Jesus was also named on this day according to Gabriel's prediction (Luke 1:31).

3 – 22-24 – 41 days - **Purification** – (Lev 12:2-6). Any women who had a boy was ceremonially unclean for 40 days. Two pigeons or turtledoves are for the poor.

IMP: According to Leviticus, this is an offering for Mary – "*and he shall offer it before the LORD and make atonement for her*" (Lev 12:7).

A boy's birth contaminates his mother in the same way we are all sinners by Adam (Rom 5:12-21).

Two doves =

- A sin offering where blood is shed transfers sinner's guilt to substitute.
- A burnt offering where virtue of the substitute is transferred to the sinner.

Why is Luke so careful about recording these things? Jesus was not conceived or born a sinner, so Mary isn't made impure by his birth. But Luke's theme is Jesus as the perfect man – the son of man, and he is proving that Jesus was born under the law and fulfilled the law, which has been mentioned 3 times so far.

Galatians 4:4-5 - But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law...

Matthew 5:17 - I have not come to abolish them [the law & prophets] but to fulfill them...

Romans 10:4 - Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

He has not simply satisfied the law, clearing our account before God. He has filled our account with his righteousness.

2 Corinthians 5:21 - For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Why is this important? Because you must either trust Jesus's righteousness or you must establish your own –

Revelation 20:11-15 - Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

- 1 – Note the difference between the 'book' and the 'books' in v 12.
- 2 – The book of life contains the name of every person who has trusted Jesus.
- 3 – The book of words contains the works of every person who hasn't trusted Jesus.
- 4 – Anyone who doesn't trust Jesus gets the opportunity to compare their works to Jesus's work – 13.
- 5 – No one succeeds. 14-15.

Everyone who does not depend on Jesus's righteousness, is eternally damned.

That's why what Simon and Anna say is so important.

b) Proclamations about the Savior 25-38

1 – Simeon 25-35

- 25 - Simeon revered the OT and poured over it, looking for the Messiah.

ILL – Simeon is like a sentry looking for dawn. Once it arrives, his shift is finished.

And so Simeon begins the fourth and final song in Jesus's birth narrative – *Nunc dimittis*, meaning, "now you are dismissing."

- v 26 – The Holy Spirit told Simeon he would see Israel's 'consolation' (v 25)
- Simeon, by the Holy Spirit, calls Jesus God's promised OT "salvation," 30.
- Jesus is not only Israel's consolation (v 25) but a light to Gentiles (32).

From the very beginning, Luke is giving hope to Theophilus and every Greek who reads his book.

V 32 – "revelation" = *apokalupsis* = /unveiling (as in the book of 'Revelation'). That's the point of the whole Bible. It is slowly unveiling Jesus until we finally see him in his glory.

V 34 – Jesus "*a sign that is opposed...*"

APP: Why did people oppose Jesus? And why do people oppose him today?

...and his birth means rising and falling for different people. It also means that Mary will suffer (v 35). This is undoubtedly one thing she "*treasured up*" in her heart (v 51).

But the baby in Simeon's arms is not just for him to see and know. And so Anna begins....

2 – Anna 36-38 (Have you noticed that Luke presents people in pairs?)

- 36 - She is a prophetess (there are only 7 named prophetesses in the OT)
- 36 - Married for 7 years and then widowed
- 38 - She too names Jesus as Israel's long-awaited the "redemption."

APP: Senior Saints - we assume Simeon was old. We know Anna was. Yet both of them were actively waiting on Jesus, serving God and sharing the good news.

Second: Jesus as a Boy. 39-40

a) Where he lived

- 1 - The place he lived. 39
- 2 - God's plan for him. 40

Luke compresses the first 12 years of Jesus's life in one verse.

He went through all the normal stages of life; had to crawl before he walked, There was never a boy like Jesus.

- Adam was never a boy.
- Cain, the first boy, sinned against God and his family.
- But Jesus grew up with "*God's favor upon him*" and without sin. 40

Contrast him with others whom Luke has named:

- Tiberius controlled Rome (3:1-2).
- Pontius Pilate ruled from Caesarea by the sea
- Herod Antipas was enthroned in Galilee.
- Philip governed in Ituraea.
- Lysanias reigned in Abilene.
- Annas served as Israel's High Priest.

None of them were godly. They were all unrighteous. And each of them had another eighteen years before they would meet Jesus. Eighteen years to get right with God.

APP: What will you do with the next 18 years of your life?

3 – The thing he loved – 41

But in the meantime, Jesus set off for his first recorded visit (see v 41) to Jerusalem singing the Psalms of Ascent (Psalms 120-134).

Psalm 122:1 - *I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD!"*

This was a city he had watched Abraham visit thousands of years earlier. He had seen David ascend its throne, Solomon build its temple, Israel murder its prophets and he knew it was the city that would one day crucify him. But the great Mover, was unmoved by it all and proceeded to the Temple, a building he called, "*my Father's house*" (2:51).

So Luke tells Theophilus a little story to demonstrate Jesus's lifelong passion, the Father's house, and the father's business.

b) What he loved 43-49.

Mary and Joseph went a day's journey without him (v 44) and spent three days in Jerusalem looking for him (v 46) before they found him conversing with Israel's leaders in the Temple.

The school of Hillel was the liberal school of rabbis and favored Rome.
The school of Shammai was the more conservative and nationalistic.

They Jesus was intimidated by neither.

IMP: V 49 are Jesus's first recorded words in Luke and they set the tone for his life.

