

GOING ABOUT OUR HOLY FATHER'S BUSINESS

A condensed version of a sermon by Sam Ennis delivered at the Ferndale Bible Chapel on Sunday 17 May 2009

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY....

...PUNCTUALITY IS A MARK OF GODLINESS

INTRODUCTION

The passage on which Sam preached was Luke 2 : 41-52.

The popular view is that between the age of 12 and 30 years of age, nothing is heard about Jesus. However, in verse 52 of the passage from Luke, we learn that during this period and before he entered his ministry, ".....Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men". So, we know that during this period he was growing mentally and physically and in stature and socially. This is good for teenagers to know.

The key verse in this passage, however, in which the first words of Jesus in the New Testament are recorded, is verse 49.

KEY VERSE

Luke 2 : 49 : "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?"

WHAT JESUS MEANT

His parents did not understand what he was saying to them, it is recorded. However, with hindsight, we know that it was his Father's business that brought Jesus into the world : John 3 : 16.

He came to heal the lepers, give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, to lift children up and bless them, to raise the dead.....

He came into a world of darkness, anger, disobedience, jealousy, murder, sexual deviation, lust.....a world of division, sin, hatred, bitterness, drunkenness, pride, broken families.

"God loved the world of sinners' lost
and ruined by the fall
Salvation full at highest cost
He offers free to all.

Oh 'twas love 'twas wondrous love
 the love of God to me
 It brought my Saviour from above
 To die on Calvary"

In a world where outward appearances are seen to be so important we are often taken in by what seems to all be in order, not realising that behind the facade of respectability often lurks all the very things Jesus came to this world to deal with : scandal, backbiting, bitterness, jealousy, witchcraft, murder.....

In Acts 13 we read about the holy mission of Barnabas and Saul (who was also called Paul) to Cyprus.

At Paphos, the proconsul, Sergius Paulus sent for Barnabas and Saul because, we read, he wanted to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. Then Saul looked straight at Elymas and said to him: "You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? "

How true is this description of men even today.

Sam told of having had to preach on the verse referred to above from Acts and of having been reluctant to do so when he learnt that a young woman, whom he knew, was to be present at the meeting. She, he didn't think, needed the Lord or so he thought. He had been taken in by the appearance of this young woman. But not the Lord. She responded to his preaching that night.

Jesus made it clear that it was not his business that he was about but the business of the Father who sent him to the world to minister. And that's our business too : to do a ministry of the Lord in one way or another. It is also not only ministers in full-time calling who are responsible for ministering. It is the responsibility of the whole church, every believer.

"Only one life
 It will soon be passed
 and only what's done for Jesus
 will last."

Sam spoke of a conference he attended at which an American preacher, relying on Revelation 1 : 6 claimed that Jesus had made us to be kings and priests unto God. He had said that the congregation were the kings and were responsible to provide for the needs of the priests and to see that they were kept well! An able theologian, to whom Sam had sent the recording of this statement, denounced it as heresy.

We are the church whose business it is to proclaim the gospel and reach the unsaved.

The great Charles Spurgeon who died at the age of 57 had a pastors' college. He taught young men to preach. A Baptist church sent for one of his pastors and after six months

wrote a letter to brother Spurgeon complaining that he had made a mistake as the young man had been with them for six months and had not yet filled the church. The legend goes that Charles wrote back saying that they had obviously been under some misapprehension as the young man had been sent to fill the pulpit. It was the church's job to fill the church.

Those who come in repentance are offered love, acceptance and forgiveness. God wants to love us with an everlasting love and wants to use us. In the story of the prodigal son, in Luke 15, we see in the son's father the way in which God wants to treat us. Once we

know the touch of God on our life, we have a ministry to fulfil and a solemn responsibility to do the will of God and to go about the business of the Father.

There are many ways in which we can fulfil our ministry. Sam told the story of a Sister who approached the elders with a list of names and wanted to know where she would find the Visitation Committee. Don't go to the elders with this sort of request : do it yourself.

APPLICATION

What is your ministry?

What are you doing to extend the Kingdom of God?

What responsibility have you assumed for Jesus?