

About My Father's Business

Scripture tell us precious little about the youthful years of Jesus. But there is one very revealing insight given us in Luke, Chapter 2, where he tells us about one particular event which occurred when Jesus was twelve years old, verse 40 tells us that “the child grew and was strong in the spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.” When His earthly parents Mary and Joseph found him missing from the caravan in which they were returning home after attending the feast of Passover, they returned to Jerusalem and found Him in the temple “sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions, and all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers” (verses 46, 47). When his parents questioned Him as to why He stayed behind, His response was “...wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? (verse 49).

Here we read of this child Jesus growing “strong in spiritual wisdom” and astonishing the elders and priests by His great wisdom regarding the very knowledge of which they were the most learned of all men. This, of course, was about Scripture, the Word of God. Although He never ceased being God when He was born as a human baby, He could not have known of Himself nor could He have consciously been aware of the wisdom of all creation. God had ordained Him to be born and to grow up to be as a human man having human limitations, physically and mentally as He grew toward manhood. It is evident that by age 12 He had learned much and was at least beginning to recognize His specialness. The fact that He referred to God as His Father is indicative of this growing evolving spiritual knowledge. The Hebrews never referred to God as Father. It was a name for God, coined in heaven and used exclusively by Jesus every time He spoke to, or referred to Him. Only once did He refer to Him as God. This was when He hung on the cross and the wrath of God was purging Him of the sins of the world, which He had taken upon Himself. Psalm 89 verse 26 speaks of God as the Father, but it is God Himself referring to Jesus who would call Him Father. Elsewhere God refers to Himself as Father, Father of the national Israel, not of any individual. Thus, the Jews probably didn't even catch the significance of this when He spoke of the business of His Father.

Later they would understand, and would try to kill Him for “blasphemy.” By the time He was thirty and had begun His ministry, He knew full well of His position as part of the Godhead, that He was truly God incarnate. By then He also knew what His mission was, and every detail of how He would carry it out.

How fascinating it is to study Scripture and see how He fulfilled more than 300 prophecies during His short earthly life. And why not? It was He who wrote the Book. It is largely about Himself, although that is difficult to discern in the Old Testament without the aide of the Holy Spirit interpreting it through the New Testament. In earthly terms, one could say He first wrote the Book, then the movie script, after which He became the producer and director and main actor, playing His role precisely as He had written it.

What was the Father’s business that He was about? At this point He was in the temple learning and teaching. Later He would also be healing, casting out demons, setting example, and declaring His Sonship as the Son of God the Father. All of this would be in complete obedience to the Father and in close communication with Him in prayer. Finally, He would fulfill His main purpose on earth by providing the ultimate expression of His supernatural love as He paid in full the price of past, present and future sins of all who would believe and obey His Word.

Are you a Christian? Do you consider yourself born-again? Are you sure? If you are, you have the exclusive right to call God your Father because you have been born into His family as His son or daughter. Having received this most precious of all possible gifts, your heart must be filled with eagerness to do all you possibly can for Him out of gratitude and love. With Jesus as our example, is it not both appropriate and essential that we too be about our Father’s business? If we are truly sincere about our faith and devotion to Him, as we must be if we are of His family, how can we not see this as the priority of our lives?

If you are of His family, the Holy Spirit resides in your new heart and is available to guide and to assist you in all spiritual matters. This includes the means and the direction by which you are able to be about your Father's business. With your new heart and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit came one or more spiritual gifts that are to be used for this purpose. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul mentions nine such gifts, and indicates that there are many more to draw from in our quest to be about our Father's business. Every genuine Christian has at least one such gift. It may even be one or more that you had long before you were "officially" saved, because remember, God knew before the beginning of time, precisely who and when they would be saved, and on that basis may have chosen to endow in advance various individuals with particular gifts that would be already available and somewhat perfected prior to an application to His business. Writing, teaching, preaching, giving, organizing, leading, etc. would be such gifts which the redeemed might have had long before the heart would or could choose to use them for His glorification.

While every redeemed soul has one or more spiritual gifts which he or she is required to use to His glory, being about His business involves much more. It includes worshipping prayers not just petitioning prayers. Jesus as God Himself, while He was also man, did much worshipping and praying to the Father. Jesus attended to the sick and needy. We cannot do the miracles He did, but we can bring comfort and support to those sick and in need. Perhaps you have had a deadly sickness from which God rescued you. Have you wondered why? It could be the basis of a spiritual gift that will now allow you to be credible to others who are similarly afflicted. Through your experience, and perhaps unique knowledge, it may be possible for you to be especially helpful to them. Through your entry into their lives as a possible agent of physical healing, you may be given opportunities to turn souls to Christ as well.

What business was this 12-year old Jesus about in the temple? It was the studying, along with sharing and teaching the Scripture. Through out Scripture we are told to do this. Its faithful pursuit can in itself be a strong indication of a saved soul. Read John 8:31 where Jesus said, "If ye continue in my word then you are my disciples indeed." Who is a

disciple? You are if you are born-again. What is His Word? It is the Bible. What does it mean to continue in His word? It is to live in accordance with what the Bible teaches. But this is impossible to do unless you “continue in His Word” by studying and knowing His Word, the Whole Word, not just what you get from hearsay or a 20-minute sermon once a week. Here 12-year old Jesus was giving us an example to follow. Studying Scripture is being about the Father’s business. This is but one of many verses where we are admonished to know His Word. Being about our Father’s business is what James was talking about in James 1:23 when he said, “But be doers of the word and not hearers only: In chapter 2 verse 20 he says, “Faith without work is dead, and in verse 24 “...by works a man is justified and not by faith only.” He also says in verse 18 of the same chapter “...I will show you my faith by my works.” Wherever “works” are mentioned in this context, we could rightly substitute “my Father’s business.” Spiritually meaningful works are by definition the Father’s business, which is also that which glorifies His name.

Just as James observed, faith without works is dead, so even more are works without faith, faith in Jesus and in His shed blood. Scripture repeatedly reminds us that there is no salvation without the shedding of innocent blood, and only that blood shed by Jesus on the cross. As we are led to do works intended to glorify Him, we must look carefully at what these works are, and especially what is motivating them. Works derived from faith and love, and those that serve and glorify God are beneficial works. But unless we know Scripture, how are we to know with certainty which of the less than self-evident works accomplish this? However, motivation is the primary factor in determining the spiritual value of one’s works, and love laced with gratitude is the essential element of that motivation.

As Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 13, without love there is nothing we can do that pleases God or has any spiritual value. If the sense of duty, repayment, seeking credit, reputation, or any reason for our works other than a grateful love is in our hearts, the works are dead. It is through the loving study of His Word, and continual prayer for wisdom, discernment, knowledge, and understanding, that the Holy Spirit will reveal

what nature of works He has planned for us. But again, no matter how much good works we may do, without God's love in our hearts it profits us nothing.

If you are His disciple, that is His son or daughter, you must not be spiritually complacent, lazy or negligent in your Christian walk, but eager and active in pursuit of His business. I pray you will examine yourself, find the spiritual gifts you surely have, and use them faithfully in love and in a sincere effort to emulate Jesus and thereby be about your Father's business.