Interesting: Contrast, "*your father and I*" (v 48) with "*my Father's house*" (v 49). (KJV = "father's business")

Either is correct because Jesus actually said, "*Did you not know that I must be about my Father's this*" as in, "I must be about this for my Father," (the Greek word for 'this' is 'ho,' = a possessive article. There is no Greek word for either house or business in the original verse.

John 5:17 - *But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working."*

John 6:38 - *...I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.*

The point is not the house or business but his relationship to the Father and his earthly mission.

"Jesus never struck a jarring note, never made a misstep. On Him circumstances left no fingerprints. Popularity never caused Him to hasten a footstep. Hostility never caused Him to falter. Temptations never loosened a moral fiber. As all the rivers are gathered into the ocean so Christ is the ocean in which all moral excellencies and spiritual pleasures meet. Even His enemies said they could find no fault in Him. Even His worst foe proclaimed Him innocent."

Robert G. Lee, *Whirlwinds of God: Messages* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1932), 64.

IMP: Jesus called God, "my Father.." (49). In the history of the Bible, no one had ever done that before.

This means that Jesus had not disobeyed his parents. He was exactly right where he should have been

John 8:29b - ... I always do the things that are pleasing to him.

Think about our OT study on the Tabernacle. This event reveals *the* Temple in the temple (That's a sermon in itself).

c) What he learned 52

Note that Mary, "*his mother treasured up all these things in her heart*" (v 51b).

Hebrews 5:8-9 - *Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. ⁹ And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him*

How did he learn obedience?

1 – His family was obedient to Caesar and Jewish law.

2 – 51 - *And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them.*

3 – Luke 22:42 - *“Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.”*

APP: We all struggle with submission. But Jesus’s submission is our salvation.

Thank God for his obedience. It compensates for our disobedience.

V 52 -

- Wisdom = internal
- Stature = physical
- Favor with God = spiritual
- And man = relational

Conclusion: The most world-shifting events have occurred in Luke 2.

- 1 – Jesus is born
- 2 – He fulfils the law from birth
- 3– He meets and becomes the Temple
- 4 – The God-man has come to do what only the God-man can do.

Community Groups

- 1 – Read Luke 2:21-52.
- 2 – What does it mean to you that God is the first person in the Bible to grieve?
- 3 – How might this help you endure grief?
- 4 – What is circumcision all about and how does it point to Jesus?
- 5 – Why were two doves presented for purification?
- 6 – Read Leviticus 12:2-7. What does this atoning purification say about Mary?
- 7 – How did Jesus fulfil the law throughout his lifetime?
- 8 – Why did Jesus fulfil the law?
- 9 – What does Jesus’s fulfilment of the law have to with us?
- 10 – Read Revelation 20:1-5.
- 11 – What is the basis of judgement at the Great White Throne?
- 12 – What happens to people who are judged from the book of works?
- 13 – What happens to anyone whose name is not found in the book of life?
- 14 – What does Simeon call Jesus and what does it mean?
- 15 – What happened to Jesus as his parents left Jerusalem?
- 16 – What was Jesus doing when Joseph and Mary found him?

17 – How did Jesus learn obedience and what is the value of it to him? To us?

Daily Devotion

Monday, the 19th. Read Lk 2:21 & Gen 17:1-14 & 23-26. What do you understand about circumcision? And how would you explain it to a friend or family member? The Hebrews didn't make covenants, they cut them. This cutting of circumcision is a bloody foreshadowing of the cutting of Jesus at Calvary. We are cut off from God at conception, saved when Christ is cut off from God, and anyone who refuses Jesus will be eternally 'cut off' from God forever. Perhaps this is how you could explain circumcision to anyone who asks you.

Tuesday, the 20th. Read Lk 2:22-24 & Lev 12:1-8. Joseph and Mary brought the least possible sacrifice for her purification, another indication of how God is turning the world, 'right-side-up.' It takes two offerings (doves) to illustrate what Jesus has done in one offering: transferring the sinner's guilt to the substitute and the substitute's innocence to the sinner. But what does this say about Mary? And what does it say about your sin? You are not just forgiven but also made righteous before God. Let that truth combat guilt in your life. And share that good news with someone else.

Wed, the 21st. Read John 19:1-11 & Rev 20:11-15. This judgement is called the Great White Throne Judgement (for sinners) and is different from the Judgement Seat of Christ (for saints). What two sets of books are opened at the GWTJ? What is the single book called? According to these verses, an unbeliever goes to Hell because his/her name is not found in the book of life but sinners are judged by their works found in the books of works. Apparently, although all unbelievers go to Hell, they suffer degrees of judgement/condemnation in Hell. Pray the Holy Spirit will use these verses to intensify your prayers for the unsaved.

Thu, the 22nd. Read Lk 2:25-35. Simeon has been waiting for Israel's Messiah and recognizes him. Anna also recognizes him and shares the good news with others in the temple. Like Simeon, we too wait, but unlike Simeon, we are not waiting for Christ's first advent but his second coming. In the interim, we who recognize Jesus, should be telling others. Who are you praying for and who are you telling about Jesus?

Fri, the 23rd. Read Lk 2:41-50. According to v 43, Joseph and Mary didn't forget or lose Jesus in Jerusalem, he intentionally stayed behind. And when Mary refers to herself and Joseph as his mother and father, Jesus reminds her in v 49 that God is his Father (see 1:32). We all need occasional reminders of who Jesus is, of his deity, grandeur, authority, and power, though fully man, yet fully God. What NT verses can you think of that

remind you that Jesus is God? Now think back Monday's devotion. How does Jesus's humanity help you see him as your invested God? How does that help you in sorrow?