

Sunday, August 22, 2021

Genesis 1:1-5, John 1:1-5, Luke 2:41-52 and Mark 8:27-30

“Jesus, Did You Know you are God’s Son?”

We conclude our summer series “At Your Request” with requests of topics from some of our church members with today’s focus with the question “Jesus, Did you know?” Starting on Sunday, September 12 we begin our fall series on “Words, Words and Actions” which will focus on what we say and how we communicate with each other Christ’s message so that we might be wanting and willing to put words into action.

Today’s focus is Jesus, did you know? asking Jesus about his life on earth and what God’s purpose was for his life. In 2004, a contemporary Christmas written by Buddy Greene and Mark Lowry was released with Michael English along with the Gaither Vocal Band asking the words, “Mary, did you know?” This song has been covered by several artists and has become a popular song about Jesus not just his birth, but his life, death and resurrection.

From the biblical texts leading up to the birth of Jesus, Mary did know that she was going to give birth to the Son of God. Upon learning of her pregnancy, Joseph was ready to break the engagement until he too was told that the baby was to be born to save His people. However, the question we are exploring today is did Jesus know he was God’s Son?

In order to answer this question, we need to go back to the beginning: both in Genesis 1 and John 1 to understand who God is. Both of these books use the familiar words “In the beginning”. We might be familiar with “In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep. ‘while a wind or Spirit of God swept over the face of the waters.” God is now described as Creator and Spirit. If we continue to read this chapter, God continues in making light, sea, sky, land, vegetation, stars, sun, moon, living creatures in the air, sea and land. Then we read: Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness. Who is the ‘us’? in whose image will people be made? In the image of God.

In John 1 again we read “In the beginning” but what follows is slightly different- was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God, He was in the beginning with God. Who is this “He” the Word?” Jesus. The Word refers to the logos the one who would speak with the people and teach God’s laws and ways of life. The Word (big W) is Jesus. So yes, the simple answer is yes Jesus did know that he was the Son of God—even before he was born!

Just think for a moment now. Have you ever told the story of what occurred the day your children were born? That is in answer to where they came from did you tell your children about what happened? Some birth stories are amazing—giving birth in cabs, police cars, in the middle of snowstorms, or in years past in bedrooms, when no electricity or water was available. And each story is unique especially if there is an element of surprise or something extraordinary happened.

Children often ask for this story to be shared on their birthdays because they are the centre of the story and want to know of the expressions on people's faces when they first meet the family. Often what is remembered is the baby crying and this gives us the beginning of life as air is first breathed. But what other things occur before that moment happens?

We do not know for sure about Mary and Joseph and what they shared with Jesus when he was a little boy. But like many children he would be interested in knowing what happened that day (not that it was Dec.25) But one can imagine Mary and Joseph telling how they had to go to Bethlehem, that there was no place to sleep, it was a bright and starry night and they stayed in a barn near an inn. We are still fascinated by this story over 2000 years later, one can only imagine Jesus hearing it for the first time. Did Mary tell him about the angels' visits before and the angels singing in the sky? Did she tell Jesus about the shepherds coming to the stable to see him and how they found out who he was? Or was this one of the things Mary pondered in her hearts the night Jesus was born?

Did Jesus know He was God's Son? We do not know anything about his early years. But we do know that at @2 years of age, Mary and Joseph did receive foreigners in to their home and that they gave the boy different and expensive gifts. These learned men and their caravans had travelled a long way from home. And how did they know about Jesus? It was written in the stars because a bright star had led them to where they were now living.

We don't know what happened as Jesus was growing up and starting school but he might have asked his parents questions – a lot of questions- and understood things very quickly. Jesus might have also asked about the gold, frankincense and myrrh that had a special place in their home. He might have also wondered why Joseph had not sold the gold so he did not have to work in the carpentry shop. But we do not know.

Jesus was being raised as a Jewish boy in the traditions of the day. He would have gone to school (unlike girls) and would be expected to achieve well in his studies. He would also need to hear and learn the stories of the Torah (OT Books). We do not know if he performed miracles as a child but there have been some fictional novels written with this possibility. At the time Jesus was growing up there was no special attention paid to him. He was just an ordinary Jewish boy growing up and following the teachings of God. But he was also a good student for we know later on that Jesus knew the scriptures well. He also wanted to find out answers.

