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Sermon
Sunday 29/12/ 2024

Genealogy of Jesus

Luke 2.41-52

In Genesis Chapters 1- 2, we are given an account of something very special as God unfolds his amazing plan of creation. Day and Night, etc, then to crown it all, humans. "Go forth and multiply", was his command for all living creatures. Two of a kind were needed to fulfill this instruction as "Family" was always the beginning for God's ultimate plan.

Family is where lifelong attitudes are formed toward others and ourselves, within the community and society where we live and grow.

It is where our own identity should be nurtured by those who have our best interest at heart and whose desire is to see growth into maturity. (Prov.22.6). It is where we develop attitudes toward others of difference, be it racial, voting habits, or religious practice. Etc.

Also learning the delights of celebrations like, birthdays, Christmas, starting school or graduating, and perhaps worship, etc.

Parenting comes with responsibilities, setting examples for their offspring by caring for their needs of love and protection.

This is where we learn about belonging, sacrificial love, trust, honesty, loyalty, giving, receiving, affection, compassion and learning to take on new responsibilities. All character building.

Family is where we discover our own identity, status and hereditary. It defines who and what we are and are to become. Is this why we have such interest in Genealogy today?

There is a television program called "Long lost family". It is riveting watching as people search for family or relatives that may take years to find.

Why? Is it because we have a very deep and strong desire to "belong" to someone, to be attached, to find our historical connections and find our place in the scheme of life? A place that we " fit "as in part of the puzzle?

This desire to belong extends to community attachments with like minded people. Social interactions give us a sense of identity and can be based on racial, ethnic, sporting, service, charitable organisations etc. Any group that can help satisfy that deep need within us. Alone and lonely can be a devastating experience with consequences that affect both health and wellbeing.

We also know that family life is not always how it should be and often we experience shortcomings and deficiencies, causing emotional, psychological, and physical abuse. However, the human race still has a deep yearning to belong to a family, a place of refuge and strength, when the whole world seems to be against us. So was God's plan achievable, or just an ideal of which we all fall short?

Just the same as all of humankind, at the beginning of his earthly life, Jesus was born into a human family.

Today's family can be traditional, Mum, Dad and brothers and/or sisters, single mothers struggling just to make ends meet. There are blended, rainbow, etc.

2. all sorts of different people wanting to become a family unit together. Jesus family was the usual traditional Jewish family. His Mother Mary, Father Joseph, four brothers and sisters. Six siblings at least. We know the names of the brothers as, James, Joseph, Simon and Judas. (Jn 7.3 – Matt. 13.54-57).

There were exceptional and supernatural circumstances around the birth of the baby Jesus. The Angel Gabriel's visitation to Mary and Angelic Hosts giving praise, visits of Shepherds, Kings from the East bringing gifts to the child and prophetic pronouncements from Simeon and Anna at his presentation in the temple. Mary held these things in her heart. (Luke 2.25-38)

In spite of this, I believe that Jesus would have had a "normal" and robust interaction with his parents and especially his siblings. It was a vital component of knowing what it was like to be truly human, otherwise he would not have been able to understand the cry for help from a child, experiencing bullying behavior, or other incidents that happen within a growing family. (Hymn "Jesus friend of little children).

It was the most important duty of Jewish family life, that the firstborn be dedicated to the Lord, so was it possible that Jesus' brothers may have been a little jealous of his status in the family? (Ex 22.29). Or having a disagreement with each other and along comes elder brother, "the peacemaker." He also experienced what it would be like to carry the burden of care for the family after the death of his Father Joseph.

Jesus has two genealogies that seem quite different. Matt. 1.1-17 begins with Jesus Christ, Son of David, and traces his ancestral lineage to Abraham. He was the lawful, legitimate, descendant of King David by Joseph his father. Luke Ch. 3.23-38 traces Jesus ancestry back to Seth, son of Adam, the son of God. This is thought to be Mary's ancestral lines.

Jesus has both the legitimate right to be Abraham's descendant as well as the Son of God. Impeccable, legal and Spiritual qualifications. This is why he could confront the Pharisees and Scribes who had questioned his authority to preach, teach and heal. With his knowledge and understanding of what was good and right, he challenges with truth, justice and mercy (Jn. 1.14-17). He has the right to say "My testimony is valid because I know where I have come from and where I am going."

Is this something that we also can say with true conviction? (Jn 8:14. 1-12-13)

It was the law given to Moses, by God, that the firstborn be dedicated to the Lord, and every male was expected to attend the Temple in Jerusalem, at least once a year or another dedicated place if unable to attend. Jesus, at twelve years of age would be studying for his rite of passage, taking responsibility for keeping the Torah, as given to Moses on Mt. Sinai. (Num 8:17, Col 1.15).

This may have been the reason for his parents taking him with them on the journey to Jerusalem, for the festival of Passover.

3. There would have been much excitement among those travelling together, as they were anticipating joining with praise and thanksgiving with God's family in the temple. It most likely took more than a whole day's journey to arrive. After the celebrations, everyone began the homeward journey. However, after a day's journey back, Jesus' parents realized that the boy was missing. They had assumed that he was with other relatives or friends. Imagine Mary's rising anxiety at not being able to find her son. After all, she knew she also had to protect him. (Lk 2. 34-35). They would have questioned everyone on the returning journey, only to find that Jesus was definitely missing.

His parents had lost contact with him for three days. Just imagine the worry, panic, anxiety and frantic emotions that the parents experienced at this time. Mary fully conveyed this to their son, after locating him in the Temple, other than experiencing the joy of finding him in a safe place, sitting and impressing the teachers, listening, questioning and sharing insight. She says "Why have you treated us like this? We have been anxiously searching for you?" The teachers were impressed but Mary wasn't. How easily we can fall into this attitude when we fail to trust God and His care.

Jesus acknowledges his familial relationship with the Lord God as his Father and replies "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (v.49) Did this help Mary and restore her peace? She was his Mother, Joseph his protector and God his Father.

The concluding verses of Luke (2.51-52) are very insightful. Jesus went home with his parents and was obedient to them, the fruit of which is his increasing in wisdom and years as well as in divine and human favour. – maturing and becoming both fully Man and fully God. (Col.1.15-20)

Family life continues for Jesus to be nurtured, as well as developing his spiritual understanding, in a place of safety.

This is relevant to the Baptismal vows of parents and their sacred duty toward their children. It also shows us just how important it is to belong to the family of God, for both our nurturing and spiritual growth. We do not have all knowledge or understanding on our own, for, as a poet/song writer composed, "No man is an Island, no man stands alone, Each man's joy is joy to me, each man's grief is my own (Author unknown).

God's family consists of God, our Father, Jesus our elder brother and brothers and sisters in Christ, where neither status, colour, gender, social standing, wealth, or position in society, matter. We are all one in Christ Jesus. Kindred, with the same genealogy. This is where the lost can come and find home and family. (Ephesians 3.5-13, James 5.13-20.).

When we are lonely, feeling alone, sick or neglected, we need to keep in touch with the family, sharing our need with those we can trust and who can encourage our faith. But above all, to put our trust in the Father and Jesus our Saviour. casting our care on Him who is closer than a brother, for he cares for and loves us far more than we can know or comprehend. (James 5:14)