At age 12 Jesus went to Jerusalem with his parents and siblings to celebrate Passover. After it was over, Jesus got separated from his family who had left for home. They thought he was with people who had travelled with them to the city. But they could not find him anywhere. We can only imagine how upset they were! Three days later they found him in the temple and sitting among the teachers, listening and asking questions. When Mary and Joseph find him, they are upset and anxious and question him. Jesus' responded, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" Jesus did not say God's house, or the temple but called it 'my Father's house.'" They did not question him, but

took him back home. How could they argue with the boy who was searching for answers? The boy they knew was born to be the messiah. The reading then says “his mother treasured all these things in her heart”. Poor Mary! Did she feel like other mothers knowing that her son would soon have a bar mitzvah or coming of age ceremony. Maybe she thought that Jesus just needed to get answers for more questions about his Jewish faith. Or maybe she knew that for Jesus’ bar mitzvah he signifies that he would become a Jewish adult and is now responsible for his own actions, deciding for himself how he would like to practice Judaism. And for Jesus, maybe this three day visit with the teachers of the law, opened his eyes to what a messiah was supposed to do and this became clearer for him those days. We are not sure.

All we do know is that “Jesus increased in wisdom and in years and in divine and human favour.” This means that he grew up and was knowledgeable and wise according to God’s teachings and as a good person.

We know that Jesus would have known and studied the OT prophets and would have learned the history of the Jewish people and the stories of Abraham, Moses and Isaac and through the different generations. He would have also grown up with John, his cousin, son of Zechariah and Elizabeth but did he know what was going to happen each day he was ministering to others? We do not know. All we do know is that he was raised learning his father Joseph’s trade as a carpenter and worked at this for years. That is until the time was right to hang up the apron and begin his ministry.

John (the Baptist) filled his role as the one who would prepare the people for the coming messiah. He preached a message of hope and new life; he baptized people into a new understanding of God. He also knew that Jesus was the one who would save his people so when Jesus came to him for baptism, John did not know what to do. They were in the Jordan River and it is when Jesus emerges from the waters of baptism that God’s voice—officially introduces Jesus as His Son. There were no spotlights, no one applauding or screaming loudly, only God’s voice resonating in the area and declaring Jesus as His Son.

Was this when Jesus really knew he was the Son of God? Or had he known earlier? This is very much unknown but through speculation, I think that God spoke to him as he grew in wisdom and in divine and human favour. They had a strong connection being God. There were probably many questions from the people of Nazareth who had grown up beside him, they might be surprised that he was preaching and healing and telling stories? But did they need to know before too long what was going to happen to him? We are unsure because even the 12 people closest to him did not expect that he would die or want to acknowledge this.

After calling his disciples they began travelling and listening to him as he taught. He performed miracles and he raised concerns with the Pharisees and Saducees about what he spoke about living and loving others and God. As the disciples accompanied Jesus into little villages they talked openly on the road. Jesus asked his disciples what the word on the street was about him. He wanted to know? Who do people say that I am? After feeding thousands,

after teaching for hours and then needing to get away to pray to God, Jesus wanted to be sure that the plan was in place. He needed the people to believe him to be God's Son. But how could he prove it even more?

The people thought he was John the Baptist, Elijah or a prophet come back on earth. But when Jesus pushed Peter further he asked, "But, Peter- who do you think I am?" Without any hesitation, Peter responded.

How would you respond to this question? Who do you think Jesus is? What would you say? A Jewish man who had an amazing childhood, a great home-life, parents who cared about his well being? But what else? Peter answered directly, "You are the messiah." He was the One promised by God to save His people.

Was Jesus convinced of his response? Probably to some degree, but we know that Peter does deny him after Jesus is arrested but in this moment, Peter believes he is the Messiah. He does not call him the Son of God then but is eager to learn more. So Jesus teaches the disciples about his pending death and resurrection and how this would occur. He would be rejected and killed and then be raised to new life.

When we consider the question asked, 'Jesus did you know that you are the Son of God'. My response is yes. He would learn from his parents of his birth and be taught by his teachers about the need for a Messiah. He would have also learned Isaiah 61:1-2. One Sabbath day when he was in Nazareth he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written. He read: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Then Jesus rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Did Jesus know? Yes, He knew his life's purpose was to save his people for his name even reflects his purpose- God's salvation. But most importantly at this time is whether you know Jesus as your Saviour, as God's Son, as the one born in a stable, crucified on a cross, buried in a tomb and alive for evermore. Do you know this Jesus? The one whom hymn writers and poets, musicians and preachers have been talking and singing for over 2000 years- who is Jesus?

Jesus is the Son of God born for you. Are you willing to follow Him, to know him and to trust him with your life? As we learn more about Jesus he asks us to tell others of his love, and he asks us to remember him. So today we will remember Jesus through the sacrament of holy communion for we believe in Jesus and he is the Son of God.

PRAYER

Holy God lift us up as we offer our praises to Jesus your Son, the Promise One who came to live, died and rise again. Show us again in word and deed who we might be as we praise you and love you for who you are. Be with us in this time of worship and as we prepare to share in what Jesus asked us to do in remembering him. Hear now our prayers. SILENCE> Amen.